



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL

**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE ANDREAS SHINTAMA,
CHAIRPERSON OF OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE OPENING SESSION OF THE REGIONAL
COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Date: 18 January 2024

Time: 09H00

Venue: Omusati Regional Council's Chamber

Honourable Erginus Endjala, Regional Governor – Omusati Region

Honourable Regional Councillors

Your Worship Councillor Selma Nelago Asino, Mayor of Outapi Town and Mayors of other Towns

Councillor Selma N Kadhila, Chairperson of Tsandi Village Council

Tatekulu Oswin Mukulu, Chief of Ombalantu Traditional Authority and other Traditional Authorities Leaders

Mr Gervasius Kashindi, Chief Regional Officer: Omusati Regional Council

Regional Commanders: Nampol and Namibia Defence Force

Chief Executive Officers of Local Authorities

Captains of Industries

Religious Leaders

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all.

It is a pleasure to greet you this morning on the occasion of the official opening of the Regional Council’s sessions. I trust you had a splendid Christmas and let me on the same token take this opportunity to wish you all the blessings in all your endeavours, in the New Year, 2024.

As we are aware, the past few years have not really been kind to us in terms of economic performance and other major challenges such as the recurrent drought and the Covid-19 pandemic. His Excellency President Hage G Geingob, christened the Year 2023 as the Year of Revival and as he asserted in his New Year’s message to the nation that; “The country has turned the tide now.” Thus, he declared the Year 2024 as the year of expectations. It is on that premises that I would like to call on all the developmental stakeholders in our region to continue drawing inspirations from the resilience and fortitude we harnessed in overcoming the multiple challenges we faced over the past years.

Our people have experienced hardships during the aforesaid period. Therefore, the signs of economic recovery should give them a glimpse of hope and renewed expectations. It is for this reason that those of us who are entrusted with responsibilities to serve our people, should see this as a privilege and embrace it and serve them without compromising the task at hand.

The promise of better opportunities is always greater and inevitable at the dawn of a New Year. It is during this time that we renew our targets and set new ambitions to fulfil the expectations of our people and in a way improve their livelihoods. We therefore need to redouble our efforts and seize the opportunities that are consistent with our ambitions and expectations. However, our Strategic Plan should always be the compass that guides us in the process of implementing our projects and programmes.

Honourable Members,

When one considers that our region is one of the regions that were severely affected by drought, it is pleasing to witness a good rainfall across the region during the last few weeks. Therefore, we must encourage our people to work harder in cultivating their crop fields, with a view to improve food security at household level. Relief food distribution is not a sustainable solution. Our Region is renowned for its high agricultural production, thus we need to produce more food for our consumption and supply the surplus to other regions as we usually do for income.

It is said: "To whom much is given much is expected." Hence, a lot is expected from all sectors in terms of contributing to the government's goal of attaining food security in the country. Food security also means, government will be able to reallocate the financial resources it spends on drought relief food aid to other developmental projects. Moreover, in 2023 the Regional Council has engaged the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform at the regional level, with a view to improve the agricultural services delivery and provision of inputs. It is our hope that these engagements will culminate in a positive impact on our agricultural production this cropping season.

Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen

On health matters, it is safe to say that there is a continued break and drastic reduction in Covid-19 cases. However, we should never rest on our laurels because there is always a risk of notifiable diseases outbreaks. In addition, it was reported that there were 28 death cases recorded countrywide last year, which were caused by Malaria. It is worth noting that Malaria is more prevalent at the northern regions of our country.

Moreover, mosquitoes that we all know cause this deadly disease, breed during this season when you have lots of water collected in swamps in our surroundings. I would therefore like to urge the Directorate of Health and Social Services to spearhead the campaign of raising awareness about Malaria to prevent further infections. Our people should also take precautions, such as using mosquito nets, to prevent this dangerous disease.

Of course, Malaria is not the only disease that pose threat to human health and existence, there are other multiple notifiable diseases or infections on the horizon, therefore great care should be exercised at all time. I should indicate that I still see some people wearing face masks and using sanitizers especially in public or crowded places. This is one of the ways to take precaution against communicable infections, hence it is such a commendable act that is worth emulating.

Hon Members

The NSSCO and NSSCAS results for 2023 came out this week. Congratulations to schools, which have done well and learners who have passed. I am informed that Onawa Secondary, Nuujoma Secondary, David Sheehama Secondary, Canisianum Roman Catholic High Schools have made the region proud. As stakeholders in education, particularly the Directorate: Education, Arts and Culture, while at the beginning of the year, we need to take stock to recalibrate our approach and strategies so as to continuously improve the performance of our schools. The government allocates a huge chunk of our national budget to the education sector. Thus, its importance cannot be overemphasized. However, the outcome should justify the immense investment we make on education. Hence, as a collective, we should do everything in our power to turn the situation of poor school performance around.

I should also emphasize the importance of safe guarding the integrity of examinations. Compromised examination produce, fake professionals e.g. Doctors and pilots, and this does not only compromise our systems but it also threatens humanity. When I say this, I have in mind, an incident of an examination handling malpractice that was reported in Omusati at one of ours schools last year. Reportedly, a school secretary stole the Semi-Grade 9 examinations memorandums and answer scripts for various subjects. The recurrence of this type of incidents should be stopped, for it does not only tarnish the image of our region but for the entire country's education system.

Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Regional Council will continue to work hard to ensure that all the planned projects are executed. To improve on participation, transparency and operational efficiency, the Council managed to develop an internal Audit plan, establish an Integrity Committee, culminating in the signing of Integrity Pledges. I would like to further call on members of the public to attend Council and other invited Meetings. Regional Council Meetings are public platforms. Their attendance will enable members of the public to follow development in the Region. I would like to call for the increased use of our Suggestion Boxes and our social media platforms. Give us continued inputs and suggestions for us to move our region forward.

This year, the Council will also continue with the construction of services infrastructure at Onesi, Ogongo Settlements and Onandjaba Village Council. I would like to appeal to

contractors to implement the projects timely and ensure quality workmanship. Moreover, where land is available, the Council will allocate land to applicants for business and residential purposes. Our people should acquaint themselves with processes to acquire land in settlement areas. Those who are allocated land are further called upon to develop their plots in order to provide services and improve the living standard of our people. The Council plans to compensate some land owners to pave way for infrastructure development in Onandjaba Village Council in collaboration with Traditional Authorities.

Honourable Members

As I conclude my Statement, I should reiterate the declaration of the Head of State that we are in the year of expectations, which at the same time is the year of elections. The honour is upon us to deliver and meet or even exceed those expectations. Our mandate as a Regional Council is all about service delivery. No effort should be spared in delivering the much needed services to our people. The Regional Council Members, Administrators, all stakeholders and development partners in the Region, should utilise the power of teamwork and the principle of participation to implement developmental activities and advance the socio - economic development of our region and country at large. Each stakeholder must do its part and most importantly in unison, so that as in the words of the late Education Minister, Abraham Iiyambo: “We deliver, deliver and deliver services to our people.” Having said that, let me once again wish you all the best for the New Year.

Finally, let me declare the Regional Council Sessions for the Year 2024 officially opened.

Thank you so much for your attention!