KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NAITWAH,

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION,

ON THE

OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF AFRICA DAY,
25 MAY 2015

GIVEN AT WINDHOEK, KHOMAS REGION
Programme Director,
Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Katjavivi
Chief Justice Peter Shivute
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
His Worship Muesee Kazapua, Mayor of Windhoek,
Regional and Local authority Councillors
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are gathered here to celebrate the rich and diverse history of our continent and its peoples as we remember the formation of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963.

In 2013 we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary, of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) through an extensive programme across the country. That programme allowed Namibians to engage in discussions of the future of our continental organisation, the African Union.

Why do we continue to celebrate Africa Day? In the first place, we celebrate the launch in Addis Ababa 52 years ago by the Heads of State and Government of independent African states, and witnessed by leaders of African liberation movements, including SWAPO. Let me remind ourselves that our Founding President His Excellency Dr Sam Nujoma, attended the launch of the OAU
in Ethiopia, in 1963 in his capacity as then-President of SWAPO. Although Namibia was a colony then, we are indeed a part of that illustrious history.

Secondly, Africa Day allows us to celebrate significant political, social, and economic achievements since the establishment of the OAU.

Thirdly, Africa Day allows us to pay tribute to the heroes and heroines of our continent who sacrificed their precious lives to defeat colonialism and apartheid in the protection of sovereignty and human dignity. Africa Day also allows us an opportunity to reflect on the state of the continent, and the individual and collective roles each of us has to play for the realisation of Africa’s integration.

Over the many years that the African peoples were struggling for the total independence of Africa from colonialism and apartheid, our focus on Africa Day was the desire for liberation. Our mood was sombre. Now that we have achieved our main goal that is independence, our mood is jubilant. We must celebrate our achievements.

However, we must always remember that the African decolonisation process is not complete. The people of Western Sahara are yet to exercise their inalienable right to freedom and independence. We must continue to call on the Kingdom of Morocco to discontinue its occupation of Western Sahara.
Director of Ceremonies,

Two years ago we rejoiced in the African Golden Jubilee and its accomplishments. In January this year, the African Heads of State and Government adopted the Agenda 2063 which is the development blueprint for Africa and outlines our commitment to eradicate poverty on the continent. The AU Assembly in January also adopted the first Ten Year Plan which implements and makes practical the Agenda 2063. As Namibian we must play our part to contribute to the realization of Africa Agenda 2063.

I am convinced that as we put into practice the programmes of the Fourth National Development Plan and Ten Year Plan, we will begin to reduce poverty on our continent. It is important, therefore, to inform ourselves about Agenda 2063 and the Ten Year Plan. While on this issue, let me inform you that Cabinet has instructed the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation to publish these important documents for nationwide distribution and we are in the process of doing so.

Director of Ceremonies,

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in Article 4 (l) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The AU has also designated 2015 as the "Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”.

Gender parity is an important pillar to advance women’s empowerment and natural development. In its contribution to the
Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, the AU has identified women empowerment as one of the enablers. SWAPO Party adopted 50-50 representation of women in all party structures, in line with the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the AU Constitutive Act. Now we need to move this historic decision from party level to national level.

In the same sentiment, in June 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique, the African Union Summit elected five men and five women Commissioners. One of those elected as the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs was Advocate Bience Gawanas. The achievements of the Department of Social Affairs under her leadership were, amongst others, to mainstream poverty alleviation as an important agenda item of the AU. Amongst others, advocate Gawanas helped established the Campaign for the Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) which, when launched in Namibia in 2009, saw an immediate decrease of mortality rates among women giving birth in this country. I am pleased to say that CARMMA is also an important element in the empowerment of women in Namibia and in Africa, in general. Let me take the opportunity of echoing the slogan of CARMMA: “No woman should die while giving life”.

In the same breath I would like to take this opportunity to thank the former First Lady, Madam Penehupifo Pohamba for her active involvement with the Organisation for African First Ladies in Addis Ababa. Not only was she instrumental in setting up the
offices of this important organisation, she was also behind the launch of CARMMA in Namibia, together with Advocate Gawanas.

**Programme Director,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Together with the shift towards the empowerment of women we are witnessing the growing demand for peace, democracy and good governance in Africa. A few decades ago, as we looked across the continent, there were many dictators and coups d’etat. Today, while there remain a few hotspots, in general, Africans are increasingly democratic. The African Union has declared that unconstitutional changes of government are not acceptable and will not be recognised by the Organisation.

Namibia was elected onto the Peace and Security Council from 2014 to 2016. The Council is an important forum through which African governments take decisions on those situations which threaten our peoples and which cause loss of security, life and the destruction of property. Furthermore, we have seen the strengthening of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Last week, our country was privileged to host a Think Tank Retreat of the AU Peace and Security Council in Swakopmund.

We invited the Council to Namibia to demonstrate our commitment to peace and stability in the continent. At the Retreat we also celebrated Namibia’s important contribution to
the conceptualisation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 as a global framework for advancing the inclusion of women in peace and security. That Resolution ushered in a new era of gender inclusive peace building initiatives. It was adopted at the United Nations in 2000 when Namibia was a member of the Security Council. It was an important contribution to a change of thinking about women, peace and security.

As we celebrate Africa day, we call on all African to ensure that national differences should be solved through dialogue and consultations. Africa is a raising continent and has full potential, we can only take our people out of poverty when peace is realised on the continent.

I also would like to call on African young people, Namibians in particular, to initiate discussions on issues of concern to Africa in order to make a positive contribution to the development agenda.

**Programme Director,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As a great sport fan, let me wish the two teams who are about to demonstrate their skills here this afternoon, good luck. May the best team win!

In conclusion, let us build a united and prosperous greater Africa by 2063.

**I Thank You.**