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STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBAMBA,
PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

AT

**THE 61ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK
20 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Your Majesties
Your Excellencies
Mr. Secretary-General
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, at the outset, Madam President, to congratulate you on your well-deserved election to the Presidency of the 61^d Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that with your wisdom and experience, you will steer the proceedings of our August Assembly successfully. May I also express our profound appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden for his excellent work during the 60th session.

In the same vein, we salute the United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan for his dedication and commitment to the work of the United Nations.

My delegation would like to pay special tribute to him for his distinguished leadership and remarkable contribution to the United Nations, taking into consideration his imminent departure at the end of a long, dedicated and brilliant career in the service of our Organisation. Mr. Secretary-General, under your leadership, the United Nations has recorded significant achievements. You ably laid the foundation for Member States to make further progress, especially with regard to the reform of the United Nations. We will carry on with this task, bearing in mind your vision of sustained global cooperation among States. Allow me to wish you the very best in your future engagements.

Madam President,

We are gathered here to reaffirm our faith in the United Nations and to recommit ourselves to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

Today, the world needs a stronger United Nations and effective multilateralism that reflects the current realities. This is the only way humanity can respond timely and without hesitation to the global challenges that we face.

We fully support comprehensive reforms of the United Nations as proposed by the Secretary-General. The reforms should aim at strengthening the organisation and making it more efficient, effective and responsive to the needs of all its members. We further attach great importance to the strengthening of the role and authority of the General Assembly as the main deliberative and policy making body, whose relationship with other principal organs should be placed in a fitting context so as to ensure cooperation and respect for their roles as provided for in the UN Charter.

Madam President,

My Government believes that reform and expansion of the Security Council are essential. The African continent deserves to be fairly and equitably represented in the Security Council. This is not too much to ask.

During the World Summit in September last year, we reaffirmed our commitment to the Millennium Declaration which was adopted more than six years ago. The Summit Outcome has reiterated our commitments to the implementation of the decisions made during previous conferences and summits. My Government therefore, appreciates the work done

under the guidance and able leadership of H.E. President Eliasson in the realization of the Summit decisions.

The fruits of those efforts are visible for all of us to see, as they culminated in the inauguration of the Peace Building Commission; the creation of the Human Rights Council; the creation of the Central Emergency Response Fund and the establishment of an Ethics Office. We also welcome the accomplishments made in the area of management reforms.

People around the world have high hopes that these newly created instruments will achieve the specific mandates set out for them. We, therefore, encourage all member States to continue in an open and transparent manner to finalise the review process.

Madam President,

Namibia attaches great importance to the global development agenda. We are therefore concerned about the slow pace at which this essential matter is being handled and about the lack of adherence to the commitments in line with the Millennium Declaration. In this regard, I urge all fellow leaders to stand together in finding effective solutions to push back the ever encroaching frontiers of poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance.

Madam President,

The African people know that they must take a lead in resolving problems and challenges on the continent. In these endeavours, they need to form effective partnerships with the international community. I, therefore, welcome the commitments made by the G8 last year in Gleneagles, Scotland, to consider increasing development aid to Africa, to cancel the debts owed by the poorest countries, and to promote universal access to anti-retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS, by the year 2010.

We reiterate our call for co-operation between the United Nations, its specialised agencies, the African Union and its sub-regional organisations dealing with economic and social development on the continent. We continue to emphasise the importance of ECOSOC as a central intergovernmental body for promoting a more integrated approach to global peace and development.

Madam President,

Namibia welcomes the Presidential and Parliamentary elections that were recently held in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which most international observers agree, were conducted in a peaceful and transparent atmosphere.

We urge the United Nations and the international community at large to continue supporting the people of the DRC during this crucial democratic transition.

The situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan is cause for serious concern. The African Union through African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), with the assistance of the international community, has made efforts to bring peace to that region under exceptionally hard conditions. We commend the African Union Special Envoy, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, for his tireless efforts in bringing the parties to an agreement. We urge all the parties to respect their commitments. We welcome the visit to the Sudan by the UN Security Council team in June this year and the recommendations they have made. Namibia looks forward

to an urgent and smooth transition from African Union Mission to a United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Darfur in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1706 (2006). We urge the government of the Sudan and other parties concerned, to accept this transition, which we believe will be in the best interest of the people of the Sudan in general, and those of the Darfur Region, in particular.

Madam President,

We would like to join other countries around the world in expressing our concern about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons which remains a menace to humanity. Their proliferation compromises peace and security, They also pose serious challenges to law enforcement agencies around the world.

The Second Continental Conference of African Governmental Experts on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons took place in our capital city, Windhoek in December last year. It adopted an African Common Position which was presented to the Review Conference on progress made in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in July 2006, here in New York. We believe that more needs to be done and Namibia will continue to call for a binding international instrument on the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons.

Madam President,

We are concerned that the question of Western Sahara remains unresolved. The inalienable rights of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence must be upheld and respected as stipulated in the relevant resolution of the United Nations. We, therefore, call for the urgent implementation of all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, with the aim of holding a free and fair referendum in Western Sahara.

Madam President,

Namibia is also deeply concerned about the ongoing suffering of the people of Palestine. We wish to reaffirm our full and unequivocal support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self determination and national independence. In this context, we appeal to the United Nations to assume its full responsibility by implementing all its resolutions and decisions on Palestine, with immediate effect and without precondition.

Sadly, the people of Lebanon have once again been subjected to war and indiscriminate bombing, which has caused enormous death and suffering of innocent people, including children and the elderly and severe damage and destruction to property and infrastructure. It is against this background that we call for the immediate and unconditional implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) and appeal to the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Lebanon in dealing with the resulting humanitarian crisis.

Madam President,

For many years now, the majority of member States of this Assembly have expressed concern over the continuous economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba which continues to cause severe hardships to the Cuban people.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia upholds the principle of peaceful co-existence of nations, fair and open trade among nations. Thus, we call on all Member States, in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, for an immediate and unconditional lifting of the embargo against the Republic of Cuba, as called for in General Assembly Resolution 60/12 and many previous resolutions.

Madam President,

In June 2006, the General Assembly convened a High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. The meeting served as an important opportunity for Member States to assess progress and further strengthen and expand responses against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Before that High-Level Meeting, the African Union adopted an African Common position at a Special Session in Abuja, in May 2006. Namibia is fully committed to the Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. We are equally grateful to the support shown in respect of the call to mobilize resources and to forge a stronger partnership in confronting the pandemic. We stress, therefore, the need for universal access and affordability of a comprehensive service packages for all those infected.

Madam President,

In our ongoing efforts to reform the United Nations, strengthen it and make it more effective and responsive to today's challenges, namely, poverty and hunger, HIV/AIDS pandemic, civil wars and the war on terror, we should place human lives and human dignity at the center of all our efforts.

The reforms we have embarked upon, should be seen as processes, therefore, they should be undertaken in a spirit of mutual understanding and with a sense of collective ownership. Let us, therefore, strive to re-energise the United Nations and make it an organisation we can all be proud of, so that we can make planet earth a common home for all humanity to live in peace, stability and prosperity.

I thank you.