

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**Speech by His Excellency Dr Hage Geingob, President
of the Republic of Namibia, on the occasion of the
2017 Masubia Cultural Festival**

Bukalo Village

ZAMBEZI REGION

July 29, 2017

Check against delivery

Director of Ceremonies;

Honourable Sophia Shaningwa, Minister of Urban and Rural Development and all other Ministers present;

Chief of the Masubia, Kisco Liswani III;

Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Lawrence Sampofu, Governor of the Zambezi Region and all other Governors present;

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Honourable Traditional and Community Leaders;

Honourable Regional and Community Councillors;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to be here in Bukalo, to officiate at this spectacle of cultural celebration - the 2017 Masubia Cultural Festival, which is being held under the theme "Tuvahamwina, Tulivumbe", which connotes building together as one people. It is indeed an apt theme, which captures the spirit of Harambee and our Namibian House.

Marcus Garvey once said, "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." The history, origin and culture of the Namibian people are the roots that keep our nation firm – our history, origin and culture defines our sovereignty – our history, origin and culture forms the foundation upon which we are constructing our Namibian House.

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.

Culture plays an important role in our communities, regions and nation as a whole. Through the practice and celebration of our culture, we are able to impart values and behavioral norms on future generations who are tasked with continuing the legacy of our Namibian identity. Acculturation of the children is necessary i.e. teaching them our customs, values and behaviours.

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. Our principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all, originate from our respective cultural beliefs. These are principles that existed in Africa long before any colonizers arrived on our shores. These principles stem from traditional African beliefs such as the respect for our elders and the respect for our leaders. Any digression from these core African values will place our democracy in jeopardy.

At this juncture, I would like to call on all Namibians to treat our Traditional Authorities with respect. Likewise, our Traditional

Authorities should practice fair and inclusive leadership, in which no member of the community should feel left out. Let us all learn to co-exist and thereby shore up the boundaries of our Namibian House against any and all retrogressive forces. The Namibian House should be defined by cultural harmony and regional goodwill instead of discord, tribalism and regionalism.

As Namibians, we should ensure that our culture should lead to the fostering of a better understanding amongst our people. 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. As John F. Kennedy

once said, "That which unites us ... is far greater than that which divides us." Therefore there is far more in our cultures that unite us than that which divides us.

Over the past several years, we have begun to propagate a new narrative in Namibia. It is a narrative based on the principles of unity, peace and harmony. Government is committed to fostering a spirit, where we should all pull in one direction as a nation. It is imperative that each and every Namibian should feel part of the Namibian House. This is why we have decided that issues that are at the heart of all Namibians, such as the emotive issue of land, should be addressed through the platform of a national dialogue, at which our people will be allowed to give their views and suggest solutions to this pressing issue. It is therefore

crucial that we should all welcome this idea and respect the views of all Namibians, without resorting to the ugly scourge of tribalism.

After 27 years of independence, it is incumbent on all Namibians to distance themselves from ideas, attitudes and practices that will undo the progress that we have made over the years. Yes, we are aware that despite the many successes we have had, problems remain, which we should commit to tackle as a united people. Let us therefore find common cause, by uniting to solve our problems through tangible and long-lasting solutions, in the spirit of Harambee.

Kwame Nkrumah, once said, "It is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and that this can only be found in African unity.

Divided we are weak; united, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world.” Let me paraphrase this Pan Africanist icon by saying that we must find Namibian solutions to our problems, and this can only be found through the unity of our Namibian House. Divided we are weak; united, Namibia could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world.

I thank you.