



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HON. DR. ALBERT KAWANA

MINISTER OF PRESEDENTIAL AFFAIRS

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF
ONAYENA HEALTH CENTRE**

16 MAY 2008

DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES, MS MARIA KAVEZEMBI

**HIS MAJESTY, THE KING OF ONDONGA TRADITIONAL
AUTHORITY**

**HON. MINISTER OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES, DR RICHARD
NCHABI KAMWI**

HON. GOVERNOR OF OSHIKOTO REGION, MR PENDA YA NDAKOLO

**HON. COUNCILLOR OF ONAYENA CONSTITUENCY, MR MARX
NEKONGO**

REVEREND KAPEWANGOLO

THE VILLAGE HEADMAN, OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS

SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT

DOCTORS, NURSES & ALL HEALTH WORKERS PRESENT

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

CULTURAL GROUPS

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I am happy to be accorded this opportunity to address you at this very important occasion during the official opening of Onayena Health Centre, here in Oshikoto region. I would like to convey the sincere good wishes of His Excellency, Hifikepunye Pohamba, the President of the Republic of Namibia, who had the desire to attend and to address you during this noble event, but could not be here due to other commitments, and has therefore assigned me to deliver this speech and to officiate the new Health Centre on His behalf.

Director of Ceremonies, shortly after Independence, the Government recognized the need to address the current status of all the public health facilities within the Republic of Namibia. The aim was to ensure that all communities have equitable access to health and social welfare services. Since then, a good progress has been made in correcting the most glaring inequities and inefficiencies.

In line with the Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan Three (NDP 3), the Primary Health Care Services shall be the focal point of health care services to be provided to the communities at this Health Centre, and shall therefore include the following:

- The promotion of proper Nutrition;
- Maternal and Child health care including family planning;
- Immunization against the major infectious diseases;
- Extension of the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) programme;

- To increase accessibility and availability of Voluntary Counseling and Testing, (VCT);
- To strengthen and expand the Home based Care (HBC) programmes;
- To strengthen the awareness campaigns that will target the traditional and cultural beliefs that encourage the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- Prevention and control of locally epidemic diseases;
- Education and training concerning prevailing health problems in communities and the methods of preventing and controlling them;
- Appropriate treatment for common diseases and injuries, etc.

Director Of Ceremonies, The presence of this facility is the “service at disposal” as guaranteed in our Constitution in terms of equity, accessibility, affordability and community involvement, and I therefore urge the community members to come together to share and discuss their problems and needs, prioritize them and find possible solutions which they plan, implement, and assess through continuous monitoring, dialogue, and evaluation in partnership with this Health Centre. This should allow maximum community responsibility and accountability for their development programmes in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination.

To the Honourable Councilor, I urge you to encourage the community to utilize this Health Centre to the maximum, and to develop a timeously health seeking behaviours, and not to wait until the disease is at an advantage stage.

Director of Ceremony, I am reliably informed that Malaria, Common Cold, Diarrhoea, Skin Disease, and Nose and Throat are the major conditions topping the list of health problems at this Health Centre. I therefore call upon everybody, the families, the community and all other role players to actively participate in educational awareness in fighting these diseases. In this way, we will jointly make a contribution to support our health workers and improve the delivery of health care to the people of Onayena and the whole country as such. Such efforts are not only promoting a healthy society, but will result in the reduction of infant and child mortality, as well as reduction in severe and moderate malnutrition among our children. In the same vein I urge the regular visits by a Medical Practitioner to this Health Centre as part of the outreach services to the patients and clients in need of medical care.

Director of Ceremonies, HIV/AIDS is a threat and travesty of human rights on regional and global scales, and has also become a chronic manageable disease, but we need still to be engaged in a day-to-day battle against this disease. It is my view that the single most important step we must now take is to provide access to treatment, care and support throughout the region. Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my wish to have many people going for Voluntary Counseling and Testing, because once people know their status be it negative or positive they then tend to change their behaviors. It is also my appeal to have many people with HIV/AIDS on Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART), there is no excuse for delay. Time for stigma and discrimination is long past, we have now to concentrate on the task at hand and take up this challenge seriously, otherwise the consequence will be too devastating.

Director of Ceremony, We need to take care of this beautiful infrastructure. The deteriorating physical condition of health facilities is an area of great concern. Basic preventive maintenance programmes should be put in place, as well as routine maintenance such as daily cleaning up keeping by the users. The community should look after the facility and not allow anyone to vandalize it by breaking into it. It is my belief that the Community Health Committee is on board, to support the health workers and to hold meetings to discuss health issues in the community.

I learnt that the staff accommodation facilities and the kitchen are under construction over there. These components will transform this facility into a complete fully fledged and vibrant Health Centre.

Director of Ceremonies, Having a new Health Centre is not enough in the eyes of the public. Attitudes and behaviours of health workers is a worrisome factor in most institutions of health care systems. “A positive disposition displayed by health care providers that demonstrate courtesy, human dignity, patience, empathy, and tolerance should form the cornerstone of your democratic values”. You should provide the patients with the relevant and accurate information in the diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation or counseling purposes.

Director of Ceremonies, It is my pleasure to express my immense gratitude towards the Ministry of Health and Social Services and all the consultants who were involved in the realization of this construction project. In this way, we are working together to improve the accessibility of all Namibians to our services and

thereby made a further step towards achieving health for all Namibians. **“A healthy Nation is a winning nation”**.

With these remarks, I declare the new Onayena Health Centre officially opened, and I thank you for your kind attention.