



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

**DR. PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP**

**MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2018 ANNUAL RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND REVIEW WORKSHOP**

**EEMBAXU RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

**OHANGWENA REGION**

**25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018**

Hon. Usko Nghaamwa, Governor of Ohangwena Region;  
Hon. Erickson Ndawanifa, Chairman of Ohangwena Regional Council;  
Hon. Regional and Local Authority Councillors;  
Mr. Nghidinua Daniel, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development;  
The Chief Regional Officer of Ohangwena Region and other CROs present;  
Senior Government Officials and Representatives of various institutions that are involved in rural development;  
Distinguished invited guests;  
Members of the Media;  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure to be here today to officiate at the opening of the 2018 Annual Rural Development Progress Review and Planning Workshop, which is being held at this new Rural Development Center at Eembaxu in Ohangwena Region. I wish to thank the Ohangwena Region for hosting us and I extend to all of you a special welcome to the workshop.

Director of proceedings

Ladies and gentlemen

A renowned author and entrepreneur, Tony Robbins said “*For changes to be of any true value, they’ve got to be lasting and consistent*”. We are all here because we believe that we should bring about a meaningful change towards improving the livelihood of our fellow Namibians who resides in rural areas, which areas are least developed and faced more socio-economic challenges than urban areas.

From the quote that I have just shared, we are here to ask ourselves the following questions:

- Firstly, are we in fact as institutions and individuals who have been entrusted to initiate and drive plans and programmes on rural development indeed doing what is expected of us by the communities in rural areas and if we are what are the tangible outputs and outcomes to support our claim?
- Secondly and as an addition to the earlier question, if our actions have brought about any change or improvement in the livelihood of rural communities, is such a change there to be seen and sustainable beyond our first intervention?
- Thirdly, if we are in fact doing what we have been entrusted to do, then why is the disparity between rural and urban areas still there if not widening? In other words, how coordinated and effective are our current strategies and programmes?

I have been informed that the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, in keeping with its rural development function has been hosting planning and review workshops every year. It is my wish that the main three questions that I posed should always linger in our minds every time when we hold our annual workshops.

Director of ceremonies

Ladies and gentlemen

Rural areas and rural development are important for a number of obvious reasons. Firstly, and most importantly, **rural areas are home to majority of our population**. Secondly, while rural areas are often known for their lack of basic essential infrastructures and services, they also hold enormous potential which if harnessed and exploited can greatly contribute to the realisation of national economic development and poverty eradication in our country. Based on these realities, the eradication of poverty and inequality in general and the

development of rural areas in particular are key priorities of the Government of Namibia.

As a nation, we cherish our hard-worn peace, and recognise, as stated in our Vision 2030, and I quote: “*Inequality and poverty endangers social harmony, peace and democracy*”. End of quote. In order to preserve our peace and to ensure that our fellow countrywomen and men who are living in rural areas are not left out, the Government since independence devised and been implementing policies and programmes that are aimed at narrowing the gap between rural and urban areas through targeted rural development interventions. This commitment by the Government among others saw the adoption of the **National Rural Development Policy and Strategy** and the designation of rural development as a key development focus area through its inclusion in all national development plans and budgetary allocations.

The Government’s resolve on addressing poverty in general and rural poverty and under-development has been accentuated under the current Administration of His Excellency President Dr Hage Geingob through his declaration of **an all-out war on poverty** and his call for **inclusivity**. It is my understanding that we are here to report back on and show our individual and collective contribution to the clarion call by the Government and leadership.

Director of ceremonies

Ladies and gentlemen

As country and under current leadership, we have set ourselves the goal of eradicating poverty. This calls for a shift in mind-set, hard work and enhanced cooperation. Rural development is a complex and multifaceted process, which involves different roles players and interventions. For this reason, our national Rural Development Policy and Strategy seeks to integrate and build on the

efficiency and effectiveness of sectoral policies in delivering services to and improving the living conditions of rural communities. In this regard, our approach to rural development consists of the following policy strategies:

Firstly, ***Coordination and integration of Rural Development Actions***: The heart of rural development is coordination in terms of integrated planning, collaborative implementation and joint monitoring and evaluation. As we all know, rural development embraces all the elements of public and private sector activities that affect the social and economic life of rural communities. As such, coordination is needed to ensure that the services rendered are synchronised, complementary and comprehensive, and further that there is equity and no duplications.

The Ministry's rural development function and role is spearheading by its Rural Development Directorate, while rural development needs and plans at regional, constituency and village levels are coordinated through regional development coordination committees, constituency development committees and village development committees respectively. The Office of the President through the National Planning Commission and Ministry of Economic Planning oversees and catalogues all national development initiatives in the country.

The other strategic area outlined in the Policy is ***People's empowerment and civic participation***. Effective and sustainable rural development should involve empowerment and building the capacity of rural communities and civil society to express their political, social and economic aspirations and needs. This involves building institutions and platforms for rural communities to articulate their needs and interact with the Government as well as to directly be part of the process of guiding and bring about rural development.

As a working and sunning democracy, Namibia has put in place appropriate policy and legal instruments to foster participative democracy. To start with, Article 102 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia provides for the establishment and role of sub-national governance structures. This constitutional provision has been operationalised through the enactment of the Regional Councils Act (Act no. 22 of 1992) and the Local Authorities Act (Act no. 23 of 1992 as amended), which saw the establishment of Regional and Local Authority Councils.

Further to this, we adopted and enacted the Decentralisation Policy in 1998 and the Decentralisation Enabling Act (Act no. 33 of 2000) respectively that provide for the establishment and roles of grassroots institutions such as constituency development committees (CDCs) and regional development coordination committees (RDCCs) a platform for people at rural and regional levels to directly and indirectly participate in the identification, planning, monitoring and planning of rural development.

The third component of our National Rural Development Policy is *rural infrastructure and services development*. The Policy seeks to promote additional gains from investments in the provision of basic infrastructure, services and utilities by adopting integrated development approaches at national, regional and local levels.

One of the sub-components falling under this component that is directly under my Ministry/s mandate is the establishment of rural development centers (RDCs), which centers are involved in designing and developing appropriate technologies and equipment aimed at enhancing the productive capacity of rural-based self-help entrepreneurial project. The centers are also used for information dissemination and community outreach programmes. The Ministry

is also helping rural communities to develop basic rural infrastructures (rural roads, rural water supply, rural schools, rural clinics, rural housing and sanitary facilities - rural toilets) as well as supporting short term employment through its Food or Cash for Work Programme.

The fourth component of our rural development policy strategy is *environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources*. It is recognised that rural areas are affected by severe environmental challenges, which threaten the livelihoods and production capacity of rural communities. It is a known fact that there is a direct link between rural poverty and environmental degradation. The focus of our intervention here is therefore to promote the upliftment of the living conditions of our people who reside in rural areas through sustainable use and management of natural resources and preservation of the eco-system.

One of the interventions of the Ministry in this area is the One-Region-One-Region (OROI), a collaborative initiative which started off with the generous support of the Government of Japan, which is aimed at helping rural communities to add value to and derive more benefits from natural resources that are available to them.

The other national rural poverty and development strategic interventions and support systems in place are *social welfare services, rural agriculture as well as human wildlife conflict management support* programmes that are implemented by the Ministries responsible for rural development, agriculture, environment, youth, gender, poverty eradication and social welfare support.

On its part, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has in place support programmes such as micro-financing to viable entrepreneurial project ideas

(micro-financing scheme) as well as support to on-farm and off-farm income and employment generating small scale projects (under the Regional Specific Action Plan projects), specifically targeting unemployed youth and women and poor rural farmers.

Director of proceedings

Ladies and gentlemen

I have just touches on some key areas of and interventions on rural development especially those falling under the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development. But as I have already pointed out, rural development in a cross-cutting sector and involves a multitude of role players. I wish to thank all our partners in rural development from the public sector, NGOs and development partners for their continued support and contributions towards making rural areas a better place for our people.

I look forward to constructive deliberations and accountability reports on what we have done and plan to do. On this note, I now have the pleasure to declare the 2018 Annual Rural Development Planning and Review Workshop officially opened.

I thank you all for kind attention.