**THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE WELCOME REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF NDF 35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION’S PARADE HELD ON 02 JUNE 2025 AT LT GEN DIMO HAMAAMBO GARRISSON, GROOTFONTEIN OTJOZONDJUPA REGION**

Thank you, Director of Ceremonies.

* Your Excellency, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, President of the Republic of Namibia and Commander-in-Chief of the Namibian Defence Force;
* Your Excellency, Madam Lucia Witbooi, Vice President;
* Right Honourable Dr Elijah Tjitunga Ngurare, Prime Minister;
* Honourable Natangwe Iithete, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industrialisation, Mines and Energy;
* Honourable Frans Kapofi, Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs;
* Honourable Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;
* Aviation General Altino Carlos José dos Santos, Chief of the General Staff of the Angolan Armed Forces;

**Allow me to stand on the protocols already established by the Director of Ceremonies and simply say, Distinguished Invited Guests; Men and Women in Uniform; Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning!**

It is my profound honour and privilege to welcome you all to this momentous occasion marking the 35th Anniversary of the Namibian Defence Force, a legacy born of unity, forged through discipline, and sustained by an unyielding commitment to the defence and sovereignty of our nation.

From the onset, allow me to extend, in particular, a heartfelt and respectful welcome to Her Excellency, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, President of the Republic of Namibia and Commander-in-Chief of the Namibian Defence Force.

Your Excellency, we are humbled and deeply honoured by your presence here at Lt Gen Dimo Hamaambo Garrison. Your personal attendance at this ceremony not only inspires the Defence Force but also reinforces our national commitment to unity, security, and peace.

Equally, I extend a warm welcome to all dignitaries present: Your Excellency, Madam Vice President; the Right Honourable Prime Minister; Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers; Members of Parliament; my esteemed guest, Aviation General Altino Carlos José dos Santos; Service Chiefs; Defence Attachés; regional and local leaders; and all distinguished invited guests. Your presence underscores the national importance of this celebration, and your ongoing support strengthens our mission.

**Your Excellency,** the Namibian Defence Force did not emerge out of convenience. It was born from the solemn determination to protect the sovereignty of a young Republic, a nation emerging from the shadows of colonialism. Guided by the Constitution and anchored in Article 115, the NDF became the institutional expression of national sovereignty.

The establishment of the Namibian Defence Force in 1990 marked a profound moment of national transformation when former adversaries chose reconciliation over division to form a single, unified instrument of power. This was more than a mere integration of opposing forces; it represented a political, social, and national covenant rooted in unity and forgiveness. The symbolism of that historic act continues to echo across our nation to this day. Indeed, the Namibian Defence Force stands as a living embodiment of our country’s unwavering commitment to peace, justice, and reconciliation. It is the shield of the Republic, the pride of our people, and a disciplined custodian of our hard-won independence.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** as we commemorate 35 years of noble service, we pause to pay tribute to those who stood at the forefront during moments of great adversity and to those who paid the ultimate price in the line of duty. From protecting our territorial integrity and rendering humanitarian assistance in times of floods, droughts, and pandemics, to raising the Namibian flag high in international peacekeeping and enforcement missions, these acts are not mere operational duties. They are solemn affirmations of patriotism, sacrifice, and selfless service.

We will continue to salute the gallant sons and daughters of Namibia whose blood has watered the tree of our independence, and whose legacy continues to inspire this Force to uphold peace, security, and national pride.

The NDF is more than a uniformed body, it is a national institution that has matured alongside the state. We have grown from modest beginnings into a structured and professional entity with land, air, and maritime capabilities. It is a Force that continues to invest in its people, modernize its platforms, and honour the ethos of service before self.

**Your Excellency,** as we gather here today, we honour not only the remarkable achievements of the past, but also the steadfast resilience of the present and the unwavering promise of the future. The parade assembled before you drawn from all three Arms of Service and various formations stands as a proud tribute to your esteemed leadership and a symbol of our combat readiness.

Moreover, today’s parade serves to reaffirm our enduring military tradition of rendering full honours to the Commander-in-Chief. It is particularly significant, as it grants us the opportunity to extend the ceremonial salute which, due to unavoidable circumstances, could not be accorded during Your Excellency’s inauguration earlier this year.

As the Chief of the Defence Force, I assure you that the NDF will continue to uphold the highest standards of loyalty, professionalism, and patriotism. We remain guided by our core values: Patriotism, Dedication, Integrity, and Teamwork. We will continue to earn the confidence of our people and honour the trust of our government.

To the men and women in uniform, I say this: Wear your national uniform with pride, serve with honour, and never forget the sacred responsibility you carry for the defence of this nation. The road behind us defines our legacy, but the road ahead will define our destiny.

I conclude by once again thanking Her Excellency, the President, and all esteemed guests for gracing this ceremony. Your presence affirms the significance of the Defence Force in the fabric of the Namibian House.

**I THANK YOU.**