



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF
THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
FUNDRAISING GALA DINNER FOR THE ANNUAL OLUFUKO
CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

SATURDAY, 27 JULY 2019

OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL'S MAIN HALL

OUTAPI

OMUSATI REGION

***Check Against Delivery**

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Hon. Dr. Albert Kawana, Hon. Erkki Nghimtina, Ms. Febronia Nelago Shapaka
(Reg No 8208)

Director of Ceremonies, Councilor Modestus Amutse; Chairperson of the Regional Council and Management Committee represented by Hon. Leonard Shikulo;
Honourable Erginus Endjala, Governor of Omusati Region and other Governors present;
Your Worship, Honourable Selma Nelago Asino, Mayor of Outapi Town Council, and other Mayors present;
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Oswin Shifiona Mukulu, Elenga Enene IyAmbalantu;
Ootatekulu Aakwaniilwa noMalenga;
Distinguished Chief Executive Officer of Outapi Town Council,
Comrade Ananias Nashilongo;
Distinguished Captains of Industry;
Distinguished Members of the Olufuko Preparatory Committee;
Esteemed Father Albertus Sheehama and all Religious Leaders present;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to officiate at this year's fundraising gala dinner for the Annual Olufuko Cultural Festival, here at Omusati Regional Council's Main Hall in this fast growing town of Outapi.

This event marks the beginning of the 8th Edition of the Annual Olufuko Cultural Festival, which demonstrates consistency and growth of the festival.

Judging from the support that this event enjoyed during the last seven years, I have no doubt in my mind that today we will again succeed to raise funds for the official opening of Olufuko Cultural Festival that is scheduled to take place on Friday, the 23rd of August 2019.

However, as we are all aware, 2019 has been a very difficult year due to the devastating effects of a prolong drought our country has ever experienced.

Indeed, during this year our water supply has diminished due to the adverse effects of climate change already felt in Southern Africa and many parts of the African Continent and Namibia stands out as one of the countries that will be most hit by the effects of climate change.

As you know, about 80% of Namibia relies on groundwater as a major water source. But due to climate change, our country could experience prolonged years of drought that could deplete all our ground and surface water resources in the future. Should the effects of Climate Change continue to affect the whole of Southern Africa, major rivers like the Kunene, Kavango and Zambezi perennial rivers could also dry up and lead to untold suffering of our people.

Ironically, Namibia is blessed with about 1500 km of coastline along the Atlantic Ocean that provides us with unlimited water resource at our disposal.

In this regard, I recently launched the Seawater Desalination Research Pilot Plant at the UNAM Sam Nujoma campus at Henties Bay, a joint initiative of the University of Namibia and the University of Turku in Finland.

The question of abstracting seawater has been at the forefront of my thoughts for many years. For this reason, I would like us to adopt Seawater Desalination using Renewable Energy as the principal source of bulk water supply in Namibia in the medium to long term time frames and consider it as a priority national project.

At this juncture, allow me to thank our government for declaring a National State of Emergency with respect to a drought that hit several areas in the country.

Director of Ceremonies;

Decolonization remains a future that Africa must fight for, as it deals with decolonizing cultural, psychological and knowledge expressions from colonialism.

Cultural regeneration in Africa must begin with a return to our abandoned roots in order to harness our resources for the development and benefit of all Africans in all areas of our life.

For this reason, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted the African Cultural Charter in 1976 and the African Union (AU) replaced it in 2006 with the Charter for African Cultural renaissance. These two instruments provide for the renewal and development of the African Culture.

Now is the time to regain our own dignity and assert our humanity by self validating the integrity of our own identity as Africans. Let us therefore return to our abandoned cultural values and continue to celebrate Olufuko without fear.

Article 19 of the Namibian Constitution, under Chapter 3 on Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, provides for every Namibian to enjoy, practice, profess, maintain and promote their culture, language, tradition or religion.

Let us therefore inculcate in our young people the cultural norms and values of our people. In fact, this could be integrated in Social Science and mother tongue languages as part of the syllabus and curriculum at schools country wide.

This year we will be celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (commonly abbreviated as the CRC or UNCRC). This is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children.

The UN General Assembly's Resolution 44/25 adopted the Convention and opened it for signature on 20 November 1989. It came into force on the 2nd of September 1990, after it was ratified by the required number of nations. Currently, 196 countries are party to it, including every member of the United Nations except the United States of America.

Namibia was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention when I signed it on the 28th September 1990, six months after our country attained its freedom and genuine independence on the 21st March 1990.

This shows our country's commitment and resolve to protecting the rights of our children, unlike those who are alleging that we do not respect the rights of our children.

There is not a single child who took part in the Olufuko rite of passage who was forced into child marriage.

Let me make it categorically clear that initiation is not marriage but the rite of passage from childhood into adulthood. We are mindful of our young girls who are taking part in this process. They are our future leaders and have to be educated because education is the key to knowledge and power.

Article 15 of the Namibian Constitution under Chapter 3 on Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, guarantees our children's rights and freedoms to a name, to acquire a nationality, to be cared for by their parents and to be protected from economic exploitation.

We do not condone child marriage but encourage our children to finish their education. One can easily go and ask those children under the age of 30 who graduated at UNAM and the former Polytechnic of Namibia now NUST, who are doctors, engineers, scientists, pilots, teachers and nurses to mention but a few, thanks to our government's efforts.

I therefore urge all our children who are going to take part in Olufuko in particular and our youth in general to take their education seriously so that they will become future engineers, medical doctors, scientists, pilots, lawyers, teachers, agriculturalists, geologists, etc.

Marriage will come after they have finished their studies. Olufuko is only here to prepare them to become responsible citizens who are fully aware of their cultural norms and values.

Director of Ceremonies;

Tonight is another special occasion to raise funds in order to make the 8th edition of Olufuko Festival a huge success. I therefore appeal to all of us gathered here to dig deep in our pockets and make this year's fundraising event a success as we always did in the past.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Olufuko Preparatory Committee for yet another milestone of a well-organized event. Similarly, allow me to thank our business community and the captains of industry for their tireless and generous contributions, through their corporate social responsibilities.

In the same vein, it gives me great pleasure to present a vote of thanks to our traditional leaders, as custodians of our cultural norms and values, for gracing this occasion with their presence.

I do not want to forget all those who will facilitate our cash contribution and pledges tonight as well as the various performances by the traditional groups and all those who made this event a huge success.

Once again, let me reiterate that we shall overcome challenges when we work together as a team. As I always say: *“A people united, striving to achieve a common good for all members of society, will always emerge victorious!”*

Long Live Our Culture!
Long Live Our Heritage!
Bonne Appetite!