

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBAMBA, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE UNITED STATES-AFRICA LEADERS'
SUMMIT.**

5 AUGUST 2014

**THE WHITE HOUSE,
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**Check Against Delivery*

Your Excellency, Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I join Their Excellencies, Heads of State and Government in expressing our sincere appreciation to President Obama for hosting this historic Summit, the first between African and USA leaders on the appropriate theme: *“Investing in the Next Generation”*.

The Summit provides a platform for African Government and business leaders and those of the United States to exchange views on strategic issues that are critical to sustaining the transformation of Africa.

I believe that for Africa to break the vicious cycle of under-development, we must work together to achieve the following priorities: increased mutually beneficial trade and commerce between Africa and the United States; infrastructure development, with specific focus on energy, rail and roads; and ICT connectivity.

Namibia is looking forward to working with the US Administration and American investors to facilitate investments in different sectors of our economy. Mining of various minerals and value addition to these natural resources are some of the attractive areas for investment. In recent years, the mining of our uranium deposits has gained momentum, putting Namibia on course to becoming the second or third biggest producer of uranium in the world.

Our country has also attracted the attention of investors who are interested in the exploration of hydro-carbons and natural gas. Although still in the early stages, a number of wells have been drilled in search of oil. More drilling campaigns are planned for the coming years. We need the technologies as well as investment capital to develop this sector of our economy. Our national power utility, together with other investors, is in the process of developing the Kudu-Gas-To-Power Project, with the aim of building a gas-powered electricity station near the diamond mining town of Oranjemund. The plan is to export excess power from the plant to other countries in the Region. We are committed to ensuring that renewable energy continues to be part of our national energy mix. It is for this reason that we welcome President Obama’s Power Africa Initiative.

It is our view that both the financial and geographical scopes of the initiative be expanded in order to broaden its impact and also reach more countries in Africa. Given the abundance of solar radiation in our country, Namibia is eager to engage with American investors to explore the possibilities of new technologies for the wider roll out of solar electricity as part of the national energy mix.

With regard to infrastructure development, we are currently deepening and expanding the Walvis Bay harbour to improve its cargo handling capacity as a major trade gateway to southern Africa. Together with Botswana, we are jointly developing the Trans-Kalahari Railway to serve as conduit for imports and exports. Other infrastructure development projects implemented in recent years include the expansion of our national railway network to Oshikango on our border with Angola.

Modern roads and railways are not only critical for competitiveness and improved trade and commerce, they are also vital for the tourism sector, which is one of the priority areas in our *Fourth National Development Plan* (NDP 4). Towards this end, hundreds of kilometers of roads have been upgraded to bitumen standards across the country as a means of improving our national road network and extending road connectivity to neighbouring countries. Through the MCA-Namibia Compact, the US Government has provided significant resources to boost Namibia's tourism sector. Several facilities, roads and other infrastructure in our national parks have been upgraded. Namibia's doors are open to receive more tourists from the United States of America.

Namibia has joined other African countries and invested significant resources in the realisation of the *West Africa Cable System* (WACS), which now has a landing point at our coastal town of Swakopmund. This infrastructure has opened up new possibilities for the provision of services in the information technology sector.

In order to boost competitiveness, we have put measures in place to make it easier, faster and more efficient for investors to conduct business in our country. The aim is to improve the ease of doing business in Namibia. One of the initiatives is the establishment of the *Business and Intellectual Property Authority* (BIPA) by our Ministry of Trade and Industry. BIPA will serve as the One-Stop Center for the registration of companies, as well as the protection of business, commercial and industrial property rights. It will also provide general advisory services on business registration and intellectual property rights to investors and the general public. We are also in the process of reviewing and modernising our Foreign Investment Act in order to increase and strengthen Namibia's competitiveness.

Other equally important priorities include the maintenance of peace and security, food security, good governance and consolidation of resilient democratic institutions, and the protection of fundamental human rights. In the area of food security, our Government has initiated the Green Scheme Programme with the aim of strengthening local food production capacity. Several Green Scheme Projects are currently underway at various locations, especially along the banks of the Orange and Kavango Rivers.

Livestock farming is one of the mainstays of our agricultural sectors. It is for this reason that extension services have been rolled out to most parts of the country, with the focus on rural areas, where these services have been neglected in the past. Our Government is working hard to modernise our agricultural sector. We are also working with our neighbours, with the aim of removing the Red Line, the control fence separating the commercial livestock farming areas from the northern communal areas.

We welcome international investors to invest in this crucial sector, to introduce new technologies and know-how that will enable us to produce more food locally in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. We believe that is also part of the essence of *investing in the next generation*.

Concerted efforts should also continue towards eradicating poverty and providing quality public services and amenities such as health care, education, housing, and clean drinking water to the millions of African people who still live in abject poverty. Proper education and health care services remain critical priority areas of our national development agenda.

Vocational training has been identified as one of the main areas of focus to prepare our young people for modern knowledge based economy. Our primary and high school curricula have also been realigned to respond effectively to modern challenges and equip our youth with appropriate skills. From 2013, our Government abolished the requirement for parents to pay school development fees as part of the provision of free universal education in the primary school phase. Free education will also be introduced in the secondary school phase during the 2016 school calendar year. Among the strategies to address the skills challenges is the introduction of Vocational Education and Training Levy. I wish to pay tribute to the American Government and the American people for their generous support to our education sector through the Millennium Challenge Account Compact, which assisted with the provision of text books in various subjects, as well as the renovation of schools.

With regard to the expansion of health care services, progress has been made in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic. More than 90 percent of those who are HIV positive now have access to the life-saving anti-retroviral therapy. Similarly, high rates of success have been achieved with regard to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the Human Immuno Deficiency Virus.

In order to expand the provision of housing and sanitation to our people, Namibia has embarked upon the *National Mass Housing Programme*. This public sector initiative is aimed at addressing the housing backlog in the country by delivering at least 187, 000 houses over the next 17 years. Phase One of the project has already started. The entire project is estimated to cost about US\$3.5 billion.

As we proceed with this long-term initiative to deliver housing to our people, we would consider Public Private Partnerships based on proven technological solutions that would enable our Government to deliver more houses to our people in an affordable and cost effective manner. Achieving success in these priority areas will continue to consistently occupy the centre of our sustained actions aimed at “*investing in the next generation*” and achieving a brighter future for the Namibian people. “*Investing in the next generation*” demands that as leaders, we take bold actions at national, regional and continental levels to break the stagnation that has hindered Africa’s advancement for many decades.

Namibia is committed to entrenching the values of constitutionalism, good governance, rule of law and the protection of fundamental human rights. We will also continue to pursue and participatory development. The United States, as an important partner, should continue to support Africa’s development efforts. Increased trade and investment, as well as programmes such as PEPFAR, the MCA and sustained support to the Global Fund have been vital to our success.

It is paramount for Namibia, as for all African countries, to embrace new technologies, and to implement the policies and best practices that have enabled many developing countries in Asia, and in South and Central America, to industrialise and diversify their economies, create sustainable jobs, spread prosperity and drastically reduce levels of poverty.

A peaceful and stable Africa is a better and safer trading partner for the United inclusive States and for the rest of the world. A secure and stable Africa is better positioned to harness the continent’s vast natural resources and unlock its true development potential, eradicate poverty and bring about shared and inclusive prosperity for the current and next generations.

Through prudent and targeted investments in education, health, information communication technology and the empowerment of women and the youth, a new era of sustainable and inclusive prosperity will dawn over Africa.

I am convinced that, together, we shall achieve our shared vision.

I thank you.