



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

FRIDAY, 23 AUGUST 2019

OLUFUKO CULTURAL FESTIVAL CENTER

OUTAPI

OMUSATI REGION

***Check Against Delivery**

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

Directors of Ceremonies;
Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the Republic of Namibia;
Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila and Mr. Amadhila;
Honourable Martin Andjaba, Acting Minister of Education, Arts and Culture;
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;
Honourable Erginus Endjala, Governor of Omusati Region and other Governors present;
Your Worship, Honourable Selma Nelago Asino, the Mayor of Outapi Town Council, and other Mayors present;
Comrade Gervasius Kashindi, Acting-chief Regional officer of Omusati Regional Council;
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councilors;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Comrade Ananias Nashilongo, Chief Executive Officer of Outapi Town Council;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Oswin Mukulu, Elenga Enene
Iyelelo Iyoshilongo ShaMbalantu;
Aasimanekwa ooTatekulu Aakwaniilwa nOmalenga goMalelo gopathigululwakalo mwa holoka mpaka;
Reverend Jesaya Hanghuwo and other Spiritual leaders present;
Distinguished Captains of Industry;
Ms. Liisa Shiindi, the Olufuko initiate and other initiates present;
Distinguished Participants and Exhibitors;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

This event marks the Official opening of the 8th Edition of the Annual Olufuko Cultural Festival, which demonstrates consistency and growth of Olufuko, since its inception 8 years ago. It therefore gives me great pleasure to officiate at this year's Annual Olufuko Cultural Festival, here at Outapi.

Allow me at the onset to give a historical context to my presentation, which I think is still relevant.

As a result of the legacy of slavery and colonization which culminated with the partition of Africa at the November 1884 to February 1885 Berlin Conference, organized by Chancellor Bismarck of Germany and King Leopold of Belgium and others, the first attempt to unite Africa came in 1958 at the Historic first All-African Conference when Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana signed an agreement with President Sékou Touré of Guinea Conakry.

In 1961 Dr. Nkrumah extended the Ghana - Guinea union to include Mali under President Modibo Keita at the Second All-African Conference, calling for a united Africa for Africans at home and those in the diaspora.

These leaders were later followed by other African Founding Fathers such as Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria and other leaders of 32 sovereign States of Africa who assembled in the Africa Hall on 25th May 1963, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and founded the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the African Union (AU).

I was honoured to represent SWAPO and the Namibian people at that meeting and I recall the statements made on the 24th of May 1963 by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania.

Indeed, the United Republic of Tanzania became the Mecca of the revolutionary spirit of Pan-Africanism with Mwalimu Nyerere himself forging us in the crucible of the struggle with the formation of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA). Mwalimu Nyerere also helped the African Liberation Committee to set-up its Headquarters in Dar-es-Salaam.

This Movement played an important role by uniting the African Liberation Movements such as UNIP of Zambia, KANU of Kenya with Jomo Kenyatta still in detention, FRELIMO of Mozambique, MPLA of Angola, PAIGC of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, SWAPO of Namibia and others.

As such, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere were visionary leaders and African Founding Fathers who put it fittingly that Africa must unite under one government, one currency and one army in order to realize her full potentials and fight against hunger, diseases and ignorance.

However, 135 years after the infamous Berlin Conference and 56 years after the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), it seems there are still some of our African brothers and sisters who did not decolonize their minds and still remain with a colonial mindset.

These are the people who are saying we are encouraging Child Marriage by hosting this cultural event. Let me once again make it categorically clear that initiation is not marriage but the rite of passage for girls from childhood to adulthood.

Permit me to explain that the word Olufuko comes from the word *Okufukala*. In Aawambo culture, when it rains, there are small insects that come from an anthill and start flying around the anthill until they break off their wings and return to the anthill. Aawambo people then used to say, *Eendhidhi or Eempuka otadhi fukala, nenge odhafukala!* Meaning, these insects have gone or transformed from one stage to another.

Against this background, we must learn from our past to inform our future because without the knowledge of where we come from, we would not know where we are going and a nation without culture is like a tree without roots. Why should we now listen to the same people who were saying circumcision is a bad African custom and are now admitting that they were wrong?

Indeed, culture is one of the important tools which we must use to undo the legacy of centuries of colonialism in Africa and it should be part of the curriculum at our schools.

It was precisely with this in mind that the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) meeting in Port Louis, Mauritius, from 2nd to 5th July, 1976, agreed to establish the Cultural Charter for Africa because colonialism falsified our history, systematically belittled African values and our languages.

Subsequently, in January 2006, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union met in Khartoum, Sudan, and adopted the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance which requires, among others, member states to commit themselves to protect and develop tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

For this reason, I am submitting to you today that Africa will never realize her full potential if we are not united as Dr Kwame Nkrumah and Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere correctly put it.

Let me therefore underscore that the African identity in us must never die. Let our diverse ethnic groups serve as our power of unity in diversity and regain our dignity and identity as Africans. In this regard, I fully support the idea of adopting Kiswahili as the Fourth Official language of SADC.

Director of Ceremonies;

This year we will be celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is a human rights treaty which, among others, sets out the social, health, and cultural rights of children.

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 regained 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.

Thanks to our government's efforts, today we have 98% of our children attending school from 40% before independence. We also now have the University of Namibia with a School of Medicine, a Faculty of Engineering, the School of Pharmacy and many others.

The detractors to Olufuko, apart from sowing seeds of division hatched from hatred, what vision do they have for this country?

Fellow Namibians;

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 continue to celebrate Olufuko, Omagongo, Oshipe and other cultural festivals without fear. I further would like to respectfully call upon all traditional authorities in our country to celebrate cultural festivals on annual basis in order to inculcate in our young people the pride and heritage of their cultures, for now and in future.

In this regard, I am reliably informed that this year more than 60 young girls have decided on their own will and with the consent of their parents to participate in Olufuko Festival. Nevertheless, we are mindful that our youth are our future leaders and have to be educated in order to become engineers, medical doctors, scientists, pilots, lawyers, teachers, agriculturalists, geologists, etc. because education is the key to knowledge and power.

I therefore urge the girls who are taking part in this initiation to finish their education as Olufuko is only here to help them become responsible citizens who are aware of their cultural values.

In conclusion, allow me to convey my appreciations to Former President Comrade Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba and our Prime Minister Comrade Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila as well as to our traditional leaders for gracing this event with their presence.

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

With these few words, I declare the 8th Edition of the Annual Olufuko Cultural Festival officially open.

Long Live Our Culture!
Long Live Our Heritage!
Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you.