



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS
AT
LAUNCH OF THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

**BY
THE
RIGHT HONORABLE, SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA,
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**24 February 2021,
UN HOUSE
WINDHOEK**

Thank you very much Director of Proceedings for giving me the floor.

Prof Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly

UN Coordinator,

Head of UNDP and other Heads of the UN Agencies,

Your Excellency, Head of the EU Commission Delegation and other

Development Partners,

Senior Government Officials,

Other Development Stakeholders

Members of the Media,

1. It is my pleasure to officiate at the launch of the Global Human Development Report 2020 and the Namibia National Human Development report 2019.
2. The theme of the Namibian report is titled "*Addressing Inequality and Disparities: Towards a New Dignified Life for All Namibians*". I wish to express the appreciations of the Namibian Government to the United Nation's Development Programme (UNDP) for partnering with us in completing the 2019 Human Development Report for Namibia.

3. The Human Development Reports unpack varying dimensions of human development such as inequalities, levels of development, a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. These reports make recommendations for change, raise public awareness of ideas about human development and promote resource mobilization in key areas of development.

4. I am pleased to note, as indicated in the reports, the progress we have made in the areas of human development based on improvements in life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling as well as Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. Namibia's human development, represented by the human development index, improved since 1990 from 0.581 to 0.646 in 2019, positioning Namibia at 130 position out of 189 countries. This progress is, however, made on the back of high inequalities in income distribution, which, although decreased, still shows high skewness, with the Gini coefficient standing at 0.560 for the 2015/2016 Financial year. The inequities in income distribution fuel poverty and unemployment, with women and youth bearing the brunt of poverty and unemployment.

5. In September 2015, World Leaders agreed on the 2030 Agenda and adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would strategically shape the future, safeguard our planet, and promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development for all our citizens. Through the global framework, it is acknowledged that inequality is one of the major development challenges we are faced with in the 21st century, and that to eliminate poverty, unemployment and build resilience of our people, we must address inequalities and exclusion. The National Economic Empowerment Bill which is now undergoing the final round of consultations is aimed to assist our country to overcome inequalities, promote resilience of the economy, promote high and sustainable economic growth and eradicate unemployment and poverty.

6. Eradicating poverty, unemployment and inequalities is the cornerstone of our Vision 2030 and our National Development Plans (NDPs) and the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

7. In this regard, a number of interventions are being implemented. These include:

- Broadening access to quality education and health care services, with free health care services, and primary and secondary education provided, while financial assistance is provided to students from low income families to access tertiary education. As a result, government allocates a substantial proportion of the budget to education and health, a trend that has been maintained since independence.
- Implementation of a comprehensive social safety nets program entailing social grants for the elderly, orphans and vulnerable children and persons with disabilities. The elderly grants have more than doubled since 2015.
- Introduction of preferences and tender set aside for previously disadvantaged, under the public procurement.
- Introduction of affirmative action policies, aimed at promoting equal opportunities in employment which opened up opportunities for employment for those who were excluded by previous apartheid policies, especially in the public service, although progress is limited in the private sector.

8. The global report reveals startling statistics about the adverse impacts of the actions of global communities on the environment and people's livelihoods. Climate change and added to that COVID-19 have eroded the socio-economic gains made over the years , increasing inequality, hence the need to tackle such situations so as to regain the progress lost and ensure a more sustainable and habitable planet.

9. The Namibia National Human Development Report reveals the multidimensional nature of the inequalities. The report reveals inequalities related to gender, access to education and health, ownership of assets such as land, ethnicity, and geographic location.

10. These findings call for concerted efforts to address the situation. To this end, the Government of the Republic of Namibia is committed to ensuring our development approaches are supportive of efforts to protect our environment and address all forms of inequalities and at every level of our society. Already, there are ongoing Government programs aimed to deal with such. These include actions agreed to at

the 2019 Land Conference which seek to address access to land and housing. The implementation of these recommendations have started.

11. The education and health sectors continue to receive largest share of government budget, and ongoing reforms will continue to improve the quality of services and ensure alignment of educational programs to the needs of the Labour markets to improve employability of the graduates.

12. A revised Policy on Nutrition and Food Security and Action Plan is being finalized and environmental protection and management continue to be main streamed in Government programs, environmental protection being a requirement under our constitution.

13. Addressing inequalities and sustainable development require that we do business not as usual, and that there is coordination and cooperation amongst all stakeholders in development.

14. Government will pursue this cause with unrelenting commitment. In this regard, government will follow a “whole of government” approach to address all forms of inequalities across all sectors. We shall also

harness the partnerships with our partners in development including local non state actors as well as international development partners to foster an inclusive sustainable and participatory development.

15. I wish to call on all the stakeholders to examine the findings and recommendations of these reports, and mainstream them in their programs for immediate implementation.

16. I want to close by thanking the UNDP, and all our development partners for the support they continue to provide to Namibia in different areas of development. We look forward to further strengthening of our partnerships in the years ahead as we all work together to implement the key recommendations advanced by these two flagship reports.

Thanks to you all for your attention!