

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION DURING THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF THE 6TH EDITION OF OPUWO TRADE FAIR, 31
MAY 2017 AT OPUWO**

Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable Minister Obed Kandjoze, Patron of Opuwo Trade Fair
Honourable Governor of Kunene Region and other Governors present;
Honourable Members of Parliament present;
Honourable Regional and Local Authorities Councillors;
Your Worship, Councillor Albert Tjiuma, the Mayor of Opuwo and other Mayors present;
Distinguished Senior Chief Executive Officers and Government Officials present;
Distinguished Traditional, Spiritual and Community Leaders;
Distinguished Exhibitors;
Distinguished Veterans of the Liberation Struggle;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to address you at this important event, The 6th Edition of the Opuwo Trade Fair. I am also greatly honoured to have been invited to officiate and share my views on the matter. The theme of this Trade Fair “Creating opportunity through business networking” tells it all. The theme must be inspiring to all the investors and exhibitors alike.

Trade fairs and exhibitions are now common in many towns and villages in Namibia. That is very healthy as, by nature trade fairs are important mechanism for promotion and they provide an opportunity for face to face contact. Of course the main focus of any trade fair is to showcase and demonstrate what you have that could be needed by others, what is being marketed be in a form of materials,

products or service. At the fair, one expects the traders or the industry to meet with the customers. However, the secret of the success of the Trade Fair depends on the preparation and what is being marketed.

To that end, it is critical for the organisers or the promoters to make a full industry and market studies in order to know the type of fair one is to organise. I am informed that this fair at Opuwo is focusing on services. Against that background, I believe this is a well thought off fair. When I was Minister of Environment and Tourism, I came to know without any doubt that Opuwo and Kunene Region is a service area. The most successful Community Conservancies and lodges were in this area and in the same areas where the tourism industry is growing fast. Tourism is one of the strategic economic sectors, not only in Namibia, but in the Southern Africa region and Africa as a continent.

When the government decided to make Opuwo the capital of Kunene Region it was not by accident. Opuwo was chosen due to its strategic location to bring about sustainable development in the area and Namibia as a country. Besides the area's rich culture, Opuwo is a gateway to the Bynes Mountain and the famous Epupa waterfalls.

In line with the theme of this Trade Fair, it has come out clear that from what we are seeing here today, an opportunity has been created thus enabling the business people to network. Networking is very critical in all operations and business is not excluded. In accordance with NDP4 Namibia has decided to make herself a regional logistic hub. Such inspiration is carried over to NDP5. What we have to know is when we talk of a logistic hub we

mean a service country. Therefore, the focus of Opuwo Trade Fair is in line with NDP5. Namibia has to grow the service sector through the promotion of exchange and cooperation and trade in service amid strong trend towards economic development. As the say goes, “One finger does not pick up a needle”. For a business to flourish openness and honest sharing of information among all exhibitors is very important and can play a positive role in creating a coordinated service sector in Opuwo and the country at large.

The government welcome local initiative as that is the only way we will move our country forward. Talking of services, we have to accept, as a country we can invest in the service sector to take our people out of poverty, hence we must work on our customer service. Customer service is lacking in our economy. However, it is critical at every institution both in the private and public sector and the tourism industry is not an exception. Communication is also important in business and development. You may have good products or ideas but if you communicate it in an offensive way, the message will not get through. We therefore need to improve on our communication skill if we want to make good progress on our national development plan.

Notwithstanding that this is a local Trade Fair, considering the strategic location of Opuwo town, this fair has a chance to grow to an International Fair. International companies will find the best home in this town. The signs are very clear, the place is growing. Opuwo of 1990 is not Opuwo of today. Tourists who are visiting this town, some will come back as business people. As residents of the town, you must be ready for the booming Opuwo. But the

fundamental responsibility to attract investment in the town is to keep it clean and crime-free, to create confidence in investors.

I am informed that Opuwo Town Council has developed and adopted its Strategic Plan 2016-2017 which will be made available today. I understand it is a comprehensive and meticulously document that cover a wide range of development initiatives of the town. I congratulate the Town Council for such a commendable job. While saying well done, I also would like to say the energy you have invested in developing the Plan, must be used to ensure its full implementation. What we must know is that, a Plan not implemented is just as good as no Plan at all.

I want to remind you that, the nature of trade fair are that, whether you are an exhibitor or just a visitor, trade fairs are for you to network and understand what is happening, and to also form good business relationship with others. Therefore, I urge all of you the exhibitors and visitors alike to take advantage of this opportunity provided by the Opuwo Trade Fair. On the other hand, the Town Council should take advantage of the fair to ensure that the aspiration of the 2016-2017 Strategic Plan captures the minds of many. The more people who buy into the Plan the better chance it stand to be implemented. I believe that this fair will stimulate growth of the local economy and of course the economic success of Namibia at large.

As Namibians we are on a better position to develop our country to eradicate poverty. To use the words of President Hage Geingob, we must build Namibia where no one is feel left out. We have space and resources, and our population is manageable. What we need is clear focus and vision that

will enable us build on strong foundation created since our independence. Thanks to visionary leaders we have in this country. I am referring to H.E. Dr. Sam Nujoma, Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation, H.E. Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President and H.E. Dr. Hage Geingob our current President. **If we are to succeed on ensuring sustainable development and to contribute to the realisation of African Union Agenda 2063, we must avoid competing among ourselves but rather complement one another. Just like fingers on our hands that are not the same size, but because they complement each other they do wonders for us. Namibia has enough space and no one should see the other occupying his/her space.**

I am reliably informed that the Opuwo Town Council and its partners are the organisers of this annual trade event. At this juncture allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the Opuwo Town Council and its generous partners for organising this Trade Fair once again. I have full confidence that the Town Council of Opuwo will develop this important annual trade event to be one of the most successful undertakings on our country's annual business calendar. May I also congratulate you on the choice of Patron of Opuwo Trade Fair in person of Hon. Obed Kandjoze. I have come to know him as a practical and hard working person. Therefore having associated him with Opuwo Trade Fair means you are ready to work hard. Comrade Kandjoze, continue inspiring this town and I believe success is unquestionable.

Once again, I would like to thank the Opuwo Town Council for the trust they have on me to open this Trade Fair and the opportunity they have given me to participate on this event. I appreciate what you are doing. The time I have

been here, I have learnt a lot that will help me to understand your business intent. In this context, I must now inform you that, one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation is marketing and linking our country with the rest of the International Community. **It is therefore, our duty as a Ministry to ensure that our products reach the rest of the world community where possible on condition that those products are marketable. I can see Opuwo is a growing town that has to be marketed. May I also inform you that Africa Heads of State and Government have declared year 2017 as the year of the youth, under the Theme “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth”.** I am happy to see many young people here as Namibia and Africa depends on the youth for sustainable development to be realized. I therefore call on our youth to play their part. Young people make use of your positive energy being the only way that can move our development programmes forward. On the other hand, negative energy will pull us back.

It is now my honour and privilege to declare the 6th Opuwo Annual Trade Fair 2017 officially open. Enjoy the Fair struck deals and for those who come outside Opuwo, drive around to see the place and come back.

I THANK YOU.