



Republic of Namibia

**Deputy Minister, Ministry of Sport, Youth and National
Services**

Hon. Emma Kantema

At

**Official Opening Ceremony of the National Conference
for Youth from Marginalized Communities and
Indigenous Minorities in Namibia**

On

22 May 2023

MTC Dome, Swakopmund

Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Lukas Haufiku

Hon. Royal /ui/o/oo, Deputy Minister: Marginalized Affairs

Hon. Neville Itope, Governor of Erongo Region repressed by Mr
Michael Jimmy

Ms. Sharonice Busch, Executive Chairperson of the NYC

Ms. Beverly Silas-!Garas, Board member of the NYC

Adv. Basilius Dyakugha, Ombudsperson

Members and board members of the NYC

Government Senior Official

Distinguished invited guests

Personnel of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!!

Master of ceremonies, there is a quote by Richard John which reads " If the cause of poverty is marginalization then the cure is inclusion". This event is a testament that there are tireless efforts being made to cure marginalization through inclusion. Therefore, I am elated to be delivering this keynote address at the Official Opening of the National Conference for Youth from Marginalized Communities and Indigenous Minorities, which is being co-organized by our line agency, the National Youth Council, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and

Social Welfare and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

Our president H.E. Hage G. Geingob has shown his commitment to the inclusion of the marginalized communities. This is evident in the Harambee Prosperity Plan under 'zero deaths from hunger or poverty'. In this section the HPP stipulates that there should be a revision and conversion of the Food Bank, Special Feeding for Marginalised Communities and Marginalized Grant into a monthly cash transfer, as a first step to phase in a Conditional Basic Income Grant. This transitional BIG will be paid only to existing Food Bank and Marginalised grant beneficiaries, effective 2022.

Similarly, the 5th National Development Plan documents how developmental interventions for persons from Marginalized Communities have been rendered ineffective by various factors, including, but not limited to, interventions that have created structural dependency, absence of social institutions and leadership structures to organize persons from Marginalized Communities and the lack of a dedicated strategy that defines integration and mainstreaming, thereby causing an ad-hoc approach to meeting the needs of Marginalized Communities.

Master of ceremonies, to be clear, the Government of the Republic of Namibia prioritizes the plight of persons from Marginalized Communities and has, indeed, made significant strides to meet their needs. Needless to mention, our Namibian

Constitution provides a foundational framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of Marginalized Communities, and Namibia is a party to various conventions and treaties that safeguard the rights of all peoples, including persons from Marginalized Communities.

One practical demonstration, however, of Government's commitment to the developmental needs of persons from Marginalized Communities is the establishment of the Division of Marginalized Communities in the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MGEPESW), to coordinate the integration of Marginalized Communities (San, Ovaherero and Ovambo Communities) into our national development framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen, through the advocacy and work of the Division, Government has demonstrated that it not only recognizes the rights and interests of Marginalized Communities and Indigenous Minorities, but, indeed, prioritizes them, to ensure meaningful participation.

Another demonstration of Government's commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind in this Namibian House is the nomination and appointment of youth from Marginalized Communities onto bodies of leadership, particularly on the

Board of the National Youth Council. By ensuring this form of representation at such a level, we are assured that the interests and aspirations of, especially, youth from Marginalized Communities and Indigenous Minorities, are not only considered but, indeed, used to shape programming.

However, it is clear that more needs to be done to build a truly inclusive Namibian House, where all young people have an equal opportunity to prosper. This is why I am particularly pleased with the expected outcomes of this National Conference, which, among others, are to form a youth organisation that can coordinate the developmental agenda of youth from Marginalized Communities. When I look at stakeholders involved in this workshop this is policy in action as the National Youth Policy iii places emphasis on coordination amongst OMAS, development partners and the private sector.

This will not be a body of the National Youth Council or the Ministry of Youth, Sport and National Service. It will not be a body of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare or the United Nations. It will belong to youth from Marginalized Communities, and will be managed by them. Ultimately, this is our commitment to the principles of self-determination and self-governance.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the convening partners for taking this very necessary step in ensuring that youth from Marginalized Communities are, indeed, not left behind. OMAKE!!!

In the same vain, as you proceed with the remainder of the Conference's activities, I wish you the clarity to engage extensively and productively, and to ultimately form a youth organisation that speaks to the collective needs of youth from Marginalized Communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to close off by reiterating that the Ministry of Youth, Sport and National Service will continue to support initiatives that empower young people's inherent rights to self-determine and organize for their collective future in order for the youth to be self-reliant and responsible citizens. I wish you fruitful week of insightful presentations and deliberations. May this week matter as we strive to empower the marginalized youth.

I thank you!