



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM
NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE
NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OSHAKATI
TOTEM EXPO GALA DINNER**

SATURDAY, 25 APRIL 2015

OSHAKATI UNAM HALL

OSHAKATI

OSHANA REGION

***Check Against Delivery**

Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable Governor of Oshana Region, Comrade Clemens Kashuupulwa;
Honourable Members of Parliament present;
Your Worship the Mayor of Oshakati, Comrade Onesmus Shilunga;
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;
Your Worship the Mayors of various towns present;
Comrade Werner Iita, Chief Executive Officer of Oshakati Town Council and Chairperson of Oshakati Totem Expo;
Tatekulu Ndilimani Iipumbu, Chief of Uukwambi Traditional Authority;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Distinguished Members of the Business Community present;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good evening

I feel deeply honoured to have been invited to this auspicious occasion, which marks the Fourth edition of the Oshakati Totem Expo Gala Dinner.

Let me begin by thanking the host town and His Worship the Mayor, for the wonderful preparations and thoughtful arrangements made for this Gala Dinner.

Allow me also to convey my appreciation to the Oshakati Town Council for making the Totem Expo an annual event since 2012.

I am informed that this year's expo is held under the theme "*strengthening ties through culture*". This is indeed a befitting theme as the Oshakati Totem Expo is a unique cultural heritage concept, which aims to trace our people clans' identities and strengthen the ties among various Namibian cultural settings.

Similarly, the Oshakati Totem Expo represents yet another bold step by the Oshakati Municipality in spearheading the development of this town as well as enhancing its corporate identity by attracting investors and marketing the town as an ideal investment center and tourist destination.

Indeed, the concept of totems creates a sense of unity, cultural linkage and pride amongst our people as they embrace their cultural values through common totems.

If we look at the annals of what social anthropologists call live archives, we will see that all groups in Africa are inter-related. Thus, tribal divisions based on race were not known in Africa during the pre-colonial period. Rather, the division that existed among our people was based on clan organisation because their blood relations were defined on the basis of clans or totems.

To this day, many people in Africa are called and known by their clans' lineage honorific names, used as a respectful and proper way to address elders.

Against this background, in the wake of the recent disturbing news of the rise of xenophobia in some parts of the African Continent, I am convinced that totems will act as a shield against tribalism and xenophobia, because people from different tribes and countries, may belong to the same clan and totem.

I therefore condemn in the strongest terms possible, the recent xenophobic attacks against fellow Africans in South Africa and call on our African brothers and sisters to unite in the spirit of Pan-African brotherhood. *“Africa for Africans, those at home and those in the Diaspora”*.

Director of Ceremonies,

Currently, the challenges we face in our countries are clear products of moral degeneration and decay driven by lack of proper cultural guidance that would provide an understanding to the African youth to know who they are, where they come from and where they are going.

Our cultural values and norms, including totems, carry our African identity and that is why we should uphold this very important feature of our being.

I therefore strongly encourage the preservation of our cultural norms and values and commend the Oshakati Town Council for this noble initiative because I believe that a nation without culture is like a tree without roots.

For this reason, as many others put it, the nest of court historians should not be disbanded. Our poets, musicians, dancers and folk story tellers should not be silenced; the works of anthropology and the anthologies of African literature as well as the schools of African studies should not be closed down.

Director of Ceremonies,

I am informed that the business community and individuals are expected to showcase their products and services during the main event. This is very important because culture today has a direct influence in the way we interact with the world for trading purposes.

As the purpose of tonight’s Gala Dinner is to raise the necessary funds to ensure the successful hosting of the Oshakati Totem Expo 2015, I therefore appeal to all thee participants to open their hearts and contribute towards this noble and worthwhile initiative.

Once again, I thank the Oshakati Town Council for inviting me as a guest of honor for the Totem Expo’s Gala dinner.

Remember, *“A people united, striving to achieve a common good for all members of the society, will always emerge victorious.”*

Long Live Our African Culture!

I thank you