



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEYNOTE STATEMENT

BY

**RIGHT HONOURABLE SAARA KUUGONGELWA-
AMADHILA**

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

AT THE

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE**

WINDHOEK, 22 JUNE 2015

- Director of Ceremonies
- Honourable Speaker of National Assembly
- Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present
- Honourable Regional Governors
- Honourable Councillors of Regional and Local Authorities,
- His Excellency, Mr Musinga Bandora, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Country Coordinator,
- Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
- Mrs Rosewin Wandu, Chairperson of the Southern African Forum Against Corruption
- His Grace, Most Reverend Archbishop Liborius Nashenda, Archdiocese of Windhoek
- Director-General and Deputy Director-General of the Anti-Corruption Commission
- Permanent Secretaries present
- Esteemed invited Guests
- Distinguished Heads of Public and Private Institutions
- Fellow presenters and participants
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a pleasure to be with you this morning and to officiate at the official opening of this important Conference on behalf of our President who is unable to join us due to other pressing official duties. We are gathered here to bring together all relevant stakeholders to reflect upon and to discuss pertinent issues relating activities that are necessary to enhance transparency and accountability among all sectors of our society.

I also wish to welcome our regional and international resource persons from the UNDP, the UNODC, the African Development Bank, and the Southern African Forum against Corruption. We truly appreciate your presence at this Conference and the wealth of information and intelligence that you will share with us over the next three days.

The theme of our Conference “**Building an Honest Namibia Together: People, Integrity and Action**” implies that fighting corruption is not solely the responsibility of the Government and the Anti-Corruption Commission,

but it requires collective action by all to ensure that those who commit crimes are brought to justice. Both those in Government and those outside who sometimes offer incentives that induce government operatives to succumb to temptations to act corruptly. It also should include other forms of corruptions, such as tax evasions and avoidance of illicit flows of funds which rob developing nations of much needed resources to eradicate poverty. Collective action is needed, since corruption enriches the few, but weakens the social fabric, the economy and the State. Where corruption is rampant, it becomes a key obstacle to development. Corruption undermines the rule of law and democracy; it leads to the wasting of public funds; it distorts markets and competition; it hampers trade and inhibits investments.

We, therefore, need a culture of integrity in all sectors of society to achieve sustained, positive change. We need **people** with **integrity** taking **action** together.

Let me assure you that Government unreservedly supports all efforts being made to prevent and fight corruption in our country and as a global partner, beyond our borders. Since Independence, our government has always lived up to this commitment. Based on this commitment, Namibia has signed and ratified regional, continental and international legal instruments on the prevention and fight against corruption.

We are cognisant that, Good governance is integral to economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger, and sustainable development. On a macro level, good governance has the following four characteristics:

- 1) Political pluralism, so that transparency and accountability can really work on the basis of a system of checks and balances;
- 2) A social coalition, where government and the non-state actors can shape and share a vision for socio-economic development;
- 3) A “policy learning” approach, to allow policy debate where role players can learn from reform failures, analyse causes for weak policy outcomes and examine how to deal with emerging policy challenges in future; and

- 4) Effective political leadership, in the sense that leaders should be deeply committed to economic development and reform.

Good governance also requires a **public administration system** that is capable of managing and stimulating development, improving economic policy formulation and managing sectoral and regional development and structural change. There cannot be good governance without a functioning system of public administration. Good governance has also to be related to government's ability to build new foundations, instruments and mechanisms that are necessary for economic policy reform.

Key requirements of an effective system of public administration include:

- 1) A professional and cost-effective civil service, including the management of human resources in the public sector in terms of ethical conduct, capacity to fulfil its mandate and affordable and competitive remuneration;
- 2) An efficient and responsive system of policy-making, including ensuring that draft policies are based on the appropriate analysis and valid legislation, and creating systems to disseminate policy decisions and monitor implementation;
- 3) A machinery of government, including the rules, institutions, and structure of the administration that are necessary to carry out government policies;
- 4) Effective public sector revenue and expenditure management systems and practices, including budget and taxation transparency, internal controls, financial disclosure, auditing, monitoring, and oversight; and
- 5) A transparent and efficient procurement system (including Natural Resources Management systems) that is free from waste, fraud, and corruption and that is directed at achieving development outcomes.

Good governance is not something one can enforce through rules and law, it is a culture that must be inculcated in the minds and souls of policy-makers, civil servants and civil society and in the policies that they design and implement.

Let me now turn to the concept of **accountability**. The notion of accountability is *de facto* an enquiry into how to control the exercise of power by attempting to apply checks, oversight and institutional constraints on the exercise of power. Thus, democratic accountability is characterised not only by elections to determine who runs the affairs of the society, but also by the continuing obligation of these officials to explain and justify their conduct in public.

In Namibia, accountability is achieved through various means. **Fiscal accountability** is achieved through giving access to relevant information that will allow citizens and their elected representatives in Parliament to hold Government accountable for the management of public moneys. This information includes Accountability Reports by each Office, Ministry and Agency that indicate how appropriated public resources were used to achieve the goals and objectives laid down in O/M/As Medium-term Plans. After the books of each Vote have been audited, the Accounting Officer is answerable to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts by providing explanations to audit finding and concerns of the Auditor-General. Accounting officers may be held personally liable for certain financial irregularities.

Policy accountability is achieved through strategic plans of O/M/As, which are closely aligned to National Development Plans. O/M/As are also required to compile Annual Reports for tabling in Parliament giving an account of the achievement of their strategic goals. Each Cabinet Minister is also held accountable for the realisation of key performance indicators and statement of responsibility as set out in their Declaration of Intent submitted to the President.

I have already touched on the concepts of **transparency and open government** by highlighting the kind of information that is publicly available to allow for effective public oversight. Transparency and accountability are indispensable for the efficient functioning of any country and for promoting economic growth and fostering social wellbeing. Transparency is necessary to create realistic expectations of the government policies and strategies. To achieve this, information should

be accessible and available about the government's policies. Accountability, on the other hand, involves requiring someone to answer for their actions.¹.

Before concluding, I would like to mention that the Government has decided to make asset disclosure by public office bearers and civil servants mandatory. His Excellency the President of the Republic of Namibia, Dr Hage Geingob, has led the process by voluntarily declaring his assets. Parliament is seized with the process to implement a revised system of MPs declaration of their assets, while the requirement for civil servants to declare their business interest which has already been in place for some time, was also revised to improve it. We believe that an effective declaration regime can help prevent abuse of power, reduce corruption and increase public accountability, public trust in institutions and government legitimacy. Research findings indicate that countries where wealth disclosure is combined with content verification and public access to declarations are significantly associated with lower perceived levels of corruption. Government attached importance to these aspects as we seek to strengthen our systems.

Once again, I wish to welcome the distinguished delegates to this important meeting. Fora, such as this one, allow for the pooling of respective experiences, expertise and resources in the continued promotion of good governance. They also provide an opportunity to shape and advance policy and advocacy positions by the participants from the various sectors of our society.

With these remarks, it is now my honour to declare the National Anti-Corruption Conference officially open. It is my wish that you will have fruitful and constructive deliberations.

I thank you.

¹ See Dawn Oliver, *Constitutional Reform in the UK*, Oxford University Press 2003