

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND
COMMANDER – IN-CHIEF OF THE NAMIBIAN
DEFENCE FORCE, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INAUGURATION OF THE AIRFORCE
SCHOOL OF AIRPOWER STUDIES**

13 FEBRUARY 201

GROOTFONTEIN

**Check Against Delivery*

**Director of Ceremonies,
Honourable Nahas Angula, Minister of
Defence,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Governor of Otjozondjupa Region,
Honourable Regional and Local Authority
Councillors,
Your Worship, the Mayor of Grootfontein,
Esteemed Traditional, Spiritual and
Community Leaders,
Chief of the Namibian Defence Force, Lt.-Gen.
John Mutwa,
Air Force Commander, Air-Vice Marshall
Martin Kambulu Pinehas,
Service Commanders,
General Officers and Senior Officers of the
Namibian Defence Force,
Esteemed Defence Attachés accredited to
Namibia,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In April last year, a tragic air accident occurred here at the Grootfontein Air Base, involving a Namibian Air Force Helicopter. The accident claimed the lives of several people including members of the Namibian Air Force. With their passing, the Air Force lost committed and dedicated young officers. Our country lost youthful citizens who could have contributed to the development of our Defence Force and the country as a whole. We honour them for their service to our country and to the Namibian Air Force. The members of the Air Force who lost their lives are:

- **Squadron Leader Elifas Simon Angala,**
- **Flight Officer Evangeline Naufiku Nghimwenavali,**
- **Flight Officer Johanna Hailaula, and**
- **Aircraftman Wilka Sheya.**

May I now request you to rise and observe a moment of silence in honour of these dedicated members of the Namibian Air Force. [I thank you.]

Director of Ceremonies,

We are gathered here this morning to witness an important milestone in the growth and development of the Namibian Air Force. In 1994, the Air Wing of the Namibian Defence Force was established. Over the years, the Air Wing was developed and expanded with the recruitment of personnel and acquisition of equipment with a view to establishing a fully-fledged Air Force.

On 13 March 2005, the Namibia Air Force was commissioned. Since its establishment 10 years ago, the Air Force has taken deliberate and calculated steps to transform itself into a professional and capable Force; a Force that is able to carry out its mandate within the framework of our national defence architecture.

I am, therefore, happy as Commander-in-Chief, to state that the Air Force has grown from strength to strength as one of the vital Services of the Namibian Defence Force.

From the very beginning, and over the past ten years, the Air Force has proven its capacity and professionalism by providing assistance to civilian authorities in times of need. For example, the Air Force has been instrumental in airlifting supplies to outlying areas during floods. It has played a crucial role in airlifting some citizens who were stranded in flooded areas. It has also helped in the delivery of drought aid supplies to outlying areas.

I am also pleased that the Namibian Air Force has provided regular air support to institutions such as the Ministry of Health and Social Services during national immunization and health awareness programs; the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in its anti-poaching campaigns, and to the Electoral Commission of Namibia in its election programs.

In this context, I wish to say that the whole nation is proud of the services rendered to the nation by the men and women of the Namibian Air Force.

Similarly, I must say that it is a source of great pride and satisfaction to witness our young Namibian pilots, our own sons and daughters, flying in formations and conducting manoeuvres with the aircraft of the Namibian Air Force at events such as the celebration of our Independence Anniversary and Heroes Day.

This is a great achievement and a clear demonstration that with hard work and proper planning, we achieve our goals. It is a demonstration that we are able to successfully train and equip our people with the necessary skills to become professionals who serve our country and its people with pride and dignity.

Director of Ceremonies,

With the establishment of the Namibian Air Force School of Air Power Studies, another significant step has been taken in strengthening the capacity of Members of the Air Force and the professionalism of its members.

I am informed that the School of Air Power Studies was established in different Phases. The first phase concentrated on the establishment of an Aircraft Technical Training Centre. Several aircraft technicians and mechanics were trained and have graduated from that facility. The aim of the Technical Training Centre was to ensure safe operations of the different aircraft deployed by the Air Force. The inauguration of the School of Air Power Studies today marks the completion of the implementation of the Second Phase.

I am pleased to learn that the School of Air Power Studies will provide training, not only to members of the Namibian Air Force, but also to cadets from other countries in the SADC Region.

This is part of Namibia's contribution towards promoting peace and security as well as integration in the region.

It is my hope that this military institution of higher learning will be utilized to its full potential and that it will maintain standards that are on par with similar institutions in the region and around the world.

I am happy to learn that students will undergo a rigorous six months training program, which is tailor-made to introduce them to the military life and the culture and traditions in the Air Force.

Apart from training students for a career in the military, the school will also prepare students to become leaders outside the military. In fact, I am informed that some of the pilots trained by the Namibian Air Force have joined civilian aviation institutions, such as Air Namibia.

Director of Ceremonies,

I commend and congratulate the Ministry of Defence for the establishment of the Namibia Air Force School of Air Power Studies. I am confident that the School will achieve the objective of giving our Air Force additional capacity to strengthen its combat capabilities and readiness.

I urge the Namibian Air Force Command to ensure continuous development of the Air Force human resource capacity, to enable the Air Force to effectively and efficiently support, protect and defend the airspace of Namibia.

With these words, it is now my honour to declare the Namibian Air Force School of Air Power Studies officially inaugurated.

I thank you.