

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS  
BY HIS EXCELLENCY NANGOLO MBUMBA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**PARLIAMENT  
WINDHOEK**

**March 14, 2024**

*Checked against delivery*

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

1. I am standing before you today, to deliver this SONA, in this most unusual of years. Just over two weeks ago, I undertook one of the most agonizing tasks when I had to pay tribute to and bid farewell to my dear Comrade and Brother, the third President of Namibia, His Excellency Dr. Hage Gottfried Geingob, who sadly left us on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2024.
2. President Geingob's burial on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, concluded a harrowing stretch of days in which we experienced myriads of emotions. At the same time, while dealing with the passing of our President, I was also overcome by a sense of responsibility. Although my swearing in as the President of the Republic of Namibia came against the backdrop of pain and grief, I was aware that the Namibian nation needed to move forward and someone would have to lead that way forward. In remembrance and honour of our departed 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the Republic of Namibia, may I call on the honourable House to rise and observe a final minute of silence.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

3. His Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob will be remembered for, amongst other things, providing astute leadership at a time when our country needed it most. Under his leadership the principles of Accountability and Transparency were entrenched into our Governance Architecture. Similarly, women and young people were appointed to senior leadership positions. Due to his efforts, Namibia has achieved the highest female representation in Parliament at 50 percent and 41 percent in the Executive. Under difficult economic conditions, President Geingob strengthened Social Safety Nets.
4. He prioritised investment promotion on new sectors to propel our country towards Vision 2030. As a consequence, the new frontiers of Green Hydrogen, Green Industrialization as well as Oil and Gas further set the country firmly on the path of accelerated economic growth and shared prosperity.
5. President Geingob worked hard to maintain Peace, Stability and Unity, without which development cannot take place.

Fellow Namibians,

6. During his inaugural State of the Nation address in 2015, President Geingob emphasized the strength of Namibia's democratic architecture and the stability of the Namibian House. He sketched an analogy between Jesus's parable of the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7: 24-27 and the construction of the Namibian House. He concluded by stating, "In Namibia, we are not foolish. Wise leaders have built the Namibian House on solid rock."
7. Owing to a robust Governance Architecture, we were able to prevail through a challenging transition after the passing of President Geingob, due in part to those of you seated here today as members of Parliament, who have continued building on the solid foundation established by the founders of the Namibian Constitution.
8. Taking this into consideration, I wish to seize this opportunity to salute my predecessors, His Excellency President Sam Nujoma, His Excellency President Hifikepunye Pohamba, His Excellency President Hage Geingob, as well as you Comrade Speaker and other historic Namibian leaders. Most importantly, I commend the Namibian people for their support in the face of unexpected sorrow, grief and challenges.
9. This year, Namibia will hold Presidential and National Assembly elections. I appeal to all political parties, their leaders and members to ensure that the elections are peaceful.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

10. As we begin to pick ourselves up from the despair of the past several weeks, we face an expectant nation. From the old to the young, from every region, town and village, Namibians are looking to their Government for economic relief, prospects for job opportunities and to live in a country that is safe and secure. They hope that the development of oil and gas, and green hydrogen will transform our country into a haven of economic growth, employment and prosperity.
11. As a result of these promising trends, we expect the announcement of concrete results from the intensive offshore drilling programme. Furthermore, several uranium mines will re-commence operations. In addition, the construction of 3 green hydrogen pilot projects should be completed. Furthermore, the Walvis Bay container terminal concession should become effective, paving the way for increased investment and container traffic.

12. Through implementation of the National Development Plans and the Harambee Prosperity Plan I and II, we have ensured that Namibia remains on track, even during times of fiscal consolidation.

#### HPPII PILLAR 1: EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

13. President Hage G. Geingob promised to strengthen Namibia's governance architecture by building on the solid foundation bequeathed by his predecessors, the Founding President Dr. Sam Nujoma and the second President Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba.
14. Through Effective Governance we promote responsive processes, systems and accountable institutions in the public sector, to accelerate the national development plans towards Vision 2030.

#### PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNANCE

15. The open-door policy of the Presidency exemplified through the nationwide Townhall meetings and other engagements with members of the Namibian society, is a clear demonstration of Government's commitment to fostering transparency and citizen participation. As Government, we remain committed to upholding the fundamental principles of freedoms of expression and freedom of the press. It is why Namibia reclaimed the number one position on the press freedom index in Africa.

#### STRENGTHENING NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION MECHANISMS

16. Namibia maintained the 6<sup>th</sup> position in Africa on the 2023 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index.
17. On the 2022 Mo-Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Namibia is ranked 8th out of 54 African countries. This speaks to the robustness of our systems, processes and institutions.
18. We have made significant strides in the rollout of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025, with 87 out of the 95 actions implemented.
19. The Witness Protection Act of 2017 has been operationalised with the appointment of an Acting Director and staff for the Witness Protection Unit.

20. To ensure speedy access to justice, 37 Community Courts have been established by the Ministry of Justice effective from February 2024.

#### IMPROVED PERFORMANCE & SERVICE DELIVERY

21. The rollout of the Public Performance Management System is fostering a culture of citizen-centered service delivery.
22. In an effort to harness efficiencies, e-services were rolled out in 14 Offices, Ministries and Agencies (OMAs) during the reporting period. Fully implemented systems include the Commodity Beneficiary Management Information System; Integrated Assistance System; Border Influx Control System, and the Declaration of Interest system.

These advancements signify a commitment to digital transformation and efficiency in public sector.

23. The e-Government Procurement (E-GP) Strategy is intended to improve transparency and accountability in the public procurement system.
24. In an effort to modernize operations, the Namibian Police Force successfully implemented the Automated Biometric Identification System and Advanced Video Surveillance (CCTV).
25. Likewise, considerable progress has been achieved in the expansion of public e-health services. In this regard, network infrastructure has been successfully installed in 35 hospitals and 23 health centres.

#### DECENTRALIZATION

26. In our resolve to bring Government closer to the people, the transfer of decision making and activity implementation powers and responsibilities were approved by Cabinet and transferred by delegation from 5 Ministries to Regional Councils.

#### ENABLING POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

27. Government prioritized the tabling in Parliament of seven enabling Policies and Laws, namely the Namibia Equitable Economic Empowerment Bill; Access to Information Bill; Land Reform Bill; Namibia Investment Promotion and

Facilitation Bill; the Namibia Informal Economy and Entrepreneurship Policy and attendant Bill; Cyber Crime Bill and the Data Protection Bill.

It is my hope and expectation that these important Bills will be promulgated before the end of the year.

#### SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW

28. To strengthen policing capacity, NAMPOL recruited 1,119 Cadet Constables during the 2023/24 Financial Year. Plans are also underway to recruit an additional 1,700 Cadet Constables during the 2024/25 Financial Year. Additionally, six new police stations were constructed at Tataleni in Walvis Bay (Erongo region), Onkumbula (Oshikoto region), Nkurenkuru and Namasira (Kavango West region), Kamenga (Zambezi region) and Omatako (Otjozondjupa region).
29. Government will continue to maintain a zero-tolerance stance against perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence and violence against children.
30. Let me strongly emphasize the need for visible police patrols, anti-crime operations and greater police presence on the ground, most particularly in crime hot spots in and around our cities and towns. Furthermore, let me encourage the public to play an active role by holding hands with the law enforcement agencies in ensuring that our Namibian House is crime free.

Fellow Namibians,

31. In an effort to ease the movement of people across our region, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration and Safety and Security introduced the issuance of visas on arrival at several entry points, with the latest additions being Katima Mulilo, Impalila and Ngoma Border posts.
32. Furthermore, the Trans-Kalahari and Katima Mulilo border posts are now operating on a 24-hour basis. This has improved trade across borders as well as movement of persons, with the resultant reduction in congestion at the two border posts.

#### HPPII PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

33. Over the past year, we have witnessed significant progress in the areas of fiscal discipline, the unlocking of new economic opportunities and the crafting of progressive policies that will anchor Namibia's regional and international competitiveness.



## SME FINANCING STRATEGY

34. In recognition of the important role that SMEs play in creating employment and spreading economic benefits widely, Government has continued investing in the SME financing strategy, which received NAD 40 million at the end of October 2023, through First National Bank and Standard Bank, under the credit guarantee scheme. Additionally, the Ministry of Finance transferred NAD 8.5 million to the Development Bank of Namibia to roll out the Mentorship and Coaching Programme.
35. Similarly, to promote local empowerment and employment creation, the Code of Good Practice on Preferences, a policy instrument for national preferences for local content suppliers, SMEs, women and youth owned businesses was approved.

## INVESTMENT PROMOTION

36. The Ministry of Industrialization and Trade, as well as the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) have played a crucial role in the promotion of domestic and foreign investment to diversify Namibia's economy. Due to Government's favourable investment climate, the Board has attracted close to 50 international business delegations, exploring investment opportunities in Namibia during the reporting period.
37. The execution of various business rescue recommendations from the Business Rescue Task Force (BRTF) is underway. Some have been completed, including enactment of the Banking Institution Act, Review of SME Covid Relief Credit Guarantee, and the Development Bank of Namibia's Covid Relief Loan scheme. Furthermore, consultations on a national scale regarding the Namibia Investment Promotion and Facilitation Act are ongoing.
38. The aforementioned collaborative efforts serve to emphasize Government's steadfast dedication to economic growth and establishing a conducive investment environment for both domestic and foreign investment.

Fellow Namibians,

## OIL AND GAS

39. In 2023, Namibia experienced a surge in oil exploration activities, from international oil companies, specifically in the promising oil-rich basins, including the Walvis Basin and the Orange Basin.
40. We expect firmer estimates of recoverable reserves to be announced this financial year. We are prepared for this opportunity through a robust local content regime, a ready sovereign wealth fund, amongst various other measures to maximize the impact and benefit for our country.

#### GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION

41. Today, Namibia is exploring the feasibility of using locally produced green hydrogen to manufacture goods such as ammonia, fertilizer, hydrogen, iron and cement in a cleaner manner, giving us a potential competitive advantage to capture new markets. The green ammonia market is expected to reach 70 percent growth by 2030. This year, pilot projects for green hydrogen, green ammonia and green iron production will produce initial outputs for the first time.

#### PROGRESSIVE POLICIES

42. During his National Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance highlighted a new tax regime looking to shed 4 percentage points off our corporate tax rate, and a new competitive rate of 20 percent for activities housed in special economic zones, and doubled the effective tax thresholds for individuals. These will provide much relief to our citizens, and are promising signals for Namibians and investors considering to establish a foothold in Namibia.

#### NATIONAL CENSUS

43. Yesterday we learned that our population now stands at over 3 million people, a significant increase from 2011. I commend the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) for successfully executing our national census.
44. I now task our experts from the NSA and the Bank of Namibia to update our social accounting matrix, to enable us to comprehensively measure the wider socio-economic impact of the key economic drivers.

#### SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND

45. In recognition of the need to prepare for a bountiful harvest to come, we seeded the Welwitschia Sovereign Wealth Fund. We are committed to ensure that the Fund is transparent and accountable to the Namibian people.
46. I am pleased to report that since its establishment, the Fund's investment returns have grown from the initial seed capital of NAD 262 million to NAD 425 million.
47. Namibia's economic trajectory is promising, with a projected medium-term growth forecast of between 3 and 4 percent.

### HPPII PILLAR 3: SOCIAL PROGRESSION

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

48. President Geingob envisioned a Namibia free from hunger and poverty, a Namibia where no one feels left out. We therefore appreciate the fact that 50 percent of the 2024/25 budget has been allocated to the social sectors of Health & Social Services; Basic & Higher Education; and Poverty Eradication, Gender Equality & Social Welfare initiatives. This is the Namibian Government's enduring investment into our most valuable resource – our People.
49. During the period under review, to achieve zero deaths from hunger poverty the following were achieved:
  - a. 331,009 households, including 33,105 marginalized households received Drought Relief on monthly basis.
  - b. 57,581 farmers were capacitated in crop, livestock production, animal health, horticulture and poultry among others. In addition, 354 tractors and other equipment were deployed to farmers countrywide, through the Namibia Agricultural Mechanization & Seed Implement Programme (NAMSIP).
  - c. Government resolved to reignite productivity of Green Schemes by outsourcing their operations through competitive leasing. Of the 4 Green Schemes placed on the market, the Uvhungu-Vhungu Diary Project and Orange River Irrigation Project have been awarded to potential investors.
  - d. With regards to land, more than two thirds of Namibians live in communal areas. The introduction of land registration in communal areas for tenure security for people holding land rights in those areas, is one way to improve the lives of the rural people.

e. Implementation of the revised Resettlement Policy of 2023 is progressing well. Regional consultations on the Draft Resettlement Criteria have been completed and a total of 18 beneficiaries have been resettled in the Otjozondjupa, Kunene, Kharas, Hardap and Omaheke regions, during the reporting period.

50. In the Fisheries sector, the promotion of Namibianization is progressing well. To date, 90 percent of fishing rights are owned by Namibians and the sector employs about 18,000 Namibians. Government has successfully implemented the employment redressing programme which employs 2,367 people. This is a sustainable job opportunity initiative, addressing the challenges of joblessness experienced by former fishermen since 2015.

51. With regards to job creation to secure livelihoods, Government facilitated the placement of 1,350 jobseekers in different sectors under the Namibia Integrated Employment Information System.

#### CONSOLIDATION OF SOCIAL GRANTS & FOOD BANK

52. To contribute to social and economic upliftment of the most vulnerable members of our society, the Government successfully converted the Food Bank programme into cash transfers in April 2022. The Conditional Basic Income Grant is now being rolled out to existing food bank beneficiaries, covering 8,907 households or 37,519 beneficiaries, at a cost of NAD 81.3 million per annum.

53. Furthermore, Government has allocated NAD 3.4 billion towards social safety nets this Financial Year. The Old Age social grant and the Disability grant have been further increased from NAD 1,400 to NAD 1,600.

54. An amount of over NAD 874 million was paid to veterans of the liberation struggle as subventions and for projects. In 2023, the School Feeding Programme reached 466,860 learners across 1,514 schools, countrywide.

55. President Geingob took the historic decision to regularize the status of stateless and undocumented persons. The four bills that have been drafted to achieve this objective are at various stages of approval and due to be tabled in the current session of Parliament.

#### URBAN LAND DELIVERY, HOUSING & SANITATION

56. For the period under review, Government provided subsidies to local authorities and regional councils to the tune of NAD 297 million, under the Mass Urban and Regional Land Servicing Programme. Government remains steadfast to address the backlog of serviced urban land and affordable housing.
57. To this end, the following progress is noted:
- a. 26 new townships have been proclaimed.
  - b. 3,103 new plots were fully serviced in various parts of the country, bringing the total number of serviced plots during the HPPII period, to 6,024. An additional 4,791 partially serviced plots are being serviced in partnership between Government, Shack Dwellers Federation and the private sector.
  - c. 2,073 housing units, constructed at a cost of NAD 97 million have been completed in partnership with stakeholders.
  - d. The new National Housing Policy and Implementation Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2023.
  - e. Government provided a grant of NAD 10 million to the Shack Dwellers Federation for land servicing and housing, and an additional grant of NAD 17 million towards the Federation's informal settlements upgrading programme.
  - f. Mass Houses: Government has concluded a new agreement for 319 of the 505 uncompleted houses at Swakopmund, enabling resumption of work and completion of 200 houses by December 2023.
  - g. Government through the Community-Led Total Sanitation programme, completed about 591 ventilated toilets for households in various rural areas.

#### IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

58. Namibia has been recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) for being the first country in the world to complete a global review and meet the criteria for the Path to Elimination of Hepatitis B Virus. In March 2023, our country was recognized by PEPFAR for the progress made towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. Similarly, in February 2024, our country

again received two awards from the WHO: on progress made to eliminate Mother-to-Child Transmission of Hepatitis B Virus and also, on elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV.

59. Government completed renovations of the renal dialysis units at the Windhoek Central Hospital and Oshakati Intermediate Hospital. The line Ministry is increasing renal dialysis treatment capacity at seven state hospitals.
60. The construction of a new Windhoek District Hospital is envisaged to reduce referrals to Katutura Intermediate Hospital. To this end, the hospital site has been allocated and consultants appointed to conduct feasibility study for the District Hospital.

#### IMPROVE & EXPAND EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

61. To enhance the quality of education, Cabinet in 2022 adopted the Transforming Education Strategy and Implementation Plan for the next seven years.
62. During the period under review the following gains were made:
  - i. During 2023, 510 classrooms and 70 ablution facilities were constructed countrywide.
  - ii. To address learner accommodation, 5 hostel facilities with combined capacity of 1,260 beds have been built in the Kavango West and Zambezi Regions during the reporting period.

#### IMPROVE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

63. A comprehensive transformation plan was developed to expand access to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). To date, 13 out of 14 regions have public TVET centres. Of the newly constructed centres, Khorixas Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in the Kunene region and Kai//Ganaxab VTC in the Hardap region will be operationalized in April 2024, while Nkurenkuru and Keetmanshoop VTCs are expected to be completed by Second Quarter of 2024.

64. In addition to graduates in medicine, for the first time the University of Namibia has produced the first Namibian Dentists, as well as the first group of postgraduates in neo-natal care during the period under review.
65. Construction has commenced for the Center of Excellence for Cancer Imaging at Dr. Hage Geingob campus.

## SPORTS

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

66. Namibia is a small nation in terms of population. However, we have punched above our weight as demonstrated through recent exploits.
67. The National Paralympic Team participated in the Paris 2023 World Para Athletics Championship and returned with 3 silver medals, while the Brave Warriors qualified for the 2023 African Cup of Nations (AFCON). For the first time in Namibian football history, our team emerged from the first round making it to the second round. Domestically, the reporting period coincided with the resumption of the Namibia Premier Football League.
68. Our country's efforts were recognized by the International Cricket Council (ICC) following Cricket Namibia's 3 international wins and awards at the ICC's annual awards ceremony.
69. The renovation of the Independence Stadium is a Government priority. The appointment of a multi-disciplinary consultant is expected to conclude during the first Quarter of 2024.

## HPPII PILLAR 4: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

70. Infrastructure development remains a core pillar of our socio-economic development. We therefore have to be strategic in making investments that enable us to connect Namibia to the region and the world markets in order to achieve our true economic potential.

## ENERGY

71. Energy is the backbone of industry and livelihood for all human beings. Substantial progress was made in enhancing our energy infrastructure,

through the electrification of 365 rural households and 2,515 peri-urban households in this reporting period. Additionally, 33 schools have been electrified and linked to the national grid under the electrification programme.

72. Moreover, the Anixas II Power Project at Walvis Bay is 85 percent complete and its additional 50 Mega Watts will contribute to energy supply security from June 2024.
73. The development of the 40 Mega Watts Otjikoto Biomass Power Project is progressing smoothly, and the engineering and construction contractors have been selected.

#### WATER

74. About 146 boreholes were drilled in various regions, with 97 commissioned. In addition, 51 boreholes and 45 water supply points rehabilitated. To enhance the availability of water, 310,000 liters of water was supplied to rural communities.
75. Increasing uranium prices and a burgeoning green hydrogen sector foreshadow a sharp increase in the demand for water in the Erongo and //Kharas regions. It is critical that we accelerate our plans to build desalinated water facilities in our coastal regions to support industrial development.

## PORT CONCESSIONS & RAIL INVESTMENTS

76. The green hydrogen and oil and gas sub-sectors will lead to increased economic activities and exports via Walvis Bay and Luderitz. This in turn will require Namport to increase the handling capacity of its ports.
77. Government has availed NAD 2.5 billion in 2024/25 Financial Year towards railway infrastructure. This is for the Kranzberg-Otjiwarongo railway section and for the rehabilitation of the Sandverhaar-Buchholzbrunn railway section in the south.

## ROADS

Fellow Namibians,

78. I list below a comprehensive number of developments in the road sector:
  - a. 23 kilometers of the Windhoek-Okahandja dual carriageway road were completed, generating 373 jobs.
  - b. Progress has been made with the bitumen Gobabis-Aminius-Aranos and the Swakopmund-Henties-Uis-Khorixas roads.
  - c. 56 kilometers of gravel roads were completed.
  - d. 93.7 kilometers of pre-existing roads were rehabilitated and 118.9 kilometers of existing gravel road network was re-graveled.

## HPPII PILLAR 5: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

79. Over the past nine years of the Harambee Prosperity Plan I and II, Namibia has continued to pursue an active Policy on International Relations and Cooperation, consistent with the diplomacy of a small, but principled state. The policies that we follow in our international relations are a response to a world that is becoming increasingly complex, with multifaceted challenges that have the potential to affect our stability, peace, development and prosperity. Multilateralism, which is the bedrock for a peaceful and stable rules-based world order is under serious threat.
80. The resurgence of major conflicts and tensions across the globe are affecting supply chains, commodity prices and impacting our economic growth.

Transnational crime, drug trafficking and cyber-crime present a real danger for the stability of our economy and our country.

81. Climate change is adversely impacting Namibia in a disproportionate manner, with recurrent droughts and floods forcing the hand of Government to change development priorities. Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT) present both opportunities and threats.
82. The Government of the Republic of Namibia under the capable leadership of our late President and Chief Diplomat, His Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob appropriately responded with all the tools at our disposal to meet these challenges. Correspondingly, we have strengthened our bilateral and multilateral engagements on the basis of the guiding principle of "a friend to all and an enemy to none". Our bilateral relations are strong and our multilateral relations are principled to advance peace, solidarity and development.

#### BILATERAL RELATIONS

Fellow Namibians,

83. The respect and prestige we enjoy as a country and the admiration for our late President Dr. Hage G. Geingob were demonstrated in the outpouring of grief and record high attendance of world leaders at the State Funeral of President Geingob. Indeed, the Pan-Africanist contributions of President Geingob to a stable Africa and a better world did not go unnoticed.
84. I wish to highlight a snapshot of the high-level bilateral engagements that Namibia was seized with under the leadership of President Geingob in the past year:
85. Alongside Botswana President, His Excellency Mokgweetsi Masisi, President Geingob launched the Use of Identity Documents as travel documents between Namibia and Botswana at the Trans-Kalahari/Mamuno Border Post in February 2023. This ground-breaking initiative is facilitating trade, including movement of people along the common border.
86. President Geingob undertook a State Visit to South Africa in April 2023. In addition to bilateral discussions on issues such as the Orange River Boundary and Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the visit gave impetus to hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Binational Commission, which President Ramaphosa and President Geingob chaired in Windhoek in October 2023.

87. President Geingob hosted His Excellency Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland for a State Visit to Namibia in April 2023. The two countries agreed to promote a green transition and the 4th Industrial Revolution.
88. President Geingob hosted Honourable Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark and Honourable Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, for a historic Joint Working Visit to Namibia in June 2023, premised on the promotion of a green hydrogen economy.
89. In August 2023, President Geingob hosted His Excellency Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, the President of Cuba as the Heroes Day Guest of Honour.
90. I wish to assure the Namibian people that the Government remains committed to conclude the Genocide negotiations with Germany and the Orange River Boundary negotiations with South Africa, to which our late President was firmly committed.

#### MULTILATERAL RELATIONS

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson,

91. In 2022, Namibia was elected to the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) for the period 2022-2025. Namibia is currently chairing the AU Peace and Security Council for the month of March 2024, focusing on the insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As Chair, it is our hope that the respective processes of transition under way in Sudan, Mali, Chad, Guinea and Burkina Faso will bear fruit.
92. Namibia continues to promote the Common African Position in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, with regard to the Reform of the United Nations Security Council. The voice of Africa cannot be ignored in the United Nations Security Council and we call for the reform of the United Nations Security Council for the UN to live up to the ideal of a just and equitable world order where no one is left behind.
93. The right to self-determination must be upheld and the long-awaited 1991 UN Referendum for the people of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic implemented. In the same vein, Namibia reiterates support for the people of Palestine to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. In this regard, Namibia made submissions in July 2023 and an oral presentation in February 2024 to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Furthermore, we call for the unconditional lifting of the illegal financial, commercial and economic

embargo imposed on the people of Cuba, and unilateral coercive measures imposed on Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

94. President Geingob was looking forward to bidding farewell to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024 as Co-Chair alongside Germany, of the United Nations Summit of the Future. In honouring the legacy and memory of President Geingob, I am confident that our diplomacy will rise up to the challenge as we seek to forge a new global consensus on multilateral solutions to comprehensively address global challenges.
95. Namibia hosts the International Women Peace Centre, whose objective is to strengthen women's participation in peace building and peace support operations.
96. President Geingob was a champion of diplomacy for peace, economic development and prosperity. I am confident that in the years to come, we will keep his legacy alive by working harder for a prosperous Namibia and Africa, and a safer world.

Fellow Namibians,

97. The greatest honour one can obtain in life is to leave behind a legacy of positive change, not only for one's family but for one's community and the world at large.
98. President Geingob has left us with the blueprint for a united, peaceful and prosperous Namibian House. He has ensured that a future of great promise beckons for Namibia.
99. It is now incumbent on us to pick up where he has left off and continue marching forward in order to achieve our developmental objectives.
100. Let us do so by safeguarding Namibia's democracy, unity and rule of law.
101. Let us do so by safeguarding our peace and stability.
102. Let us do so by safeguarding our sovereignty and independence.
103. By safeguarding the integrity of our processes, systems and institutions.
104. We will guide our nation and its people towards a path of shared prosperity and victory in the second phase of our struggle.

105. In so doing, we will do justice to the legacy of Namibia's historic triumvirate of President Sam Nujoma, President Hifikepunye Pohamba and the late President Hage G. Geingob.

God bless the Republic of Namibia.

I thank you.