



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**Statement by Honourable Sakeus Shanghala, Minister of Justice, MP,
at the 40th Session of the Human Rights Council, High Level Segment, 25 to 28
February 2019**

**27 February 2019
Geneva, Switzerland**

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

Let me once more congratulate you on your election as President of the Human Rights Council for 2019. Likewise, I congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. In the same vein, I express warm congratulations to madame Michelle Bachelet for assuming the function of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. I assure you both of Namibia's full cooperation during your tenures.

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council was created because Member States deplored many of the practices that characterized its predecessor, the Human Rights Commission, which was disbanded in 2005. These vices included the politicization, double standards, selectivity and hypocrisies while dealing with human rights issues. The questions we should be asking ourselves now should be are we better off now in dealing with human rights issues?

Namibia commends the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, member States and other stakeholders for the remarkable efforts undertaken to address issues of concern. We appeal for an open spirit of dialogue and trust to underscore the discussions at this forum. Though much remains to be done, the Human Rights Council remains the principal forum for the analysis and discussion of human rights situations by members states

Mr. President,

Last year, the international community celebrated the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which forms the basis of the Bill of Rights in the Namibian Constitution. We reiterate the value its preamble, which state that, "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" It is our belief that the respect for and promotion of fundamental human rights remain critical and necessary to create and maintain peace and stability in a world plagued by inequality, violence and

conflict. The UDHR is the cornerstone of all multilateral human rights instruments. We should all pledge to sacredly uphold the rights set out therein in our quest for finding solutions to the challenges facing us. We share the concern of the international community as regards the internal conflicts in many countries in which the lives of thousands of innocent people are lost. This is not what the world should look like today as we are supposed to have evolved much further than resorting to violence.

Mr. President,

We concur with the High Commissioner, who recently stated that the human rights impact of climate change is profound, and the impact is mostly felt by the most vulnerable members of our societies. According to weather forecasts, Namibia is facing yet another drought spell this year, which will have devastating impacts on all living creatures, with the inevitable consequence of draining scarce economic resources. Unless we recognize the impact of climate change and global warming on the enjoyment of human rights, we will not act responsibly. Namibia calls upon the international community to change its ways and to join efforts to minimize the impact of climate change. It is only through concerted efforts targeted towards specific outcomes that we can make realistic changes, our individual efforts aimed at fighting climate change must therefore be part of a larger cooperative plan. We re-iterate our serious misgivings on the decisions of those who either renege or withdraw from major climate change agreements.

Mr. President,

Namibia firmly supports all initiatives to make the right to development a reality for everyone. The promotion of this right is essential for poverty eradication in developing countries and our government is prepared to partner with those who acknowledge this right and to work with others to eliminate any adverse impressions or connotations to this right. We remain hopeful that the Sustainable Development Goals will enable us all to get on board, ensuring that we will not be left behind in reaching our targets.

Mr. President,

Namibia will continue to call on member States to re-consider their positions on the imposition of the death penalty and notes with gratitude the strides made in some countries to reduce the number of executions and to place moratoriums on the imposition of the death penalty.

As we are preparing ourselves for our third cycle review under the UPR mechanism of this Council, we look forward to engaging with our peers and stakeholders during our UPR review, which is scheduled for January 2020. We have recently submitted our mid-term review report to indicate our efforts in implementing accepted recommendations from our second cycle review.

Mr. President,

The right to self-determination, in which Namibia firmly believes, is so sacrosanct that it is in Article One of the UN Charter. Accordingly, we reiterate Namibia's unwavering support to and solidarity with the People of Palestine in their just cause for freedom, independence and social justice. We further remain steadfast in our support for the implementation of the various UN solutions to resolve the plight of the people of Western Sahara as a matter of urgency and we call on the HRC to play its part in this regard. As Chair SADC, Namibia calls on the removal of the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, the existence of which deprives Zimbabweans of their rights to enjoy various fundamental human rights. Lastly, Mr. President, Namibia believes in the cardinal principles of national sovereignty and the solution of conflicts by peaceful means, as such, we call on the international community to assist the people of Venezuela in their efforts to solve their national issues through peaceful means.

I conclude by re-iterating Namibia's commitment to human rights and human rights law and instruments, to which it is party.

I thank you, Mr President.