



*Republic of Namibia*

## **REMARKS**

BY

**HON. DEREK KLAZEN, MP**

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
HANDING OVER OF DECENTRALISED (DELEGATED) FUNCTIONS  
OF THE MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE  
TO REGIONAL COUNCILS**

**Oshakati, Oshana Region**

**09 August 2018**

Director of Ceremonies

The Deputy Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Hon. Lucia Witbooi

The Governor of Oshana Region, Hon. Clemens Kashuupulwa

Other Hon. Governors from other Regions

The Hon. Chairperson of Regional Councils

The Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, and of Urban and Rural Development

Chief Regional Officers

Staff members of Regional Councils and of the Ministries of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and of Urban and rural Development

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

I bring to you warm fraternal greetings from my Minister, Hon Dr Peya Mushelenga, who very much wanted to be here to witness this tangible demonstration of the Government's commitment to the process of decentralization process as an important tool for bringing Government and services closer to the people, but is not able to do so due to other work commitments else.

Director of proceeding

Ladies and gentlemen

The importance of decentralization in Namibia can be traced back to Article 1 of our Constitution, which states that all power shall vest in the people of Namibia, who shall exercise their sovereignty, through the democratic institutions of the State. In this regard and as pointed out by His Excellency President Dr Hage Geingob at the opening of the first meeting of Cabinet on 8 February 2018, the Government at all levels is accountable to the people and I quote *“it is to them, beside our personal interests, that we must serve in the most responsible and effective manner”*.

As a demonstration of our commitment to the democratic governance, that is a *“government of the people, for the people and by the people”*, the Government adopted the Policy on Decentralisation in 1997 and subsequently passed the Decentralisation Enabling Act, 2000 as policy and legislative frameworks to guide the implementation of decentralization in the country. The ultimate goal of these instruments is to enhance participatory democracy, improved service to the public and the involvement of the community in the planning and realization of their development.

While Namibia is a unitary State, there is consensus that the most effective way to serve the people and to be accountable to them is by bringing the government closer to the people. In this regard and in keeping with Articles 102, 103 and 111 of our Constitution, we have enacted the Regional Councils Act, 1992 and Local Authorities Act, 1992, which has seen the establishment regional councils and local authorities as the lowest tiers of governance closer to the people.

Director of proceeding

Ladies and gentlemen

As it has been pointed out, we are here to witness the handing over the delegated functions of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Our being here today is a culmination of a shared commitment and collaborative effort of the Central Government represented by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, on the one hand, and Regional Councils on the other. Comrade Deputy Minister, Hon Governors and Hon Chairpersons, this hand over event sums up the actual hard work that our committed officials have put in over the past months and even years. I wish to commend them for this.

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development is particularly very grateful and commends the Hon Minister, Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary and entire staff of the Ministry of Gender Equality & Child Welfare for this remarkable milestone which demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to the principles decentralization, which is underlined by the desire to bring government and services closer to the people.

Director of proceeding

Ladies and gentlemen

The success and benefit of decentralization will be measured not in terms of the number of functions that have been decentralized but more in terms of the tangible benefits that has resulted from it. In particular, decentralisation must manifest itself in the empowerment of people at local level; improved administrative efficiency and effectiveness, inclusivity and responsiveness and high quality services.

Indeed, our decentralization policy and efforts have an important role to play in the implementation and realisation of our national strategies on poverty eradication, inclusivity and sustainable development that are outlined in our national development roadmaps of Vision 2030, National Development Plans and the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has a very importance mandate in the development of our country and her people, that of ensuring gender equality and equitable socio-economic development opportunities for both women and men as well as safeguarding the welfare of our children. The functions of this Ministry that are being handed over to Regional Councils, namely community empowerment and development, early childhood development, child welfare services as well as gender equality and research, are very crucial and their decentralisation closer to the people is expected to enhance accessibility of the services involvement to the community as well as the efficiency in the manner in which the services are rendered by the public institutions to whom the functions are being transferred.

The above mentioned goals and desired outcomes can however only be realised if the Regional Councils to whom these functions are being transferred fully embrace and integrate the decentralised functions and staff, and use such capacity provided to render more professional and improved service to the people in your respective regions. . How well you execute and manage the handful functions that have so far been delegated to you crucial and will instill the confidence in decentralisation and the efficacy of the sub-national government system. As our President always says Transparency plus Accountability equals Trust.

While the Ministries of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and Urban and Rural Development as well as Regional Councils are the direct role players in the decentralisation process that we are here to witness, this process has been taking place under the stewardship of the Office of the Prime Minister, which Office has provided and continue to provide valuable leadership and direction. We convey our appreciation to the Right Hon Prime Minister and her team in this regard.

The commitment and role political leadership at the regional level, namely the Hon. Regional Governors and Chairpersons of Regional Councils to the process of decentralisation and effective governance and service delivery is equally critical and also highly valued. The Central Government will continue to look to you to ensure that the functions that have been transferred to the regional level are indeed making a difference in the lives of the community and that there are periodic reviews of the impact as well as full accountability of the utilisation of the human capital and financial resources that are part of the decentralisation process.

Director of proceedings, Comrade Deputy Minister, Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, I wish to renew our gratitude to the Minister and the staff of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and the Regional Councils for this tangible show of commitment to decentralisation. As the Ministry charged with coordinating decentralisation, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development pledges its continued support to both the decentralising line Ministries and the Regional Councils. We are in this together!

I thank you for your kind attention.