

I would like to thank Dr. Kalumbi Shangula, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation and his team for their hard work and eloquent presentation on the background and rationale for the establishment of the Foundation.

Director of Ceremonies,

I believe that each and every one of us can make a contribution to the social and economic development of our country. We can make a difference in the lives of our fellow citizens, especially those who do not have access to these opportunities.

The reality in many households and communities is that the basic needs for everyday's existence are not being met. Despite the laudable interventions by the Government and social partners, there remains a great need for all of us as citizens to provide assistance to the needy members of our society.

The orphans and vulnerable children amongst us, are unable to fulfill their potential, because of lack of resources. Many of them are unable to realize their goals, because they do not have access to appropriate information that is instrumental to unlock their potential. I believe that the talents of our young people should not go to waste. Rather, they should be developed and nurtured to build a brighter future.

In this regard, citizens, especially those who are in a position to do so, should do their part in order to meet the Government half way in its efforts to overcome the challenges facing our nation. Each and every contribution to the betterment of the lives of the less fortunate members of our society will be a step in the right direction.

Although the needs of our people are great, and the resource gaps remain wide, we should be courageous to step forward and join hands with the Government and other social partners to make it possible for more young Namibians to realize their goals.

The assistance given may appear small, however, for a child from a low-income household, it may just be the breakthrough that such a boy or a girl could need to break the vicious cycle of poverty. It may just be the boost that such a young person may need to start the journey to become an engineer, a medical doctor, an architect, or a geologist.

Through the Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation, we aim to do our part as citizens, to contribute to the process of nation building and empowerment of young Namibians through education. The Foundation will provide financial assistance to talented and committed young Namibians who wish to pursue studies in specific disciplines, especially in agricultural sciences and related fields. This is because the area of food production is very close to my heart.

As President, I have traveled the length and breadth of our country, I have seen, first hand, the challenges that our country and our communities face with regard to food security and the need to boost food production in order to feed the nation. For some communities, the threat of food insecurity is a real and present danger. It breeds vulnerabilities that manifest themselves in food shortages, especially during the periods of drought.

We need more professionals and technicians in the field of agriculture. With more experts in this field, the nation will be able to complement the efforts of Government aimed at boosting food production. Namibia should not continue relying on imported foodstuffs. Our country has sufficient land and water resources to produce enough food locally through our Green Scheme Projects and subsistence farming.

We should, therefore, educate and train more young people in the field of agriculture in order to make Namibia self-sufficient in food production. That is one area where the Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation will be making a contribution.

Director of Ceremonies,

As Dr. Shangula pointed out in his presentation, the Foundation was preceded by the President's Charity Fund, which was established a few years ago. The Charity Fund received valuable support and financial contributions from individuals, corporate entities, diplomatic missions and other organizations. I take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported the President's Charity Fund over the years.

Your support has helped us to plant the seed for the establishment of the Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation, which we are launching here this evening. I am pleased to say that as a result of the support given to the Charity Fund, we have already been able to assist dozens of young people and to provide financial support, as well as educational and learning materials to several schools around the country. This is indeed a promising start, which gives us reasons for hope that this Foundation will bring joy and happiness to many young people in Namibia in the coming years.

I take this opportunity to call upon you all to support the Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation in achieving its goals and objectives of assisting young Namibians to build a brighter future for themselves, their families, their communities and indeed the country at large, through education.

I trust that by working together, the seed that we have planted in the form of the Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation will grow from strength to strength and make valuable contribution to the education and training of more young Namibians.

As I wish you all an enjoyable evening, it is also my pleasure to declare The Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation officially launched.

I thank you.