

Founding President Sam Nujoma's Inaugural speech on 21st March 1990

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and government, Distinguished Guests,

Dear Compatriots Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the Namibian people and for myself, this day 21st of March, 1990, is the most memorable and indeed the most emotional moment in the annals of our history.

This solemn hour is the moment which our people have been waiting for, for more than a century. This is the day for which tens of thousands of Namibian patriots laid down their lives, shed their precious blood, suffered imprisonment and a difficult life in exile. Today our hearts are filled with great joy and jubilation because our deepest and longest yearning has been realized.

Honourable Master of Ceremony, Sir, for the past 43 years ago or so, this land of our forebearers has been a bone of contention between the Namibian people and the international community, on the hand

and South Africa, on the other. The Namibian problem has been at the center of bitter international disputes over the last four decades. The United Nations and other international bodies produced huge volumes of resolutions in an attempt to resolve this intractable problem.

However, it pleases me to state that we are gathered here today, not to pass yet another resolution, but to celebrate the dawn of a new era in this land and to proclaim to the world that a new star has risen on the African continent. Africa's last colony is from this hour, liberated.

It is, therefore, profoundly momentous and highly joyous, for the Namibian people and myself, that the highest representative of the international community, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, together with the state President of South Africa, and the Namibian nation, which I am honoured to lead, are able to announce, here today, to the world that a definitive and final solution to the protracted Namibian problem has indeed, been unani-

mously reached by these three parties.

For the Namibian people, the realization of our most cherished goal, namely, the independence of our country and freedom of our people, is fitting tribute to the heroism and tenacity with which our people fought for this long-awaited day. We have been sustained in our difficult struggle by the powerful force of conviction in the righteousness and justness of our cause. Today history has absolved us; our vision of a democratic state of Namibia has been translated into reality.

With regard to the international community, the achievement of Namibia's independence today is, we believe, a welcome and laudable culmination of many years of consistent support for our cause. The world's demand for our country to be allowed to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination and independence has been achieved. We express our most sincere gratitude to the international community for its steadfast support.

As for the government of the



Former UN Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar; handing over the reins of State power to President Sam Nujoma at the swearing-in ceremony in Windhoek, 21 March 1990.

South Africa, it can be said that the decision to accept the imple-

mentation of Resolution 435 has been the first demonstration of political will to find a negotiated solution to the problems of our region. Furthermore, President de Klerk's proclamation here today that South Africa has reached a final and irreversible decision to relinquish control over Namibia is an act of statesmanship and realism. This, we hope, will continue to unfold in South Africa itself.

Compatriots, Ladies and Gentlemen, I seize this opportunity to point out that the process of negotiating an agreement on Resolution 435 and struggling for its implementation has been difficult and, at times, acrimonious. It was only perseverance, forbearance and commitment which helped us to see the process through to its logical conclusion, namely, the birth of the Namibian nation we are here to witness.

Against the background, it is heartening for the Namibian people and I, to know that our independence has been achieved under conditions of national consensus and international unanimity. The impressive presence here today of so many world leaders and other dignitaries is a clear testimony to the fact that Namibia's achievement of independence is an event of great world importance. For us, this is yet another reason for celebration.

With respect to the important question of national consensus, I am glad to announce that, following the independence election last November, the various Namibian political parties have been able to work together in the Constituent Assembly, where we formulated and adopted a Constitution acceptable to the broad majority of our people.

Against this background, Honourable Master of Ceremony, Distinguished Guests and Dear Compatriots, I am indebted to the Namibia electorate for giving SWAPO an absolute majority, thereby enabling it to form the first government of the Republic of Namibia. In the same vein, I am grateful to the mem-

bers of Namibia's Constituent Assembly for the confidence they have placed in me in electing me as the first President of the Republic of Namibia.

I pledge to do my utmost to uphold the Constitution of the Republic, and to honour the trust which the Namibian people have bestowed upon me to lead this new nation at this critical juncture.

To the Namibian people, I would like to state, on this solemn and historic occasion, our nation blazed the trail to freedom. It has arisen to its feet. As from today, we are the masters of this vast land of our ancestors. The destiny of this country is now fully in our hands. We should, therefore, look forward to the future with confidence and hope.

Taking the destiny of this country in our own hands means, among other things, making a great effort to forge national identity and unity. Our collective security and prosperity depend on our unity of purpose and action. Unity is a pre-condition for peace and development. Without peace, it is not possible for the best and talented citizens of our country to realize their potential.

Our achievement of independence imposes upon us a heavy responsibility, not only to defend our hard-won liberty, but also to set for ourselves higher standards of equality, justice and opportunity for all, without regard to race, creed or colour. These are the standards from which all who seek to emulate us shall draw inspiration.

Master of ceremony, Sir in accepting the sacred responsibility which the Namibian people have placed on me, as the first President of the Republic of Namibia, I would like to bow and pay homage to our fallen heroes and heroines, whose names Namibia's present and future generations will sing in songs of praise and whose martyrdom they will intone. In conclusion, I move, in the name of our people, to declare that Namibia is forever free, sovereign and independent!

Sam Nujoma



The fallen Heroes and Heroines, brave Sons and Daughters of the land of the brave have sacrificed their precious lives and blood for Namibia to attain freedom and self determination independence. Their blood waters our freedom! Today we celebrate the fruits of their sacrifices and keep the freedom flame alight.

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA!!!