



**Republic of Namibia**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

**DR. PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP  
MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ON OCCASION OF THE  
COMMISSIONING OF ABLUTION FACILITIES  
AND STREET ROAD  
AND  
HANDING OVER OF LOW-COST HOUSES TO  
BENEFICIARIES**

**OMITARA SETTLEMENT, OMAHEKE REGION**

**OCTOBER 15, 2018,**

- Director of Ceremonies;
- Hon. Festus Ueitele, Governor of Omaheke Region;
- Hon. Ignatius Kariseb, Chairperson: Omaheke Regional Council;
- Hon. Raphael Mokaleng, Regional Councilor for Okorukambe Constituency and other Regional Councilors present;
- Hon Local Authority Councilors present;
- Community and Spiritual Leaders;
- Managers and Staff of the Omaheke Regional Council;
- Members of the Omitara Settlement Development Committee;
- Men and Women in Uniform;
- Representatives of Artee Project Engineers and Tulu Trading cc
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon to you all!

It gives me great pleasure to be with you here in Omitara Settlement where I have been invited to commission a 244 ablution block and a half kilometer gravel street road as well as to hand over the five (5) low cost houses to beneficiaries.

The three projects whose commissioning we are here to witness are contributing to the realisation of our national development goals of improved sanitation, affordable housing and creation of supportive physical infrastructure.

I have no doubt the projects will have a positive impact in the lives of the community of Omitara Settlement.

Director of proceedings

Ladies and gentlemen

Sanitation and affordable housing are among the key priorities areas in our national development agenda and the reason is that these are two very important basic necessities in human life. Decent and affordable shelter or housing is one of the effective means to alleviate poverty. Homelessness is a tormenting and devastating life, and indeed a sign of impoverishment.

While Namibia has made great progress in expanding sanitation services in formal urban areas, access to improved sanitation and hygiene remains a challenge in rural areas and informal urban settlements where a large section of our population are still practicing the inhuman open defecation or using bucket toilets. Water and sanitation are inextricably interlinked to good health, productivity and development. Lack or poor sanitation results in the contracting of dreadful diseases, particularly to children whom in most cases are easily negatively affected by poor standards of hygiene. The disparity of water and sanitation coverage between urban and rural areas is a cause for concern to the Government as we believe that access to proper sanitation is not only a basic need for development but is also a human right issue.

In its commitment towards improving the well-being and welfare of the citizens in both urban and rural areas, the Government continues to invest in the provision of basic services and infrastructure such as housing, sanitation facilities and roads.

I am informed that the construction of the ablution facilities, which included a gravel street road, commenced in November 2016, and was funded by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development to the tune of N\$8,9 million. I wish to commend the Governor and the Omaheke Regional Council for steering the planning and successful implementation of the project. I also recognise the role played by of other stakeholders such as the project engineers, Artee Project Engineers and the contractor, Tulu Trading cc.

Director of Ceremonies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Access to proper housing is a challenge to many Namibians in both urban and rural areas especially for those in the ultra-low and low income groups. Among the contributing factors to this state of affairs is the high cost of the building materials most of which is imported. The end effect of this is high prices for houses beyond the affordability of most of our people.

In response to the above challenge, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has been exploring ways to reduce the cost of building materials and consequently housing prices especially for the ultra-low and low income groups. Among the many initiatives that the Ministry has devised is the investigation of durable yet cost-effective building materials that are available locally.

In this regard, the Ministry under the leadership of my predecessor and now the Secretary General of the governing SWAPO Party, Comrade Sophia Shaningwa, commissioned an investigation into the existence and use of locally made building materials in Uis, Tsumkwe and Kombat. A fact-finding visit led by then Deputy Minister of the Ministry, Hon. Silvia Makgone, took place from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 and three companies that are manufacturing clay bricks were visited. The companies are NamClay Bricks and Pavers in Uis, Kalahari New Hope in Tsumkwe and Zhen Hua Construction Materials cc at Kombat.

I am informed that the Omaheke Regional Council opted to pilot the use of the Kalahari New Hope bricks in the construction of the five (5) low-cost houses that we will be handing over to beneficiaries today. Beside the use of local building materials, it is also pleasing to note that members of the community of Omitara were involved in the construction of the houses, while the Government, through the Omaheke Regional Council provided financial and technical support through our Food-For-Work rural development programme. This is the spirit of harambee that our President continues to advocate.

This collaborative effort has resulted in the construction of the five (5) houses at a total cost of N\$250,000. I applaud the Regional Council and community for this, and I am calling on the Omaheke Regional Council and other Regional Councils to expand and emulate this successful affordable housing initiative to benefit other needy communities.

I also acknowledge the inspirational leadership provided by my predecessor, Comrade Shaningwa and her deputy, Hon. Makgone.

In conclusion, I wish to re-affirm the continued commitment and readiness of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development in supporting development initiatives such as these projects that seek to improve the livelihood of our people who reside in settlements or rural areas, and thereby reducing unbalanced development between urban and rural areas.

I thank you all for your kind attention!