

**REMARKS BY TOM ALWEENDO (MP),
MINISTER OF ECONOMIC PLANNING
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FORUM
WINDHOEK, 5 DECEMBER 2016**

Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners
Distinguished invited guests
Members of the media

Allow me also to welcome all of you to this event. The event – the Development Partnership Forum – is organized in order for us to engage each other on our development strategies.

It must also be noted that it is not the first time we are having this kind of a meeting. Few years back we used to have an annual event like this to engage with our development partners. And therefore in a way, this is a revival of what used to happen before. It is my wish that we will again make this an annual event, given the importance of the development partnership we have formed with all of you – some of you since our independence some 26 years ago. It is also important for me to state that this forum does not in any way replace the bilateral engagement we have with various countries – those bilateral engagements will continue as usual.

Despite all the development milestones we have achieved this far – such that we are now classified as an upper middle income country - Namibia is still a developing country. We have not reached the pinnacle of our development. We still have a number of areas of our development where more still need to be done. For example, there is no denying the fact that our economy still needs to grow at a higher level; that our economic growth needs to be more inclusive; that we need to create more employment opportunities, especially for the young people; that the income generated from our economy needs to be shared on a more equitable basis among the members of our society; that we need to pay particular attention to the quality of our human capital development.

These are some of the developmental issues that still require our urgent attention. We therefore still have a journey ahead of us - a journey during which some of us might become apprehensive and even fearful. We still have an expedition to undertake - an expedition where some will start to despair and become discouraged. Already there are some among us who have become rather cynical about our ability to achieve great things. Their starting point now is to always remind us of what has not happened and

conveniently remain silent about what has happened. For them it is to emphasize failure and disregard success. Instead of recognizing the greatness in our ability to make things happen, they constantly remind us of what has not succeeded.

I would therefore want to invite all our development partners to join us on this journey. We hope that you will continue to encourage us on this journey. We expect not only for you to assist us financially but also to learn from your experiences. I know that development experiences can be different from one country to the other – but I also know that there are general principles that can be applicable across countries.

I also know that on this journey of our development there will be successes and disappointments. There will be things that we will do well, just as there will be some that we will be less successful. That happens to all expeditions. However, what we don't want to do is not to try again just because we are afraid to fail. Our attitude is that important successes are delivered by those who believed that you succeed through failure and that what is more important is not the failure but the courage to keep trying. Our motto is that failure cannot be a reason not to try again and we believe that every failure is a lesson well-learned.

Our economic development strategy going forward is to transform our economy through industrialization. Transformation is defined as a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone. Knowing how difficult to completely change things or someone, this will not be an easy thing to do. However, given the size of our economy, in a long run our economic sustainability can only be guaranteed if we promote an export-led economic development. This strategy requires us to continue investing in the necessary economic infrastructure – both hard and soft. It will require that we continue to invest in high level and relevant skills that can enhance our competitiveness. It will require us to continue to work on all the aspects that impact on our economic competitiveness. Again, it is our hope and expectation that as our development partners, you will be with us during this transformation process.

I look forward to work with all of you on our journey to continue to make Namibia a success.

I thank you.