



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

BY

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1. This statement is issued in the midst of the negative narrative being published about the Government, SWAPO Party and the leadership of the Party and Government concerning the reported corruption and fraud at the National Fishing Enterprise (FISHCOR). We are all aware that the FISHCOR case is before Courts. In spite of this, accusations and insinuations continue to be made through media platforms aimed at casting doubt on SWAPO Party and the President. These allegations are obviously baseless and are undoubtedly only aimed at tarnishing the image of the SWAPO Party and the President.

2. As indicated by His Excellency President Hage Geingob on several occasions, and as should be known to all of us, tackling corruption and the perception of corruption can only be successfully achieved through robust processes, systems and institutions. The Government has put in place a robust governance architecture, and it provides the necessary cooperation and financial support to our Law enforcement agencies to enable them to effectively carry out their work. As an Executive, the Government has acted in the case of the two ministers who are facing charges in regard to the

FISHCOR case, and this resulted in their resignation from their ministerial positions. The Party has also withdrawn the two former ministers from its parliamentary list, and in line with its Constitution terminated the political bureau membership and suspended the central committee membership, as the case may be, of the respective former ministers. Beyond these administrative measures taken by the SWAPO Party and the President, the Judiciary needs to be allowed the space, as an autonomous institution, to carry out its work in regard to this case without any interference. This is in line with the separation of powers enshrined in our Constitution and adherence to the rule of law and the principles of effective governance.

3. With regards to allegations being leveled against SWAPO Party, the Government and the President regarding the reported corruption at FISHCOR, these allegations are unsubstantiated and devoid of any truth and are, therefore, rejected in the strongest terms.

4. The commitment of our Government to fight corruption is unquestionable. This commitment is evident in robust laws, systems and institutions

established to deal with corruption and enforce accountability and effective governance in the country. The governance institutions and systems are properly functioning, and the autonomy of the Courts and the watchdog institutions are fully respected.

5. The unearthing and prosecution of the corruption cases are a result of the measures adopted by the Government to tackle corruption, including the enactment of the Anti-Corruption Act, Whistle-blowers Act and Witness Protection Act.
6. The reporting of suspected corruption incidents is indicative of the public confidence in Government's commitment to fight corruption and the effectiveness of the governance system in dealing with such cases.
7. Under the leadership of H.E. President Hage Geingob, an Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2019 was adopted to promote systems of integrity, accountability and transparency across all spheres of society and

to strengthen domestic anti-corruption systems, inclusive of legislation, policies and institutions.

8. An Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan which was tabled in the National Assembly, provides a holistic and integrative national anti-corruption plan which mandates all stakeholders to proactively participate in the prevention and fight against corruption. An evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy indicated commendable progress in meeting the agreed Strategic Objectives as follows:

8.1. Increasing the level of Political accountability:

In promoting political accountability, the Electoral Commission of Namibia issued regulations relating to the declaration of assets and liabilities, disclosure of foreign and domestic financing of political parties, organisation or other persons, in line with Section 139 to 142 of the Electoral Act. The regulations were gazetted in November 2019.

8.2. Preventing corruption in Offices, Ministries, Agencies and Public Enterprises:

This Strategic Objective aims at reforms in the internal management of public resources and administration, to reduce opportunities and incentives for corruption, while minimizing wastage in public institutions. It also aims at reforming public-sector management and public finance.

- The ACC conducted pilot Corruption Risk Assessments in three public institutions and monitoring of Corruption Risk Assessment mitigation plans were undertaken at various border posts.

- To enhance transparency and integrity in public enterprises (PEs), Cabinet approved a comprehensive manual on “Policy Framework, Principles and Directives”, including those guiding the remuneration of Board Directors, Chief Executive Officers and Senior Managers of public enterprises.

The Public Enterprises Governance Act was also enacted.

Actions were also implemented under this Strategy aimed at supporting reform of public procurement system.

8.3. Strengthening efforts to deter corruption:

Effective Anti-Corruption laws and strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission are deemed effective means of the anti-corruption strategy. In this regard:

- About 19 lifestyle audits were conducted, which resulted in action taken against tax avoidance. Operational guidelines aimed at curbing tax planning opportunities and tax avoidance were developed.
- A Security and Risk Management Division and Tax Intelligence Investigation Unit were established at the MOF to conduct regular inspections and to reduce corruption.
- The Public Service Staff Rules were emended to extend the definition of major offence to include corrupt practices as stipulated in the Anti-Corruption Act.
- Financial Intelligence Center conducted off-site and on-site compliance assessment on certain accountable and reporting institutions to ensure compliance against the amended Financial Intelligence Act, 2012 which contributed to confiscation and forfeiture of assets generated from illicit activities.

8.4 Conducting extensive anti-corruption education:

- A nationwide civic education was implemented which include formulation and conduct of training of members of Ethics and Integrity Committees in public institutions, introduction of anti-corruption themes in schools and engagement of the public in debates and discussions on anti-corruption, including through social media.

8.5 Preventing corruption in the private sector:

This Strategic Objective aimed at promoting transparency and maintaining systems of integrity in the private sector. It also covers issues of extractive industry and marine resources.

Progress made include:

- A Corruption Risk Assessment was undertaken to assess the processes, procedures and control aspects related to fisheries observers and fisheries inspectors' functions.
- Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources established Ethics and Integrity Committees to deal with corruption practices and prevention in the ministry.

- An ongoing review by Ministry of Mines and Energy of the various legislations and policies to benchmark them to best international standards.

8.6. Engaging civil society and the media in combating corruption:

This strategy encourages the mediating role of civil society citizen groups, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and the media in constraining corruption.

Progress made include:

- Training of investigative journalists conducted by ACC in collaboration with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

9. The evaluation of the implementation of the strategy revealed that:

- Out of 75 actions of the Strategy, 70 actions representing 93% have been implemented. Out of 70 actions implemented, 15 (20%) were completed.

“Completed “in this regard refers to activities that were executed in a single period, in other words, once-off actions.

- The majority of the actions in the Strategy are continuous, based on the functions and mandate of the implementing institutions.

10. Hon Speaker, Hon. Members!

The adoption and implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan show Government's unreserved commitment to fight corruption.

In addition, the following actions, among others, are clear testimony of H.E.

President Geingob's commitment to fight corruption:

- Ordering the cancellation of the irregular awarding of the upgrading tender for Hosea Kutako International Airport;
- Action taken against plans for an Angolan oil deal which did not appear to have tangible national benefit, had it proceeded, and
- Action was taken in the National Oil Storage project, where costs escalated due to an unfavorable contractual agreement.

11. Namibia's efforts to curb corruption and promote effective governance are internationally acknowledged. Namibia is ranked 7th in the 2020 Mo Ibrahim index on governance for Africa. Further, the Afro Barometer ranks Namibia 2nd in its report released in January 2021 which indicated that only seven percent of the respondents in the survey conducted in Namibia reported experiencing a situation where public officials demanded bribery

in exchange for public services. While any level of corruption is bad and justify incidence of corruption and is receiving a decisive action by government, it is clear that perceptions are not an accurate reflection of the actual situation. There is no doubt that we are making strenuous efforts as a country to fight corruption and those efforts are impactful. We, therefore, have a solid foundation on which to build in our quest to completely rid our country of corruption.

12. In conclusion, the government assures our nation that the FISHCOR case is receiving due attention through the Courts.

In terms of our governance system, guilt is only determined by the Courts on the basis of evidence and not on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations.

We will only succeed to eliminate corruption in our country if we work together, across our diversities, to fight against it. Sensationalization and political goal scoring will only tarnish the good image of our country which

we have worked so hard to build and erode investors' confidence in our country.

We are, therefore, urged to allow the process that is going on at the Court to take its course.

Courts have appropriate competencies to deal with the matter. It is important that we fully support them to ensure that they perform their duties effectively, thereby strengthening accountability.

I thank you for your attention.