



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HON. DR. PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP

MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

AT THE OCCASION OF THE

HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATIVE RETREAT WITH GOVERNORS,

CHAIRPERSONS OF REGIONAL COUNCILS,

MAYORS/CHAIRPERSONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

02 JULY 2019

WALVIS BAY, MUNICIPAL HALL

- Director of proceedings;
- Hon. Obeth Kandjoze, Minister of Economic Planning and Director General;
- Hon. Derek Klazen, Deputy Minister of Urban and Rural Development;
- Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua, Governor of Erongo and other Governors present;
- Chairperson of Erongo Regional Council and Chairpersons of Regional Councils;
- Your Worship the Mayor of Walvis Bay and Mayors of Municipalities and Town Councils and Chairpersons of Village Councils;
- Regional and Local Authorities Councillors;
- Mr Phillip Tjerijie, Special advisor to the Minister on Traditional Matters;
- All Stakeholders from other Ministries, Namibia Action Group/Namibia Shack Dwellers Federation;
- All Chief Regional Officers and NHE.
- Senior officials from Government and Private Sector;
- Members of the Media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

A Very Good Morning!

It is my distinguished honour and privilege to officiate at this important occasion of the High Level Consultative Retreat between the Ministry leadership with the sub-national leadership, referring to Regional Governors, Chairpersons of Regional Councils, Mayors and Chairpersons of Local Authorities. I recognise the presence of our Key Stakeholders, particularly, Hon. Obeth Kandjoze, Minister of Economic Planning and Director General; and high level officials from our Line Offices, Ministries and Agencies as well as from the private sector.

In today's competitive world, where we all compete for the available resources, it is crucial that there is synergy between all levels of government. This gathering is important for the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development as it provide a rare opportunity for us to

consult each other on accounting for the realization of the set strategic objectives of our Ministry. It follows similar events held in 2015 and 2016. These two retreats deliberated on key challenges affecting the service delivery by the Ministry and resolved better approaches to improve service delivery. This retreat builds on the foundation of the previous retreats.

**Director of Proceedings;**

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development together with Regional Councils and Local Authorities are entrusted with the responsibility of meeting some of the fundamental needs of the people of Namibia. This enormous responsibility entails ensuring appropriate governance structures and coordinated efforts in bringing about development as well as the provision of basic infrastructure and services that would ensure that Namibians live decent and dignified lives. For this reason, our Ministry can be viewed as a gateway to development and the realisation of the vision and goals of our nation.

In order for us to effectively execute this mandate that has been entrusted upon us, it is critical that we have the necessary tools in place and work together as a team pulling in same direction. We must therefore intentionally and collectively work out modalities to address the challenges the many challenges our sector is faced with, namely:

## **1. Shortage of serviced urban land and rampant housing backlog**

Access to affordable serviced urban land and housing have become key issues especially in the developing nations of the world where majority of the population is not able to buy serviced urban land and or houses at market prices. Government recognise that a large section of our people still do not have access to land and a decent shelter since most of our citizens cannot afford to acquire serviced urban land and housing.

For this reason, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has embarked on addressing these problems through Massive Urban Land Servicing and the Mass Housing Development Initiative Programmes. The implementation of these initiatives calls for the involvement of both the public and private sector. Furthermore, I wish to assure you that the Government will continue to provide budgetary support to Regional Councils and Local Authorities to service land and develop other basic services to keep up with the Harambee Prosperity Plan national development targets.

**Director of Proceedings;  
Honourable Members;**

I recognize the important role being played by community-based housing initiatives such as Namibia Action Group / Shack Dwellers Federation and other similar initiatives in complementing Governments efforts in financing and facilitating the construction of affordable housing for the ultra-low and low income groups of our society. In this regard, I wish to inform you that my Ministry will continue to work with and support the work of these community-based housing groups for the attainment of the common goal.

## **2. High rate of open defecation in rural areas and informal settlements**

The rate of open defecation in our rural areas and informal settlements is worrisome with statistics indicating 70 per cent of the people in rural areas still defecate in the open. This situation does not only put our people in a health hazard state, but also compromise their human dignity. I have also noticed with concern the frequent outbreak of water-related diseases such as Hepatitis E and reports of unused government built toilets facilities in our areas of jurisdiction. I wish to remind you that we can change these unfavourable situations by designing and implementing proper policies to uphold the dignity of our people and maintain a health nation.

The Namibian Government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has assisted the poor households especially in rural areas and informal settlements through the provision of basic sanitation programme including elimination of the bucket system to enable communities to have access to basic amenities namely; water and sanitary facilities and we will continue to do so.

### **3. Poor budget execution**

His Excellency, Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, being the Head of the Executive Branch of our Government, declared the year 2019 as the 'Year of Accountability'. I am convinced that it was with clear wisdom and democratic principles in mind that the President made this declaration, compelling all organs of the state and our entire governance apparatus to be accountable to the sovereigns on account of the social contract entered with them aimed at making their lives better.

The Namibian Government makes budgetary provision for the implementation of development programmes towards the realization of development targets enshrined in the guiding principles, namely; the Vision 2030, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and our National Development Plans. Budget execution should be aligned to both programmes and

period, so that funds are expended timely. I must tell you that the rate at which such budget is expedited lies with the officials of the Offices, Ministries and Agencies. I therefore wish to remind our officials to expedite the execution of the Government budget at all times, in order to ensure timely service delivery.

#### **4. Poor coordination among Offices and Agencies**

The service delivery process of our Ministry requires unification, integration and synchronization of our joint efforts to provide unity of action for the common goals. I therefore urge you Comrades to coordinate all your endeavours with your key stakeholders in particular the government institutions, Traditional Authorities and even with the private sector.

As rightly put by Lee Iacocca, that "*A major reason capable people fail to advance, is that they do not work well with their colleagues*", this can be true if our offices fail to communicate and coordinate well our efforts.

#### **5. Poverty and Rural Development**

My Ministry is also tasked with the responsibility of initiating and coordinating development interventions that are aimed at creating basic political, social and economic conditions and opportunities necessary to improve the welfare and living standards of our people. In his academic publication, titled *Growth and poverty in rural Indi, an analysis of inter-state differences poverty*, Indian Economist at the world Bank, Gaurav Nayyar, states that poverty can be better addressed when there is a *pari passu* increase in the income level of the poor with the growth of the economy and employment elasticity, among others.

Accordingly, the focus of our Rural Development Programme is on reducing rural poverty, rural-urban migration and improving the economic livelihood of our people who reside in rural areas, and create self-employment and wealth opportunities for them. Further,

our interventions are in line with our President's declaration of an all-out war against poverty.

**Director of Proceedings;**

I want to take this opportunity to call on Regional Governors, Regional Councillors and officials to ensure that money that is provided for the implementation rural poverty eradication projects are used for their intended purposes and that projects are implemented timely and on budget. I wish also to remind you that the delayed implementation of development projects translates into delayed or denied delivery of requisite basic social services to our people.

I wish to call upon my team to gear up and redouble our efforts towards eradicating the evils of poverty and accelerate rural and peri-urban development in our areas of jurisdictions.

**6. Effect of severe drought**

Our country is facing the effect of severe drought resulting from poor precipitation received across the country which led to poor agricultural production, rangeland as well as water scarcity in the country. This has led to the declaration of the state of emergency by the Head of the State, His Excellence Dr. Hage Geingob on 06 May 2019. In addition, this year's drought followed a series of years of low precipitation, where farmers have been experiencing difficulties in farming productively.

The Government, through the Office of the Prime Minister has set aside an amount of five hundred and eighty million Namibian Dollars (N\$580 mill.) for responding to the effect of this evil severe drought. My call to you Honourable Governors and Councillors is to

ensure timely coordinated response to the effect of drought in our areas of jurisdiction.

## **7. Slow pace of decentralization**

The Namibian Government embarked on empowering local communities to make decisions on issues affecting them through decentralizing the government functions to sub-national government levels. My Ministry is the responsible institution for the coordination of the implementation of the decentralization process in the country.

At the moment I am humbled to inform you that six (6) Line Ministry have initiated to decentralize functions to sub-national governments, and these are Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Education, Art and Culture, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and Ministry of Land Reform.

However, I noticed with concern the following challenges affecting the decentralization implementation process:

- The need for prioritising decentralization within the framework of the Policy;
- Line Ministries need to develop and follow a decentralization action plan for the implementation of decentralization;
- Line Ministries and Sub-national Governments (Regional Councils and Local Authorities) need to collaborate closely to ensure that decentralization deliver meaningful impact; and
- Regional Councils as recipients of decentralised functions need to make sure that such functions are managed effectively and to use the resources of the decentralised functions efficiently.

My Ministry will continue to support the decentralization process.

**Director of Proceedings;**

In conclusion, I wish applaud for the continued support my Ministry receives from our Key Stakeholders particularly NPC, OPM, Ministry of Finance, Offices of Attorney General and Auditor General as well as the private sector. Equally, I wish to renew my appreciation to all the esteemed participants for making time to attend this important three days High Level Retreat of our Ministry. I hope we will have productive engagement. I am equally thankful to my staff for organising this event. It is now my singular honour to declare the 2019 High Level Consultative Retreat officially open.

I thank you all.