

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: NDP5 LAUNCH**  
**BY TOM K ALWEENDO, MP**  
**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**6 JUNE 2017**

Honorable Speaker  
Honorable Deputy Speaker  
Honorable Members

As we all now know, His Excellency President Hage Geingob has launched our fifth National Development Plan, NDP5, on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017.

**Where we started and where we have gotten so far**

Given our chequered history of segregated development, the need to safeguard the well-being and improve the living standards of every Namibian has been the cornerstone of our development planning since independence, now more than 27 years ago.

One of the main strategies adopted at independence was to invest in the people - particularly in health and education. It is therefore not a coincidence that since independence our budgetary allocation to both education and health has been the highest in the SADC region. In our 2017/18 budget, N\$22bn has been allocated to education and health.

The second development strategy pursued by our Government was to nurture the value of a caring society. A caring society where the strongest among us feel compelled to protect the weakest among us, and where the minorities do not feel to be the objects of scorn by the majority. Through this strategy over the years the Government has been providing a social safety net to the most vulnerable members of our society. These are the elderly, the orphans and those living with disabilities. Here again, in our 2017/18 budget N\$3.3bn has been allocated to this strategy.

The third strategy was that of investing in economic infrastructure and today our economic infrastructure compares relatively well in the SADC region. Without hesitation I can say that Namibia is certainly a better place to live in for most Namibians than it was before.

By recounting our achievements so far, I am not in any way suggesting that we no longer have challenges that need to be addressed. It is not to say that we no longer have areas of our development where more still need to be done. It is indeed still the case that our

economy need to grow at a higher level and be more inclusive; that we need to create more employment opportunities, especially for the young people; and that income generated from our economy needs to be shared on a more equitable basis among members of our society. I am, however, narrating our past achievements to remind ourselves that we are capable of achieving great things.

### **Economic backdrop under which NDP5 is framed**

Our NDP5 has been crafted under rather difficult economic conditions. We now understand that our economy is currently facing some headwinds. However, it is during such times that it is important to adopt an attitude of “*every cloud has a silver lining*”. When times are hard, it should not mean that life is over, and it cannot mean that we must become hopeless. It should rather mean that we need to reorganize our lives and goals – and as a Government it is what we did and what we are doing. We should regard hard times as these as an opportunity to hone our skills in dealing with our development challenges.

Last year the global economy was characterised by global economic uncertainty. The global economic recovery slowed due to stagnant global demand, weakening consumer confidence, low commodity prices and heightened policy uncertainty. These global economic risks weighed heavily on the growth prospects of many commodity-exporting countries – and we were not an exception.

During the NDP4 period the economy grew on average by 4.7% against a projected average of 6%. This growth is still, however, higher than the sub-Saharan Africa average of 4.2% during the same period. During the period between 2012 and 2016 the GDP per capita grew by 10%, from N\$42,000 to N\$47,000 and the poverty levels declined to 18% in 2016 from the levels of 28% in 2010.

Although one of the priorities laid out in NDP4 was job creation, the biggest development challenge that is still unyielding is that of unemployment. The latest labour force survey suggests that unemployment is on the increase, now standing at 34%. This calls for unorthodox measures in terms of our interventions. It is here where we need to be more innovative and assertive in finding solutions - even if it means getting rid of some of the things that might have worked well for us in the past. We are now busy with a comprehensive review of the achievements or lack thereof under NDP4 and it is our intention to finalize the review process before the end of the second quarter.

### **NDP5 principles and its main strategies**

NDP5 is influenced by not only local considerations such as the Swapo Party Manifesto and the HPP, but also by external ones such as those contained in the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. And just like with NDP4, NDP5 is characterised by two important principles – that of prioritization and plan ownership.

When it comes to prioritization, it is the case that there is so much that we want or need to do to advance our development goals. But it is also true that not all the things we can do will have the same impact on the goals that we need to achieve. Some of the activities have greater impact on the goals and those are the ones we should rather focus our attention on. We will also not have enough time and resources to do everything at once – hence prioritization helps us to focus our attention on the more important things and spare us from the tyranny of the urgent.

With regard to plan ownership, one of the most important lessons we have learned during the implementation of NDP4 is that a plan is an effective development tool only when it has a broad ownership from the various stakeholders. We also learned that plan implementation will be more effective only when the potential beneficiaries, especially those that might be required to implement the plan, have helped to shape such a plan.

It is for this reason that from the start of the process we made sure that as many stakeholders as possible were consulted. The consultation was extensive where we visited all the fourteen Regions with the view to afford the citizens an opportunity to provide their input. We also made it possible for the private sector and the non-state actors to give their input.

We did all this because we are convinced that most of society's biggest challenges can be resolved successfully only when the Government teams up with businesses, social entrepreneurs and citizens at large. We wanted to forge a strong partnership in our development planning process and in the process to ensure the necessary ownership of the plan. Thus we need a true partnership among all stakeholders that is based on mutual trust and rooted in our collective desire to prosper as a nation. Throughout the process it was our desire that at the end of the process we will have a plan that is relevant, realistic, practical, and most of all a plan which we all can identify with, support and work towards making it a reality.

The plan covers four key goals, namely to achieve inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth; build capable and healthy human resources; ensure sustainable environment; and promote good governance through effective institutions. The main strategies to deliver the key goals of NDP5 includes increasing our investment in infrastructure development; increasing productivity in agriculture, especially for

smallholder farmers; investing in quality technical skills; fostering value addition; and achieving industrial development, particularly through local procurement.

### **Plan implementation principles**

If there is any valuable lesson we have learned over the years, it is the importance of plan implementation. It is one thing to have a plan and it is entirely another thing to make sure that the plan gets implemented. Without an effective plan implementation, the whole planning process will be in vain and it will be just as good as not having a plan.

NDP5 is likely to face some implementation challenges – some real ones while others exist only in our imagination. I can think of two such challenges.

#### *Insufficient financial resources*

The first challenge that we are likely to encounter during the implementation of our plan is not having all the financial resources that we might require. When it comes to money there is a saying that says that “*empty pockets never held one back. Only empty heads and empty hearts can do that*”. The truth of the matter is that there will never be a time when we have enough money to do everything we need to do. However, this is something we can manage. There are two things we can do to manage the challenge of inadequate financial resources.

First is the need to always be more selective with regard to what we do with the limited financial resources. This calls upon us to prioritize our expenditure and investment in those areas where we are likely to have maximum impact on delivering the plan. It should also not be about what is urgent or what is popular with a certain section of our society. It should instead be all about what will accelerate our development agenda; it should be about what matters most and what is likely to create the prosperity the Namibian people legitimately expect.

Second is the need to emphasise the fiduciary responsibility towards the public. We cannot and should not lose sight of the fact that the financial resources we use are entrusted to us by the citizens for their benefits; and that it belongs to them. It is their legitimate expectation that we utilize their resources with diligence; and that the resources are used for their intended purposes.

Recently we have noted a public voice that is growing louder, suggesting that public financial resources are being abused. We cannot and must not ignore this public voice of concern and we cannot afford for it to grow deep roots in our society - for it to become a norm. It needs to be corrected and it is for us – especially those of us in the public service - to continuously improve the state’s ability to deliver public service. It is for us to resolve any conflict between our personal interests and our official duties and in favour of public interest – always acknowledging the centrality of the citizen. Let us all agree and demand

that all of us – regardless of rank or status in society – be held to the highest standard of integrity where corruption in any form is regarded as an abomination by all of us. It is the only way to cultivate the necessary trust between the Government and the citizens that is so indispensable for successful development.

### *Our determination to succeed*

The second challenge we will encounter is our determination to implement the plan. It is said that “*the difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man’s determination.*” I have no doubt that there will be those who will be sceptical about our ability to implement our plan. They will tell us that it cannot be done. They will say to us it was never done anywhere else before.

Our response to the cynics ought to be that of determination and perseverance. Our reply to the doubters cannot be to relent but to persist and be steadfast. We should know that there’s nothing worthwhile where there is no obstacles but that only our drive and our determination will help us to overcome those obstacles. Without courage and determination is like a rough diamond that want to be a gemstone but yet refuses to be cut and be polished – it will remain a rough diamond.

As part of our determination to implement our plan, we will also be better served by promoting a strong work ethic and a strong thirst for self-improvement. It certainly does not augur well for our future wellbeing when some among us start stoking sentiments of entitlement; when we are more concerned about short term gains that are likely to jeopardize our future wellbeing. Instead let us cultivate the ethic of deferred gratification in order for us to meet our long term goals.

### **Concluding remarks**

I am well aware that during the NDP5 period a number of real difficult issues will come our way - such as the issue of land distribution or the ownership in our economy. I also accept that it is not always possible for us to agree on everything, especially in societies like ours that are characterized by deliberate past socio-economic injustices. In such situations the temptation will be to find solutions in avenging the wrongs of the past, and in the process inadvertently igniting new hostilities among ourselves. While the status quo is certainly not an option for us on both the two issues, let us aim for solutions that are not prone to causing future resentment and ill-feeling among different groups of our society.

It is when dealing with such complex issues that we need to remind ourselves of our recent past where we have proven beyond doubt that we are capable of overcoming formidable challenges. It is during these times when we need to draw inspiration from our former and current political leaders how they successfully dealt with what seemed to be intractable political difficulties of the time.

Think about the difficult and complex political struggles that led to our independence. Spare a thought about the drafting of our Constitution that was completed in record time and at the surprise of many who did not give us a chance to succeed. These are successes that were brought about through the leadership of those who were focused and determined; leaders who were altruistic in their outlook and not self-seeking.

For us today it will be rather pointless to stand on the shoulders of giants - the likes of Sam Nujoma, Hifikepunye Pohamba and Hage Geingob - and only see what they saw. Not because we have better vision than them or that we are braver than they were; but simply because we have had the benefit of learning from them and that we are borne aloft on their towering statures.

When all is said and done, it all starts and ends with all of us as Namibians. Let us therefore, as individuals and as a collective, recognise the great potential that is within all of us to make a difference. Let us go and make NDP5 a great success it can be and give practical meaning to President Hage Geingob's vision of a Namibian House where we all feel at home. We owe this not only to ourselves but more importantly we owe it to the future generation of Namibians.

I thank you.