



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY

KEY NOTE ADDRESS

BY:

**ANNA N. SHIWEDA, MP
DEPUTY MINISTER**

AT THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF CASSINGA DAY

26 MAY 2019

**ONDUGU VILLAGE
OMUSATI REGION**

Director of Ceremonies

Honourable Erginus Endjala, Governor of Omusati Region

**Honourable Junias Amunkete, Regional Councillor of Tsandi
Constituency**

Other Councillors Present

Traditional Leaders

Survivors of the Cassinga Massacre

Distinguished Invited Guests

Comrades and Friends

We are gathered here today, to commemorate the massacre of about 600 Namibian refugees mostly mothers and children and the youth, committed by the troops of the then South African apartheid regime, 40 years ago, on the 4th May 1978 at Cassinga settlement in the Republic of Angola.

I would like to start by requesting you to rise and observe a minute of silence in honor of all our Heroes and Heroines who have sacrificed their lives at Cassinga in 1978, the survivors of the Cassinga Massacre and indeed all our fallen country men and women who gave their lives for our freedom in the resistance against colonialism and apartheid oppression.

May their souls rest in Perfect peace!

On this day, we want to remember and pay homage to all our forebearers who paved the way for freedom for us, and indeed hundreds of Namibian sons and daughters who lost their lives at Oshatotwa, Oshikuku, Epinga, Singalamwe, Shantuhu, Ondeshifilwa and many other places in Namibia, Angola and Zambia.

On this day, we pay our utmost respect to those who were thrown in the Atlantic Ocean and those who are buried in unmarked graves in the jungles and on battle fronts in Namibia, Zambia, Angola and other neighboring countries. ***Their blood waters our freedom.***

Director of Ceremonies
Comrades and friends

Even after Forty (40), years, the Cassinga Massacre still evokes the haunting and unforgettable memories of the pain and horror that our people endured. We want, therefore, at this moment to remember all the survivors of these brutal attacks. Many of those survivors are amongst us here today and in other parts of our country. They continue to carry very heavy loads of physical, psychological and emotional scars. They live with disabilities that remain as constant reminders of the cruelty that was perpetrated on that particular day. ***We will forgive but never forget.***

As we reflect on the tragic events of the 04th of May 1978 and other painful events which have occurred during the years of colonial occupation of our country, we are constantly being reminded to understand that the freedom, peace, security, stability and independence that we enjoy today was not given to us on a silver platter. It has demanded sacrifices and commitment of the Sons and Daughters of the soil, for the total liberation of our Motherland, Namibia.

Those Sons and Daughters, selflessly, gave their lives so that we can build a united, tolerant, inclusive and harmonious society, free from discrimination, tribalism and racism. They gave their lives so that we can reverse the injustices of the colonial past that have robbed our people of their dignity.

Today, we are a united people, under the banner of ***One Namibia One Nation.*** We should learn valuable lessons from our history about the importance of unity and about working together just like our forefathers did in 1904 at Fort. We should continue to harness the spirit of unity of our forefathers for the betterment of our country's future.

As we face current and future developmental challenges of our country, we owe it to our fallen Heroes to move this country to high heights in the true spirit of togetherness and Harambee. They would expect us to focus our energy on the social and economic development of the country for the good of all our citizens. We should, therefore, strive to build a better society, free from all forms of discrimination that are contrary to the ideals of those who lost their lives in the course of the liberation struggle. In their honour, we must join hands to combat poverty; expand and improve the provision of education, health care, housing, clean drinking water, electricity, sanitation, better infrastructure and other basic public amenities.

**Director of Ceremonies,
Comrades and Friends,**

On this day, of the commemoration of the Cassinga Massacre, I would like to direct a special focus to the children, and the youth of Tsandi Constituency in particular and Omusati Region in general, I would want to urge them to take a serious interest in the national activities and events in the country.

I am pleading with them because they are the future leaders of our country and whether they like it or not they will have to take charge of the future of this country one day. Therefore, they must know the past history of this country so that they can lead the country into the future.

Majority of those who lost their lives in the Cassinga Massacre were children and their mothers, as well as the Youth. It will be an ingratitude, disrespectful and a crime against those children who died if today's Youth do not take interest in the happenings of the country. You have to commit yourself to take forward the beautiful legacy left by these selfless children, and vigorously intensify our second struggle, which is the struggle for economic emancipation and freedom. It is only after we have successfully waged and won the war against social evils such as hunger, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and diseases that we can claim total freedom for our country.

In speaking to the children and Youth, I want to single out the fourth commandment that says: **“Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long”**. This commandment is directing you, young people, to respect and to be obedient to your fathers and mothers, and to all the other elders in our society. I should highlight here that the young people who died in Cassinga Massacre commanded a high level of discipline, and respect for their seniors and elders.

The same behavior was demonstrated by the young people in different camps of SWAPO in exile. This type of conduct contributed immensely to the attainment of the independence and freedom that we are enjoying today. It is, however, saddening today to hear young people insulting our elders, especially in the social media. It is, equally, disheartening to observe the decaying of discipline among young people, including the school going children. These types of behaviours do not conform to the African tradition cultural values and norms. Please, stop imitating the cultural practices that are foreign and that you do not understand.

Director of Ceremonies

Dear Comrades

If Namibian young people continue on this unacceptable behavioural trend they run the risk of compromising the fruits of independence that were brought to you through the loss of precious lives and sacrificial blood of the Youth. at the time. Therefore, if you are to take the mantle of leadership for the future, the time is now for you to change your behaviours by respecting your elders and listening to them when they speak to you, and by exercising maximum discipline at all times. This is the only way that you can equip and prepare yourself to take over the leadership of our country.

**Director of Ceremonies
Comrades and Friends**

I would want to touch on the important issue of reading

While we are aware that a culture of reading is a big challenge in Namibia, I would still like to encourage the young people to read, particularly about the history of the liberation struggle of Namibia and the world history. Taking reading as a hobby could keep you busy and keep you away from unbecoming behaviour such as consumption of alcohol or stealing that have, increasingly, become serious problems among the Youth in our country.

Please, be warned that there are no benefits to be derived from those behaviours, instead, there is only destruction of personalities that will make you an unproductive and irresponsible citizen. This is not what the young heroes and heroines fought and died for. Therefore, I strongly urge you, today, to abstain from such negative activities and instead become a knowledgeable, educated, cultured, disciplined, useful and productive citizen. This is the ideal that the fallen heroes and heroines envisaged in an Independent Namibia when they decided to join the struggle at a very young age, to liberate Namibia.

**Director of Ceremonies,
Dear Parents and Leaders**

Let me turn my focus to the Parents and the Traditional leadership. There is a saying that: ***“Anyone who closes his eyes to the past is blind to the present”***

As parents and leaders, most of you have seen the past and you fully understand the sacrifices that you made through your first-hand experience and encounters with the brutal forces of the enemy during the liberation struggle. It is, therefore, your responsibility to incessantly continue to narrate the history of the liberation struggle to our children for them to know the past, appreciate the present, and to be enlightened on the future for the development trajectory of our country.

We should also continue to teach the children and the Youth to respect elders and instill in them the discipline and African moral values and culture at the very early age. As the saying goes **“bend a tree while it is still young”!**

**Director of Ceremonies,
Comrades and Friends,**

Before I conclude, allow me, Director of Ceremonies to touch on the Africa Day. Yesterday, the 25th May, all African countries celebrated the Africa Day. For the benefit of the youth, Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963, which is today called the African Union (AU). This day is celebrated in various countries on the African continent, as well as around the world. This year, Africa Day is being commemorated under the Theme: **“Healthy Lifestyle Prolongs Life”**.

When one considers the aims and objectives of the OAU and AU and those of the liberation struggle for the political independence of Namibia led by our Mighty SWAPO PARTY, one cannot miss the interlinkage between the two. For this reason, it is befitting and appropriate to celebrate and commemorate Cassinga and Africa Day **on the same Day**. I wish therefore to thank the leadership of the Tsandi Constituency for taking the wise decision to hold a combined commemoration of these two days today.

In conclusion, it is important for us to attach a meaning to the day that we are commemorating today, and to relate the tragic events of this day in 1978 to the current situation in the country. Therefore, to me this day means among others that:

1. We should take a step back and reassess ourselves to evaluate whether we are still on track in our efforts to working towards the achievement of the ideals and aspirations of all those who died in Cassinga Massacre?

2. We should not forget the sacrifices made by those who died for the Liberation and political independence of Namibia and that we should continue to harness and treasure it by safeguarding it against any negative forces that may want to destroy it;
3. We should continue to intensify our second struggle for economic independence in order to take Namibia to higher level of economic development through the achievement of our National Vision by year 2030.
4. We should prepare our Youth to take the leadership in the development of our country, through the provision of quality education, teaching of cultural values and traditions, inculcation of discipline and sense of respect for elders.

**Director of Ceremonies
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is only when we recommit ourselves on this day to do all these that our national and continental political Independence will continue to be meaningful, and the souls of our fallen Heroes and Heroines and those of the departed Founding Fathers of the OAU will find eternal and lasting peace where they are. May their blood continue to water our political and economic freedom, and may their sacrifices continue to serve as an inspiration and motivation and a reminder for us to do better for our country in particular and our continent in general.

I THANK YOU

