

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY HAGE G. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE UN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

21 SEPTEMBER 2016

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(Check Against Delivery)

Your Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the
United Nations General Assembly;

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations;
Distinguished Heads of Delegations;

Mr. President,

Let me congratulate you on your election as President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly. You hail from a country that is held in high regard by the government and the people of Namibia. Namibia is a Child of International Solidarity and was midwived by the United Nations. Fiji was one of those countries that contributed to the contingent of peacekeepers in NAMIBIA as part of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG).

Given your background, we are confident that this session will be successful. You rightfully emphasized in your acceptance speech that the main purpose of the seventy-first session is to get momentum on the Sustainable Development Agenda and this is evidence by your choice of the theme, *The Sustainable Development Goals: A Universal Push to transform our World*. Namibia joins you in reiterating the fact that the implementation of this Agenda is imperative if we are to safeguard the security of our future generations.

Mr. Secretary General,

As you have said in your report on the work of the United Nations, the peoples of the world have implored the United Nations to do more in more spheres of activity, in more locations, in more challenging circumstances than at any other point in the Organization's history. Your commitment to this organization and your concern for the pressing issues that affect the world has impressed me. You indicated that you have sought to leave the Organization better prepared for the immense challenges ahead, able to serve its entire membership and "we the peoples" in every corner of the world. You have raised the bar indeed and the onus is now on us to carry the mantle of humanitarian excellence to even higher heights.

Mr. Secretary General,

In September last year we committed ourselves to a new agenda for Sustainable Development. We are all in agreement that effective implementation of this agenda will require coherence and complementarity between global, continental, regional, national and local efforts as stated in your report.

We are confident that we will join the global drive towards ensuring a life of dignity for all and we will spare no effort in working to free our fellow

men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty.

Mr. President,

Namibia agrees with the notion that the successors of the Millennium Development Goals will need to fully integrate economic growth, social justice and environmental stewardship. In terms of economic growth, we need to talk about inclusive growth that will translate into creation of decent job opportunities for our citizens. In other words, we must do more to move away from the current jobless growth model that prevails in many of our member countries. We, should therefore, aim to grow our economy in a sustainable and inclusive manner in order to ensure that we effectively tackle the scourge of poverty.

As a consequence of the slowdown in the global economic cycle, and a fall in commodity prices, the Namibian economy is experiencing a downturn in 2016, following robust growth averaging more than five percent during the preceding 5 years.

We are mindful that in order to make a meaningful dent on poverty, we need to grow at a higher level. We remain optimistic about the long-term outlook for Namibia, as the key economic fundamentals, including fiscal

sustainability and sustainability of our external current account remains intact. Testament to this is the fact that the Fitch rating agency recently reaffirmed Namibia's International Default Rate at BBB-, and bond issuance in the South African and Namibian market at AA+, although the longer-term outlook was revised from stable to negative.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia remains committed to managing the economy in a prudent and responsible manner, and has already instituted, expenditure, revenue and structural reform measures to address concerns raised by rating agencies about the long-term outlook of Namibia. We would like to assure all our partners, that there is no risk that Namibia will not honor debt obligation in the near and medium term. In fact, we remain bullish about the country's economic outlook.

Moreover, we remain committed to creating conditions in Namibia that will enable full participation of the private sector in the economy. Government alone cannot shoulder the burden of extending development to all. The private sector has a crucial role to play in stimulating economic growth and job creation in our country.

In terms of social justice, we are all concerned by the fact that we are witnessing the highest levels of force displacement of people since the founding of this organization. The current refugee crisis needs our

immediate attention and our collective action. As the Secretary General has said in his report, global solidarity is needed for us to effectively respond to the needs of our fellow human beings. We need to determine the basic factors which cause people to flee in such large numbers so that we can tackle the root causes rather than the symptoms of this evil. Our belief is that no one must feel left out for we are aware that inclusivity spells peace, while exclusivity spells war.

Mr. President,

Earlier this morning, we attended the High-Level Event on the entry into force of the Paris Agreement. Namibia welcomes this development and we are happy to announce that we have ratified this agreement which represents a milestone in our endeavors to fight the devastating effects of climate change.

Climate change is a global problem and requires a global response from all of us, both in the developed and developing world.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction, remain the

central multilateral frameworks for cooperative action to address climate change induced disaster risks, such as droughts.

Namibia is one of the driest countries in the world. Consequently, we have undertaken ambitious domestic actions on climate change, including on mitigation and adaptation, to surmount the losses and damages arising from climate change-induced natural disasters. At the same time, we are developing renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and hydro electricity production. In tackling this crisis, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility must be upheld.

Furthermore, the activation of the Green Climate Fund, is a welcome and timely development. This accord us an opportunity to decentralize the operations of the Fund. In this context, I wish to announce Namibia's offer to host the African Regional Hub of the Green Climate Fund at an appropriate time. As you may recall, Namibia came second to South Korea in the bid to host the world headquarters of the Green Climate. As a consolation prize, we would therefore be honored to host the African Regional Hub of the Green Climate Fund. Namibia counts on your support.

Namibia believes that the United Nations remains the center for the consolidation of international rule of law. Therefore, the UN system should serve as a banner of transparency and accountability. For Governments and organizations such as the United Nations to regain trust from people who have lost trust in the global leadership over the years, they must place

inclusivity and transparency at the forefront of governance, for transparency plus accountability spells trust.

Reforming the Security Council is therefore paramount. The reform of the Security Council cannot be reduced to the aspirations of few countries. The Security Council is too important an organ to be left to the interests of a few.

Hence we reiterate our call for the comprehensive reform of the Security Council, thereby making it more democratic and transparent, so as to better serve humanity. Namibia remains fully committed to the Africa Common Position on the UN Reform. We are of the opinion that the Security Council should reflect the broad membership of our organization. Fairness and justice warrant that Africa be part of the equation.

Mr. President,

As a Nation which emerged from a long, bitter and bloody struggle for Independence and has since enjoyed 26 years of freedom, Namibia sympathizes with those who are not yet independent and denied their

basic human rights. Namibia thus calls for the full implementation of all relevant UN resolutions on Palestine. The international community must fulfill its obligations and assist the people of Palestine to realize their basic right to independence and self-determination. Their freedom and independence cannot be denied forever – it can only be delayed – let history be our best teacher.

Namibia recognizes and acknowledges the role played by the Kingdom of Morocco in helping us attain our Independence. I can proudly say that the people of Morocco are our brothers and sisters and this was affirmed during my two visits to Morocco. We are a nation that believes in being an enemy to none and a friend to all, and we also believe in a world where no one should feel left out. Unfortunately, our brothers and sisters in Western Sahara feel left out. We therefore hope that the people of Western Sahara will soon enjoy the freedom that the Kingdom of Morocco helped Namibia to attain. It is in this vain that we call for the full implementation of resolutions calling for a referendum in the occupied Western Sahara, so that the people there can freely express themselves as to whether they opt for independence or unification with Morocco, so that the disagreement between brothers and sisters comes to an amicable end.

Mr. President,

Namibia remains confident that despite the fact that humanity faces some of the most unprecedented challenges in its history, under the United Nations, we can live up to the promise of ensuring a life of dignity for all.

Let us not lose heart, for Saint Teresa of Calcutta once said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." Let us therefore realize that our differences should not draw us further from one another but rather nearer to each other. Let us celebrate unity in diversity. Together as people, who realize that we belong to each other, we can bring about change in this world, through this indispensable institution the United Nations and usher in a new era of humanity, characterized by peace, unity and dignity for all the world's citizens.

I thank you.