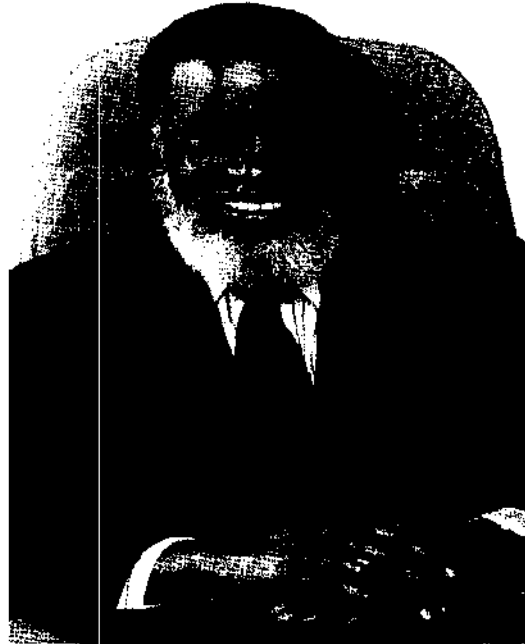




REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
SAM NUJOMA, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AT THE
OCCASION OF THE 59th SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

22 SEPTEMBER 2004

NEW YORK

**Mr President,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Mr Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,**

It is a source of pride for Africans and our friends alike to see you, Mr President, presiding over the demanding business of the 59th Session of the General Assembly. You bring to this high Office immense wisdom and experience you have gained over the years, as a dedicated public servant and Cabinet Minister of the Republic of Gabon. You hold in your capable hands the mandate given to you by the Charter of the United Nations to give a new impetus to promote peace, human security and sustainable development throughout the world. I congratulate you warmly and pledge Namibia's full support to you personally and also to your Bureau.

You will recall, Mr President, the renewed spirit and firm resolve for change demonstrated by the African leaders in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. In transforming the OAU and launching the African Union and its development arm, NEPAD, there we stressed a new beginning for Africa. We also reiterated our commitment to embrace the African Diaspora in the consolidation and the transformation of our continent.

I am, therefore, delighted to note that the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte hails from a sister country of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean. I pay tribute to him for his excellent and successful service to the United Nations in pursuit of a better world characterised by peace and cooperation among nations, peoples and governments.

We are gathered once again at the United Nations Headquarters to reaffirm the precious ideals, principles and purposes of the United Nations and to make them ring true in action towards ending armed conflict, saving our children and investing resources for eradicating hunger, disease and poverty in the world.

Our illustrious and hardworking Secretary-General, my Brother Kofi Annan of Ghana, has left no stone unturned in his tireless efforts by exerting his authority in conflict situations and insisting on the centrality and legitimate responsibility of our Organisation to be on the side of the poor, the weak and the needy in the world, as we search for lasting solutions to the old and new challenges confronting humanity.

Again, in his annual report the Secretary-General is reminding member States of the terrible state of the world and offering real alternatives in favour of conflict resolution, peace-keeping, financing for social development and mitigating the effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. I commend the Secretary-General and support his worthy interventions and effective leadership.

During the 1999/2000 period, Namibia had a rare honour and privilege in serving our Organisation in dual capacities. My country served both as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and simultaneously as President of the 54th Session of the General Assembly, whose task, amongst others, was to prepare for the Millennium Summit and the adoption of the historic UN Millennium Declaration.

I was thus called upon to co-chair that Summit together with my Finnish counterpart, Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen. At that memorable Summit, the largest gathering ever of the world leaders unanimously endorsed far-reaching millennium

development goals and targets. To date, we all remain bound by that historic and far-reaching commitment.

UN Member States collectively pledged, among others, and by 2015, to:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality and improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop global partnership for sustainable development

By endorsing these development goals and targets, our Governments have made a serious and irrevocable commitment, through reliable public policy interventions, to care for millions of our children all over the world, who are asking for nothing more than love, protection and a peaceful childhood.

In this undertaking, we cannot ignore the ever widening income gap between the rich and the poor, between the industrialised North and the developing South. This situation represents a dangerous time bomb which the world can ill-afford to let take its own course. Our planet earth is too small to perpetuate the unacceptable co-existence of abject poverty and abundance of prosperity within its fold. We will only deal with this situation effectively, when we promote mutually beneficial commercial trade between the North and South within the framework of North-South and South-South Cooperation.

I would like to point out for emphasis that the Millennium Development Goals and Targets by themselves are only declarations of intent by States and promises on behalf of our Governments to translate them into sustainable policies, buttressed by adequate financial and technological resources, to make a real difference in the lives of our peoples.

For its part, Namibia has, in cooperation with the relevant UN Agencies, adopted our country-wide programme to implement the Millennium Development Goals and Targets. We, therefore, in addition to our own resolve and capabilities, call upon the United Nations and other development partners to assist our national efforts of nation-building, reconciliation and transformation.

My visit to the United Nations and the United States of America, at this time, is significant to me for a number of reasons. Recently, His Excellency Mr Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil and I exchanged constructive and forward-working visits. During the discussions we held in our respective countries, we identified specific areas of mutual concern, and we were encouraged to share those insights with other world leaders in the context of the current Session of the General Assembly.

Towards that end, President Lula da Silva took an initiative to bring few of us, in the company of the UN Secretary-General, to reflect seriously on the worsening state of the world and search for practical and timely solutions to the pressing problems of poverty, HIV/AIDS, organised crime and the plight of the world's children, to name but a few. We held meetings here at the United Nations and reached a pragmatic plan of action in which we are urging the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, the

Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to urgently consider and approve, as the basis for collective action by States, Private Sector, Labour and NGOs.

The world has enormous resources to fight and defeat poverty, hunger and under- development. We must insist, in this process of dialogue, on a realistic balance between the total world spending on war and weapons technology, on the one hand, and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and Targets, on the other. What is required is political will and compassion on the part of world leaders. The debate on weapons of mass destruction must not divide UN member States, but should lead nations to find and enhance peaceful co-existence and cooperation. Developed countries should consider their support to the countries of the South, as an act of enlightened contribution to regional and global stability, and as an purposeful incentive towards encouraging increased mutual beneficial commercial trade and investments among all nations.

Mr President,

I mentioned earlier the significance of my presence at the current Session of the General Assembly. Attached to my attendance is a long history, a personal journey and an unbroken link between Namibia and the United Nations over many years. I entered this building for the first time in 1960, as a Petitioner before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

That was my first humble, but determined emergence on the diplomatic scene. I have spent many years since then attending various United Nations debates and conferences that dealt with decolonisation, Namibian negotiations on self-determination and independence, and during those many years, I addressed some of

the Security Council's meetings in respect of the Question of Namibia, starting in 1971, as the first Freedom Fighter accorded such an opportunity.

I got to meet and know many distinguished statesmen, diplomats, fellow petitioners and eminent international civil servants in New York, Geneva, Paris and at other important conference venues. My Namibian colleagues and I will always treasure the advice, support and solidarity we received from the UN family and friends the world over. Many friendly nations of the world stood firm and rendered moral, material and diplomatic support to the noble cause of our Freedom and Independence.

Many world renowned revolutionaries, particularly in the African Continent rendered selfless sacrifices, not only towards the independence of our motherland, but to free the African continent from colonial exploitation and apartheid colonialism.

I therefore would like to pay homage and salute the visionary leaders of the African Continent who shaped the vision of African unity and the continent's emancipation from the yoke of colonialism, foreign occupation and apartheid. Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the First President of Ghana; Ahmed Ben Bella, the First Prime Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria; Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt; Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania; Dr Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia; General Murtala Muhammed of Nigeria, Dr Antonio Augustinho Neto of Angola and other African Leaders and Pan-Africanists.

We salute them for their dedication and support to the fight to break the chains of colonialism and the historic quest to free the African people from the bondage of foreign occupation.

Namibia's protracted liberation struggle was bloody and bitter. It demanded untold suffering and sacrifices of our people inside the country and the rest of us who were forced to spend many decades in exile. During the years that followed, the international community recognised the legitimacy of our just cause for freedom, equality and justice, and endorsed the Namibian people's struggle, led by our National Liberation Movement SWAPO.

Namibia became the principal legal responsibility of the UN itself and a unique partnership was forged in that way for a common cause between this world Organisation and the struggling Namibian people, that endured for thirty daunting and eventful years.

On 21 March 1990, I was sworn in as the President of the Republic of Namibia, by His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, the then Secretary-General of the UN. Later in September 1990, I returned to the United Nations to address the General Assembly, to thank on behalf of my people, the United Nations for a special partnership and principled support in various forms that eventually gave birth to the 160th Member State of our Organisation.

I also paid tribute to those UN civil servants and force members of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) who died in the course of their duty in Namibia. It was the NGOs, Church Groups, a handful of UN staff members, and concerned diplomats from friendly countries who had made my initial access into the United Nations premises possible. I sincerely thank them all. The Namibian people salute them and will forever honour the memories we shared.

Amongst the many Organisations, I wish to particularly single out and pay deserved tribute to the Africa-American Institute, for its exceptional dedication to provide and expand educational opportunities to Africans across our continent, including Namibians, both before and after our independence. I join other African leaders in welcoming AAI's 50th Anniversary Education Partnership Campaign, which I wholeheartedly commend for global support.

Mr President,

By my own decision and in compliance with our national Constitution, I will be serving as President of our Republic only until 20 March 2005. I will then bid farewell to my State duties and public functions. I am, therefore, looking forward to a less hectic life, but will remain a fully engaged private citizen.

I intend to undertake certain causes that are dear to my heart and be ready to assist national, regional and international efforts, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, people with disabilities, food production through agriculture and infrastructure development.

At the beginning of my statement, I referred to the launch of the African Union and NEPAD and Africa's resolve to pursue a new beginning. I now want to add another crucial dimension of gender equality and empowerment of women in decision-making, resource mobilisation and election to decision-making institutions and structures nationally, regionally and internationally.

Our sub-regional body, SADC, had spearheaded that new thinking and the African Union is implementing our progressive and forward-looking agenda.

The recent inauguration of the Pan-African Parliament, which will be hosted by South Africa, is a litmus test for Africa's renewal and we must not delay nor fail in our joint venture to achieve the total integration of our continent.

Recognition and full participation of women in decision-making are fundamental to Africa's transformation and industrialisation. With that in mind, we proudly acknowledge the election of Mrs Gertrude Mongela of Tanzania, who became the first President of the Pan-African Parliament. There is no shortage of competent and experienced African women to lead the way forward. The African Union Commission is made up of female Commissioners from various African countries. Africa must place high on the agenda the involvement and support of women as leaders and role-models.

From the days of the OAU, the United Nations and Africa have been true partners. In the process they offered each other mutual support and ever increasing cooperation in the vital fields of conflict resolution, peace-building, humanitarian relief and social development. Now that the African Union has established its Peace and Security Council, as well as NEPAD, we envisage a wider scope for cooperation and resource mobilisation to plan for the prevention of armed conflicts and human suffering in Africa.

Without concrete and sustained peace and stability, Africa's economic growth and poverty eradication will remain unfulfilled dreams. They will make our promises empty and a betrayal to the African masses. We must act collectively to nurture their hopes and make their dreams come true.

Mr President,

From this podium and at various other venues, Namibian leaders and delegates have repeatedly argued for our beliefs in a peaceful, democratic, transparent and just international system. We have advocated for such a system that will bring the poor and the rich of the world together to save lives of millions and pursue sustainable development and human security as our common calling.

To achieve that noble end, the United Nations itself and in particular the Security Council cannot continue operating on the basis of undemocratic structures of representation and decision-making. The overall reforms that have already been agreed upon should be implemented without delay. Political will is what is lacking. We can do better and now is the time. Africa needs its place as a key role-player in this world body and now is the time for that to happen. Africa demands its share of responsibility.

Mr President,

The current war in Iraq has divided the world, causing enormous human suffering and undermining socio-economic well-being of countries not only in the Middle East, but world-wide. We too in Africa feel the negative impact of that situation. Millions of people in Africa, especially in Sudan and the Great Lakes Region continue to experience untold suffering due to conflict and war. Regrettably, there is widespread distrust and the danger of nuclear proliferation makes the situation even more alarming for everybody.

The UN Settlement Plan for Western Sahara must be implemented. The inalienable right of the Palestinian People must be realised. We owe it to them. Namibia reiterates its call

for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the US embargo against Cuba, in order to allow the people of the two countries to co-exist peacefully.

The global security situation has also been worsened by the emergence of mercenaries and private armies which have now become the world's biggest political challenge. Mercenaries are amassing arms and launching military offensives against legitimate governments to support companies who scramble for oil, gas, diamonds and other world's precious resources. The African continent has not been spared by these misfortunes.

The United Nations is the ideal place where solutions should be found through multilateral negotiations and compromise. The Secretary-General needs unwavering support from all member States to play an effective role in the Middle East, Africa and in other conflict situations around the world. Whether fighting poverty, HIV/AIDS or terrorism, the international community must act as one. We must stop the looming catastrophe and suffering. Instead, we must promote human security and prosperity for all.

Mr President,

We are honoured that, in our sub-region and in the rest of Africa, Namibia stands for peace, unity, stability and for economic partnership and trade relations for a win-win outcome. Our Constitution is the primary guide we rely on in these pursuits.

My Government is implementing Vision 2030 and the successive national development plans, through stages, with a view to further enhance economic growth and improve the living conditions of our people, including by transforming our villages

into viable socio-economic participants. Poverty, education, healthcare, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, skills development, empowerment of women, protection of children and assistance to people with disabilities, are among the urgent national priorities covered in those people-centred Government interventions.

We carry them out in partnership with business, labour and those representing the civil society. Happily, the competent UN Agencies and international experts based in Namibia are working closely with my Government to bring prosperity and transformation in Namibia and the sub-region. When we succeed, Africa will benefit and the world too will acknowledge the shared rewards of development partnerships.

Mr President,

I conclude these remarks with the confidence that through the UN, humanity will triumph over the challenges that confront us so that the future generations will live in peace, free from the scourges of war, insecurity and diseases.

I believe strongly that our common goals and objectives are achievable because a people united, striving to achieve a common good for all members of society will always emerge victorious.

Long Live the United Nations Organisation!

I thank you.