

Abundance through Resilience

*Drawing on a lifetime of service,
I invite Namibia's youth to take
the lead in shaping a sustainable
and equitable future.*



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November is always a special month for me, because it was in this month, on the 11th of November, that I was born in Grootfontein. From those humble beginnings, I grew up traveling to different parts of our country and have come to appreciate that Namibia is a land of vast opportunities and rich endowments. From dramatic and contrasting landscapes, where the world's oldest desert, the Namib, gracefully meets the Atlantic Ocean, to the rugged terrains concealing riches in the south, and the sub-tropical savannahs of the north and north-east, Namibia is a country of striking beauty and diversity. It is no wonder that Namibia is fondly known as the Land of the Brave, for to thrive in these contrasting environments, one must be resilient and hardworking to tap into our natural endowments and turn them into opportunities for all.

Like most Namibians of my generation, my journey has been shaped by persistence and resilience — the determination to break free from the shackles of colonialism and apartheid oppression. The only way many of us could push back against the rampant abuse of human rights was to enroll ourselves in the organized national resistance and struggle for independence. I left the country at a tender age, which eventually gave me access to opportunities I could never have dreamed of, including quality education. I was privileged to be among other young Namibians sent by the SWAPO leadership in exile to study Development Studies at the United Nations Institute for Namibia, and later to pursue Law in the United Kingdom, where I obtained a Master's degree (LLM) from the University of Dundee in Scotland. At every step, the just cause of the struggle for independence remained a key driver in all I did, knowing that education was not only a privilege but also a huge responsibility — a duty to return its benefits to the Nation that raised me.

After independence, I joined the Ministry of Mines and Energy as Chief Control Officer, later becoming Director of Mines, and subsequently being appointed the first Managing Director of Namdeb Diamond Corporation. During my early years at Namdeb, I learned a lesson that has stayed with me: that diamonds, though born of immense pressure, shine brightest when they serve a greater purpose — when they uplift a Nation. This appreciation guided everything we did as we steered that great company to its highest potential. The same is true of people. Like farmers who trust that the rain will return and plant early, we endure through dry seasons, holding faith, and when the time is right, we rise: stronger, brighter, and unbreakable.

Today, as Minister responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform, I know with certainty that Namibia's greatest treasure lies not only beneath

the ground but within its people — and above all, within its youth. To the young women and men of Namibia: you hold the potential to drive productive agriculture and sustainable management of our natural resources, including water and land. Agriculture demands patience, but it also rewards vision, discipline, and innovation — qualities Namibians have long embodied in feeding their families, nurturing their communities, and building this Nation with quiet strength.

Young people have the responsibility to leverage their skills and knowledge in agriculture as a key driver of economic growth and job creation. To this end, the Ministry has introduced several initiatives for youth participation in agriculture along both the crop and livestock value chains. In addition, the Ministry continues to capacitate farmers through subsidized services, short training courses, weekly farmers' demonstrations, and information days. Furthermore, the Ministry offers opportunities in charcoal production at one of its farms through the National Youth Service, and I urge especially the youth to consider entering this field, which offers promising returns.

Equally, the fisheries sector offers numerous opportunities for developing the full value chain, as well as the aquaculture and mariculture sub-sectors. It is well known that marine fishery biomass stocks are on the decline due to various environmental and human factors. We must therefore begin to explore alternative ways to ensure sustainable fishery harvesting and management.

Land has always been here, but land alone does not create prosperity. It is your hands, your courage, your voices, and your ideas that will turn it into abundance. And so, I say this with pride: Namibians are not only the inheritors of this soil, but also its curators, its leaders, and its future.

I leave you in the company of this month's stories. Enjoy the read. ❀