



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

DR. PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP

MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT

ON OCCASION OF THE

HANDING OVER OF TOILETS AT DORDABIS

WINDHOEK RURAL CONSTITUENCY

16 MARCH 2019

Director of Ceremonies;

Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council
Hon. Laura McLeod-Katjirua - Governor of Khomas Region;

Hon Cllr Rachel Jacob, Chairperson of Khomas regional Council

Your Worship Hon. Cllr Muesee Kazapua, Mayor of City of Windhoek

Cde. Rosalia Muashekele-Sibiya, Special Advisor to the Governor;

Hon. Cllr Penina Inga Iita, Councilor for Windhoek Rural Constituency

Other Hon. Regional and Local Councillors present;

The Executive Director and staff from the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

The Chief Regional Officer and Staff from the Khomas Regional Council;

Members of the community of Dordabis and surrounding areas

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very delighted to be here in Dordabis to officiate at commissioning of toilet facilities that have been built by the Government through the Khomas Regional Council.

I wish to thank the Regional Council for inviting me and for bringing about this much needed development to the community of Windhoek Rural Constituency.

Director of proceedings

Ladies and gentlemen

Basic social infrastructure such as the sanitation facilities or toilets whose handing over we are here to witness is an important precondition for good health and socio-economic development of any country.

According to the **2015 Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey**, only 54% of the households have access to improved sanitation. This problem is particularly acute in the **rural areas** where **only 28% of the households have access to improved sanitation facilities** and up to **71.5% of households practice open defecation**. Low access to improved sanitation constitutes a serious public health problem.

In response, the Government has devised targeted interventions that are aimed at arresting this undesirable state of affairs.

In this regard, improved sanitation is one of the key priorities under our **Five National Development Plan** (NDP5) and a key component of the Social Progression Pillar of the **Harambee Prosperity Plan**.

In terms of NDP5, we have set ourselves the goal of improving the percentage of rural households with access to sanitation in rural areas from 28% in 2016 to 40% by 2022. The following **strategic interventions** have been identified and are being employed to achieve this goal:

- Strengthening **advocacy** and creating **strategic partnerships**;
- Improved stakeholder **coordination** at all levels - national, regional and local levels;
- Increased and coordinated **investment** in sanitation infrastructure; and
- Promotion of **self-build approaches** by providing relevant technical guidance and market linkages.

The construction of the sanitation infrastructure or toilets that are to be handed to the community today is a clear demonstration of the **strategic partnership** between the Central Government, Regional Council and community as well as the continued commitment of the Government to **invest** in improving access to sanitation by our fellow country women and men who are living rural areas. This **inclusive** approach is informed by the President's declaration that **ours should be and I quote "a society where no one feels left out"**.

Director of proceedings

Ladies and gentlemen

Our rural sanitation programme is aimed at improving the living standards, hygiene and health, and most importantly to restore the dignity of our rural communities whom are often forced to answer to the call of nature by using the bushes due to the absence of or limited access to the requisite facilities in comparison to their counterparts in urban areas.

Interventions of this kind have positive multiplier effects in that they do not only improve hygiene and health conditions but also help in the **protection of our environment** (fauna, flora, air and water) on which we the current generation and future generations depend.

I wish to point out that the achievement of our **sanitation** goal is and must be the **responsibility of all of us** – the Government and the community. While the Government will continue to ensure that there is an enabling policy environment and to invest in the provision of physical sanitation infrastructure, there is equally a **bigger role for the community to play**. This role and responsibility starts with the will and right attitude towards personal hygiene and recognition of open defecation as an undesirable practice. It is only with such an **attitude and mind-set change** that we can achieve our sanitation goals.

I also wish to further point out that it is practically and financially possible for the Government to build toilets for every needy Namibian. Accordingly, and as per our fourth strategy that I have referred to above, members of the communities who are physically and financially able are required and encouraged to build their own toilets and should not wait or look to the Government.

Let us all contribute in whatever small way, including in some cases in the form of labour.

Director of ceremonies

Ladies and gentlemen

I equally want to register a concern about instances where toilets are built and provided to members of the community but some of these beneficiaries do not take good care of and fully utilise such facilities but still continue using the bush. Such practices are counter-productive and must not be allowed.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to once again recognise and commend the partnership and **unity of purpose** that exist between the community of Windhoek Rural Constituency who showed their trust in their elected leaders and the leadership of the Constituency and the Region at large for living up to the expectations of the electorates in this Constituency through this sanitation project.

I also recognise the role played by other key stakeholders. These are:

- The Community Development Committee (CDC) who I am told assisted in the identification of beneficiaries and in monitoring the construction of toilets, and
- The contractors and members of community who took part in the construction.

I wish to re-affirm the unwavering commitment of the Government in general and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development towards realisation our national goals on sanitation and in supporting initiatives on improved sanitation in the country.

I thank you all for your kind attention.