



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**REMARKS**

**BY**

**HON. YVONNE DAUSAB, MP**

**MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

**DURING INAUGURATION OF THE KATIMA MULILO  
MAGISTRATES' COURT**

**IN ZAMBEZI REGION**

**TUESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**Director of Proceedings;**

**Hon. Chief Justice, the Acting Governor, the Mayor, Leaders of Local and Regional Leadership, our Esteemed Traditional Leaders, Leadership within the legal and justice sector, the people of the Zambezi region, our Uniformed Forces;**

**Distinguished Invited Guests, the Media;**

**Good morning, I am always very happy when we are taking small steps to deliver services to our people.**

1. “Access to justice” means many things to many people. For some, it signifies the ability to exercise legal rights and seek remedies when wronged. For others, it represents having a fair and transparent forum to defend oneself against criminal or civil charges and being heard by an impartial decision-maker. Yet, to others, access to justice means having the necessary law-related resources—such as legal assistance or the means to navigate complex judicial processes.
2. No one can deny the importance of these components of justice, especially when the legal stakes are high. Consequently, access to justice also symbolised in a more immediate, physical form. In this instance, it is about having a court that is geographically accessible—a place where justice is not just an idea, but a lived reality. Today, that is the reality for the Zambezi region.
3. That is why today’s inauguration of the Katima Mulilo Magistrates’ Court is so important. It provides the people of this region with a local, physical space where they can seek justice, defend their rights, and have their cases heard by impartial decision-makers.

4. It is indeed an honour to stand before you today as we celebrate yet another significant milestone in our ongoing mission to bring justice closer to the people of Namibia. The inauguration of the Katima Mulilo Magistrates' Court marks the culmination of a journey that began with the Environmental Crimes Court in Otjiwarongo and the more recently the Hoachanas Periodical Court. This marks the conclusion of the current series of court inaugurations planned for this period, but many more such developments are planned for the future, as we remain steadfast in our commitment to enhancing access to justice for all Namibians and providing court facilities to all of our regions over the next few years until we are satisfied that we have covered the entire country and serve our people.
5. The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia guarantees every citizen the right to access justice. This is a promise to the people of this country that justice is not a privilege reserved for a few, but a right for all.
6. Just like in other aspects of life, every society must have a clear understanding of how it relates to others and must guide its policies with ideals that foster fairness and cooperation. This same principle applies to our justice system. Just as no society can function in isolation, our courts must ensure that justice is accessible to all—reaching the most remote regions and serving every citizen equally.
7. The inauguration of the Katima Mulilo Magistrates' Court embodies this vision, demonstrating that justice is not confined to urban centers but extends to every corner of our nation. With only one district court and two periodical courts gazetted at Ngoma and Impalila Island, this new facility strengthens our ability to deliver timely and impartial justice to the people of this region.

8. As we move forward, it is crucial to underscore that the confidence of the people in a independent, impartial and competent Judiciary, requires that the Judiciary is supported to dispense justice in an effective, timely and dignified manner and a court facility is an important part of this aspect. A facility that is people centred and where service functionaries are friendly. Where we strive to speed up the delivery of Justice and not unnecessary delay, nor should it favour any individual or group. It must serve all citizens equally, safeguarding the rights enshrined in our Constitution.
9. However, this commitment is not one fulfilled by a single entity. It requires a whole of government approach. It requires a mutually supportive role( not interference in the functions of each)of all key state organs, the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary.
10. The collaborative work between the Office of the Judiciary and the Ministry of Justice is aimed at only one thing and that is to ensure access to justice for all. While our operations and mandates are distinct, our missions converge on the shared goal of making justice accessible as widely as possible and to administer justice in a timely and impartial manner, respectively.
10. The Office of the Judiciary, as the administrator of courts, is responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of the judicial system, through the timely hearing of cases, the impartial delivery of justice, and the professional management of court infrastructure. Their role is fundamental in safeguarding judicial independence and ensuring that justice is not only done but seen to be done.
11. On the other hand, the Ministry of Justice, while different in its operations, complements this mission by ensuring that the necessary legal frameworks and

services are in place to support the judicial process. We are responsible for the administration of maintenance investigations, the granting of legal aid, and the administration of deceased estates, among other justice and legal services. Our role is in part to make legal services affordable, integrated, and accessible to all Namibians, especially those with limited financial resources or those facing complex legal challenges. This court facility reflects that intent.

12. I also encourage the community leaders here to take an active role in educating their communities about their rights to access justice, especially through community courts. This approach goes hand in hand with these efforts. It shifts the focus from punishment alone to reconciliation and rehabilitation. Restorative justice illuminates the path toward healing within communities, focusing on restoring relationships and addressing the harm caused by criminal behaviour. This is especially important in our context, where the focus is not only on deterring crime but on rebuilding trust and harmony within our communities.
  
13. As we conclude here today, let us remember that true justice is not just about laws and processes. It is about people. It is about communities. And it is about ensuring that everyone, no matter where they are or what challenges they face, can access the justice they deserve. I would like therefore like to thank all stakeholders for your continued collaboration to ensuring that each and every Namibian, from the borders of the Zambezi River to the deserts of the Namib, has equal access to justice, as promised by our Constitution.

Thank you.