

# **REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**Talking Points for His Excellency Dr Hage Geingob,  
President of the Republic of Namibia**

**Official Opening of the 21st Annual National Cultural  
Festival**

**Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region**

**December 7, 2016**

## **A. Opening**

- a. Fellow Namibians & Children of the Namibian House, I am glad to join today in order to mark the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Cultural Festival.
- b. Today we are here to celebrate our cultural diversity as Namibians.
- c. Culture can be defined as the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. It can also be defined as customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of racial, religious, or social group.
- d. Culture is important for a number of reasons because it influences an individual's life in a variety of ways, including values, views, desires, fears, views and worries. In addition, belonging to a culture provides people with a sense of identity, purpose and belonging.

- e. Every nation has a set of values and norms that govern the behaviour of its people. There are similarities in many of these values across nations and continents and there are also values and norms that are unique specifically to a particular nation.
- f. Today, we meet here in Katima Mulilo in order to celebrate those values and norms that comprise the unique cultural kaleidoscope of the Land of the Brave.

## **B. Role of culture in Nation Building**

- a. Many have often said that culture is the oil that keeps our society running.
- b. Tradition and knowledge have been described as the main pillars of development and sustenance of communities and that no society can progress in the absence of the two.
- c. Author Paulo Coelho said the following about culture, "Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other

better in their soul, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first they have to understand that their neighbour is, in the end, just like them, with the same problems, the same questions.”

d. As Namibians, we should ensure that our respective cultures should lead to the fostering of a better understanding amongst our people. If we understand each other better in our souls, then it will be easier to overcome any economic or political barriers that may exist amongst us. As Namibians, we should strive to understand that at the end, we are all alike and share the same problems, aspirations and questions.

### **C. Cultural Festivals and celebrating our unity in diversity**

a. Cultural diversity, also known as multiculturalism, is the set of characteristics that distinguishes groups within a society.

- b. Our various cultural groups represent the bricks that form the walls of our Namibian House.
- c. The cultural characteristics of the Namibian people are expressed through the value systems, symbols, practices and rituals of every group.
- d. Through the celebration of cultural festivals, all Namibians can enhance their capacity to understand and acknowledge the critical aspects of our cultural diversity and appreciate how our various cultures make us more united and stronger as a nation.
- e. The celebration of our cultures enables us to neutralize the potential cultural barriers and conflicts, such as stereotypes, that may exist in our society due to ignorance and fear of the unknown which was exploited by Apartheid regime e.g. Bantustans.
- f. Culture should never divide us but should rather unite us.

**D. New narrative of the Namibian House**

- a. Our new narrative is based on the pillar of unity.
- b. We should foster a spirit where we all pull in one direction as a nation, regardless of tribe or race. Every Namibian should all feel part of the Namibian House.
- c. Sayings like ***No Namibian should feel left out, Harambee, One Namibia – One Nation, Namibian House***, represent the new narrative.
- d. As children of the Namibian house, we should always strive to preserve our heritage which identifies us as Namibians. We need to focus on aspects of our cultural identity that can inspire positive change, stability and unity in the interests of building our Nation.
- e. In the Namibian House we take pride in our culture and our tribes. However, we should be cautious of isms.
- f. Therefore we refrain from engaging in tribalism, racism, sexism, nepotism and fascism. These are

all enemies of a progressive society and therefore they are enemies of the Namibian House.

## **E. Conclusion**

- a. Let me quote author Robert Alan who said, *“Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity.”*
- b. As we celebrate one of our many diverse cultures today, let me once again remind you that our culture should not separate us from each other, but rather bring us closer to one another and bring us a collective strength under one roof of one Namibian House for the benefit of all Namibians.
- c. It is now my honour to declare the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Cultural Festival, officially open.