



Republic of Namibia

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**BY CALLE SCHLETTWEIN
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 23RD ANNIVERSARY OF
NAMIBIA'S INDEPENDENCE**

DHPS, WINDHOEK

Sehr geehrte Frau Ritter und Mitglieder des Deutschen
Schulvorstandes

Sehr Geehrte Frau Pfaender, Mitglieder der Schulleitung, des
Kollegiums und der Verwaltung

Liebe Schueler, Sehr geehrte Eltern

Sehr geehrte Vertreter der Presse

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren

I am delighted to address you on this occasion marking the commemoration of a very special day in the history of our country, its Independence Day. In addition to the subject of my being here, this school brings fond memories.

Marion Wallace in her introduction of “A History of Namibia” summarized our history as follows:

“On 21st March 1990, Namibia gained its independence after a bitter, decades-long struggle against South African rule. The transition took place a quarter-century after decolonization swept most of the continent, but four years before South Africa itself achieved majority rule. Namibia’s colonial history was, thus, a long one: Originally occupied by Germany in 1884, it was conquered by South Africa in 1915, ruled by the latter from 1921 as a mandated territory of the League of Nations and, after the Second World War, effectively as part of South Africa itself.

Although this colonial past is recent and memories of it remain very intense it was, nevertheless, a relatively short interlude in the long span of human activity in what is now Namibia. For thousands of years, humans have migrated into and across the region, building power,

creating art, music and literature, exercising religious beliefs, producing food and goods, trading across wide distances and introducing new solutions to old problems. Over the last few centuries, semi nomadic societies have kept cattle, sheep and goats, or foraged and hunted for food, or both, across much of the very dry and marginal central and southern parts of Namibia; In most of the more fertile north small polities, usually ruled by kings or queens, established themselves on the basis of farming, cattle rearing, fishing, foraging and hunting. From the late eighteenth century, and especially from the middle of the nineteenth, all areas of Namibia began to see significant political, economic and cultural change, as its residents were affected by, and indeed grasped and shaped, the new forces of merchant capitalism and Christianity. By the time Namibia became a colony in formal terms, it had already been considerably transformed.”

Der Schlüssel der Geschichte ist nicht in der Geschichte, er ist im Menschen.

Théodore Simon Jouffroy

Today, more than 23 years after independence, over 2.1 million people inhabit Namibia. Its land area is 832 690 square km – more than double the size of Germany and nearly 70 % that of South Africa.

The 21st March is, and should be a very special day to every patriotic and peace-loving Namibian, young and old. It is on this day, 23 years ago when our Founding President, President Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma was sworn in by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Javier de Cuellar, as President of the Republic of Namibia.

Die Freiheit ist eine neue Religion, die Religion unserer Zeit.

Zitat von *Heinrich Heine*

Our political stability and statehood is anchored in our Constitution, which was drafted in 1989 by the then Constituent Assembly, comprising of representatives of various political parties. It was chaired by our current Prime Minister, Right Hon Hage Geingob and was then, and still is hailed as one of the best on the continent.

Dem Friedlichen gewährt man gern den Frieden.

Zitat von *Friedrich Schiller*

Graham Hopwood describes this process as follows:

“Namibia’s Constitution is a remarkable achievement. 72 elected members of the Constituent Assembly in just 80 days in late 1989 and early 1990 put it together. Many of these Assembly members had been sworn enemies up until the Namibian transition process got underway in April 1989 under the auspices of the United Nations. It is hard to imagine how difficult it must have been for those on the different sides of the liberation struggle to sit down with former foes and respectfully debate Namibia’s supreme law. It took courage, open-mindedness and magnanimity. The fact that the founding document of the state was drawn up in such an atmosphere was a key enabling factor for the peace and stability that has characterized Namibia’s first 23 years as an independent country.”

Die Menschen machen ihre eigene Geschichte aber nicht auf die Art und Weise, wie sie ihnen gefällt, sondern durch Umstände, die sie nicht selbst gewählt haben.

Karl Marx (1818 - 1883), deutscher Philosoph, Sozialökonom und sozialistischer Theoretiker

As we celebrate the day of our Independence, we remember and pay tribute to our leaders who led the struggle and carried the torch that lit our way to freedom and self-determination. We pay homage to fallen heroes and heroines, young and old, who made the ultimate sacrifice that has resulted in the freedom, peace and democracy that we are enjoying today.

Ladies and gentlemen

Political freedom and independence will remain meaningful only if there is peace, harmony, unity and equality amongst all of us, and all the citizens have opportunities and means to live a decent life.

As we enjoy political independence, we are faced with various socio-economic challenges, namely unemployment, poverty and inequality. The Government has devised measures to tackle these challenges, but this is not the responsibility of the Government alone. All Namibians, young and old, have to play their part in dealing with these challenges. We view these challenges as the second phase of the struggle, the struggle for economic development and independence.

An Fortschritt glauben heißt nicht: glauben, daß ein Fortschritt schon geschehen ist. Das wäre kein Glauben.

Franz Kafka (1883 - 1924), deutschsprachiger Schriftsteller, in Prag geboren als Sohn einer bürgerlichen jüdischen Kaufmannsfamilie

Quelle: »Chinesische Mauer«

“Since independence, Namibia has succeeded in generating positive economic growth almost every year and this has led to a steady rise in average incomes. The economy has become less dependent on agriculture and mining and has diversified its exports so that the variety of goods and services sold abroad as well as the markets in which they are sold have both increased. However, growth has fallen far short of what is required to substantially reduce levels of poverty and unemployment.” (Robert Sherbourne in Guide to the Namibian Economy 2010)

Our goal, to attain levels of economic development equal to that of the industrialized countries will be realized only when the Namibian economy is restructured. We need to transform from an economy, which is heavily depending on trade with its mineral and other raw materials only. We must become stronger in manufacturing finished goods from our raw materials. We need to shift from consuming what we do not produce and producing what we do not consume, to higher levels of homegrown production and manufacturing. At the same time our economy must remain competitive, meaning that the commodities and services with which we trade must become preferable, price wise and quality wise, to similar goods and services produced and manufactured somewhere else. If a consumer sees a label “naturally Namibian” that must be the convincing information to purchase that article.

By way of a simple example the dilemma could be described as follows: Namibia is producing diamonds, raw diamonds. Almost the total production is exported to Europe where these raw diamonds are cut and polished and placed in a variety of jewelry. These finished pieces are re-imported into Namibia and sold to end consumers as wedding rings etc. It would be much more favorable for our economy if Namibian entities

would cut and polish these raw stones, if Namibian jewelers would use them in making high value pieces of jewelry and if they would market (sell) those locally to Namibian citizens or to foreign destinations (export them). The cutting, polishing and setting efforts would create jobs with salaries to those workers who in turn can spend their income on other consumer goods or services. This is a simplified example of a value chain and it is such value chains that we have to develop with all raw materials.

Der Reichtum besteht nicht im Besitz von Schätzen, sondern in der Anwendung, die man von ihnen zu machen versteht.

Zitat von *Napoleon I. Bonaparte*

Ladies and Gentlemen

The causes of unemployment may be many, but perhaps the simplest explanation for it is that there are not enough job or employment opportunities. The important question to ask is: Why are there few or limited job opportunities. It goes without saying that unemployment is the primary cause for poverty and therefore and therefore, if we find a solution for the unemployment problem, we would have, by and large also found a way out of the perpetual poverty trap.

Die Arbeit ist also eine Ware, die ihr Besitzer, der Lohnarbeiter, an das Kapital verkauft. Warum verkauft er sie? Um zu leben.

Karl Marx (1818 - 1883), deutscher Philosoph, Sozialökonom und sozialistischer Theoretiker

In any society, jobs are largely created by 'entrepreneurs'. This term is used to refer to people who set up businesses to produce goods and render services that are required in society, and in the process they create job opportunities for themselves and others.

Our country is blessed with abundant mineral and natural resources and business opportunities that in turn offer huge opportunities for employment and poverty alleviation. Given this, it would appear therefore that what is needed is a pool of Namibians with innovative business ideas and the determination to translate those ideas into successful employment-creating enterprises.

I recognize and pay tribute to the important role played by business icons and forerunners such as Dr Frans Aupa Indongo and the past ones such as the late Messrs Werner List and Harold Pupkewitz. There are others, as well as a number of new generation entrepreneurs that have emerged over the past years.

The continued prevalence of unemployment and poverty, however, is an indication that we need many more entrepreneurs with innovative ideas that will help us create jobs, as well as to produce the goods and services that we need for our own use and for export as well as to diversify our economy away from heavy reliance on finite natural resources.

The importance of entrepreneurial innovation and competitiveness in our national quest towards building a knowledge-based and industrialised economy is clearly recognised our national development roadmap, Vision 2030.

Building on the solid foundations of my predecessors, especially the Right Hon. Prime Minister, we are setting the focus of the Ministry of Trade and Industry towards achieving or bringing about greater “Growth at Home”. This is the theme and yardstick by which we will be measuring

our performance going forward. This theme is inspired by our desire to grow our economy and increase the capacity of our economy to compete globally, by boosting our industrial and export base as well as through increased value addition to our resources before they are exported to other countries and creating more jobs for our people.

Ladies and gentlemen

As you will no doubt agree, unemployment and poverty are national problems that not only require collective action but also innovative solutions from all of us - Government, private sector, the academia and entire civil society. Our political stability and the peace that we have been enjoying over the past 23 years can only continue to be if we join hands to address the socio-economic challenges that I have highlighted. All Namibians have a duty and responsibility to ensure and guard the peace that we enjoy and turn our country into a prosperous and industrialised nation by 2030, as per Vision 2030.

***Fortschritt* „= Der Übergang von Situationen, deren Nachteile man schon kennt, zu Situationen, deren Nachteile man noch nicht kennt.**

Arnold Gehlen (1904-76), dt. Soziologe Querverweise: [Innovation](#), [Wandel](#), [Neues](#), [Reform](#), [Zukunft](#), [Technik](#)

Our learners and youth are the future of our country. And it is expected of schools and society to harness and mold them into responsible citizens who will take Namibia to the desired stage of economic development and prosperity. As a result of the hard won political independence, our children and youth have the opportunity to study in any fields of their choice, and to become educated citizens and assets to their country. If we are to achieve Vision 2030, we need a pool of

economists, entrepreneurs, industrialists, doctors, scientists, engineers, and development planners.

To the learners, I urge you to take your education very seriously. There are many children not only in our country but also in other parts of the world who do not have the opportunity and support to go to school due to factors beyond their control. Education is the best equalizer and hence the high investment in education.

“ Es gibt nur eins, was auf Dauer teurer ist als Bildung, keine Bildung.”

John F. Kennedy

Let me conclude by wishing you all a very happy Independence Day. Enjoy what we have achieved, have the courage to face the challenges to make a prosperous tomorrow possible for all, all of us must be part of that.

Long Live Namibia and I thank you. Vielen Dank fuer Zuhoeren.