



ADDRESS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND
FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION,**

**UNDER THE THEME: *“THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFEGUARDING
OMAGONGO ANNUAL FESTIVAL AND TRADITIONAL NORMS AND
CULTURAL VALUES” “OMUTHIGULULWAKALO NAGU SIMANEKWE”***

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE OMAGONGO CULTURAL FESTIVAL BY
H. E. DR. HAGE GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA**

SATURDAY, 27 MAY 2017

UUKWAMBI TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY HOMESTEAD,

ONAMEGA, ELIM

OMUSATI REGION

***Check Against Delivery**

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I am greatly honoured to have been invited to this auspicious occasion of Oshituthi shOmagongo or Marula Fruit Festival, here at Onamega pombala yoshilongo Sh' Uukwambi, moElim, Omutunda gwa Mbala.

Indeed, Omagongo Annual Festival has been inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during the 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage that was held in Windhoek, in 2015.

With this in mind, I have been requested to say a few remarks on the topic: "*OMUTHIGULULWAKALO NAGU SIMANEKWE*", in other words, on the importance of Safeguarding our Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Indeed, cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants.

In this regard, cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the Cultural Heritage of different communities therefore helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for others ways of life.

Director Ceremonies;

Our ancestors used to celebrate their exploits such as good harvest, including their achievements in the form of social gatherings. Such events also served a useful purpose of forging unity and cultural identity which have been bequeathed from generations to generations. One such event was Oshituthi shOmagongo or Marula Fruits Festival.

In addition, every year our people also used to celebrate a type of festival known as *oshipe*, where shortly after the harvest, the new grain is processed and an offering is made in order to thank Kalunga kaNangombe for not having brought illness to the people while they were cultivating their fields and most importantly for having sent the life-giving rains.

This year the Omagongo festival is also taking place at a time when Mother Nature has responded to our plea for generous rains to break the cycles of drought in order to soak the loamy and drought stricken soil.

Director Ceremonies;

Our cultural values and norms carry our African identity and that is why I would like to urge our older generation to ensure that we pass on what we know to the next generation.

Ohungi was an important and meaningful instrument in the life of communities to bequeath values and traditional norms to the younger generation.

When people in the household gather around the fire at **Olupale** for **Ohungi**, they recount collective memories and tell stories of hard work and bravery of our forefathers and grandmothers.

They also teach the youth how to lead responsible lives, how to behave and how to respect the elders. However, it is a pity that nowadays parents do not spend time with their children but rather utilize most of their time abusing alcohol at cuca shops and bars, especially the fathers.

For this reason, the younger generation is forgetting and ignoring the significance of embracing our culture because of lack of proper cultural guidance to know who they are, where they come from and where they are going.

If I am allowed to cite a few examples, one of the common practices in our culture is naming our children with at least one name in our mother tongues with a specific meaning, message or remembrance of an event of a hero/heroine. However, lately only foreign names are bestowed on our children.

It is equally disturbing to come across children who cannot speak their mother tongue. This practice must be discouraged because our mother tongue is a very important vehicle and transmission belt of our culture and our identity to the new generation.

Nonetheless, I am delighted that we are now reviving our cultural heritage and this Omagongo Cultural Festival and other such as the Totem Expo, Olufuko Cultural Festival and many others serve to practically demonstrate that historic national collective objective.

Allow me therefore to register my sincere appreciations and commend the Uukwambi Traditional Authority for hosting this Omagongo Festival with the aim of strengthening the value of nation building in cultural diversity, and thus enhance the promotion of unity, peace and stability among our citizens.

As I have stated on numerous occasions, a nation without culture is like a tree without roots. I would therefore like to encourage our traditional leaders to continue promoting our cultural heritage and instill these norms and values in our youth so that we can create a strong nation, because a nation that respects its culture and traditions will always create a strong national unity and identity.

Long Live Our Culture!
Long Live the Omagongo Annual Festival!
I thank you.