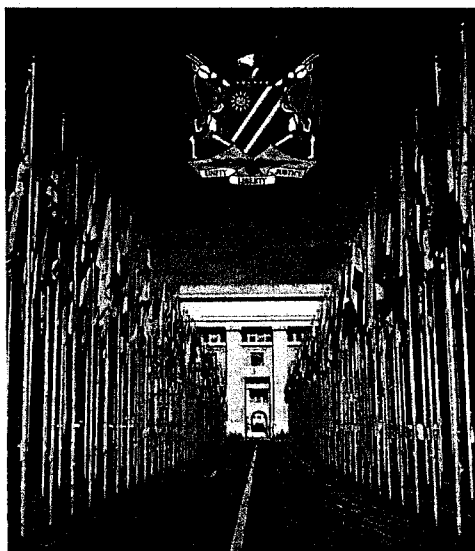


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Opening Statement by
HON. PENDUKENI IIVULA-ITHANA
MP, Minister of Justice
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**On the occasion of the 17th Session of the
Human Rights Council**

Geneva, Switzerland
8 June 2011

Check Against Delivery

**Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Members of the Human Rights Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. The 17th Session of the Human Rights Council is meeting at the backdrop of political upheaval and crisis in a number of countries around the world. The peoples of the world are looking for answers and solutions to their problems. They are looking for answers from institutions such as the Human Rights Council. It is therefore of paramount importance that the Council functions efficiently and effectively in addressing human rights situations around the world, with credibility, fairness and justice for all.
2. Mr. President, as Namibia's Universal Periodic Review outcome is being considered during this Council Session, we welcome the opportunity to report on the final position of Namibia on the recommendations to which we had reservations during our UPR in February this year. We thank the Council and Member States for their recommendations and words of encouragement to Namibia in strengthening her efforts to promote and protect the human rights of her citizens and that of persons finding themselves within the borders of Namibia.
3. In January of this year, I had the pleasure of leading the Namibian delegation to the UPR Session and today I am joined by Mrs. Gladice Pickering, a member of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and members from our Permanent Mission here in Geneva.
4. During our review in January we received a total of 120 recommendations during the interactive dialogue session. Namibia decided at the time to accept 90 of these recommendations and to reject 3. My delegation made reservations on 27 recommendations pending further consultations and approval by Cabinet. Approval was granted by Cabinet to reply to those reservations, and those responses can be found in the Report addendum to the Outcome Document to be adopted.

5. Since the adoption of the Report of the UPR Working Group on Namibia in February 2011, the Namibian Government continued to ensure the safeguarding of the rights of our people. Further to the Addendum Report, I would like to add the following to the progress Namibia has made in promoting and protecting the human rights of its citizens. The percentage of the rural population with sanitary facilities has increased to 38% and the Government of the Republic of Namibia is hard at work to increase this percentage rapidly. Plans are underway for the upcoming visit of the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the right to access safe drinking water and sanitation, Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque. This is the first ever visit by a special rapporteur in Namibia, and our Government looks forward to working closely with Ms. Albuquerque to further enhance our efforts in supplying the entire Namibian population with safe drinking water and proper sanitation.
6. Mr. President, I kindly request the Secretariat to rectify the figure of **180 000** job opportunities as reflected in our latest report submitted on **27 May 2011** on page 1 paragraph 1 to be **104 000**. These are the jobs that our Government aims to create over the next few years in order to curb the recent increase in the unemployment rate.
7. A further correction will be to the adopted Report by the Working Group on the number of San people living in Namibia. The figure should be about 30 000 and not 60 000.

Now, Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I welcome your comments on our report addendum to the UPR Working Group Report, and the Working Group Report itself, as well as our interventions today. I thank you.

Closing Remarks

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, I reaffirm the Government of Namibia's commitment in building the Namibian society in a spirit of harmony and national reconciliation. Namibia remains committed to enhancing efforts towards the promotion and protection of human rights in order to improve the quality of life for her people. We commit ourselves to promote peace and international cooperation by engaging constructively in the deliberations of the Human Rights Council, its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms, as one way of achieving that. The Council must, unquestionably, address all situations of human rights without double standards.

Namibia remains committed to implementing the recommendations that enjoyed her support during the first cycle of the UPR. In reference to the ratification of outstanding core international human rights instruments, our Government requests for technical assistance from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out an impact assessment study in respect of each instrument. Further assistance is requested in the area of state reporting. Our Government is in the process of establishing a National Action Plan for Human Rights and we appeal to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to render us support in this regard. We look forward to participating in the second cycle of the UPR in an open and constructive manner.

I thank you Mr. President.