INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY
HONOURABLE DR. PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP
MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE
OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 21ST ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

WINDHOEK
10 SEPTEMBER 2018, SAFARI COURT HOTEL
Director of Ceremonies,
Your Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia
Omukwaniiilwa Immanuel Kauluma Elifas Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Leaders, in absentia,
Gaob Immanuel /Gâseb, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Leaders
Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers
Hon. Members of Parliament,
Hon. Laura Mcleod-Katjirua, Governor of Khomas Region and other Governors,
Esteemed Traditional Leaders
His Worship Councilor Muesee Kazapua, the Mayor of the City of Windhoek Municipality and other Mayors and Chairpersons of local authorities in attendance,
Hon. Regional and Local Authority Councilors,
All other invited guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen
It is my profound pleasure and privilege to part of this very significant gathering that marks a history on the calendar of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development.

As we are celebrating the 21st anniversary of the establishment of the Council of Traditional Leaders, I wholeheartedly wish to extend my appreciation to our traditional leaders for taking this forum very seriously as per their mandate to advice the State on issues pertaining to communal land and other related matters.

This sitting has been a vibrant event where most of the Government sectors and Private sectors mutually engage the traditional leaders to tackle and review programs that aim to address issues of nation building.

During my brief stay at the Ministry that directly deals with the Traditional Authorities’ affairs recently, I have come to appreciate the institutions of traditional authorities are important stakeholders in addressing socio-economic issues in our society. As put by Ray et al. in their discourse, The
role of traditional authorities in Africa, traditional authorities in Namibia, too, are unavoidably facing the challenges of administration, dispute settlement, human rights, environment and development. Hence, their contribution to the overall framework of addressing these challenges by the government is relevant.

At the same time, I would like to bemoan the fact that that some Traditional Authorities are embroiled in disputes and find them-selves stagnant in resolving their disputes. In attempt to seek for amicable solutions to address all the types of disputes within the traditional authorities, the Ministry is compelled to investigate some of these problems, but failure by members of the Traditional Authorities to reach consensus in honouring the decisions and recommendations of the investigation committee put to waste public resources.

It is our preference to allow traditional matters to be resolved I terms of customary laws. But this can only be achieved with cooperation from the members of the
Traditional Authorities. Failure in this regard has always led to litigations, where matters are put before the judiciary for adjudication. The decisions of the courts are binding and the Ministry will continue to strictly observe the rulings by the courts.

**Director of ceremonies;**

Allow me to briefly refer to issues of good governance within the Traditional Authorities. In relation to good governance, the Law has made provision for the establishment of Community Trust Funds for Traditional Authorities to be managed by Boards of Trustees. However, some of our Traditional Authorities have failed to establish these Community Trust Funds as per the Regulations of the Traditional Authorities Act 2000 (Act No. 25 of 2000), while others have established them but do not comply with the general guidelines on how to manage them despite the efforts by the Ministry to have extensively trained the Traditional Authorities and Board of Trustees on the management of Community Trust Fund.
Our Ministry had received complaints from some traditional community members who accuse their Traditional Authorities of deriving equal benefits from the Traditional Authorities' resources. Further, on several occasions we received queries from the Anti-Corruption of Namibia requesting us to provide explanations on irregularities or misuse of funds by some Traditional Authorities. It is for these reasons that I call on Traditional Authorities to manage resources within the framework of the law and with due regard to transparency and accountability.

Academics from University of Berne, Switzerland, George Lutz and Wolf Linde asserted in their discourse, *Traditional structures and local governance*, that:

Accountability, responsiveness and transparency are not restricted to elected governments. The basic concept of a democracy with elected representatives is that elections guarantee responsiveness and accountability by the authorities... Though traditional authorities are usually not elected, it does not mean that they are not responsive, accountable or lack transparency... the power of traditional leaders depends on public support.
It is against this background that I urge our traditional leaders to enhance good governance in their administration to ensure that no one is left out as per the advocacy of our sitting President. It is because of lack of good governance that some of the institutions of Traditional Authorities are now embroiled in disagreements causing disunity among their traditional communities.

**Director of Ceremonies**

I will fail in my duty if I do not state on this rostrum, my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Dr Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, for the confidence and trust that he has in me, by entrusting me with the responsibility of carrying out the mammoth task of being at helm of government’s coordination of Traditional Authorities. President Geingob’s presence here today to officially open this Session attest to his commitment and dedication as a leader.
Your son of the soil is renowned as an industrious and hands-on statesman with a track record of excellence in the fields of diplomacy, academia, public administration and commerce. He was moulded into an African for Africa by the festooned environment of the Namibian flora and fauna, mountains and desert. Dr Geingob has walked through the thick and thin of the Namibian revolution, where he remained steadfast and ready to respond to the call. He is a keen listener, but assertive decision-maker; a team player and tactful organiser; a decorated freedom fighter and effective mobiliser, a skilful negotiator and accomplished statesman; a sociable personality and remarkable man-of-all seasons. Above all, he is a God-fearing Gottfried. I invite him to address this august gathering.

I thank you