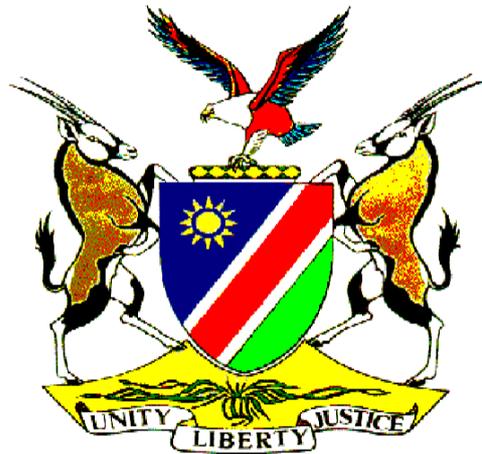


**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,**

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW TERMINAL AND GROUND BREAKING**

**CEREMONY OF THE NEW RUNWAY: ONDANGWA AIRPORT**

**ONDANGWA**

**OSHANA REGION**

**AUGUST 21, 2015**

*Check against delivery*

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb – Minister of Works and Transport;**

**All other Cabinet Ministers President;**

**Hon. Clemens Kashiupulwa – Governor of the Oshana Region;**

**All other Governors present;**

**All Councilors and Mayors Present;**

**Inspector General Sebastian Ndeitunga; Inspector General of the Namibian Police;**

**All leaders of Traditional Authorities present;**

**The Namibia Airports Company Board of Directors and Management;**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Captains of Industry;**

**Distinguished Invited Guests;**

**Members of the Media;**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

It is my pleasure to join you today to mark what I believe is a very important occasion in the development of the civil aviation sector in our country and the transport sector as a whole.

According to NDP 4, *“There are a number of factors that imply a comparative advantage for Namibia in the transport sector. Firstly, Namibia is strategically positioned within the SADC region, meaning we offer a gateway for trade to and from the region.”* The document continues further by stating that, *“One of the great opportunities for Namibia to be positioned as a logistics hub is the fact that economic development in a number of SADC countries is expected to take off rapidly. The export of mineral resources such as copper and coal and the importation of chemicals for mining have started in a number of neighbouring countries.”*

As you know, Namibia is sandwiched between two giant economies of the SADC Region. To our north, we have Angola; a country that has broken free

from the yoke of war and is using its wealth in natural resources to rapidly develop its economy. To the south, we have South Africa; a country with a well-established and superior manufacturing base.

Earlier this year, I visited both Angola and South Africa and when I spoke with my counterparts President Dos Santos and President Zuma, one of the key topics of discussion was the need for greater economic cooperation regarding investment and trade. Furthermore, we discussed on how best to take advantage of our transport corridors such as the Angola-Namibia-South Africa (ANSA) Corridor in order to accelerate industrialization and bring economic development to our countries.

This is one of the reasons that I am delighted to facilitate at the inauguration of this new terminal and the groundbreaking of the new runway. As I mentioned during my speech at the opening of the Ruacana-Omakange Road two days ago, Government has a clear intention to turn Namibia into the logistics hub of SADC, and thus become a symbol of efficient service delivery to our neighbours. Through improving our existing infrastructure and creating new ones, we are moving closer to realizing this ambition and tapping into the huge purchasing power and business potential that exists within these neighbouring countries.

This terminal is expected to establish new bench-mark of functional efficiency and operational safety for airports within Namibia. It also exemplifies our intent as a nation to build world-class infrastructure. I have no doubt that this terminal will fulfill the expectations we have from it and make us all feel very proud.

You are all aware that when you build a house which is breathtaking in design and appeal, you will attract many admirers who will be keen to visit your house. You must therefore make sure that the entrance to your house is reflective of the quality of the entire structure. Our airports, seaports and border checkpoints are the entrance to our Namibian House, a house which has many admirers and would-be visitors. We must therefore ensure that these

**key infrastructures are reflective of our country and are able to leave a long lasting positive impression on our visitors.**

**Everywhere I have travelled in Africa, countries are improving and upgrading their airports. This is because all over the continent people understand that for a country to attract tourists and retain corporations with national and global ties, efficient and functional airports are increasingly crucial. It is high time that Namibia follows suit by developing better airports. I hope that this development at Ondangwa Airport marks the beginning of a national drive to improve the standard of our airports.**

**I compliment the Quindao Construction Company for having built this modern facility valued at N\$ 84 million. I would also like to compliment Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb and his predecessor Hon. Erkki Nghimtina, together with the Namibia Airports Company for their commitment to the overall development of the civil aviation sector in Namibia, and in particular for ensuring effective implementation of this project.**

**Government is seized with the task of transforming Namibia's airports into world class facilities, comparable with the best in the region and beyond. I am therefore pleased to see that our efforts are beginning to come to fruition. This new terminal, coupled with a larger runway in future, will open up the northern regions of our country by allowing for much larger aircraft to land at Ondangwa Airport. This will have a significant and positive impact on commercial and tourist activities in the northern regions.**

**We are all aware that if we intend to meet our goal of becoming the logistics hub of Southern Africa, we will need to invest heavily in infrastructure. Currently our infrastructure needs are enormous. A deficit in infrastructure is a serious constraint to our ambitions as it will limit our rate of economic growth. It is therefore crucial that we meet what we have put on paper with action on the ground to produce tangible results.**

**We therefore need to apply extra effort to bridge any existing infrastructure deficits so that we are able to catapult ourselves to the head of the queue, not only as a logistics hub, but as the preferred destination for investment and tourism in the region and in Africa as a whole.**

**Government alone cannot make the large investments required to build the infrastructure which we require, and therefore, we are encouraging partnerships with private investors. The Private Sector must pull its weight in joining our drive for improved infrastructure since it stands to benefit from this, just like the rest of the country.**

**The importance of this airport for the country cannot be overemphasized. Northern Namibia is a major source of enterprise and creativity which drive our economic growth. Therefore this region truly deserves a facility such as the new Ondangwa Airport Terminal.**

**Let me conclude by once again congratulating all those who have contributed to building this very impressive project. I am sure in the time to come; we will see several such projects in our country.**

**With these words, I have great pleasure in officially opening the new Ondangwa Airport Terminal. Thank you.**