



3 YEARS OF GEINGOB: HARAMBEE AT HALFTIME

An Analysis of President
Hage Geingob's First
Three Years in Office



Introduction

On 21 March 2018, President Hage Geingob marked his third year in office as the President of the Republic of Namibia. As he marked the day – which was also the 28th Anniversary of Namibia's independence – he capped off his speech to a packed stadium in Tsumeb in the Oshikoto Region with another call to unity, saying: "Let us stand united, as one Namibia, as one Nation. Let us look forward, hold hands and contribute to progress in whichever way we can. Let us renew our commitment to Namibia and pull together in the same direction under the sanctuary of our Namibian House."¹

This unifying call was in keeping with the 'Namibian House' mantra with which he came into office on 21 March 2015, when he told Namibians "No Namibian should feel left behind!" and called on them to "stand together in building this new Namibian House."² When he made that first speech as President, Geingob was riding on a titanic wave of support, catapulted to the position of first citizen with 87 percent of the national vote in the presidential election of 28 November 2014.

¹ Geingob, Hage. 2018. Speech on the occasion of the 28th Independence Day Celebration. "Accomplishing the Task of Unity and Shared Prosperity."

² Geingob, Hage. 2015. Inauguration Speech.

Almost exactly three years after the national election, on 27 November 2017, President Geingob was again assured of his party's confidence in his leadership, when at the Swapo Party Congress, he garnered almost 75 percent of the vote to become Party President, after acting in that role since his former President Hifikepunye Pohamba vacated the seat in April 2015. Gaining this nod from his party was especially important for Geingob, who, as President of both the party and the nation, now has greater leverage to align party and national policies, and "to act with more purpose in implementing the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) and stepping up the fight against poverty."³

At each of the aforementioned occasions, and in various speeches throughout his presidency to date, Geingob has highlighted his commitment to eradicating poverty and inequality in Namibia as his major objective during his time in office. Each of his State of the Nation Addresses to date, the Harambee Prosperity Plan (launched during his SONA of 2016), and the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5) speak to this notion; and indeed, most Namibians have come to expect that this should be the basis upon which the President's success is measured.

³ Iilonga, A. 2017. "Congress win a great boost for Geingob." In *Informanté*, 1 December 2017.



There are several other promises though – highlighted in a range of policy documents and statements from the President – upon which the President’s progress should be assessed. This paper highlights these promises – most notably those captured in the President’s Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) – and analyses the progress made towards achieving them. It also assesses the hits and misses of Geingob’s presidency thus far.

Measuring Progress on Promises Made

President Geingob came into office with the promise of ‘Prosperity’ for all Namibians. (Party advertisements in the run-up to the 2014 elections portrayed President Nujoma as having represented peace, and President Pohamba as representing stability, with Geingob being the President who would ensure prosperity.) Given the high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality that continue to exist in Namibia, this was a promise that generated much hope among Namibians, and which shaped his policy direction, as seen in his key national speeches.

Importantly (and positively), soon after coming into office, President Geingob held a number of ‘townhall meetings’, during which he engaged the Namibian public on the issues affecting them. He noted in his 2016 SONA that this feedback was pivotal to shaping his policy focus⁴ and in guiding his actions as President; and in various speeches, he has encouraged Namibians to continue to engage in addressing the issues affecting the nation.

Since coming into office, the President has made a number of important policy pronouncements – as captured in his various speeches, the government’s budgetary focus, the new national development plan, and perhaps most notably, the Harambee Prosperity Plan. In fact, Geingob’s promises against which we can measure his progress are essentially captured in the HPP, and many of his pronouncements after its launch in 2016 touch on the pillars upon which Harambee stands, i.e. Effective Governance, Economic Advancement, Social Progression, Infrastructure Development, and International Relations and Cooperation. He has, himself, measured his progress as President against these pillars. In fact, his 2017 SONA was essentially an account on progress made in the first year of implementation of Harambee.

Using the HPP in measuring the President’s impact to date is important, because, as he noted in his 2016 SONA, the Plan “complements our shared long-term prosperity goal, by targeting the immediate implementation limitations and accelerating development in the short-term.”⁵ As a short term strategy, it therefore provides a perfect tool with which to measure the President’s goals for his first term, with the HPP aptly being set to meet its stated targets by 2020 (which would mark the end of the President’s first term).

Beyond Harambee, which forms the primary basis for this assessment, the President has been clear on the causes to which he is committed, and where his energies are invested, by often highlighting the key markers of his presidency in his most important national speeches. Some of the key statements from his annual SONAs provide an important look at his consistent rhetoric around the ‘prosperity mandate’, as captured below. An assessment of how well the President has performed in meeting the HPP is provided in greater detail starting on page 4.

Inauguration Speech 21 March 2015

After 25 years they (Namibian citizens) want food, clothing and shelter. They want jobs, better housing and good nutrition. They want a leader who will bring prosperity to the nation and they want that leader to act quickly.

The main priority for the next administration will be addressing the socio-economic gaps that exist in our society. Therefore, our first priority will be to declare all-out war on poverty and concomitant inequality. Our focal point will be to address inequality, poverty and hunger and that will involve looking at a range of policies and interventionist strategies to tackle this issue.

There won’t be just one approach. We need a myriad of options and not a one size fits all strategy. It is for these reasons that we have put in place a revised Government structure that will exist for the next five years. The goal is to improve alignment of existing Ministries to Government goals and objectives such as: poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities and disparities; sustainable economic growth and economic diversification; job creation; and improved service delivery.

2015 State of the Nation Address 21 April 2015

Nation building is similar to building a house, and in our case, building the Namibian house. ... We are intent on building and maintaining a high quality house in which all its residents have a sense of shared identity. We are determined to build a house that will be a place of peace and refuge for all its children and a house in which no Namibian will be left out.

As a rules-based Nation, we must capacitate and allow our institutions such the Anti- Corruption Commission, the Namibian Police and our Courts to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption without fear or favor. ... A key requirement in preventing undue benefits accruing to Public Officials is preventing conflicts of interest and the disclosure of assets. The law does not require the President to disclose his personal assets. However, managing conflict of interest is a matter which requires political will. Therefore, I feel obliged to publicly declare my personal assets.

⁴ Geingob, Hage. 2016. State of the Nation Address.

⁵ Ibid.

The war against poverty and the quest for economic emancipation must be a multifaceted war which we will fight on many fronts, using a myriad of methods at our disposal.

I want to reaffirm my personal commitment to addressing land reform and provision of affordable housing to all Namibians. Land reform, therefore, remains one of the areas of transformation that is critical towards social justice, inclusion and poverty alleviation in Namibia.

We must aim to create an economy that is inclusive, sensitive and responsive to national developmental objectives and imperatives. Our duty is to ensure that these complicated technical terms we use translate into measurable improvements in living standards for ordinary Namibians.

2016 State of the Nation Address 5 April 2016

We have developed the Harambee Prosperity Plan as the implementation roadmap to fast-track the achievement of our development goals.

The attainment of prosperity may sound overly ambitious to some. However when we speak of prosperity, we are not speaking of opulence or excess. We speak of a Namibia in which every inhabitant has access to the basic necessities for a dignified life. We aim to meet those basic needs and by so doing, enable every Namibian to realize their potential and prosper according to his or her inherent ability. In other words:

- We strive towards a Namibia where no one dies of hunger;
- We strive towards a Namibia where people have access to decent shelter;
- We strive towards a Namibia where our people have access to basic amenities such as safe water, quality education, basic health services and sustainable income to afford the necessities of life.

Fellow Namibians, the Land of the Brave has overcome tremendous historical obstacles. Through the Harambee Prosperity Plan, I am confident, that we will rise to the challenge and set the scene for an epoch of everlasting prosperity in Namibia. Once again let me state that the Namibian House is solid – the State of our Nation is sound – the future and well being of the Namibian people is safe.

2017 State of the Nation Address 12 April 2017

The foundation of the Namibian House is secure with prospects for economic recovery and increased growth. This will place Namibia on a trajectory to meet our Prosperity goals. During the past year, we faced a number of challenges as a nation. These include the devastating drought and adverse global economic headwinds, diminishing levels of public trust and the impact of unemployment. We understand your

anxieties. We have, however not succumbed, but stayed on course.

Today our fiscal situation has stabilised and although there are uncertainties, the future is promising. We continue to make inroads against the scourge of poverty as reflected in improved social indicators. We continue to wage war against corruption. We continue to channel the bulk of our resources into the social sectors of education, health and housing.

Progress reviews confirm that our Plan is working. Going forward, into this year and beyond, we must rededicate ourselves to the implementation of our Plans. We must do this with a sense of urgency and in a 'business unusual' manner.

2018 Independence Day Celebration 21 March 2018

I should remind you that prosperity for the majority of our citizens is the only insurance for sustainable peace. A country where inequality still exists cannot be successful. As I always emphasize, inclusivity spells harmony – and exclusivity spells conflict.

Since assuming office as Head of State, I have, after speaking to Namibians in town-hall meetings, rolled-out the Harambee Prosperity Plan as an implementation tool of the 2014 Swapo Party Manifesto. A narrative around nation building and inclusivity, and fast-tracking the National Development Plan is now part of our Governance Architecture.

We have made tangible gains in infrastructure provision, social protection, economic advancement and effective governance. Recently, our roads were rated the best in Sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty rates have fallen; more children are in school; and better social services are provided to the majority.

I am the first to admit that we would have loved to sustain a higher rate of progress and implementation. But we had to contend with independent intervening variables beyond our control. The past four years have been fraught with "headwinds", brought about by a global economic downturn, characterized by falling commodity prices and exchange rate fluctuations. This "perfect storm" as some have termed it has had a direct impact on our economy and revenue base.

Government has high hopes to deliver on development and for the prosperity of our people. We are aware that if we are to deliver these results, we will need to tackle corruption, crime and poor implementation of policies and programmes. It is disheartening to note that allegations and perceptions of corruption continue to taint our Government. This has led to the public losing faith and confidence in a few Government Ministries and Agencies. We cannot allow corruption to sabotage 28 years of progress. Corruption undermines stability and social cohesion.

The above excerpts make it clear that above all, addressing poverty and inequality is at the top of Geingob’s agenda, underpinned by national unity, “peace and stability, respect for the rule of law, and good governance.”⁶ However, while the President has done well in clarifying and communicating his policy promises through Harambee, his speeches, his social media engagement, and various other platforms, the tangible implementation of these promises has produced both hits and misses, which have brought him both praise and criticism.

The next section provides a summary of some of these hits and misses, in line with some of the key components of the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

The Harambee Prosperity Plan

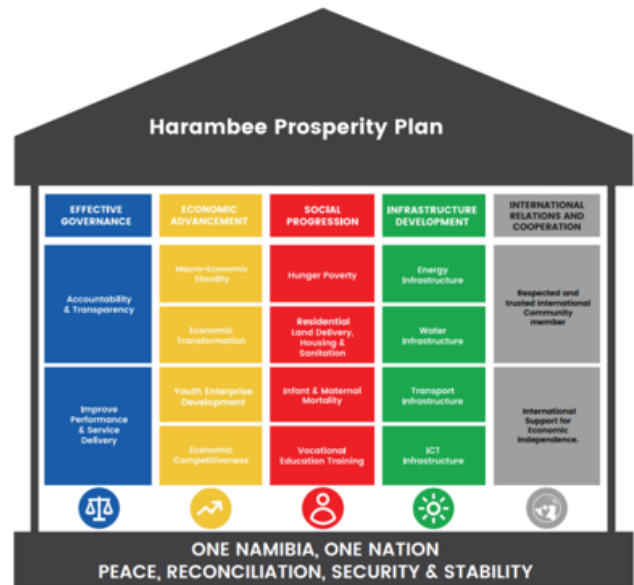
Overview

During his State of the Nation Address in April 2016, President Geingob announced the signature initiative of his administration: the Harambee Prosperity Plan, or HPP. The plan includes a number of goals across five areas, many of which were taken from the fourth National Development Plan. In a way, the HPP can be understood as an effort to focus attention on the most important development goals, adjusting some targets in the process.

When President Geingob introduced the Harambee Prosperity Plan in April 2016, he stated that the plan “does not pretend to be the universal panacea that will resolve the numerous causes of poverty within the remaining four years.” That said, he highlighted the key outcomes that his administration would work towards in implementing the plan:

- A more transparent Namibia;
- A High Performance and citizen-centered culture of service delivery;
- Significant reduction in poverty levels;
- A reputable and competitive vocational educational training system;
- A spirit of entrepreneurship resulting in increased youth enterprise development;
- Broader participation in the Namibian economy;
- Improved access to serviced land, housing and sanitation;
- Guaranteed energy supply and sufficient water for both human consumption and business activities; and
- Remaining a respectable member of the international community.

The Harambee plan included five pillars: effective governance, economic advancement, social progression, infrastructure development, and international relations and cooperation. The document focuses mostly on the first four pillars.



Source: Harambee Prosperity Plan p.i

The effective governance pillar emphasises service delivery and accountability. Key goals in this section relate to the implementation of the recently-passed procurement bill, asset and income declarations, citizen satisfaction surveys and charters to ensure better service delivery, as well as a number of policies to improve communication with citizens.

The economic advancement pillar of Harambee focuses on the economy in a broad sense. It includes macroeconomic targets (such as debt levels, import coverage, and credit ratings) and goals related to improve government’s efficiency in spending and revenue collection. It targets 8,000 new manufacturing jobs and new foreign investments, economic empowerment, and initiatives to empower entrepreneurs – especially young ones.

The social progression pillar contains perhaps the most ambitious goals. The HPP aims for the elimination of poverty by 2025 and foresees the expansion of social safety nets and the establishment of food banks. It also includes targets on constructing houses and servicing land, and sets a target of 50,000 rural toilets to be constructed, as well as the elimination of the bucket system by 2017. It envisions an expansion of vocational training and a significant reduction in maternal and child mortality.

Finally, the pillar focusing on infrastructure development includes a range of goals targeting electricity, water, transport, and information and communication technology. The plan calls for an increase in electricity generating capacity (smartly scaling the NDP4 target down to a more reasonable number) and rural electrification. It seeks to expand access to potable water to 100 percent of the population by 2020, complete the expansion of the Walvis Bay Port, and upgrade roads and railways. All pillars specify how these targets should be reached, including the drafting of legislation and policies, construction of infrastructure, and development of plans.

⁶ Geingob, Hage. 2015. State of the Nation Address.

Performance

Assessing Government's performance on these targets is a difficult task for two reasons. Firstly, many targets are only due in a number of years, and it is difficult to know if the preparatory work done for addressing these complex issues is enough to ensure success by the end of the process. Only in retrospect will we know whether some of the initiatives have failed. Secondly, and more generally, government has been rather coy in sharing updates about the Harambee Prosperity Plan. At the end of 2017, the Presidency released a document purporting to give a progress report on Harambee. However, this report mostly focuses on the targets where government was successful, and only mentions a few areas where it failed to meet targets. The majority of goals are not addressed at all.

Thus, a comprehensive assessment is impossible. From the information available through government and media sources, it seems that government's performance on Harambee has been mixed. There are some successes: the government slightly exceeded its targets for servicing land (although critics would note that the amount of serviced land needed is so large that the newly serviced plots make little difference), and in increasing enrolment in vocational training initiatives.⁷ Looking at the government's report, it seems that a large number of government's completed targets involve the drafting of plans, policies, regulations or laws. However, even these were often finalised with a significant delay.

Partly, this is because the Harambee Prosperity Plan set unrealistic goals on many targets. This was most apparent with the new Procurement Act, which the Harambee Plan said should be followed by all Ministries by April 2016 – the same month the plan was launched, and many months before the plan itself said regulations governing the new system should be completed.⁸ The plan aimed to eliminate the bucket system by the end of 2017, but given slow progress, government reframed this target in its progress report to “the end of [financial year] 2017/18.”⁹ Due to its overly ambitious targets, government was bound to miss several milestones.

A look through the different pillars suggests progress is often occurring, though seldom at the pace envisioned. Namibia has seen a number of smaller electricity producers, especially using alternative energy, join the grid – though it is doubtful we will reach the production targets specified in the document. Given the economic downturn, the goals relating to new manufacturing jobs and foreign investment seem to be in serious doubt. Meanwhile, government's credit rating has been downgraded and debt levels look unlikely to reduce to desired levels by the end of the Harambee period. Many policies and bills have been passed with the aim of improving governance, but implementation is still a long way away.

At best, progress on Harambee is a mixed bag. Some of the most important targets – such as the construction of rural toilets – are significantly behind schedule. Others, like road

construction, are moving along at an appropriate pace. In the absence of more complete data from Government, it is fair to assume that a number of targets need renewed attention during the second half of the Harambee period if they are to be completed.

Governance

Asset Declarations

One achievement of President Geingob's term is that he has brought some renewed attention to asset declarations - though the progress has been far from perfect. At the beginning of his term, Geingob garnered positive headlines when he completed a voluntary asset declaration, noting that he was demonstrating that there was political will to fight conflicts of interest.¹⁰ His asset declaration was supposed to be followed by those of his Ministers, but the members of his Cabinet proved less forthcoming. For a long time, Calle Schlettwein, the Minister of Finance, was the only Minister to publicly declare his assets. In the meantime, members of the National Assembly (a group which includes all Ministers) delayed publishing their asset declarations as required by the constitution.

In this, they maintained the status quo: the last time the National Assembly had published a register of assets had been in 2009, and the body had become notorious for its secrecy in this regard – in contrast to the National Council, which traditionally did publish a yearly register. For the first few years, it seemed that MPs would remain stubborn in their refusal to release their financial interest declarations. While Geingob raised the issue infrequently, he also seemed to equivocate: for example, he stated that salaries of public officials should not be public knowledge.¹¹ At the opening of Parliament in February 2018, he addressed the issue without taking a stance: “...there are perceptions that the declaration of assets of Members of Parliament should be made publicly available... I therefore leave this matter to this august House, to provide clarity as to whether declarations by Parliamentarians should be publicly availed, or not.”¹² While his tone could have certainly been more forceful, Parliamentarians did eventually respond (whether to him or to media pressure is unclear). In late February, the National Assembly published its register of financial interest in early 2018 – for the first time in 9 years.

The Economy

Overview

Hage Geingob's term in office has coincided with the worst economic climate in many years. The year he took office, 2015, was the only year of his tenure with a respectable amount of economic growth. That year, GDP grew by 6 percent, down only slightly from 2015. However, as IJG securities noted, the economy already showed signs of slowing that year, “but these signs were largely masked by expansionary fiscal policy as well as the boom in construction which only began to taper toward

¹⁰ Geingob, Hage. 2015. “State of the Nation Address 2015”

¹¹ Immanuel, Shinovene. “Geingob Wants Salaries to be Secret The Namibian, 16 June 2016. <https://www.namibian.com.na/152000/archive-read/Geingob-wants-salaries-to-be-secret>

¹² Geingob, Hage. 2018. “Statement Delivered at the Opening of the 7th Session of the 6th Parliament.”

⁷ Government of Namibia. 2017. “Progress Report on Key Harambee Activities and Outcomes,” p.6-7

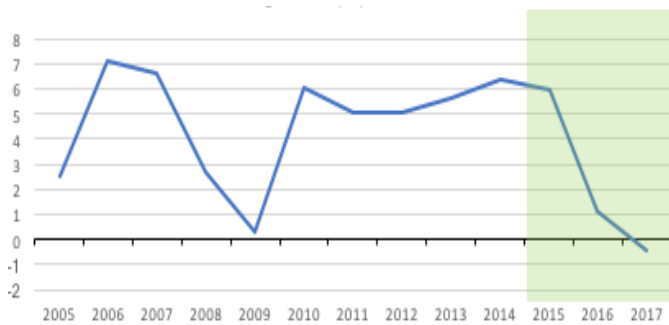
⁸ Harambee Prosperity Plan, p.65

⁹ Government of Namibia. 2017. “Progress Report,” p.6

the end of that year.¹³ In 2016, the economy encountered serious problems. Driven by serious struggles in the construction industry – a major employer – as well as a downturn in commodity prices, economic growth was negligible, coming in at around 0.3 percent, and amounted to a per capita decrease.¹⁴

In fact, after a fairly strong first quarter, GDP shrank two quarters in a row – thus officially plunging Namibia into a recession, the official definition of which requires negative growth for two consecutive quarters. Confronted by this situation, the Geingob administration reacted by christening the moment a “technical recession,” a term repeated by many media outlets. This might have been effective spin-doctoring, but it did not change the fact of the matter that this recession was very real, no matter what terminology was deployed to distinguish it from other recessions.

GDP growth (%) 2005 - 2017



Source: World Bank, IJG Securities

Unfortunately for Geingob, attempting to reframe the issue was the best the government could do. After years of expansions in government spending, debt had increased to a level where countercyclical fiscal policy – i.e. massive spending increases to stimulate the troubled economy – were not possible for government.

While the debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 23.7 percent at the end of 2014/15, it increased dramatically to 37 percent by the end of the next year.¹⁵ In absolute terms, debt increased from about N\$36 billion to N\$60 billion that year – an increase of 70 percent.¹⁶ By the time the 2018/19 budget came along, the ratio had risen to 42.8 percent. The sharp increase in Namibia’s debt-to-GDP ratio in turn worried credit rating agencies, two of whom (Moody’s and Fitch) downgraded Namibia’s credit rating last year¹⁷ – making it more expensive for government to raise funds.

Thus, when the economy suffered further losses in 2017, government could not afford to counteract the contraction. In fact, many businesses blamed government for making things worse: newspapers were rife with reports that government was delay-

¹³ Van Zyl, Eric, Dylan van Wyk and Cecil Goliath. 2017. “Economic Outlook Update: August 2017.” IJG Securities, p.6.
¹⁴ Van Zyl et al, 2017, p.7.
¹⁵ Brown, Rowland. 2016. “Fiscal Sustainability and Growth: A Difficult Balancing Act.” Institute for Public Policy Research, p.2. <http://www.ippr.org.na/publication/fiscal-sustainability-and-growth/>
¹⁶ Schlettwein, Calle. 2016. “Budget Statement 2016.” Ministry of Finance, p.19.
¹⁷ Ministry of Finance, 2018. “Fiscal Strategy 2018,” p.15

ing payments for months, leaving many businesses, especially in the struggling construction industry, without a source of income they had relied on heavily in the past. Government now estimates that the economy shrank by 0.4% percent in 2017, the first year of negative growth since 1993.¹⁸

Employment

This economic slowdown inevitably led to job losses. Data for last year are not available, but the 2016 labour force survey counted 676,885 employed – down from 708,895 in 2014.¹⁹ Given the further downturn in 2017, it must be assumed that unemployment increased last year as well. Other sources can give some indication of these losses. Estimations have often focused on the construction industry. In late 2016, the National Union of Namibian Workers claimed that the construction sector had lost 10,000 jobs.²⁰ In mid-2017, Cirrus Capital estimated that “36,000 jobs will be lost in two years.”²¹

In early 2018, The Namibian reported that the economy had shed 60,000 jobs in 2016/17.²² However, that claim needs to be taken with a grain of salt. The Namibian’s figure is derived from the annual report of the Employment Equity Commission, which tallies figures provided by organisations in their affirmative action reports. To calculate their figure, The Namibian adds the total number of dismissals, retrenchments, and non-renewals of contracts (25,000) to the number of resignations (20,000) and those who left for unspecified reasons (14,385). Not all of those figures necessarily represent job losses – many people who resigned presumably did so to take up positions elsewhere, for example. In this sense, the estimation may overstate the figure. On the other hand, the Employment Equity Commission only reflects data from 877 organisations covering 263,720 employees²³ – a fraction of the 676,000 employees in Namibia counted by the 2016 labour force survey. It stands to reason that, given the downturn, many of the organisations not counted by the Employment Equity Commission report also saw job losses. Thus, while The Namibian’s methodology is not beyond reproach, their figure may look plausible after all.

Poverty and Inequality

President Geingob has made poverty the key issue of his presidency, vowing not to reduce, but to “eradicate” poverty by 2025.²⁴ Indeed, government has pointed to a reduction in poverty with regularity. For example, in his State of the Nation address in 2017, Geingob noted the reduction of poverty levels to 18 percent from 70 percent in 1994.²⁵

¹⁸ The World Bank. 2017. “Country Data: Namibia. GDP growth (annual%).” <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=NA>
¹⁹ Office of the President. 2018. “Status of the Namibian Economy.”
²⁰ New Era. “Construction Sector loses 10 000 jobs – NUNW.” New Era Newspaper, 14 December 2016. <https://www.newera.com.na/2016/12/14/construction-sector-loses-10-000-jobs-nunw/>
²¹ Kaira, Chamwe. 2017. “Namibia Enters Recession.” Windhoek Observer, 23 June 2017. <http://www.observer.com.na/index.php/national/item/8302-namibia-enters-recession>
²² Likela, Sakeus. 2018. “Over 60 000 jobs lost in 2016/17.” The Namibian, 20 March 2018.
²³ Employment Equity Commission. “Annual Report 2016 -17”
²⁴ Government of Namibia. 2016, “Harambee Prosperity Plan,” p.39.
²⁵ Geingob, Hage. 2017. “State of the Nation Address 2017.” 12 April 2017, p.33

However, the figures cited are not an accomplishment of the Geingob administration, because they are from the 2015/16 National Household Income and Expenditure Survey, which was conducted in the beginning of his term. To see the effect of Geingob's policies, we will have to wait until the next such survey is carried out. Even then, the Household survey is not as uniformly positive as has been suggested. While the number of people under the upper poverty line (which is set at N\$520 per adult per month) decreased significantly between 2009/10 and 2015/16, the percentage of people who fall beyond the food poverty line, calculated at N\$293 a month, decreased by only one percentage point.²⁶

The Geingob administration's most prominent initiatives were food banks and an increase in the old age pension, from N\$600 a month before his presidency to N\$1200 in 2017. The increase in grants will likely be remembered as one of Geingob's most effective anti-poverty measures. While grants in Namibia are somewhat inefficient in terms of their redistributive effects, they have a wide impact. 17 percent of Namibians receive the old-age pension – and its reach is broad as many recipients of old-age grants use their grants to take care of other family members.²⁷

The food banks, on the other hand, have been controversial and marred by logistical difficulties from the beginning. It took far longer than planned to start the first one in Windhoek as government sought an appropriate location. While government claimed success, noting the Khomas food bank assisted 22,000 households or 95,000 individuals,²⁸ it soon struck 7,000 households off the list after allegations that households earning above the threshold of N\$400/month had been able to register.²⁹ Residents of one settlement accused the food bank administrators of favouritism on the base of ethnicity and political affiliation in deciding who qualified for food aid.³⁰ Given the operational difficulties, there have been suggestions that the aims of the food banks could be better achieved in differ-

²⁶ Namibia Statistics Agency, 2018. "Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2015/16 Report," pp. 104-105.

²⁷ The World Bank. 2017. "Does Fiscal Policy Benefit the Poor and Reduce Inequality in Namibia?" p.42

²⁸ Nakale, Albertina. "Foodbank benefits over 94 000 needy people." *New Era*, 1 March 2017. <https://www.newera.com.na/2017/03/01/food-bank-benefits-over-94-000-needy-people/>

²⁹ Nhongo, Kaula. "Thousands kicked off food bank list." *Windhoek Observer*, 10 November 2017. <http://www.observer.com.na/index.php/national/item/9015-thousands-kicked-off-food-bank-list>

³⁰ *New Era*. "Food Bank Committee Accused of Favouritism" *New Era*, 19 January 2017. <https://www.newera.com.na/2017/01/19/food-bank-committee-accused-of-favouritism/>

ent ways – particularly given the apparent scale of the need, judging by the high number of beneficiaries in Windhoek alone.

Gini Coefficients in Namibia		
2003/04	2009/10	2015/16
0.6	0.58	0.56

Source: NSA 2018. A lower score is better.

A study by the World Bank and the Namibia Statistics Agency found that Namibia's fiscal policies – social spending on subsidies, health and education, and taxes – were somewhat progressive and contributed to decreasing inequality, though not as effectively as policies in other countries.³¹ However, much work remains to be done on this front. The latest figures from the Namibia Statistics Agency note that the GINI coefficient, a measure of income inequality, stood at 0.56. This is a marginal decrease from previous surveys, and suggests that previous government policies have not been effective enough in combating inequality.

Promises Beyond Harambee

Assessing the implementation of each and every promise made by the President is beyond the scope of this paper, and we trust that the analysis above provides a broad-strokes picture of how well the President has performed on the issues that he highlighted as the key markers against which he could be evaluated, particularly in respect to the HPP.

That said, based on statements made in his Inaugural speech on 21 March 2015 and his first State of the Nation addresses on 21 April 2015, the table below provides a basic overview of additional promises made (beyond those highlighted above in the HPP), and the extent to which they have been fulfilled. (Note that the 2016 and 2017 SONA have not been included in this table, as for the most part, they report on the progress made based on the promises noted at the beginning of his presidency, and in the Harambee Prosperity Plan.)

Sources: Inauguration Speech on 21 March 2015, First State of the Nation Address on 21 April 2015

³¹ World Bank 2017.

Promises Made & Assessments Thereof	Promises Fulfilled? (green = yes, orange = partially, red = no)
<p>Poverty & Inequality</p> <p>Promise Made “Our first priority will be to declare all-out war on poverty and concomitant inequality. Our focal point will be to address inequality, poverty and hunger and that will involve looking at a range of policies and interventionist strategies to tackle this issue.”</p> <p>Assessment President Geingob has clearly demonstrated – in word and deed – that the war on poverty is a major priority. While implementation has been slow, further burdened by economic conditions, the increase in the old age grant, the introduction of the Food Bank, and other measures have proved that this is a priority for the current administration. While more needs to be done on addressing inequality, the rhetoric created in terms of seeing these issues as priority are clear. Essentially, the war on poverty has been declared.</p>	
<p>Implementation</p> <p>Promise Made “We will work towards improving the rate of implementation and in turn catapult the economy into a new period of faster growth, improved job creation and improved service delivery. Our aim is to have a Government structure that is responsive to national goals and objectives and that will promote effectiveness and efficiency across all Government structures.”</p> <p>Assessment The rate of implementation, as noted in the assessment above on Harambee, has not been fast enough – by the President’s own admission. He has noted that this has been primarily as a result of unforeseen economic conditions. On several occasions (notably in all SONAs), he has called on his Ministers to increase the pace of implementation.</p>	
<p>Economic Transformation</p> <p>Promise Made “Our vision is clear. We plan to expand and spread the opportunities for growth and prosperity to be enjoyed by all Namibians in all parts of the country, with a specific focus on the disadvantaged sections of our population. We will do so by pursuing policies and strategies to safeguard macroeconomic stability, promote economic diversification and transformation of the Namibian economy to be more inclusive and resilient to internal and external shocks.”</p> <p>Assessment Geingob noted that in achieving the above promise, the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and the Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises were formed. He also noted the restructuring of other Ministries. Policies and strategies that could be seen to work towards this goal include the establishment of a food bank pilot programme and the expansion of old-age pensions. On the topic of macroeconomic stability, Geingob’s administration has struggled. Debt levels have reached historic heights and Namibia has been downgraded. On the other hand, foreign reserves have stabilised somewhat and inflation is at manageable levels.</p>	
<p>Gender Equality</p> <p>Promise Made “Gender equality is an enabler which allows all people to reach their full potential to contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political participation. It is pertinent that women have greater access to high level decision-making roles.”</p> <p>Assessment Since Swapo’s introduction of the 50/50 zebra list, little else has been done to bring more women into decision-making roles, particularly in regional governance. During the cabinet reshuffle in 2018, where three men were promoted to Ministerial positions, no women were promoted to these posts, although we now have more female Deputy Ministers than male ones.</p>	

<p>Corruption</p> <p>Promise Made “As a rules-based Nation, we must capacitate and allow our institutions such the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Namibian Police and our Courts to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption without fear or favour.”</p> <p>Assessment While the promulgation of the Whistleblower Protection Act is a great development, the ACC does not seem adequately capacitated or empowered to investigate and prosecute high-level corruption, and has backed off from various cases, most notably the probe into the millions paid by government to lawyers in the UK for advice on genocide reparations. That said, Geingob has – at least in his speeches – made strong statements on rooting out corruption.</p>	
<p>Corruption & Asset Declaration</p> <p>Promise Made “A key requirement in preventing undue benefits accruing to Public Officials is preventing conflicts of interest and the disclosure of assets. The law does not require the President to disclose his personal assets. However, managing conflict of interest is a matter which requires political will. Therefore, I feel obliged to publicly declare my personal assets.”</p> <p>Assessment President Geingob honoured his promise to disclose his assets in 2015. Since then, he has not made additional public declarations of his assets, but he has reminded the National Assembly MPs to disclose theirs.</p>	
<p>Ministerial Accountability</p> <p>Promise Made “All Ministers and their Deputies will be required to issue Ministerial Declarations of Intent that will constitute a contract with the public on delivery to which they will be held accountable.”</p> <p>Assessment The first set of performance agreements arrived with considerable delay and were not easily available to the public. Subsequent agreements have been posted online, however, indicating progress.</p>	
<p>Food Poverty</p> <p>Promise Made “In the Namibian House, no child should go hungry. I am committed to the introduction of a Food Bank.”</p> <p>Assessment The introduction of the Food Bank has had mixed responses with respect to whether it would adequately respond to the needs of the food poor. Moreover, its rollout, which started in Windhoek’s informal settlements and is yet to have national coverage, has had its challenges. Essentially, the President made good on his promise to pilot this initiative, but to date, it is yet to have the expected coverage and success initially envisaged, as Namibians continue to battle poverty.</p>	
<p>Poverty (incl. Employment and Education)</p> <p>Promise Made “Many of the residents of the Namibian House are poor because they don’t have a job nor access to proper education or marketable skills. We will, therefore, tackle poverty from all fronts, through safety nets, access to quality education, and by creating jobs and growing the economy.”</p> <p>Assessment Unemployment rates remain incredibly high. The national unemployment rate currently stands at 34 percent, with women and youth being especially affected. While Geingob has extended free education to secondary schooling, the quality of said education continues to leave much to be desired, as failure rates remain at shocking levels, and high school graduates struggle to enter university and to find jobs. Safety nets such as the old age grant and the food bank have helped to decrease severe poverty, but the most recent poverty statistics still highlight key problems in lifting people from poverty en masse.</p>	

<p>Inequality (Economic Empowerment Framework)</p> <p>Promise Made “Due to the structural nature of wealth accumulation, the average Namibian was dispossessed and does not possess much wealth in terms of homes or shareholding....these are the principles included in the draft policy framework on Broad-Based Economic Empowerment. The finalization of this policy is overdue and it is time to re-imitate the consultation process on this long outstanding policy framework. “</p> <p>Assessment The NEEEF is yet to see the light of day.</p>	
<p>Education</p> <p>Promise Made “This year, we are going to introduce free secondary school education, which will enable thousands of young Namibians to have a better shot at a brighter future. This will immediately arrest the high youth unemployment rate.”</p> <p>Assessment The introduction of free secondary education was a welcome initiative. However, various hidden costs – including ‘mandatory contributions to the school development fund’ continue to be a difficulty for poor families. Further, while this education is free, its quality leaves much to be desired, and requires serious redress. Additionally, the implementation of free secondary education has naturally not resulted in the immediate arrest of youth unemployment, and the youth – particularly young women - continue to be disproportionately unemployed compared to other groups.</p>	
<p>Land & Housing</p> <p>Promise Made “I want to reaffirm my personal commitment to addressing land reform and provision of affordable housing to all Namibians. Land reform, therefore, remains one of the areas of transformation that is critical towards social justice, inclusion and poverty alleviation in Namibia.”</p> <p>Assessment Geingob has made some concessions to land activists, withdrawing the land bill from Parliament to allow for further consultations at the land conference – which was also rescheduled to a later date. Under the Harambee plan, Geingob included a goal for servicing plots, as well as the continued delivery of housing. However, the plots serviced and houses delivered so far represent only a small number of the national backlog. In August 2017 Geingob postponed the Second Land Conference (which had been slated for 18 September 2017) to 2018, noting that additional consultation was required. The exact date has not yet been set.</p>	
<p>Inequality (Inclusive Economy)</p> <p>Promise Made “We must aim to create an economy that is inclusive, sensitive and responsive to national developmental objectives and imperatives ... Although low inflation is important for growth, people need sustainable jobs that pay them a living wage so that they can feed their families. It is our obligation to distil everything we do into bread and butter issues which affect our brothers and sisters living in rural communities and townships.”</p> <p>Assessment Namibia has not imposed a living wage for workers across the board, and ensuring a decent wage for all remains a challenge; unemployment rates remain high (and economic conditions have not helped this situation), informal settlements continue to mushroom, and rural communities bear the brunt of unemployment and poverty. That said, the policy basis has been set, but requires more urgent implementation.</p>	

Economic Transformation

Promise Made

“Whilst efforts to transform the production structure of the economy and making the economy more competitive will continue to be pursued, we shall also raise the bar regarding transformation of ownership structures. To redress imbalances of the past, we have adopted the model of a pro development state. In other words, the State will play a more active role in the economy. This is not to compete with the private sector but to acknowledge that the „invisible hand” of the market does not always work as it should. Therefore, restriction of ownership over our natural resources will also be explored and enforced. I will also direct that the Procurement Bill be brought back to Parliament as soon as possible. This Bill should deliberately favour local business especially the previously disadvantaged. Equally, the completion of the Retail Charter should be fast-tracked and finalized before the end of 2015. It is unacceptable that, a quarter century after independence, locally produced goods are denied shelf space in retail outlets.”³²

Assessment

The procurement bill was passed in late 2015, and the new procurement framework was widely seen as a substantial improvement over the old one. While implementation took longer than planned, the bill was in effect by the end of 2017. The retail charter, too, saw delays, but was finally implemented. It is unclear whether it has had a measurable impact, however.

Gender Based Violence

Promise Made

Let us respect our women and children. Women are the bearers of life. They are an integral component of humanity and its future and to violate the rights of women is to violate this whole nation’s conscience. We all came into being through a woman so let us in our collective Namibian voice say - no - to Gender Based Violence.

Assessment

The Presidency has responded to gender-based violence mainly through the work of the First Lady’s Office. An allocation of around N\$8 million was made towards enhancing the national gender-based campaign through the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Gender-based violence is not stated explicitly as a priority in the Harambee Prosperity Plan, and given the scourge of violence, much more should be done – including by the Ministry of Safety and Security – to tackle these crimes head-on.

Another important indicator of how well the President is performing, includes the laws passed during his/her term in office. During President Geingob’s tenure thus far, he called for the expeditious passing of laws, and has signed at least bills into law, as captured in the list below.

Laws Signed

2015

Public and Environmental Health Act
National Health Act
Child Care and Protection Act
Appropriation Act
Veterans Amendment Act
Namibian Citizenship (Second) Special Conferment Act
Namibia University of Science and Technology Act,
Public Enterprises Governance Amendment Act
Marine Resources Amendment Act
Appropriation Amendment Act
Judiciary Act
Value-Added Tax Amendment Act
Income Tax Amendment Act
Deeds Registries Act
Public Procurement Act

2016

Appropriation Act (withdrawn by GN 139 of 24 June 2016)
Export Levy Act

Credit Agreements Amendment Act
Income Tax Amendment Act
Presidential Remuneration and other Benefits Act
Civil Aviation Act
Appropriation Act
Business and Intellectual Property Authority Act
Namibia Investment Promotion Act
Anti-Corruption Amendment Act
Medical Aid Funds Amendment Act
Long-term Insurance Amendment Act
Short-term Insurance Amendment Act
Unit Trusts Control Amendment Act
Appropriation Amendment Act
Namibia Industrial Development Agency Act
Customs & Excise Amendment Act

2017

Appropriation Act
Access to Biological and Genetic Resources and Associated
Traditional Knowledge Act
Nature Conservation Amendment Act
Namibia Time Act

Public-Private Partnership Act

Source: List compiled from the Legal Assistance Centre’s database of laws in Namibia and media reports

Note: Parliament discussed and passed many more bills than these last year – but these are the only ones that have been signed, and not all acts that Geingob signed have been implemented.

³² Geingob, Hage. 2015 “State of the Nation Address 2015”

NEEEF

Missing from the list of laws above is the Namibia Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework (NEEEF). NEEEF received attention from the beginning of Geingob’s term, and has been one of the most controversial policy initiatives of this administration. In a sign of the importance of the issue, Geingob name-checked the draft policy in his first state of the nation address, and the Prime Minister’s first performance agreement included a goal for the draft bill to be formulated by the end of the year.

However, the initial draft presented to the public was met with fierce criticism both from the business community and from the left. The business community focused on a section that would mandate that at least 25 percent of every business should be held by previously disadvantaged persons. They argued that this would penalise existing business-owners who would be forced to take on new co-owners, and discourage foreign investment. Other critics, on the other hand, argued that NEEEF would do little to disturb the racial imbalance in wealth, as only a small number of already well-off people would be able to buy into existing businesses. Thus, the draft risked exacerbating inequality rather than curbing it.

In response to the fierce backlash, government engaged in further consultations and promised to work on the document, emphasizing that it was merely a draft. An updated version has not yet been released to the public.

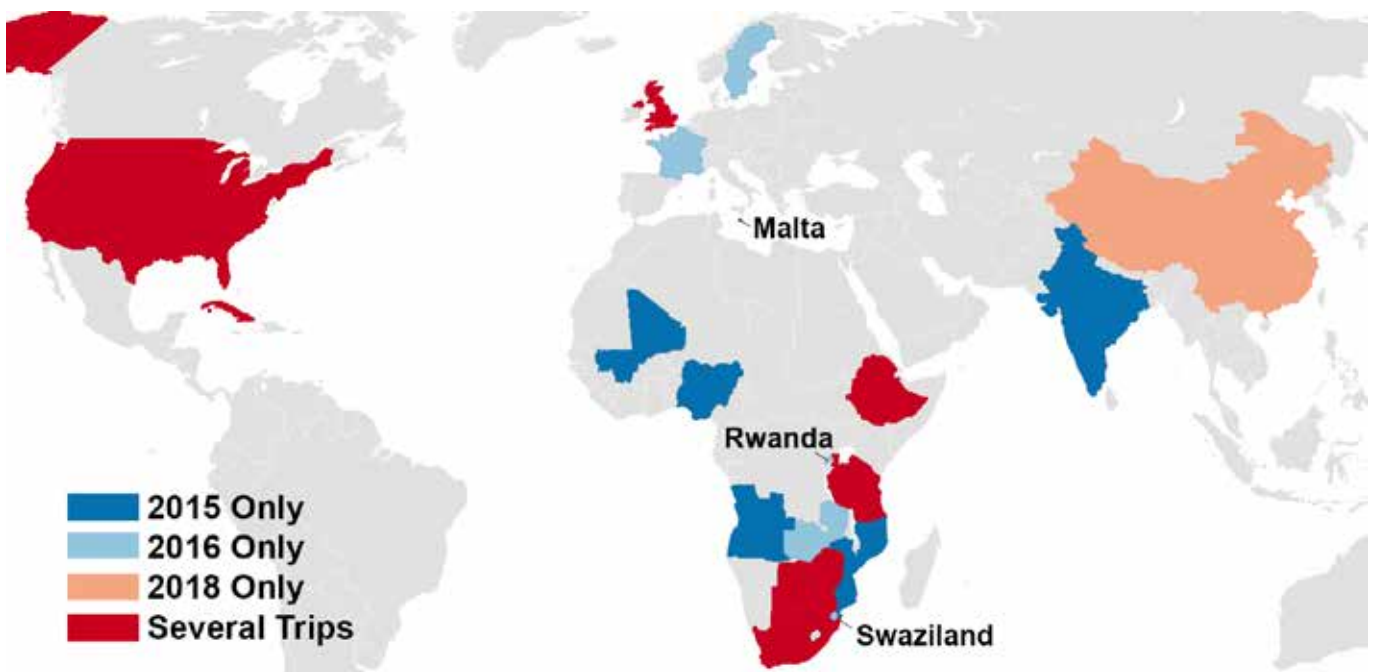
‘Watch What I Do, Not What I Say!’

In 1969, at the beginning of US President Nixon’s term, his first Attorney General, General John Mitchell, famously advised the media to “watch what we do, not what we say.”³³ This statement can either result in a positive view, if what is being done reaps positive rewards beyond what was said; or it can be negative, if what is done runs (negatively) counter to what was said.

As noted earlier, President Geingob usually says all the right things with his speeches and the delivery thereof, often taking on a unifying tone, while his policy promises showcase a good understanding of the type of development people wish to see. In his communications, he has shown a higher level of public engagement than his predecessors (with the help of technology that was not as broadly used during his predecessors’ time). Additionally, in his first year of office, he engaged the public directly through townhall meetings.

But saying and doing are two different things, and it is important that beyond the promises noted in preceding sections, we look at other key events or actions that have provided indications of his leadership style beyond the words spoken. In this vein, we look at three issues: the President’s travel since taking office, the impact of Swapo’s November 2017 Congress, and the implications of his February 2018 Cabinet Reshuffle.

³³ Cockburn, A. 2009. “Watch What We Do, Not What We Say”. In Counter Punch, 17 July 2009. Retrieved from: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2009/07/17/quot-watch-what-we-do-not-what-we-say-quot/>



Presidential Travel

Travel has been a recurring theme through President Geingob’s administration. At several times during his term, and especially as government’s financial difficulties became apparent, Geingob warned against excessive travel by public officials. During the first Cabinet Meeting of 2018, Geingob re-emphasised the

travel ban, stating: “The recently announced foreign travel ban will be extended beyond the month of February 2018. Following this period, all requests for foreign travel will be carefully considered by the approving authority. We recognize that we cannot completely ban all foreign travel. The intention is to exercise control and reduce the size of delegations...I expect the other organs of State to join the Executive and exercise

due restraint.³⁴ He reiterated these concerns a few days later during his opening of Parliament address, in which he said: "I have noticed, with concern, that members of parliament, who are responsible for their respective constituencies, have added international constituencies to their list of responsibilities as well. I have no problem with people traveling as long as such traveling results in tangible benefits for the people of Namibia. Parliament as we know it, is described to be "sitting" or "in session" and not as a "traveling" Parliament. We should travel for concrete reasons and not just because there is invitation to travel."³⁵

President Geingob has been accused of ignoring his own advice, travelling extensively around the globe. His defenders have countered that as the Head of State, he has the duty to represent Namibia on the international stage—especially at multilateral organisations such as the United Nations and the African Union, which explains why the countries he has visited most are Ethiopia and the USA. At the same time, Geingob has emphasised his role in attracting international investors to Namibia, and has often held meetings with business delegations when abroad – encouraging a potential economic benefit he argues is well worth the cost of a trip.

Most recently, from March 26 2018 to 3 April 2018, the President led a delegation of 82 people to the People's Republic of China (including 7 Ministers, 6 Public Officials, 5 'mission organisers', and 63 business representatives who form the 'business delegation'). Below is a list of countries Geingob has visited in his official capacity since the beginning of his term³⁶:

2015: USA, Cuba, Mali, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Malta, India, United Kingdom, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa.

2016: Ethiopia, Kenya, the United States of America, France, England, Swaziland, South Africa, Cuba, Zambia, Botswana, Sweden and Rwanda.

2017: USA, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom, Kenya

2018: China

Swapo Congress

The Swapo Party Congress of November 2017 proved to be rather divisive for the ruling party, with two major factions – Team Swapo and Team Harambee – being formed in the fight for the heart of the party. Reports note that "the leadership battles left the party battered and bruised,"³⁷ and even the Founding President, Dr. Sam Nujoma, expressed his disappointment at some of the shortcomings found in the run-up to the Congress.³⁸ Additionally, the outcome of the election was contest-

ed by a few in the party³⁹, who claimed that there were "several irregularities before the congress but these were ignored in the name of unity," and called for a probe into the process. It has been reported that the probe will be discussed at the next Central Committee meeting.⁴⁰

The party election resulted in all top four positions going to President Geingob's Team Harambee, with Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah taking the Vice President position, Sophia Shaningwa becoming Secretary General, and Marco Hausiku coming in as Deputy Secretary General. In fact, in campaigning for the team, Geingob and his cohort made three key campaign promises, against which the President's performance should be measured by his party. These were (1) Entrenching unity by fighting against -isms and uniting the party; (2) Strengthening Swapo along 12 key indicators/reforms; and (3) Implementing the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

In the run-up to congress, President Geingob's rhetoric was centered on unity in the party, although the creation and nurturing of these two factions, along with prior events under Geingob's watch that saw divisions in the party structures – most notably in the youth league – made it clear that the party was indeed fractured. Geingob urged party members to focus on issues, rather than on personalities, and to keep the party intact, despite differing on who their preferred candidates were. His victory speech also preached unity and reconciliation, noting, "Today is not about saying that this individual has won or that individual has lost. It is not about saying that this team has won or that team has lost. There are no losers in Swapo. Today, Swapo has won. No matter what the crisis, Swapo will always emerge victorious."

Some argue, however, that there were losers in this case. They argue that his firing of his rivals for the presidency of the party went against his unity ethos, and appeared to be vengeful and divisive, considering that they had accepted defeat, and urged their supporters to back the elected President. Others, however, argued that given the criticism levelled at him by livulathana and Ekanjjo, in making good on the Harambee promise, it would be necessary to have people who believed in his vision on board. Moreover, while the two lost their Ministerial positions, they remain in parliament.

It will be important for Geingob to match his actions with his words going forward, not only in uniting the party, but more importantly, in fulfilling the promises he made in this process.

Cabinet Reshuffle

On February 8th 2018, at the opening of the First Cabinet Meeting of the year, President Geingob reshuffled some of his Cabinet Ministers, in the first reshuffle of his presidency. From the beginning of his term, Geingob emphasised that there would be consequences for poor performance. As a first sign of his commitment to holding senior public officials accountable, he introduced performance agreements for Ministers, in which they outlined their goals for the year. However, it was

³⁹ Smith, S. 2018. "Congress Recount will give assurance – Angula". Windhoek Observer, 16 February 2018.

⁴⁰ Iikela, S. 2018. "Swapo congress probe to be discussed at CC". In The Namibian, 5 March 2018.

³⁴ Geingob, Hage. 2018

³⁵ Geingob, Hage. 2018. Statement on the opening of the 7th Session of the 6th Parliament, 13 February 2018.

³⁶ The list is drawn from Immanuel, Shinovene. 2015. "The globetrotter's jackpot." The Namibian, 18 December 2015.; Immanuel, Shinovene. 2016. "Geingob's N\$700,000 S&T." The Namibian, 23 December 2016, and various other news reports.

³⁷ Insight Magazine. "The End of the Party?" Dec/Jan 2017-2018 Issue.

³⁸ Nujoma, S. 2017. Statement at the 6th Swapo Party Congress, Windhoek, 23 November 2017.

only in early 2018 that Geingob changed the make-up of his Cabinet. Even then, only three Ministers lost their jobs: Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana and Jerry Ekandjo, who had challenged Geingob at the recently-concluded congress, and Immanuel Ngatjizeko, who resigned due to poor health. This means that only three people became Ministers for the first time: Erastus Utoni at Sport, Youth and National Service, Stanley Simataa at Information and Communication Technology, and Peya Mushelenga at Urban and Rural Development.

Opinions on the cabinet were mixed. Some condemned the fact that Geingob had simply swapped around Ministers, especially as he indicated in his speech that day that he was troubled by allegations of corruption – naming specific Ministries in this regard. He stated:

“I have particularly been disturbed by various allegations of corruption, maladministration and/or incompetency, mostly directed at the: Ministry of Works and Transport; the Office of the Attorney-General; the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Ministry of Health and Social Services. There may be other Ministries and Agencies too, to a lesser extent. While I have not been presented with any credible evidence of corrupt practice per se, I believe that whatever has been the cause of public unhappiness has since done a serious damage to the ability of such Ministries, Offices and Agencies to effectively execute their constitutional and statutory mandates.”⁴¹

‘Why then move them to a new portfolio?’ has been the question on the minds of many, who wonder whether his actions sufficiently complement his rhetoric on zero tolerance for corruption. That said, the President noted in his speech that he would “continue to investigate and consider various reported complaints of maladministration.”⁴² On the other hand, some of the changes he made were praised, with Stanley Simataa and Peya Mushelenga raising hopes that they would prove competent in their respective portfolios.

Ministry of Justice. Out: Albert Kawana; **In:** Sacky Shanghala

Attorney General. Out: Sacky Shanghala; **In:** Albert Kawana

Agriculture, Water, Forestry. Out: John Mutorwa; **In:** Alpheus !Naruseb

Works and Transport. Out: Alpheus !Naruseb; **In:** John Mutorwa

Mines and Energy. Out: Obeth Kandjoze; **In:** Tom Alweendo

Director General of the National Planning Commission and Minister of Economic Planning: Out: Tom Alweendo; **In:** Obeth Kandjoze;

Information and Communication Technology. Out: Tjekero Tweya; **In:** Stanley Simataa

Industrialization, Trade and SME Development. Out: Immanuel Ngatjizeko; **In:** Tjekero Tweya
Presidential Affairs. Out: Frans Kapofi; **In:** Immanuel Ngatjizeko*

Home Affairs. Out: Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana*; **In:** Frans Kapofi

Urban and Rural Development. Out: Sophia Shaningwa*
In: Peya Mushelenga

Sport, Youth and National Service. Out: Jerry Ekandjo;
In: Erastus Utoni

*Ngatjizeko resigned a week after being appointed due to ill health. Iivula-Ithana and Ekandjo were removed from their posts by Geingob, while Shaningwa resigned to focus on her role as Secretary-General of the Swapo party.

A few days after the reshuffle, former Swapo Party Secretary General, Nangolo Mbumba, was sworn in as Vice President, after Nickey Iyambo stepped down from the post due to health concerns. Some viewed this appointment as a ‘reward’ to Mbumba, whose tenure as Secretary-General of the party saw much controversy, particularly with the expulsion of vocal youth leaders from the party, and the subsequent court case on this issue.

On all occasions, the President again emphasised implementation as key, in delivering on Government’s mandate to the Namibian people.

Conclusion

As has been the case with the implementation of the Harambee Prosperity Plan, the fulfilment of promises on the whole has been a mixed bag for Geingob. This has been marred even more so by economic conditions, that made it increasingly difficult to deliver on his major promises of the eradication of poverty and inequality. Further, it should be clear that Geingob’s success does not only rest on his own shoulders, but also requires implementation from his Cabinet Ministers, and from government as a whole.

Dubbing 2018 the ‘Year of Reckoning’ at the First 2018 Cabinet Meeting, President Geingob made clear his expectations of his team to deliver on their mandate, noting, “I am counting on every one of us to step up the implementation of Government programmes. We cannot continue at the same pace and mindset and somehow expect a different outcome. We cannot continue to make promises and not reckon.”

It is against this assessment by the President himself, that we conclude by again emphasising the need for speedy implementation of the HPP and the other promises made, and for the President to take the requisite action where said implementation is lacking.

⁴¹ Geingob, Hage. 2018. Statement at the opening of the first Cabinet Meeting, 8 February 2018.

⁴² Ibid.

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About Democracy Report

Democracy Report is a project of the IPPR which analyses and disseminates information relating to the legislative agenda of Namibia's Parliament. The project aims to promote public participation in debates concerning the work of Parliament by publishing regular analyses of legislation and other issues before the National Assembly and the National Council. Democracy Report is funded by the Embassy of Finland.

About IPPR

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to deliver independent, analytical, critical yet constructive research on social, political and economic issues that affect development in Namibia. The IPPR was established in the belief that development is best promoted through free and critical debate informed by quality research.



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