

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, MR. TOM ALWEENDO, AT THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATION'S DAY AND LAUNCHING THE UNITED NATIONS-NAMIBIA PARTNESHIP FRAMEWORK 24 OCTOBER 2013, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

The Right Honorable Prime Minister, Dr. Hage Geingob
Mr. Bandora Musinga, Resident Coordinator of the United Nation System in Namibia;
Honorable Members of Parliament
Excellences, Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Distinguished Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor for me to have this opportunity to say a few words on this day – the United Nations day. Today not only are we celebrating the UN day, we are also launching a new partnership framework between Namibia and the United Nations. The framework is for a five-year period, starting 2014. Today, therefore, serves as a day where we yet again reaffirm our enduring development partnership with the United Nations.

Namibia's relationship with the United Nations started way back before we gained our independence in 1990 – and as we all know the UN played a critical role in the process of our independence. Since independence the UN has been a significant development partner to Namibia. The development partnership framework that is being launched today is therefore not the first time we are having a formal cooperation framework with the United Nations. On behalf of all the Namibians, I would like to appreciate the role played by the UN so far in our development efforts.

Over the last 23 years of our independence we have achieved important milestones with regard to our development agenda. At the time of our independence many of our detractors did not believe that we were capable of achieving what we have so far accomplished. We are, however, conscious of the fact that a number of development challenges still remain. We still have too many Namibians who are looking for jobs that are not available; we still have a small number of Namibians who disproportionately own

the income from the economy. That is why our fourth national development plan is driven by a deep concern that things are not what they ought to be and by our desire to urgently construct a sustainable economic development.

While it is the case that we are the architects of a better Namibia, it is also equally true that we still need development partners on our journey. Hence the importance of the partnership framework we are launching today with the United Nations. In our dealings with all our development partners, including the United Nations, it is important for us to ensure that our development partnerships have real impact on our development challenges.

This is in the best interest of both parties. As the one who is being assisted, we certainly want to make sure that the assistance given to us takes us from one level of development to another. Ultimately we want to be in a situation where we no longer need external development assistance. Equally, our development partners should be happier when they see that their development assistance is making the desired difference.

What is unique about the new framework is its alignment with the NDP4 goals. Our fourth national development plan sets out our development priorities for a five-year period. As we know, the international flow of development assistance has been diminishing over the last few years. Specifically for Namibia development assistance has dried up, more so because of our classification as an upper middle income country. It is therefore necessary to ensure that we use all our resources in a targeted manner and also in those areas that have been identified as priorities.

Consequently, the new partnership framework is concentrated around the four NDP4 strategic areas. These are the improvement of the institutional environment in order to advance our competitiveness; the reduction of extreme poverty; the enhancement of the quality and access of public health services; and the improvement of education outcomes.

The UN will assist us in those areas through the strengthening of our national institutions' capacities to deliver quality services; and the promotion of standards and norms and accountability mechanism. The UN will also seek to harness multi-disciplinary approaches to development and strengthen knowledge generation and management.

Lastly, I must make a point or two about the development challenges ahead of us. One fact we need to recognize is that development is a complex matter. If it was that easy, you will not have more countries today that are designated as developing and fewer

countries classified as developed. Having said that, let us also know that our current development challenges - as complex as they are - are not pre-ordained to us. There is nothing that is natural to Namibia having too many young people looking for jobs they cannot find. There is certainly nothing that suggests that the level of poverty or the inequality we have currently is something we cannot change. These are all challenges that we can overcome, provided that we take full ownership and do what it takes to resolve them.

It is also necessary to remind ourselves that it will be imprudent on our part to believe that we can successfully address our development challenges, without the necessary tenacity to overcome them. We can conquer our challenges only when we – all of us - are steadfast in our beliefs that it is possible to overcome our current development challenges. Success will come only when we focus all our attention and energy on what is in our best interest as a country. It serves no purpose to be cynical and spend inordinate time and energy focusing on what did not work or what failed. Instead let us learn from our experiences and move forward with a sense of urgency.

I once again want to thank the United Nations, through its Resident Coordinator, for being our partner in development. We look forward to the implementation of the partnership framework we are launching today.

I sincerely thank you.

