



STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY COMRADE
DR SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND FATHER OF THE
NAMIBIAN NATION AND PATRON OF OLUFUKO FESTIVAL,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 4TH
EDITION OF OLUFUKO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

28 AUGUST 2015

OUTAPI
OMUSATI REGION

*Check Against Delivery

Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable Sophia Shaningwa, Minister of Urban and Rural
Development;
Honourable Minister and Deputy Minister present;
Honourable Ester Anna Nghipondoka, Deputy Minister of
Education, Arts and Culture;
Honourable Members of Parliament present;
Honourable Governor of Omusati Region, Comrade Erginus
Endjala and other Governors present;
Your Worship, the Mayor of Outapi, Councillor Matheus
Ndeshitila;
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Oswin Mukulu, Elenga Enene
lyelelo lyoshilongo ShaMbalantu;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Johannes Mupiya, Omukwaniilwa
gwaNgandjera;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Josia Shikongo, Omukwaniilwa
gwUukwaluudhi;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Herman Iipumbu, gwElelo
lyUukwambi;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Mathias Walaula, gwElelo
lyOmbandja;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Tjimbuare Tom, Chief of Vita
Thom Royal House;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Paulus Tjavara, Chief of Otjikaoko
Traditional Authority;
Distinguished Deacon Tatekulu Ambrosius Shalumbu and
other Spiritual Leaders present;
Distinguished Captains of Industry, Participants and
Exhibitors;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am indeed delighted to join you at this momentous occasion marking the Official Opening of the Fourth Edition of *Olufuko* Festival since it was launched in 2012 here in Outapi, in Omusati Region.

Allow me therefore to first and foremost commend the Outapi Town Council, in conjunction with the Omusati Regional Council, the Olufuko Festival Preparatory Committee, and the Local Authorities of Okahao, Oshikuku, Tsandi, Okalongo and Ruacana as well as their respective Traditional Authorities for their full involvement in this purposeful initiative of hosting the *Olufuko* Festival.

Indeed, Omusati region is unique in that it has nine traditional authorities, and thus, the Olufuko Festival serves as a unifying factor which brings people together from Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi, Ongandjera, Uukwambi, Ombandja, Ombalantu, part of Oukwanyama and two traditional authorities in the Kunene Region, namely Otjikaoko Traditional Authority and Vita Thom Royal House of Kaokoland.

I am also happy that other regions especially, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Kunene regions and beyond are represented here with a multitude of varied products and services on offer.

The presence of many traditional leaders who came to grace this occasion with us is a clear testimony of the commitment to the preservation of our culture and traditions as well as complementing our Government's efforts to promote national identity and national pride.

Director of Ceremonies;

Although the majority hail the revival of Olufuko as a positive contribution to restore our people's culture and heritage, some afro pessimist foreign oriented pressure groups are still busy stigmatising the practice under the guise that it leads to child marriage and prostitution.

Such ignorant views are promoted by those who refuse to educate themselves on values and virtues which define our people.

In this regard, I am happy to hear that since the inception of Olufuko Festival, all previous brides continued with their education, and some have since graduated.

In addition, some brides in previous ceremonies have clearly testified that the initiation of girls has strengthened their understanding on traditional chores, the roles of men and women in society, including sex education and issues of gender-based violence.

For this reason, those who argue that the female initiation ceremony teaches girls to accept subjugation and inferiority with apathy should know that *“a Nation without culture is like a tree without roots.”*

Let us therefore preserve our cultural heritage and let our people use their discretion to decide what is right and good for them in a bid to overcome cultural imperialism.

Against this background, I am happy that Olufuko Festival Preparatory Committee has reached an agreement with the University of Namibia (UNAM) to research on Olufuko and to produce a book which will shed more lights on this cultural practice, particularly in relations to how the missionaries negatively impacted on this cultural ritual.

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 their 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 conclusion, I urge our people to remain united, because as I always say;

Remember! 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 4th Edition of Olufuko Cultural Festival officially open.

I thank you.