



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
NAMIBIA AND PATRON OF OLUFUKO FESTIVAL, ON THE OCCASION OF  
ITS OFFICIAL OPENING**

**OUTAPI  
OMUSATI REGION**

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**\*Check Against Delivery**

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

Members of the Media;  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my distinct honour to join you at this momentous occasion marking the Official Opening of the Fifth Edition of *Olufuko* Festival since it was launched in 2012 here in Outapi, in Omusati Region. Once again, I would like to thank you for gracing this occasion with your presence. This speaks volume of working together in the spirit of harambee, and pulling in the same direction to achieve our goal of celebrating our culture and tradition.

Director of Ceremonies;

Africa agenda 2063, which is a collective vision and road map for the next 50 years for the African Continent, commits to an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics.

The Arts and Cultural Industries have over the past few years emerged as one of the major sources of foreign currency, employment and a tool to assert the people's national identity. They have contributed immensely in attracting tourist inflows and in building the country's image.

For this reason, the promotion and development of the Arts and Cultural Industries can only enhance the capacity to create new jobs, generate income and increased inflows of foreign currency.

We have a rich cultural heritage built over a long period of time and we must therefore fight against the erosion of our traditions, values and norms.

Colonialism wanted to create a black man with foreign cultural traditions. Our rich cultural heritage, which withstood this onslaught, has to be promoted and preserved as it defines us as a people within the global community.

But now, some of our traditional values and beliefs seem to be disappearing owing to various factors, which include, urbanization, globalization and acculturation. The need to promote and preserve our cultural heritage has become more important in the face of the above factors.

Director of Ceremonies;

A people without a culture are a people without identity. A people's culture gives them the reason to live as it guides them to make correct and beneficial choices in life. Culture is of crucial importance in the development of a nation, and its integration as it ensures that economic development is in line with the country's social values.

For this reason, the African rites of passages such as Olufuko Festival mark the stages in a life of a community and individuals and give them a sense of identity and belonging.

We know that there are those afro-pessimists who dismiss our culture. For this reason, we went from the 16<sup>th</sup> century characterization of "people without writing" to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century characterization of "people without history and culture", to the 20<sup>th</sup> century characterization of "people without development" and more recently, to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century of "people without democracy". All of these are part of global designs articulated to deny us our rights and existence as human being.

In line with this realization, it is essential that we respect our traditional leaders as the custodians of our tradition in true African culture.

In this regard, I would like to thank our Traditional Leaders in Omusati Region, especially Tatekulu Oswin Shifiona Mukulu, being the Host of Olufuko Cultural Festival, for the commitment and invaluable support since the inception of this festival.

However, I should also reiterate here that in order to strengthen our position we should start to build physical infrastructures that will make Olufuko Centre relevant to the current and future generations.

I suggest that a museum be built at Olufuko Centre in order to conserve a collection of artefacts and other objects of cultural, historical, or scientific importance and make them available for public viewing through exhibitions.

Furthermore, we should improve the Olufuko Centre and add value to it in order to create new job opportunities for our people and fight poverty and hunger.

For instance, we need factories for marula oil, animal fodders, sorghum stalks including making belts (omakwamo) and sandals (oongaku dhoongombe) from cattle hides as our forefathers and mothers used to do. The aim here is for our youth to get an example on how to make some of these things.

I therefore urge our business people to partner with the Olufuko Preparatory Committee in order to establish these factories and add value and beneficiation to our natural resources as there is nothing pagan to make household utensils, clothing and adornments as some want us to believe.

Director of Ceremonies;

Whilst serving as a platform to de-stigmatise the girl's initiation ceremony, the festival also creates a conducive environment for the inhabitants to market their goods and services.

I am informed that this year the Preparatory Committee intends to make sure that local and regional exhibitors get priority to exhibit their products in order to live up to the motto of the cultural festival, which is the promotion of local and regional economies.

In this regard, the overall objective of this platform is to grow the local economy, create jobs and thus, in line with the Government's overarching aim, to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty in order to achieve our objectives as set out in our National Development Plan (NDP4) and Vision 2030.

I am also proud to hear that the Olufuko Centre's master plan has already been completed and there are plans, among others, to build the exhibition halls, and fundraising efforts in this regard are ongoing in collaboration with the Omusati Regional Council.

I therefore strongly encourage Businesses to use this platform in order to highlight the quality of the products they sell, and convince people why their value proposition are more competitive.

I also encourage both the private and public sectors to embrace all opportunities presented during the festival and showcase their products and services, while raising awareness and building their public profile.

In the same vein, allow me to thank all those individuals and corporate business entities who always come in large numbers and provide financial and material support to make the event a huge success. I have here in mind those who contributed a sum of three million Namibian dollars (N\$3 million) in the fundraising gala dinner held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

In conclusion, I urge our people to remain united, because as I always say; ***A people united, striving to achieve common good for all members of the society, will always emerge victorious.***

With these few words, it is now my honour and pleasure to declare the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of Olufuko Cultural Festival officially open.

I thank you.