



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**HON ERASTUS UUTONI,
MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
INAUGURATION OF THE UIS SETTLEMENT OFFICE**

**WEDNESDAY, 19TH JUNE 2024
ERONGO REGION**

- Honourable Neville Andre Itope, Governor of Erongo Region,
- Honourable Benitha Imbamba, Chairperson of Erongo Regional Council and the Regional Councillor of Arandis Constituency,
- Honourable Kennedy Haseb, Regional Councillor for Daures Constituency,
- Honourable Regional Councillors of other constituencies,
- Your Worship, Mayors of the Local Authorities,
- Honourable Councillors of Local Authorities,
- Chief Zagarias Seibeb of the Dauren Daman Traditional Authority
other Traditional Leaders in the Erongo Region,
- Esteemed members of the media,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

A very Good morning to you all.

It is with delight that I stand here before you this day to celebrate with you all a historical milestone in the development of the Uis settlement. This indeed long awaited because the first attempt to inaugurate this building was previously taken over by other responsibilities but here we are finally to carry out the task this morning.

From the onset, it is my sincere belief that the Uis settlement will not be the same again, observing the ambitions of the Erongo Regional Council to return the settlement to its former glory. This event therefore, signifies the new path to prosperity and to ensure that residence rally behind the efforts of the Regional Council to live this dream.

Director of our proceedings;

The Government of the Republic of Namibia is committed to bringing development to all corners of our country, thus our gathering here today is a clear testament to that commitment. Through the construction of building this office, government aims to bring development closer to the people and to serve the residents of the Uis settlement with pride and determination. Thus, this particular development is aligned to the aspirations of the Decentralisation Enabling Act 33 of 2000.

Ladies and gentlemen, Distinguished Invited Guests;

I would like to applaud the Erongo Regional Council for expressing sound leadership, management and dedication to duty that has yielded tangible results, through the delivery of the office we are about to inaugurate today. This is the setup we would like to see, whereby the Regional Councils are responding to the developmental needs of our people to steer a change in the service delivery cycle. The art of development is only manifested when it is visible, by that I mean when we see, touch, feel and smell it the development. This timely building as you can see for your represent development and it speak for itself what government can do for you're the residence of Uis settlement.

In that light, I wish to emphasise a critical factor in the management and maintenance of public buildings. From the outside, it is often evident that government buildings might seem mysterious, or even impressive. It is therefore, imperative to observe that at these places is where decisions are made, written and executed, judgments handed down, and, well, water accounts and rates and taxes billed from. If anyone in the public sector can tell you, public buildings such as this settlement office, are normally fitted with complex systems that need careful monitoring and maintenance to function well. Important to note, is the fact that these are buildings where critical work is done and that the public relies on it for essential services, making comfort, functionality, and safety top priorities.

Having said that, **ladies and Gentlemen**, this particular building will benefit you with robust upgrades in service delivery efficiency, uniquely

positioned to lead the charge toward a more secure, sustainable future for generations to come. Therefore, we should ensure that this facility is put to good use with a proper maintenance plan in place to keep it strong and lasting for generation to come.

On that note, I want to recognise and applaud the local authorities in the Erongo region, as I have been informed that this office is constructed from the accruals of the 5% contribution that you collect for the Regional Council. On account of transparency, the total sum collected to build this modest office was N\$11.75 million. Noting this development, I implore the local authorities in the region not to waiver but rather continue to honour this noble undertaking as enshrined in our policy instruments. To the Erongo Regional Council, I encourage you to develop a culture of accountability and demonstrate to the local authorities how these funds are being managed and the value added to the development of the region.

Honourable Governor, Honourable Chairperson, I should mention that I am pleased with the sound and symbiotic relationship between the Office of the Governor, the Erongo Regional Council and the Local Authorities, as well as the private sector in the region. Keep building the momentum as you refer to yourselves as the '**Region of Excellence,**' and continue to embrace your motto, "***We Plan together, we develop together***".

Director of our proceedings;

As I end my statement I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Erongo Regional Council to formalise the Tatamutsi Informal Settlement,

the upgrading of the bulk water supply line to this informal settlement as well as the projected expansion of the townland boundaries of Uis. This is important for the growth of the settlement and notably the quest to advocate for the return of Uis to a local authority status, a process that we all hope will be realised.

I am therefore aware that the Erongo Regional Council has already made contact with my office regarding this bold move. Thus, I wish to mention that it is an uphill task and I want to caution that remedial actions need to be applied to address all issues that were flagged during the downgrade (more than 12 years ago) and ensure that, if the status is granted, the new entity will operate a model that reassures sustainability and robust accountability systems. It is our ultimate wish to have local authorities that are run effectively and that can be used as learning centres for those faced with governance and management challenges. I strongly believe that Uis settlement could be that model local authority we hope to see one day!

Allow me at this juncture, to once again encourage the community of Uis to safeguard this infrastructure whilst enjoying the maximum benefits that come with it.

Let us all hold hands in the spirit of Harambee and shun the evil of vandalism to safeguard this building as it forms part of the establishment of the future development and prosperity of the settlement and its people.

Finally, it is also important that we remind ourselves that this year is a crucial year where we are going to have Presidential and National Assembly

Elections in November 2024. Thus, all eligible voters who are 18 years above are required to register and exercise their democratic rights to vote for a leader and members of their choices. We should therefore inform and remind each and every one to register, as our current voters cards have expired and we need all of us to be registered again this year. The Electoral Commission of Namibia has commence with the General Registration of Voters from the **03rd of June 2024 – 01st of August 2024** countrywide. You should make sure that you register in a region and a constituency where you are currently residing to be issued with a new voter`s card for you to be eligible to vote in November 2024 during the Presidential and National Assembly Elections.

Let me assure you that the Government of Namibia through our Ministry of Urban and Rural Development is on the move and remains committed to the task of delivering affordable housing to as many Namibians as possible.

It is now my honour and privilege to declare the Uis Settlement office officially open and the Almighty God Bless us all.

I thank you!!!!!!