

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBAMBA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**Check Against Delivery*

Mr President
 Your Excellencies
 Mr Secretary-General
 Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate you, Mr President, on your election as President of the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly. We support the priorities that you have identified for this Session.

I wish to express Namibia's appreciation for your predecessor, H.E. *[pronounced: Serjan]* Srgjan Kerim, for focusing the agenda of the 62nd Session on matters of crucial importance to Member States. We commend the distinguished Secretary General of our Organisation, Mr Ban Ki-moon for tirelessly taking up the challenging issues of peace and security and economic development.

The 63rd Session of General Assembly is taking place at a time when the global economy is dominated by four interrelated crises. I have in mind the financial crisis in the industrialised countries; the global energy crisis; the devastating impact of climate change as well as the food crisis, which has adversely affected poor people around the world. Others, but no less daunting challenges are the HIV/Aids pandemic; under-development and abject poverty as well as the need to foster peace and security around the world. We must act decisively and collectively at national, regional and global levels to overcome these challenges.

Mr President,

The devastating effects of climate change have become present day realities in all parts of the world. Namibia has experienced the negative impact of climate change. The floods and drought during 2007 and 2008 were some of the most devastating in recent times. In their wake, they left behind poor harvests, livestock losses, environmental degradation, damaged infrastructure and destroyed livelihoods. This has put a severe strain on our plans to invest in new development projects.

Namibia is committed to the Bali road map in order to conclude the negotiations on the post-Kyoto regime by 2009. We call on all parties to honour their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol including the immediate and full capitalization of the Adaptation Fund. Namibia will play her part in the build up to Copenhagen.

We want to contribute to making Copenhagen a success in terms of commitments to substantial mitigations, financial instruments for adaptation efforts in developing countries and mechanisms for sharing and harnessing appropriate technologies.

Mr President,

As a net importer of food and fuel, Namibia has been hit hard by the soaring prices of these commodities. There will be catastrophic increases in incidents of hunger, malnutrition and infant mortality in developing countries unless the trend is reversed. This calls for decisive national, regional and international response. In our case, the Government of Namibia has exempted some basic foodstuffs from value added tax in order to mitigate the effects of high food prices on poor households. Such interventions can provide some relief.

However, long term challenges remain, which demand appropriate policies and substantial new investments to raise agricultural productivity and increase food production around the world. There is a real risk that the gains made by developing countries in poverty reduction and the attainment of the other MDGs over the years, will be reversed if we do not act rapidly.

Global efforts to address the food crisis, the impact of climate change and the drive to achieve MDGs must go hand-in-hand. In this regard, we support the proposal for the General Assembly to hold thematic debates until 2015 to take stock of successes achieved and setbacks encountered towards the achievement of MDGs.

This will give development co-operating partners an opportunity to account for the fulfilment of their commitments. On the other hand, developing countries should also account for their commitments to strengthen democratic institutions, enhance good governance and fight corruption.

Mr President,

There is a need for genuine political will, especially among donor countries if the attainment of all MDGs is to be achieved. In this context, open, predictable and non-discriminatory trading and financial systems must be developed. We call for the intensification of the implementation of the global partnership for development as agreed upon at Monterrey in 2002.

We also appeal to the Bretton-Woods and other international financial institutions to create special mechanisms to enable middle-income countries to access financial resources for development on concessional terms. This was called for by the Windhoek Declaration on Development Cooperation with Middle-Income Countries.

Mr President,

The scourge of poverty is one of the most serious challenges facing humanity today. I believe that with requisite political will poverty can be overcome. Let us act in unity of purpose to address not only the manifestations of poverty, but its underlying causes that make communities vulnerable. Let us harness the technological, financial and other resources to get rid of the dehumanising effects of poverty on all members of the human family.

Mr President,

Peace and security as well as social justice are paramount to the achievement of MDGs and resolution of conflicts. In this regard, all countries must commit themselves to implement policies that promote economic growth, social justice, rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights and the protection of the environment in order to guarantee durable peace and security.

Mr President,

On 15 September 2008, the political leaders of Zimbabwe signed a power-sharing agreement which is designed to restore political and economic stability in their country. We wish to congratulate the leaders of Zimbabwe on this important milestone and express the hope that the agreement will put that sister country on the path towards economic recovery.

We commend the SADC mediation efforts led by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa who invested extraordinary skill, time and energy in the process. We urge the international community to support the implementation of the agreement by providing economic, financial and humanitarian assistance. We call for the immediate lifting of all sanctions that have been imposed on that country.

Mr President,

My delegation is concerned that the question of Western Sahara remains unresolved. We support the ongoing direct talks between the parties under the auspices of the UN Secretary General. We also call for the implementation of the UN Settlement Plan for Western Sahara and all relevant UN resolutions, providing for a free and fair referendum in that territory. Namibia is also concerned about the conflict situations in the Darfur Region of Sudan and in Somalia. We urge the respective parties to these conflicts to work towards finding lasting peace.

The people of Palestine have an inalienable right to self-determination. Namibia is concerned about the lack of progress in negotiations on the question of Palestine. We call for the immediate implementation of all United Nations resolutions on Palestine and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine, living side-by-side with Israel.

Mr President,

My delegation reiterates the call we have made on several occasions in this august Assembly for the unconditional lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. The blockade is not only against international law, but its extra-territorial nature impedes free trade and economic development. Namibia calls for the implementation of all the resolutions of the UN General Assembly calling for the lifting of the blockade.

Mr President,

To be able to respond effectively to the manifold challenges of our time, we need to accelerate the reform of the United Nations. Member States should work with resolve to strengthen our organisation and ensure that it delivers in terms of its mandate

However, this process will not be complete without the reform of the Security Council. We have an obligation to make the Council more representative, democratic and accountable. It is an anomaly and it is unjust that Africa does not have permanent representation on the Security Council. Namibia reiterates the African common position on Security Council Reform as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. The intergovernmental negotiations on reform should commence without any further delay.

It is our duty to ensure that the United Nations remains true to its unique universal character and that it becomes a source of hope for a more secure and peaceful world for the current and future generations.

I thank you.