



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**MINISTRY OF POVERTY ERADICATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE
DIRECTORATE OF PLANNING AND STRATEGIES**

GENERAL STAFF MEETING

Keynote Address

By

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Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare

30 JANUARY 2019

*Reverend Aino Kapewangolo, Honourable Deputy Minister,
Ms. Esther Lusepani, Executive Director/Permanent Secretary,
The Management Team,
Dear Staff Members,
Members of the Media
All protocol observed,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Good Morning,

It is appropriate that we hold our first General Staff Meeting as a team to welcome one another to the prospects of the New Year, take stock of the growth we made over the past year, the opportunities and the challenges we encountered and how best we can perfect our approaches to optimally deliver on our goals.

We say goodbye to 2018, a challenging year which only saw marginal improvements in the domestic economy and through fiscal and monetary adjustments maintained economic sustainability and stability. We are now presented with the opportunity to correct the shortcomings of 2018 with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.

I would like to use this platform to welcome all new staff members that have recently joined our young, vibrant, dynamic Ministry, including our very own Executive Director (Permanent Secretary) who joined us in August 2018. We hope with new staff members; new ideas will also come to the fore to tackle some of the challenges we as a Ministry face in executing our mandate.

To the new staff members who may not be fully aware of the important role the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare plays in Namibia, let me highlight some key points;

The Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MPESW) was established in 2015. The establishment was in line with His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Namibia's declaration of the war against poverty.

This declaration is underpinned on and derived from various national instruments including the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (Article 95), Vision 2030, the National Development Plans (NDP5) and the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP).

Our Mandate is to initiate, implement and coordinate social development programmes aimed at promoting the wellbeing of all Namibians.

Our Vision is for a caring and inclusive society that ensures coordinated access to basic social services and promotes dignity for all Namibians.

And finally, our Mission is to develop and implement programmes and activities that effectively eradicates poverty and inequality.

To effectively administer our duties in line with our mandate, vision, and mission, it is important that each one of us employed in the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare understand the role we play in the Ministry and not to take for granted our importance.

It will also be lax of me if I do not, once again, recognize the contribution which each one of us individually made to the achievements of the targets which we set for ourselves over the past calendar year. We should continue to prevail in our collective efforts to fully meet our strategic targets we set for our Ministry.

The year 2018 saw many milestones achieved through various activities undertaken across respective Directorates in execution of our sole mandate.

With regards to Social Welfare, the Ministry maintained reasonable coverage of Old Age Grant of **97 percent** and Disability Grant of **68 percent** respectively. This is commendable as safety nets aid greatly in eradicating extreme poverty and reducing inequality.

The Ministry plans for social protection systems to be expanded in the new Financial Year by targeting vulnerable groups such as *women and children* with the envisaged introduction of the Basic Income Grant falling under the Blueprint on Wealth Distribution and Poverty Eradication.

The Ministry is committed to increase the coverage for the social grants in order to reach all eligible beneficiaries. In this regard, the Ministry recorded an overall increase in the number of social grant recipients from 204,621 beneficiaries in 2016/17 to 211,447 during the 2017/18 financial year. The Old Age Grant beneficiaries increased from 165,376 to 170,386, and the Disability Grant beneficiaries, increased from 39,245 to 41,061 during the period under review. Social Grants such as the Old Age grant and Disability grant have seen a significant increment since 2015/2016 financial year to the 2018/2019 financial and currently stand at one thousand two hundred and fifty (**N\$1 250**) Namibian dollars. During this financial year, an amount of Three billion, One Hundred and Seventy Million Namibian Dollars, (N\$3,170,000,000) is allocated to social assistance transfers to old age and disability grant beneficiaries. As a proportion

of the Vote allocation, social grants make up 92% of the Ministry's total budget allocation.

Under the implementation of the Blueprint on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication, the Ministry convened SPAs stakeholders' consultative meetings for O/M/As to report on progress made on scheduled activities.

The Ministry has also managed to develop a Zero Hunger Work Plan as per the Monitoring and Evaluation framework in line with NDP5.

These are two very important policy documents that require relentless monitoring for effective implementation thereof.

The Social Protection Draft Policy is at an advanced stage, with the successful hosting of the Social Protection Workshop in 2018, the document is awaiting stakeholders' feedback for further consideration in 2019.

Food Bank or *Harambee* as it is known locally is one of the salient activities that the Ministry undertook, and significant progress has been made in 2018 with regards to its administering. The Ministry has in the past three months held consultations with the Office of the Regional Governors and councillors of Zambezi Region, Oshikoto, Oshana and Omusati towards the establishment and operationalization of the Food Bank in the respective regions and we are hopeful that this process will be finalised soon. To date, the Ministry is distributing food to about 17, 000 beneficiaries in the Khomas, Karas, Hardap, Kavango East and Kavango West regions. For the 2018/19 financial year an amount of Seventy Million Namibian Dollars (N\$70,000,000 million) was utilised for the acquisition of food parcels and administration of the food bank programme.

Initially being a pilot project in selected Windhoek constituencies, in 2018, Food Bank has further rolled out its activities to include;

- a) Kavango East Region (Rundu)
- b) Kavango West Region (Nkurenkuru)
- c) Kunene Region (Khorixas)
- d) Oshana Region (Eenhana)

I applaud all of you involved in making sure that really ***No One Should Feel Left Out.***

In 2019, more roll-outs of Food Bank will commence with consultations with Regional Councils ongoing with the aim that the Food Bank will operate in all fourteen (**14**) regions in Namibia.

It is worth noting that the Food Bank in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) received a huge boost in terms of operationalisation with the official launch of the biometric system called SCOPE in November 2018, which has made it easier to clamp down on fraudulent collection of food parcels, help in identifying beneficiaries, registration of beneficiaries, distribution of food parcels and acts as a data source for reporting. Phase 1 of SCOPE implementation is close to completion with two constituencies in Windhoek remaining. Phase 2 is set to begin in 2019 in conjunction with the regional roll-outs.

The Ministry established a Donation Account, where generous organisations and individuals can donate money to address what is often referred to as low hanging fruits. I am pleased to announce that since the establishment of this donation account, the response from the public, including the Embassies, Local and International NGOs, Local Businesses and even individuals, have responded positively to this noble initiative of the Ministry. Since its inception the donation account was capitalised to the tune of N\$4.6 Million Namibia dollars.

The Donation Account is linked to the Special Programmes of the Ministry and its aim is two-fold: firstly it is aimed at addressing the immediate needs of those who might find themselves in desperate situations, for example our people in informal settlements who are confronted with losing their belongings due to fires and floods.

The Ministry has to date assisted the Oshikoto Regional Council with the drilling of two boreholes for impoverished communities and has paid tuition fees for vulnerable students at various Tertiary Institutions, who did not secure any study loans. By the end of this financial year, the Ministry through the donation account, will assist three water provision projects in the Oshana, Kunene and Omaheke regions respectively, two agricultural projects in the Kunene region and the construction of a decent shelter for a destitute family in the Karas region.

The Ministry has faced some challenges such as the fragmentation of the social protection systems in Namibia and we are confident that the social protection policy that will address all overlapping issues and make sure that our people are covered comprehensively and make sure that all vulnerabilities will be covered. The Ministry also noted that during the year that the issue of unemployment continues to haunt the nation in general and that as long as there is unemployment and no opportunities for people to become employed then the task of eradicating poverty becomes more demanding and challenging. The Ministry also noted that challenge of the minimal economic growth has affected its abilities to expand its programmes and this has also meant less resources allocated to the Ministry and we are hopeful that higher economic growth will return and that the nation will recover from this past economic contraction we have been experiencing as a nation.

With regards to the issue of staff discipline and performance I wish to inform the staff members to take care of the property of the state that is assigned to them or in their care at all times and making sure

that you take necessary precautions to report missing and damage property at all times.

I would also ask the staff members to make sure that when taking leave that it is approved and to avoid leaving before leave is approved as you risked being guilty of not following rules and procedures with regards to the issue of leave. So I urge you to always make sure you a granted approval for your leave before taking leave.

Staff members must also make sure that they are constantly in the offices during office hours so you can attended to the people they you were recruited to assist or unless if you are unable to please let the ministry know so that that opportunity to given to somebody else that wants to serve. Remember you are not doing the people of Namibia a favour by assisting them, but you were recruited to serve them.

And those that make themselves guilty of theft of state property will be held to account and the full of wrath of the law will take its cause and if you make yourself guilty of such crimes then you will be held liable and accountable for your action and you stand to lose your job, so I caution all of you to remember that the property of the state belongs to the people of Namibia and not to individuals.

I want to caution all the staff members to always conduct themselves in the most professional manner and to always be willing to avail themselves to help those in need. The Ministerial Customer Service Charter clearly highlights the core values of the Ministry and I urge all staff members to read them, memorise them and adhere to them at all times.

Before I conclude I want to share with you some 20 golden rules for success which I think every staff member of this ministry should be able to live up to or to remind themselves with every day:

20 GOLDEN RULES FOR SUCCESS

1. In Latin:
 - ☐ A Minister is a Servant
 - ☐ Ministrare is : to Serve
 - ☐ Ministry is a place where people are served.
2. We are servants of the people of Namibia
3. Our attitude in the Ministry must be of a servant, not a boss.
4. Do not be eager to refer people to other Ministries: help them as you can and explain their need to your colleagues in the other Ministries.
5. Poverty is unusual, and therefore let it be not business as usual.
6. Do not delay what should be done urgently; those in need so not want delays or postponements, but want to be addressed now.
7. Come down at the level of those in need and place yourself in their situation, in order to understand and help them.
8. Let our service not be driven by self-interest or gain, but by the gain of those whom we are serving.
9. Be punctual, and do not be waited for but wait for those you are serving.

10. Do it now and not tomorrow or after your leave.
 11. Do not compromise quality by doing it just to finish.
 12. Teamwork is not enjoyed when others are struggling alone or making mistakes, but we help each other so that the end result can be pride of the whole team.
 13. Do not waste time or sabotage what should be done by economizing on sharing necessary requirements at once.
 14. Keep and promote the peace in the office and work environment in which you are working.
 15. Work for the betterment of yourself on a daily basis, so that you can be a better person from what you were yesterday.
 16. Do not cultivate a culture of being absent from work, because that is not good for the image of the Institution in which you are serving and for your image and reputation.
 17. Do not just be there, but be present with a purpose.
 18. If you have been given a task to perform, give feedback always on a regular basis. So not only report about the good but also about the challenges you are facing.
 19. Discuss and consult when you want to do something in the context of your work, not all surprises are pleasant.
- 2.0 Let the beauty of the vision of a just and peaceful and prosperous Namibia, be an inspiration for you in your work: not selfish ambition, entitlements, overtime payment or S&T.

Therefore, dear colleagues, as I have just highlighted, despite the challenges of budgetary constraints, lack of cooperation from stakeholder's, human capacity, lack of manpower, we the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare was able to execute its mandate to a more than satisfactory level. This does not mean our job is done, 2019 lays ahead with even more uncertainty but with collective effort I am sure we can make 2019 an even more successful year.

Thank you for your attention and may 2019 be a year of accountability as the President declared.