



Republic of Namibia

STATEMENT

BY

HON. DR PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP

MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**OFFICIAL HANDING OVER OF THE DECENTRALIZED (DELEGATED)
FUNCTION OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WATER AND
FORESTRY TO REGIONAL COUNCILS**

Windhoek, Khomas Region

18 October 2018

Director of ceremonies

Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb; Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry;

Hon. Anna Shiweda; Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry;

Hon. Laura McLeod-Katjirua, Governor of Khomas Region; and other Governors present;

Hon. Chairpersons of Regional Councils;

Hon. Regional and Local Authority Councilors present;

The Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, and Urban and Rural Development;

Chief Regional Officers of Regional Councils;

Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning to you all.

First of all, I wish to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Comrade Alpheus !Naruseb for inviting me to this occasion and above all for his commitment and that of his entire Ministry to the decentralization process.

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.

As a demonstration of our commitment to democratic governance, our Government adopted the Policy on Decentralisation in 1997 and subsequently enacted the Decentralisation Enabling Act, of 2000 (Act No. 33 of 2000) as the policy and legislative frameworks to guide the implementation of decentralization in the country. The ultimate goal of these instruments is to enhance participatory democracy and improved service delivery through the involvement of local communities in the planning processes to ensure the realization of their developmental aspirations.

Director of ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is important at all times, and particularly on occasions such as this one, to remind ourselves that the commitment of the Government of Namibia to the principles and values of decentralization in Namibia dates back to the pre-independence period when the SWAPO Party in its 1989 Election Manifesto committed to the people of Namibia that and I quote:

“Under the SWAPO government, independent Namibia will have democratically elected local authorities, both in rural and urban areas

in order to give power to the people at the grassroots level to make decisions on matters that affect their lives”

“For administrative convenience and development requirements, a SWAPO led government will restructure and divide the country into regional, district, municipal and village units of local government”, end of quote.

Therefore, while Namibia is a Unitary State, there is consensus that the most effective way to serve the people and to be more accountable to them is by taking government closer to the people. It is in view of this reality and in keeping with the provisions of Articles 102, 103 and 111 of our Constitution, that the Regional Councils Act, 1992 and Local Authorities Act, 1992 were enacted, which gave birth to the establishment of regional councils and local authorities as the lowest tiers of government closer to the people.

Director of ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen

As it has been mentioned, we are here to witness the handing over of the delegated functions of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, namely Rural Water Supply and Sanitation functions. Our being here today is a culmination of a shared commitment and collaborative effort of the Central Government represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and the Ministry of Urban

Rural Development, on the one hand, and Regional Councils on the other.

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development is particularly grateful and commends the Hon. Minister, Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary and entire staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry for this significant milestone in the demonstration of the Ministry's commitment to the principles of decentralization, which is underlined by the desire to take government and services closer to the people.

To the recipient region councils, the functions that you are receiving today, are fundamental to the survival of human beings and as such they feature prominently among the Sustainable Development Goals as adopted by the United Nations, as well as in our national development roadmaps, namely Vision 2030, National Development Plans and the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

Therefore, I call on you to embrace these functions and the accompanying resources as well as the staff members with enthusiasm, professionalism and above all, with a sense of absolute accountability. As we have always said, the success and benefit of decentralization will not be measured in terms of the number of functions that have been decentralized but more so in terms of the tangible benefits that has resulted from it. Therefore, decentralisation must manifest itself in the empowerment of people at local level; and

characterized by improved administrative efficiency and effectiveness, high quality services, inclusivity and a highly responsive system. In order to achieve these, regional councils are required to provide sound leadership at both political and administrative levels.

Director of proceedings

Ladies and gentlemen

I wish to conclude by renewing my gratitude to the Minister and staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry for their commitment to decentralisation and for inviting me to witness the handing over of the functions to be decentralized. I call on and encourage other Decentralising Ministries to accelerate their decentralization plans and to emulate this commendable example.

Finally, as the Minister charged with coordinating decentralization, I pledge the continuous support of my Ministry to the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, and other decentralising Ministries as well as to the Regional Councils with a view to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved.

With these remarks, I thank you for your kind attention.