



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY REAR ADMIRAL PETER HAFENI VILHO,
PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHEN HE WAS
INTRODUCED TO THE LEADERSHIP AND STAFF MEMBERS OF THE MINISTRY, ON
MONDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2017, AT THE DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, WINDHOEK**

The Honorable Minister of Defence
The Honorable Deputy Minister of Defence
The Chief of the Namibian Defence Force
The Deputy Permanent Secretary
General Officers and Officials
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning!

The purpose of today's meeting is to afford ourselves the opportunity to know one another. Therefore, it is both a great pleasure and great privilege to be here today and speak to the management and staff of the Ministry of Defense.

So, at the onset I would like to state that am happy to be here and I am looking forward to work with everyone. I believe in teamwork and cooperation and I will be expecting that from you as well.

TODAY, I would also like to share the following with you:

1. My perspective on whom we as administrators are expected to serve. This is important because the client/customer is our most important legitimizer;
2. What we need to do from now on in order to leave behind a professional force; and at the same time improve the image of the NDF; and
3. The principles that we need to live by; and that need to guide us in our day-to-day activities.

Firstly, ladies and gentlemen:

Before you can perform a public service or any service for that matter, you need to know who your customers are.

Sometimes we lose focus of whom we are supposed to serve. But it's the customers that give us legitimacy, and people forget them all the time. Without customers, we do not exist, so we have to understand who they are and what we ought to deliver for them.

I could tell you in one word who our customer is. However, for better illustration, allow me to paint a scenario.

When the C-in-C gives an order to the Defense Force to engage the enemy in combat, that order flows through the chain of command from the Strategic Level to the Tactical Level, where it will find an infantry soldier sitting somewhere in a trench at the battle front and who will actually pull the trigger that will release the bullet that will take out the threat.

Now, the president issues these orders under the assumptions that all the necessary conditions are in place for the rifleman to perform his mission. However, the possibility also exists that it will find an unfit, unskilled, and hungry

rifleman with a torn uniform, with worn out boots, with an unserviceable rifle and without ammunition.

Now, that soldier could be you; it could be your brother or sister; and it could also be your son or daughter.

If it were up to the soldier to arm himself, he would have procured the best rifle, and most durable uniform and boots. Unfortunately, the administrative system does not allow for that. Under the principle of division of labor, that responsibility lies with other members within the organization. And the poor soldier at the frontline can only trust that his colleagues will do their part and deliver the right equipment.

Those colleagues that the poor rifleman is counting on are us. Which means, the whole defense administration exists for one and only one purpose: and that is to produce a combat ready soldier. So, if at any one point you find yourself engaged in activities in the name of the Defense Force that do not contribute to that objective, then surely you are wasting government time and resources. You are weakening the Defense Force and rendering our people vulnerable to foreign subjugation.

So, whether we are in uniform or civilian attire; we are all here to serve the soldier, the airman, the sailor. He is our most important customer.

Secondly, ladies and gentlemen:

There is today a general perception among our stakeholders and members alike that the Defence Force is in a state of decline, or at best in a state of stagnation.

As public servants, we should bear in mind that our responsibility is to create public value. Creating public value means producing institutions, enterprises, policies, programs, projects, services that advance the public interest and the common good.

In order for the beneficial effects of our institutions and efforts to carry on into the future, we have to change what needs changing, so that we leave behind a better world than we found it.

We all have that little voice in ourselves that yearns for a better working environment; a place where you can pursue significance. We all have experienced that inner question of – if only the NDF could be this or that? If only the Minister the CDF and the PS would do this or that? Beyond the salary, we all yearn for a meaning in our lives. We all want to make a difference in life.

I too have hopes and dreams of a better Defence Force; and I am looking for like-minded people – in the spirit of “*three Services; one Force; one Ministry*” – to join hands with me in leaving a better NDF than we found it.

At the UN General Assembly, the President was quoted as saying that the **Tanganyika Group** will leave very soon. I believe the same applies to the **Oshaatotwa Group**. Our generation finds itself in a transitional period. We are transitional leaders. We are the bridge that links the PLAN veterans to those that were enlisted after independence. What we do in our last days in the service, will determine whether we leave behind a Professional Force, where regulations are enforced; or an Armed Militia, where everyone does as he/she pleases.

The only option open to us is as a matter of urgency to embark upon a Defence Review. The Defence Review will help us determine whether there is a fit between our Military Strategic Objectives and related Tasks, on the one hand; and our Force Design and Force Structure, on the other.

This will inform us on what to do to close the gap between the two. The effort to close that gap will inform our long-term strategies, our 5-year strategies, annual plans and programs. The resultant Force Design will inform our doctrines, concepts of operation, and SOPs. It will also be a useful and practical lesson to posterity on how systematically to determine one’s Force Design. I am confident

that pulling together with the CDF and with the blessing of our Ministers we can do that.

So, Nathinge, Nambagu, Lugambo, Lennox and the rest of your generation, it is up to you, whether you want to do this with our help; or you want to do it alone after we are gone?

Finally, ladies and gentlemen;

Apart from what we are setting ourselves to achieve, there are expectations from our external stakeholders, especially the Office of the Prime Minister. That in the course of our work we should at all times adhere to the principles of good governance.

We should exercise:

Equity: As Managers, we should be equitable (treat people in similar circumstances similarly).

Transparency: What we do should be open to scrutiny. One person cannot look for a quotation, process it and make the payment. There should be checks and balances.

Probity: There must be scrupulous honesty in dealing with public funds. We are just the stewards and not the owners.

Prudence: We should not take undue risks with public money. We should not get into contracts that leave government at a disadvantage. We should not expose government to interest rate hikes and foreign currency fluctuations.

Accountability: We should be regularly called to account for the stewardship of public funds through reviews and audit processes.

With that, ladies and gentlemen, I am really looking forward to your ideas on how we can contribute to those three things (1. how to best serve the soldier, airman

and sailor; 2. how to improve the image of and instill confidence in the Namibian Defence Force; and 3. how to improve upon good governance).

Thank you!