



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Statement by Honourable Yvonne Dausab, Minister of Justice, MP, High Level Segment, 46th Session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, Switzerland.

24 February 21

**Madame President,
Madame High Commissioner,
Distinguished delegates,**

Madame President, I congratulate you on your election as President of the Human Rights Council for 2021, and in the same light, I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. I assure you of Namibia's full cooperation during your tenures.

Madame President,

The efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in these very difficult times are commendable. It is not easy to ensure that states continuously recommit to their human rights obligations when many are focused on keeping their inhabitants alive and safe from the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights through the execution of their mandate and support remind us that human rights remain crucial and that we carry a duty to promote and protect human rights especially in times of crises. Namibia is therefore grateful for the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, member States and other stakeholders of maintaining their commitment to the realization of all human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic and re-enforcing key implementation measures. We reiterate our call for equitable regional representation in the structures of the Office of the High Commissioner.

Madame President,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action or in short, the DDPA. However, the recent events around the world clearly illustrate our shortcomings in realising the vision of this noble international commitment. We strongly condemn systematic inequality, racist and extremist practices that divide people on basis of colour and ethnic origin, as there is no justification for differential treatment of people on basis of their skin colour or origin. As we listen to the cries of those who suffer at the hands of racists and extremists, our duty to humanity and the future generations is to fulfil our obligations under the DDPA and to restore the dignity and equality of all persons at all levels of society. Namibia joins other countries in the continued commitment to eliminate racism, extremism and ideologies alike because no person should be discriminated against on the basis of their colour or ethnic origin in the era of human rights. It is time to actively address our shortcomings because one life lost due to this appalling form of inequality is one too many.

Madame President,

Persisting natural disasters such as storms, earthquakes, forest fires and locust infestations are nature's call to action to all of us: climate change is real and its impacts threaten our livelihoods daily. Our duty to the future of this world is to embed climate change considerations and protective measures in our policies and laws. Our efforts to protect and promote human rights will be rendered futile in an inhospitable climate and environment. Namibia is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, as we often experience extreme alternating drought and flooding which adversely impact the livelihood of our people. The SDGs and the Paris Agreement present unique opportunities for countries like Namibia to access assistance in their efforts to address the impact of climate change, and take protective and preventative measures. Namibia therefore echoes the words of the UN Secretary-General in his recent call for greater commitment to deliver measurable targets and means of implementation of both the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

Madame President,

Namibia is concerned about the slow progress in global efforts to promote and protect human rights of persons with disabilities and that of persons with albinism. The provisions of the CRPD demand full inclusion in policies, laws and infrastructure ensuring unlimited access to public services and support in the independent living of persons with disabilities. We cannot ensure the promotion and protection of human rights of persons with disabilities if we continue to exclude them from political decision-making positions at national level. Let us all work with international organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities and civil society organisations to mainstream disability issues and achieve full inclusivity.

Madame President,

The alarming rate of violence against women and girls remains a concern and a challenge for Namibia. In recent years Namibia recorded high numbers of violence against women and girls in cases of domestic violence, intimate partner killings and rape and other forms of sexual violence. We joined the world in commemorating the 16 days of Activism against Gender-based violence, and as leaders we listened to the activism and calls for change from protesters across the world who drew attention to the prevalence of gender-based violence as an issue of global concern. Namibia has since begun the process of amending both the Combating against Domestic Violence and the Combating against Rape legislations but we also acknowledge that societal reform is necessary to denounce and eliminate harmful patriarchal and cultural practices which diminish the rights of women and girls. Namibia welcomes cooperative engagements on effective interventions and good practices from member states and international organisations to address the alarming scourge of violence against women and girls.

Madame President,

In our view, the right to development is central to the promotion of human rights and remains a priority for Namibia. The eradication of poverty in developing countries impacts our ability to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and Namibia is committed to working towards ensuring that the negative connotations surrounding the acknowledgment of this right are effectively denounced. Akin to the right to development is the accountability of transnational corporations and other business entities, and their role to the implementation of human rights. We continue to support the work of the Human Rights Council on transnational corporations and other

business entities and human rights with the view to ensure that action is taken against those business entities that operate in complete disregard for human rights.

Madame President,

As our review under the 3rd Cycle of the Universal Peer Review mechanism draws closer, we are pleased to state that we have submitted our country report setting out our efforts thus far in implementing recommendations accepted during the 2nd Cycle review and other relevant updates. We invite our peers and other stakeholders to peruse the report as we look forward to constructive engagements during our review in May 2021.

Madame President,

Namibia strongly believes in the right to self-determination and the right of a people to freedom, independence and social justice. We therefore reiterate our support for UN solutions in resolving the plight of the people of Western Sahara, and we also stand with the People of Palestine in their just cause. Lastly, Madame President, Universal coercive measures serve as additional constraints to countries that have limited-to-no resources, especially during these challenging times of a global pandemic, sanctions aggravate pre-existing adversities that impact on human rights. We therefore call on the international community to respect the principle of state sovereignty and offer necessary assistance to states that are trying to resolve their disputes through peaceful means.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that Namibia remains committed to implementing human rights and actively participating in the work of the Council. I wish you fruitful deliberations and engagements during this Session.

I thank you, Madame President.