



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**KEYNOTE STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**AT THE**

**FIFTH GENDER AND MEDIA SUMMIT**

**UNDER THE THEME OF:**

**Empowering Women in and through the Media – Providing a Voice for Gender  
Equality**

**GATEWAY CONFERENCE CENTRE**

**KHOMASDAL**

**08H00**

**WINDHOEK**

**17 AUGUST 2016**



- Director of Proceedings
- Mr Stanley Similo, President of the Southern African Broadcasting Association, and fellow members of the Board
- Ms. Ellen Nanuses, Secretary General of the Association
- Director Generals and Chief Executive Officers of public broadcasters in the SADC Region
- Esteemed Speakers, Presenters and Participants to the Conference
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is indeed an honour for me to join you at the **Fifth Gender and Media Summit** under the theme of *Empowering Women in and through the Media – Providing a Voice for Gender Equality*. Allow me to start by commending the Southern African Broadcasting Association for its broad-based efforts to enhance professionalism and credibility of public service broadcasters and other broadcasters in the Southern African region since its inauguration in 1993.

The conference, I am informed, will look at initiatives to empower women in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, the SADC Protocol on Gender, the Gender and Media Progress Report and the Freedom of Expression of Women in light of the Windhoek Declaration, which commemorated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in May this year.

My hosts have requested me to give you my perspectives on the *importance of leadership driving key building blocks to sustainable development*. This topic is quite involved given that the year 2016 is also the first year of the 15-year life-cycle of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This topic reminds me of the words of an American politician, Marco Rubio, who said: *“Leadership can not be measured in a poll or even in the result of an election. It can only be*

*truly seen with the benefit of time. From the perspective of 20 years, not 20 days”.*

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH VIS-À-VIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Let me get going by pointing out that economic development is not only about achieving a high rate of GDP growth. In fact, World Bank’s 2016 World Development Indicators use a database of more than 1,300 time series to measure the state of development of countries using indicators on the environment, the economy, state policies and market performance, as well as global links. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda for SDGs is represented by 17 goals and 169 targets.

Whereas economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and a rise in GDP, economic development is a policy intervention targeted at the economic and social well-being of all people. Therefore, economic development can also characterise the sustained, concerted actions by policymakers and communities that promote the improvement of people’s lives through economic, social, political, and technological change. It is a transformation that certainly requires incomes to grow, but it is also about reducing poverty and inequality, building critical human and infrastructural capital, enhancing competitiveness, and safeguarding environmental sustainability, social inclusion, health, safety, literacy, amongst other initiatives. In addition, economic growth and development both depend on distributive policies, which mean the way society deals with vested interests of advantaged groups and social inequalities in their country. This element of inclusiveness is perhaps the most important factor in a sustained development process, and we are rudely reminded of this important fact in an increasingly uncertain global environment. We must be people-centred in crafting our developmental policies otherwise they will not stand the test of time. In this regard, national ownership and leadership take centre stage in a people-centred development model and I will elaborate more on this in the remainder of my intervention.

## **STRONG LEADERSHIP A PREREQUISITE**

### ***Director of Proceedings***

While economic development cannot be achieved through strong political leadership alone, and certainly not by only one political leader, however, strong political leadership is one vital element in economic development. In 2005, the World Bank Task Force on Capacity Development in Africa<sup>1</sup> came to the conclusion that “*political leadership is the primary driver of capacity development*”. Leadership will enhance governance and capacity building, while good governance and capacity building will, in turn, facilitate the emergence of new and better leaders.

Today’s leadership requires an in-depth understanding that our destiny as an emerging market economy is linked to leadership capabilities. The economic challenges we face, as well as the untapped opportunities, require a higher level of energy and a new set of insights from leaders.

With the regional economies registering sub-optimal growth, the need to develop strong managers and leaders who are prepared to deal with complexities in this uncertain terrain has become more urgent. The role of good leadership and management is a key ingredient for sustainable development, growth and prosperity of our region.

We are living in tough times, and the need to acutely improve leadership and management capabilities and to help create more ambitious, resilient organisations has become more urgent. We need leaders who are able to respond to the current economic slowdown and tackle challenges head-on. We need strong and capable leaders with an innate ability to exploit new business opportunities and improve business efficiency. With the understanding that executive leadership is critical for

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. 2005. *Building Forging Engaged Societies*. Report of the World Bank Task Force on Capacity Development in Africa. Washington DC.

organisational acceleration, it goes without saying that it is, therefore, essential that business schools and businesses collaborate to create executive education programmes, which will equip managers with the right skills and tools to flourish and lead organisations into the future and contribute towards growth and social welfare.

As mentioned before, economists have designed numerous theories of what are the key drivers of economic development and the factors are expanding by the day. However, let me focus on four high-level policy approaches that successful countries have adopted to achieve rapid economic development:

- a) Safeguarding political, social and economic stability – Without doubt, stability is perhaps the most important factor for economic development. The creation of that stable basis for development to kick off requires effective institution building. This involves crafting an institutional infrastructure for strategic planning, as well as monitoring and evaluation to measure progress with implementation. The problem is that we sometimes lack these institutions, or the leadership is hesitant to reform existing institutions. However, knowing the nature of the problem helps to specify the nature of the trade-offs necessary to move nations onto an appropriate reform path.
- b) Creating a learning and innovative economy – A learning economy values skills, ideas and technology, and lays the foundations for domestic innovation, which, in turn, is necessary for long-term sustainability based on total factor productivity. Workers without adequate education do not have the skills to take on high-productivity jobs or to adopt new technologies to increase the productivity in the jobs they have. This requires educational reforms on primary, secondary, vocational, and tertiary levels, encouraging research by universities and private sector, and harnessing of digital information using state-of-the-art information and communication technology (ICT).

- c) Stimulating entrepreneurship and organisational efficiency – Entrepreneurship must be complemented by strong managerial skills to keep the businesses going and to make the best use of existing as well as leading technologies. Protecting the rule of law and enforceable contracts and combating corruption create incentives to invest, to start up new enterprises, and to expand existing enterprises with high productivity jobs. This, in turn, stimulates new capital formation and entrepreneurial activity.
  
- d) Promoting competition and openness – Trade openness (as opposed to protectionism) is associated with higher growth and the adoption of new technologies. State monopolies, excessive regulations and standards, labour market rules affecting entry and exit of enterprises, and financial market constraints, can dampen competition if they are not carefully designed or controlled. We also need to create a conducive investment regime and improve our capacity for domestic revenue generation and expanding the tax base.

Let me conclude my brief submission on the topic of *the importance of leadership driving key building blocks to sustainable development*, with a citation of the great statesman, Nelson Mandela. He said: “*It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership*”.

## **ENHANCED TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### ***Director of Proceedings***

Namibia’s development aspirations, development outcomes and strategies to be pursued are clearly outlined in our Vision 2030, our 5-year national development plans, and lately the Harambee Prosperity Plan. We are also obliged to follow up at national, regional and global levels on progress made in meeting the SDG goals and targets over the coming 15 years. Progress in meeting our overall strategic goals and targets is regularly assessed through Performance Agreements for

Ministers and Political Office Holders. I believe our approach is highly transparent, since all documents pertaining to our planning, monitoring and evaluation processes are accessible to the public, while it also holds public office bearers accountable.

Speaking of transparency, it gives me pleasure to relate to this distinguished Summit that we have made good progress to finalise the Namibian ***Access to Information Bill***. This brings us in compliance with the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa adopted by the African Commission in 2002 to supplement article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which provides that "every individual shall have the right to receive information".

In addition, to promote transparency and accessibility of public information, we will expedite a gradual deployment of e-governance to cover all Ministries and public agencies and to give easier online access to public information.

## **GENDER, MEDIA, ICTs AND THE SDGs**

### ***Director of Proceedings***

I am pleased to learn that the Summit will, amongst others, also address strategies to bring about improved gender balance in the news media.

A recent Gender and Media Progress Study in Southern Africa (GMPS) shows that overall women constitute 40% of media practitioners – one percentage point less than in 2010. However, there have been improvements in women's representation in decision-making. The 2015 study shows that women constitute 30% of the Board of Directors (compared to 28% in 2010); 35% of top managers (compared to 23% in 2010) and 34% of senior managers (compared to 28% in 2010).

I am also informed that the Summit will propose ways in which the media in the region can achieve gender equality using the Goal 5 of the SDGs.

The SDGs project a world where we can achieve gender equality and empower women and girls; where all women and men contribute to and benefit equally from development; where women and men of all ages can equally access information through media including online platforms for self-expression, including cultural expression and contributing to peace.

## **CONCLUSION**

Indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, if women are to share in the growth of our economy, the issue of gender equity will have to be more firmly integrated into all Government national plans, policies and strategies. But, the integration of gender equity into our plans alone cannot ensure and/or guarantee that women will share in the growing economies of our region. The integration of gender equity should be complemented by the enthusiasm and diligent commitment of all relevant stakeholders and, in particular, women entrepreneurs and technologically literate women (or techno girls).

I firmly believe that women's empowerment and economic development are closely interrelated. On the one hand, development itself will bring about women's empowerment. Empowering women, on the other hand, will bring about changes in decision making, which will have a direct impact on development. Inequity and inequalities stand in the way of many nations reaching their full potential. Inclusion and equity are good things in their own right, but they also have significant development spin-offs in offering the opportunity to overall success. If, for example, the female half of the population doesn't have the same opportunities as male counterparts do, that is not only opportunity denied to women to meet their full potential, but actually to the whole nation.

On this note, let me conclude with the inspiring wisdom of Kofi Annan who said: "Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a

precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

I thank you.

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