



**REMARKS BY HONOURABLE**

**PROFESSOR PETER H KATJAVIVI, MP**

**SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**AT THE**

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF  
THE 6<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT**

**TUESDAY, 09 FEBRUARY 2016**

**PARLIAMENT GARDENS  
WINDHOEK**

*Check Against Delivery*

- **Rt. Hon. Saara Kungongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister;**
- **Hon. Margreth Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council and Mr Williams;**
- **His Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice**
- **His Lordship Petrus Damaseb, Deputy Chief Justice and Members of the Judiciary;**
- **Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Relations and Cooperation;**
- **Hon. Laura McLeod-Katjirua, Governor of the Khomas Region;**
- **Hon. Gurirab, Former Speaker of the National Assembly,**
- **Hon. Asser Kapere, Former Chairperson of the National Council,**
- **Your Worship Mr. Muesebe Kazapua, Mayor of the City of Windhoek;**
- **Your Excellences Ambassadors and High Commissioners and, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Distinguished Service Chiefs;**
- **Mrs. Rosemary Jane Katjavivi, my dear wife;**
- **Eminent Invited Guests;**
- **Fellow Namibians;**
- **Media Practitioners;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

On behalf of the Chairperson of the National Council, myself and Members of both Houses of Parliament, I would like to welcome you all to this joint session of the Official Opening of Parliament, 2016.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Honourable Loide Kasingo, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, for presiding over the first phase of the proceedings of this opening of Parliament.

**Your Excellency,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Article 63 (1) of the Constitution states that: *The National Assembly, as the principal legislative authority in and over Namibia, shall have the power, subject to this Constitution, to make and repeal laws for the peace and good government of the country in the best interest of the people of Namibia.* These functions are, *ipso facto*, also extended to the National Council under Articles 74 and 75 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. These Constitutional provisions include the oversight function of the two Houses of Parliament, which is an important dimension of our democracy. This provides for checks and balances between the three organs of the State – which is the hallmark of a true democracy. And ours, ladies and gentlemen, is a true and vibrant democracy!

In keeping with the our oversight role, we in Parliament fully support the President's call to use service agreements as a benchmark upon which senior officials should set targets and indicators of success upon which their performance can be monitored and evaluated. Indeed, this is something that needs to be replicated in all our various structures!

**Your Excellency,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a Constitutional requirement that each year at the opening of Parliament, the three organs of the State; The Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, are jointly in attendance. Equally, in terms of Rule 15(d) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the National Assembly, the President of the Republic, delivers an Opening Address to the Joint Session of Parliament. True to the democratic values that are ingrained in our parliamentary system, we are standing here today, to re-affirm that long-standing tradition.

**Your Excellency,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

There are three things I would like to highlight during this official opening:

- Firstly; why the chosen theme;
- Secondly; the coinciding of Opening of Parliament with Constitution Day; and,
- Thirdly; why meet in the Parliament Gardens.

The theme of this Third Session of the Sixth Parliament is, **“Striving towards Gender Equality and raising awareness against Gender-based Violence.”**

Given the unacceptable level of gender-based violence in Namibia, this theme will be our lodestar throughout the year. It is essential that the entire country is united against gender-based violence.

The theme is also very fitting in the sense that the governing SWAPO Party has, for the first time, a fifty-fifty gender representation in the National Assembly. This commitment to gender equality perspective is shared by other political parties in Parliament, and is equally shared by many parliaments around the world. We should be proud that we are ahead of many countries in the equal representation of women in Parliament. Now we need to deepen that commitment to other areas of society. I take this opportunity to present to this House, this sculpture right before us entitled **‘Helping Hands’**, by a local artist, Mr. Ismael Shivute, which is symbolising our theme of the year.

**Your Excellency,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are aware, the 9<sup>th</sup> of February is the Constitution Day of the Republic of Namibia, an important Day in the history of Namibia. This year the opening of Parliament has coincided with Constitution Day. It is the responsibility of Parliament to uphold the Constitution of the country, therefore this coincidence is timely.

**Your Excellency,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

One may wonder why we are meeting in the Parliament Gardens. The answer is obvious to many of us. With the increase in the number of MPs in both Houses of Parliament, it has become impossible to accommodate all of us within the National Assembly Chamber during events that bring both Houses of Parliament together. Nevertheless, we are pleased to hold this important National event within the premises of Parliament despite the obvious challenges we face in this regard.

Of course, this brings us to the need to have a larger and more appropriately designed Parliament Building. As has been indicated before, the proposed new Parliament Building will create a better working environment where both Houses of Parliament can work efficiently together. Furthermore, Members of the National Assembly have increased from 78 to 104, while those of the National Council have increased from 26 to 42. As a result of this, we also have a deficit of office space for the Parliamentarians and support staff, as well as a lack of secure vehicle parking slots. Therefore, we cannot escape the need for an appropriate National Parliament building in line with other key installations of vital significance to national governance in the country.

**Your Excellency,**

I now have the honour and distinct pleasure to invite you Your Excellency, Dr. Hage Gottfried Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, to deliver your address for the opening of Parliament.

Your Excellency, the President, please take the podium!