

**CLOSING SPEECH BY HONOURABLE PENDA YA NDAKOLO,
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AT THE SIXTH (6TH) EDITION OF
THE NDF ANNUAL SPORTS TOURNAMENT HELD FROM 05 TO
10 AUGUST 2019 IN KEETMANSHOOP, //KARAS REGION**

Honourable Lucia Basson, Regional Governor of //Karas Region

Your Worship Gaudentia Krohne, the Mayor of Keetmanshoop

Mr Philipus Heita, Special Advisor to the Minister of Defence

**Air Vice Marshall Martin Kambulu Pinehas, Acting Chief of the
Defence Force**

Major General Matheus Alueendo, Army Commander

**Rear Admiral Sinsy Ndeshi Bamba Nghipandua, Navy
Commander**

**Air Commodore Theofelus Shaende, Deputy Air Force
Commander**

**General Officer Commanding 12 Brigade and General Officers
Present**

**Commissioner David Ukongo Indongo, //Karas NamPol Regional
Commander**

**Commissioner Aune Hango, Keetmanshoop Correctional
Facility Superintendent**

Directors and Distinguished Invited Guests

Senior and Junior Officers

Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers

Members of the Defence Force Foundation

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen; Fellow Sports Women and Men

It is my distinct honour to deliver the closing speech at this very important event on the calendar of the Ministry of Defence and the Namibian Defence Force (NDF), the 6th Edition of the Namibian Defence Force Annual Sports Tournament, hosted by 12 Motorised Infantry Brigade, together with the beautiful city of Keetmanshoop in the great //Karas Region.

Honourable Governor we are grateful for the warm reception and hospitality offered by your office and the friendly people of Keetmanshoop in particular and the //Karas Region in general during this tournament.

Before anything else, I want to emphasise the importance of sport. We must admit that we have not been paying befitting attention to sports within the MoD/NDF. Sport, like health, education, and culture, is very important for human development, and particularly, for our troops.

Sport generates health through physical, mental and psychological fitness. In addition, it keeps our officers and troops occupied with something positive and constructive rather than resorting to the practice of negative behaviour and indiscipline.

I am glad that the NDF leadership made it a point for all of us, as leaders of the Ministry and the NDF, to be present at this important event to demonstrate how serious sport must be taken within the Namibian Defence Force. Therefore, our presence here today is a recognition of the importance of sport for our officers and troops.

Thank you Acting CDF for spearheading this very important initiative, it shows that you are a real sports fan. This must continue, sport must be taken seriously and supported adequately in terms of infrastructure development and the provision of appropriate equipment for athletes to train and become competitive at both national and international levels.

As the 6th Edition of the NDF Annual Sports Tournament is ending, we are grateful for the time we spent together. A time filled with positive energy and sportsmanship. This was, indeed, an event that helped our members not only to focus on their spiritual and emotional health but also their physical well-being. Let me express sincere thanks to heads of delegations, athletes, team officials, sponsors and those behind the scene for your active participation and great support.

Since the commencement of the games, our athletes competed fairly and bravely; displaying strong determination, great perseverance and true sportsmanship in the following sporting codes:

- a. Soccer with twenty-one (21) teams;
- b. Netball with eighteen (18) teams;
- c. Volleyball with fourteen (14) teams;
- d. Boxing three (03) Units participated;
- e. Pool Table with twenty-one (21) teams; and
- f. Athletics eighteen (18) Units participated.

Six days ago you stood at this parade with your respective teams ready to compete against each other. Today, you stand here surrounded by old, but also new friends you made during the tournament. That is one of the beauties and benefits of sport, it unites people irrespective of background.

You might feel that you defeated some of your colleagues or that you lost against some of them, but we must not categorise ourselves into losers and winners because at the end of the day we are one family and one Defence Force. The benefits of this tournament are shared benefits for all of us. That is what makes true friends and comrade-in-arms.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the main objective of this tournament is to promote cohesion, endurance, physical fitness and **esprit de corps** amongst NDF members. Besides, we must not underestimate the entertainment element of sport, participating in sport allows our bodies to relax and keeps our minds alert and focused, let alone the ability of sport to bring people together to socialise and create friendships.

In that spirit, I wish to congratulate all of you for achieving this objective during this spectacular week of sport here in Keetmanshoop. We saw several beautiful matches take place on these grounds for the past six days of intense activities. At the same time, we established strong bonds of friendship with the big numbers of spectators who turned up all those days from the Keetmanshoop community to watch the matches.

We wish that the good relations between the Keetmanshoop community and the NDF continue after this tournament.

The NDF is a member of the International Council of Military Sport (CISM), which is responsible for organising regional and world military games, I hope coaches and officials responsible for selecting NDF representatives at those games seized the opportunity to identify talented athletes who would represent the NDF at those levels.

Also not less important are bilateral games held with neighbouring countries with which Namibia has joint commissions on defence and security for which the NDF has to be ready to compete.

Also, the NDF has the Sports Day Parade every Wednesday and the inter-unit sports completions where talented athletes could be identified.

Therefore, I encourage all members to participate in those sports events as important platforms for talent identification and advancement of athletes to higher levels of competitions.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank our men and women who excelled at national and international sports events. Thank you so much for being good ambassadors of the NDF in particular and the Namibian nation as a whole.

We have outstanding NDF athletes who have excelled in different sports nationally and internationally, such as Ali Nuumbembe, Reinhold Iita, Hilaria Johannes, Paulus Ambunda, among others.

But what worries me is that these athletes most often compete as if they do not belong to this large family of MoD/NDF.

We need to pay more attention to this by answering the question of why NDF athletes compete as if they belonged elsewhere. We, like the Ministry of Defence and the Namibian Defence Force, especially the Defence Force Foundation, of which I am the patron, must support our athletes and ensure that the NDF brand is recognized through excellent performance.

I want to express our gratitude to the General Officer Commanding 12 Motorised Infantry Brigade and the entire Brigade staff, as well as the community of Keetmanshoop for your generosity. We thank you for organising the 6th Edition of the NDF Annual Sports Tournament and for bringing all of us together to shine, grow, laugh and sometimes even cry together.

We came here as individual teams, but we are now leaving as friends who are looking forward to meeting again next time.

A word of deep appreciation goes to our sponsors of the tournament, the Defence Force Foundation as the main sponsor, Metropolitan Namibia, NAMFORCE, August 26 Textile and Garment Factory, August 26 Logistics, UBM Construction and 26 August Holdings. It is because of your generous support that this tournament has been successful. Please, continue supporting us to maintain a healthy and strong Defence Force.

In conclusion, let me once more congratulate all participants for a wonderful event, without you this event could not have been successful. In particular, the winners in their various disciplines, you are superstars, may today's success be the beginning of tomorrow's bigger achievements!

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my distinct honour to declare the 6th Edition of the NDF Annual Sports Tournament 2019 officially closed. I call upon all NDF sportsmen and sportswomen to converge again at the 7th Edition next year, so that the spirit of true sportsmanship picked up from Keetmanshoop can be continued with courage and honour for the benefit of all of us.

Safe return to your respective destinations, see you next year and goodbye Keetmanshoop.

I THANK YOU.