



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT

BY

RIGHT HONOURABLE DR. SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

DURING THE VISIT TO DR. FISHER PRIMARY SCHOOL,

AMINIUS CONSTITUENCY,

OMAHEKE REGION

12 OCTOBER 2018

10H00

Director of Ceremonies, Mr. Pijoo Nganate, Advisor to the Governor of Omaheke region,
Hon. Bernard Esau, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources,
Hon. Festus Ueitele, Governor of Omaheke Region,
Hon. Peter Kazongominja: Councillor of the Aminius,
Hon Katjizeu, Councillor of Otjinene Constituency
Other Regional and Local Authorities Councillors present,
Chief Tjiunde, and other Traditional and community Leaders:
Ms. Sanet Steenkamp, Permanent Secretary: Ministry of Education Arts and Culture,
Ms. Meriam Onesmus: Director Escalate Investments (Pty) Ltd,
Ms. Patricia Hoeksema, O&L Group Corporate Relations Manager
Acting School Principal, Management and Learners of Dr. Fischer Primary School,
Community Members
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentleman,

A very good morning to you all,

1. It is a great pleasure to be here with you today. I have organized this visit to your school to familiarize myself with your educational activities and to officiate at the handover of donations from partners from the private sector.
2. Let me firstly commend you Dr. Fischer Primary School and Omaheke region for the successes as enumerated by PS Steenkamp.
3. Education is ranked amongst the highest Government priorities in recognition of its strategic nature as the most effective empowerment tool and the greatest equalizer.
4. As such, the sector is one of the largest recipients of resources under the budget. For this financial year, the Ministry of Education Art and Culture received N\$13

483 065.00 in budget allocation. This amount reaches N\$13, 670.00, and N\$181,000.00 in the 2020/2021 financial year. This high budget allocation is in pursuit of a vision of achievement of full access for learners to inclusive quality Education that qualifies them to pursue higher education.

5. To achieve this outcome, we have to, among others, increase the primary education completion. In this regard, Government is also implementing programs to fight poverty and its associate challenges which undermine a child's access to continuous education.
6. One of the programs we are implementing is the School Feeding Program which is aimed at:
 - Increasing school enrolment, attendance and retention;
 - Contributing to learning performance and progression and
 - Improving health and nutrition of children through the provision of foods that have been fortified with essential nutrients.
7. The program is providing food to 365 854 learners from 1435 schools out of 1846 schools in the country. Omaheke region currently has 26 schools benefitting from the School Feeding Program.
8. One area which undermines our learners' access to continuous education is teenage pregnancy.
9. Statistics indicate that in 2015 a total number of 1882 learners dropped out of school due to pregnancy, of which 72 learners are from Omaheke. In 2016, about 2260 learners dropped out and 60 were from this region while in 2017, I am informed, 1952 learners also dropped out due to pregnancy of which 57 are from Omaheke region.

10. The issue of teenage pregnancy needs to be addressed jointly by all stakeholders in education. We also need to address the problem of teachers impregnating learners. This is unacceptable behaviour and government will not yield in its efforts to curb this undesirable practice.

In this regard, we wish to call on the broad community of teachers, education administrators and the entire education stakeholders community to support government in these efforts and help support and encourage our children to have a safe learning environment which is conducive for them to absorb the learning that is imparted on them.

11. I want to reiterate Government's commitment towards the provision of quality and equitable education to all Namibian children. It is against this background that free primary and secondary education has been introduced. This has resulted in an increased intake of learners at public schools. This improved access should be complemented by improved educational outcomes which although it has shown some improvement still remains below desirable levels. We need to put in more efforts as a nation to improve pass rates at our schools and drastically improve progression rates to tertiary education institutions.

12. Without tertiary qualifications or skills, finding employment will remain an elusive dream for our youths, and poverty will continue to be passed on through generations of our people, dashing the hope of achieving the vision of a prosperous Namibia that we are all striving for.

13. Secondly, greater commitment from learners, teachers and the entire education community can add a significant boost to our schools results. It is not beyond our reach to achieve significantly better educational outcomes. For one, the investments being made into the sector can definitely yield much better results than we have thus far managed to achieve. We must adopt a culture of results orientation as opposed to focusing on routine tasks. It is not enough to attend

school regularly without achieving improved results. A teacher whose class records a failure rate of up to half of his or her learners should see this as an indictment against him or herself and the school management, and should be spurred into greater action by such situation to bring about a reversal of the situation.

14. The Government will continue to strengthen its accountability systems to ensure that those entrusted with public duties are held to answer for results for which they are paid with tax payers' funds.
15. We understand that schools need to be adequately resourced in order for effective learning to take place. We also appreciate that some of our schools have to operate with less than what they need. But still, we can achieve much more with the resources we have than we have been so far able to do. The dismal performance of some of our schools cannot be explained away by arguments of inadequate resources.
16. The Government will, however, continue to strengthen funding to schools and improve the targeting and utilization of such funds to achieve more results from our limited resources.
17. In this regard, I wish to once again applaud our private sector partners, Escalate Investment Pty (Ltd) and Olthaver and List group of companies for their generous donations to this school that will be handed over today. Corporate social responsibility has become more important now more than ever, given the limited resources available to Government to deal with the unyielding challenges facing our country, including in the education sector. I encourage the rest of our corporate sector to follow this good example of trying to meet Government half way so that we can pick up speed in reaching all our people with essential services, bearing in mind that an investment into our communities is an

investment in the future of our country and is thus an investment in all of us and not a form of charity to the individual recipient communities.

18. Our parents and communities in general are also called upon to take greater interest in the education of our children and contribute in whatever way they can to ensure that our schools are well run through their participation at school boards, and that children are disciplined, protected and supported to make optimal use of the opportunity granted to them to learn.
19. The Government is concerned about the unabating incidences of child abuse at home and in society in general. We are also greatly disturbed by reported incidences of abuse of school development funds by teachers and others entrusted with the custody of these resources. Government will deal decisively with those found guilty of such undesirable deeds.
20. To the learners, I want to say, while government and society can do their best to support you to succeed at your studies, your destiny lies in your own hands. As the saying goes, one can only take the horse to the stream, but one cannot force that horse to drink. So, unless you show commitment to your studies through hard work and discipline, all the efforts we are making as a nation to improve our education system will come to nothing.
21. I, therefore, call upon you pupils to work hard and be disciplined, respecting the school authorities and your parents and shunning the vices of alcohol and drug abuse and indulgence in sexual activities, and to persist with your studies until you complete your tertiary education.
22. As I said in the beginning, education is the key to success. It is the most effective empowerment tool, the greatest equalizer. If you fail to optimize the opportunity given to you to learn, you will be condemned to poverty that you will then pass on to your children. In turn, your failure to attain success at school will spell doom for our country's vision to be a prosperous nation because you are the

future leaders of this country and the potential drivers of the development that we want to see in this country. The destiny of this country is thus in your hands, just as the prosperity that we are striving to achieve for Namibia is yours to enjoy.

23. So, aim for the best in all you do, the sky should be the limit. You can count on us to be by your side, guiding you, supporting and cheering you on.
24. Finally, please protect the school's resources. Vandalism of schools' properties has become the norm at most of our schools. This means that the meager resources we have, have to be diverted to replacing and repairing damaged properties instead of rolling out the infrastructure network to and resourcing schools that have not been reached with these services. This holds back progress in attaining full access to quality education for all.
25. I wish to conclude by conveying to you my best wishes for success with your studies as the end of year examinations approach. Thank you very much for your attention. Thank you also for the birthday wishes extended to me as I celebrate my 51st birthday, and for the warm reception extended to me upon my arrival here. I should also use this platform to announce that the request from Aminius C
26. constituency for Government to provide relief to community members affected by the drought was received and approved by Government. The process to distribute food assistance to affected community members has already commenced. We at the Office of the Prime Minister are working with your Regional Council to identify qualifying beneficiaries to be assisted. Please give the Regional Council your cooperation so that distribution of the food will proceed without hindrance and so that the qualifying individuals will be the recipients of this assistance.

I thank you.

