



TRIBUTE BY H. E. DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCASSION OF THE STATE FUNERAL IN HONOUR OF H. E. DR HAGE G. GEINGOB, NATIONAL HERO AND THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,

MEMORIAL SERVICE  
INDEPENDENCE STADIUM  
SATURDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2024  
14H00  
WINDHOEK  
KHOMAS REGION

**\*Check Against Delivery**

Program Director; The Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister;  
Madame Monica Geingos, Former First Lady, the Children, and the Entire Geingob Family;  
Your Excellency, Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, President of the Republic of Namibia and Madame Mbumba, First Lady;  
Your Excellency, Heads of State and Governments past and present;  
Your Excellency, Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President and Madame Pohamba, Former First Lady;  
Your Excellency, Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Vice-President and Retired Lieutenant General Ndaitwah;  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other Foreign Dignitaries;  
Allow me to stand by the Protocol already established;

We are gathered here not only to bid farewell to H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, the third President of the Republic of Namibia, but also to celebrate his heroic life and acknowledge his immense contributions to our country.

The sad news of his untimely passing struck a deep and solemn note when I received a call shortly after midnight on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 from H.E. Dr Nangolo Mbumba informing me that President Geingob is no more.

The last time I spoke to the Late President Geingob was when he called me a day before he went for medical treatment. On that occasion, I wished him a quick recovery and renewed strength to continue leading our country to greater heights of economic development and prosperity, through new unchartered fertile grounds, as a trailblazer as his name rightly suggests so.

As the nation collectively grieves this profound loss of a loving husband to his dear wife and a caring father to his children, our thoughts and prayers are with the Widow, Madame Monica Geingos, Former First Lady, the children and the extended Geingob's family and clan at this difficult time.

May you find solace in the knowledge that as a nation we share in your grief and join you in mourning our departed President Geingob.

Fellow Mourners;

It is difficult to eulogize and vividly capture in words what makes a life and the essential truth of any person. However, having heard the many tributes that have been written over the past three weeks, describing President Geingob as a freedom fighter, a Pan-Africanist and the Chief Architect of our Constitution and our Governance Architecture, I could not agree more with such well-deserved description as it is appropriate and fits him aptly.

Indeed, it has been profoundly touching to witness how the news of his untimely passing united our nation in grief. Similarly, the outpouring of love from all over the world is a testament to President Geingob's diplomacy of multilateralism when he used to say "*Namibia is a child of international solidarity and therefore a friend to all and an enemy to none*".

The theme of this State Funeral which reads; "*Inclusivity spells Harmony, Exclusivity spells Conflict*", is befitting as the Late President Geingob fervently advocated for our country's unity in diversity, reflecting our unique Namibian identity as opposed to our different ethnic identities, which he weaved together in a common tapestry through his mantra of; "*The Namibian House in which no one should feel left out*".

Against this background, he will be remembered as a unifier because he embodied a politics that was not divisive but unifying as he understood the immense power of unity and vehemently fought against tribalism.

For those of us who knew him, who worked alongside him, and those who loved him, it is unbearable that we will not see him again.

We may have lost the commanding presence of a gentle giant and a roaring lion with a heart of a lamb as well as the heavy accented tone of his towering figure, but his spirit will live on in the countless men and women that he mentored and trained over the years.

Fellow Mourners;

The first time I met the Late President Geingob was in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, when he joined us in exile in 1963, hitch-hiking to Botswana where he spent some times in a refugee camp and then proceeded to the then Tanganyika before he left for the United States of America in 1964 to study at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, when he was granted a scholarship.

Subsequently, he obtained a BA degree from Fordham University in New York in 1970 and a Master degree in International Relations from the Graduate Faculty of The New School in New York in 1974.

I appointed him, at the age of 23, as SWAPO Representative at the United Nations and to the Americas when he was still a student, together with the Late Comrades Theo-Ben Gurirab and Hidipo Hamutenya.

Being our Representative, he lobbied hard for the UN General Assembly's Resolution 2145 of 27 October 1966 to terminate the mandate of South Africa over Namibia and reaffirm our peoples' inalienable right to self-determination, freedom and independence.

In 1975, I campaigned for Comrade Geingob to be appointed as the Director of the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN), an educational body set up by the United Nations Council for Namibia in Lusaka, Zambia on 26 August 1976 to educate Namibians for roles in an independent Namibia.

In 1989, he was appointed by the SWAPO Central Committee to lead the SWAPO election campaign as Director and I handed to him the SWAPO flag during the implementation of the UN General Assembly's Resolution 435.

In September 1989, after nearly 30 years in exile, when I returned to Namibia, I was received by the Late President Geingob in Windhoek.

I recall that when I stepped down from the plane, he held high the same SWAPO flag I had handed to him on 18 June 1989 and handed it back to me.

After SWAPO's historic landslide victory in the 1989 UN supervised elections, the Constituent Assembly elected Comrade Geingob as its Chairman. His task was not only to conduct the proceedings but also to build confidence between diverse parties and previously warring enemies.

He showed us painstakingly that he was a skilful negotiator who was not afraid to seek for compromises for the sake of a bigger goal. Because of this, he was highly praised for his skilful handling of debates which proved instrumentals in ensuring that our supreme law was drafted in a record time of only three months and was unanimously adopted on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 1990.

I then appointed Comrade Geingob as our country's first Prime Minister to oversee the restructuring of the public service that was fragmented along racial and ethnic lines and to put up the new Governance Architecture of an independent Namibia.

He executed his role with diligence and with dedication. I was therefore not surprised when he was elected as Vice-President of the SWAPO Party and eventually the third President of the SWAPO Party and of the Republic of Namibia.

At this juncture, allow me to applaud the Namibian people for their calmness during the mourning period and for a seamless and peaceful transition of power where no gun shots were heard.

This is an indication that our democracy has matured and our state is stable because we have sound processes, systems and institutions in place, as envisioned by the Late President Geingob.

In this regard, allow me to wholeheartedly convey good wishes to H.E. Dr Nangolo Mbumba for his ascendancy to the highest Office when he filled the vacant position, for the remainder of the term of Office of the Late President Geingob, in accordance with the provisions of the Namibian Constitution.

In the same vein, allow me to extend my well wishes to Her Excellency Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah for her appointment as Vice-President of the Republic of Namibia.

Fellow Mourners;

In according a Hero's Funeral to the Late President Geingob, we are giving a richly deserved recognition to the Third President of the Republic of Namibia as a recipient of many International Awards, including the José Martí Order, which will be conferred on him posthumously by our Cuban friends and Comrades in arms with whom we shared trenches together with the Angolan FAPLA Forces until the final historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

The Late President Geingob is also a recipient of Namibia's Highest Award, when he was conferred the Most Ancient Order of the Welwitchia Mirabilis, and thus he deservedly enters the pantheon of Namibia's heroes and heroines.

We will miss his towering presence in the corridors of the UN, the AU and the SADC Summits as well as at State House as he is no more, but let me say to the young people of our country and Africa at large that they too can make his life's work their own.

The Late President Geingob hails from humble beginnings and the white minority colonial regime of South Africa thought that he will live a life of servitude because he was a child of farm labourers.

However, life had a different destiny for him to endure a life of service, but not to any master other than to the struggling masses of the Namibian people and rose through the ranks to the highest Office in the land of the braves.

Looking at the scope of his accomplishments and the admiration that he so rightly earned, he has shown us that he was a man of flesh and blood, a loving husband to his dear wife and a caring father to his children, and that is why we learned so much from him, and we can still learn from him as he earned his place in history through struggle and unrelenting spirit, taking risks on behalf of his ideals.

He taught us the importance of reason and arguments and the need to study not only those who you agree with, but also those who you do not agree with, as he used to say; “*You do not make peace with your friends but with your enemies*”.

He also demonstrated that action and ideas are not enough. No matter how right, they must be moulded into “*processes, systems and institutions*”.

He always demanded the best from everyone around him, as well as being supportive to get you to where he wants you to be. He was very attentive, teachable, a very consultative person, who placed great emphasis on dialogue. Above all, being truthful was very important to him.

As we bid the Late President Geingob a fond farewell at the end of his earthly journey, and when we have re-joined our daily routines, let us reflect on his distinguished career and what we can learn from him to ensure that the legacy he leaves behind has grown deeply grounded roots and good shade for future generations.

On behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma family and indeed on my own behalf, allow me to convey our deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to Madame Monica Geingos, the Former First Lady, the Children, the extended Geingob’s family and the entire nation for this profound loss.

As we walk through this dark cloud hovering around our nation, May we all be granted fortitude to overcome this bereavement and be left only with the most cherished and treasured memories of our beloved departed President Geingob.

May the Late President Dr Hage Gottfried Geingob’s legacy illuminates our path as we chart the future destiny of our country to greater economic development and prosperity!

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!