

Ipumbu Shiimi: Namibia's new generation of banknotes

Remarks by Mr Ipumbu Shiimi, Governor of the Bank of Namibia, at the official launch of the new banknotes during the 22nd Independence Anniversary celebrations, Mariental, Hardap Region, 21 March 2012.

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Directors of Ceremony

Your Excellency Dr Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia and First Lady Meme Pohamba

Right Honourable Prime Minister, Nahas Angula

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. Theo Ben Gurirab

Honourable Chairperson of the National Council, Asser Kapere

Honourable Chief Justice, Judge Peter Shivute

Honourable Ministers

Honourable Members of Parliament

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Honourable Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, Governor of the Hardap Region and other Governors from other regions

Your Worship, Alex Kamburute, Mayor of Mariental and other Mayors from other local authorities

Local and Regional Authority Councillors, Traditional Leaders

Senior Government Officials

Members of the Media

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon

I am humbled and privileged for this opportunity to make few remarks and introduce the video about Namibia's new generation of banknotes.

Today is a special and momentous Day in the history of our beloved country. Today, we are not only celebrating 22 years of our Independence, we are not only celebrating 22 years of peace and stability, but we also witnessed the launch of the new generation of Namibia's banknotes by his Excellency, the President of the Republic.

Your Excellency,

Directors of Ceremonies!

The theme of my remarks is titled "Our Money, Our Pride, Our heroes and heroines, we Honour, know your currency". This is because the new banknotes launched a moment ago are not just decorated papers but are very important national payment instruments that symbolize our sovereignty, nationhood, and natural diversity.

Directors of Ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Namibian people have given the Bank of Namibia the responsibility to ensure that our currency is of high quality, safe and acceptable by the public. We believe that continuous improvements in the security features of our currency is a long term investment that will protect the public and the economy from potential counterfeiters. It is for that reason that we have decided to introduce a new generation of banknotes with the latest and state of the art security features to ensure that our banknotes remain safe, credible and presentable.

Director of Ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The preparation for this new generation of banknotes has been an intricate process, involving many role players. On this note, on behalf of the Board, staff of the Bank of Namibia and indeed my own behalf, I would like to thank the President and the Cabinet for the endorsement of the new generation of the Namibia Dollar Banknotes. Furthermore, we would like to express our gratitude to the Minister of Finance for her guidance and support during this process. Special thanks also go to my predecessor, Mr Tom Alweendo, who started this project, just before he left. I am grateful to my Colleagues at Bank of Namibia who worked hard on this project to ensure that we have well secured banknotes which compare with the best in the World, notes that we are proud of.

Director of Ceremonies

Your Excellency

Our notes do not only contain state of the art security features, but they also honour Namibian heroes. Kaptain Hendrik Witbooi will forever remain one of our martyrs, a hero who fought fearlessly against the occupation of our mother land. The battles he fought, for example in the Naukluft Mountains on 27 August 1894 and subsequent battles in the Auab Valley, were not ordinary, but acts of bravery. Kaptain Hendrik Witbooi died on 29 October 1905 near Koes after he was wounded in the battle near Fahlgras. Your Excellency, according to history, these were his last words "*It is enough now, the children shall have peace*". Ladies and Gentlemen, my fellow Namibians, let's treasure the peace we are currently enjoying for this was bought with blood.

Your Excellency, Sir, we are celebrating and praising our heroes and their heroic deeds. Inspired by our forefathers, Dr. Sam Nujoma, with his compatriots, carried the struggle forward. This too, Director of Ceremonies, was a long and bitter struggle. They sacrificed their youth years and many rivers of blood were crossed. Their efforts paid off, on 21 March 1990, Namibia became a Republic. Dr. Nujoma became our Founding President and Father of our newly born Nation, a unique position in the history of our country which no else will ever occupy. In his inaugural address on that day, the Founding President also paid homage to all fallen heroes and heroines, who sacrificed their lives for the total emancipation of the Namibian people. He said: "*In accepting the sacred responsibility which the Namibian people have placed on me as the first President of the Republic of Namibia, I would like to bow and pay homage to our fallen heroes and heroines, whose names Namibia's present and future generations will sing in songs of praise and whose martyrdom they will intone*". Ladies and Gentleman, as with the task of leading the liberation movement, on the job of reconstruction and nation building he also excelled. His courage and exemplarily leadership are admirable and for this we honour him. We are indeed honouring our heroes.

Director of Ceremonies

Your Excellency, Sir

In honoring national heroes, the challenge and questions faced by decision makers in many countries is always "why this one and not the other one". There are many other heroes and heroines in Namibia. Why not Jacob Marenga, a legendary personality in the whole of Southern Africa, known as the black Napoleon, Cornelius Fredrikies of Bethanie, Samuel Maharero, who fought brave battles at Okandjira and Ohamakari in 1904. How about Nehale Lya-Mpingana who attacked the forte at Onamutuni in support of Maharero and his people. Why not Chief Kutako who also fought at Ohamakari? Where is Mandume ya Ndemufayo, who died in combat in 1917 at Oihole? How about Lipumbu ya Shilongo, who was sent into exile in 1932 after his palace was bombarded by the air force? How about the fearless warrior, Chief Kai Xamseb, who was beheaded in 1890 and his grave was only found in 2005 in the botanical garden in Windhoek? How about Tobias Hainyeko? What about Meme

Gertrud Kandanga? Why not Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, who disappeared without trace in 1972? How about Anton Lubowski, who was murdered in 1989?

Director of Ceremonies what about our other heroes and heroines whose names we have not mentioned today. The truth is that we have many heroes and heroines who have sacrificed for our beloved country. To these people we shall remain indebted for ever. To our heroes and heroines, we owe our freedom. Their aspirations are nothing else but for the present and future generations to have unity, to ensure nation building and to work hard to achieve Vision 2030. We shall continue to honour them in different ways because their blood waters our freedom.

In conclusion, Your Excellency, a moment ago you have directed us to start a nation-wide campaign to inform the nation about the new currency. We shall, oblige Mr. President. For the next four weeks we shall travel all corners of this beautiful country to tell our people about our new symbols of nationhood, to inform them that through these notes we honour our heroes. With this money we are singing their names in songs of praise and martyrdom. We shall convey the message "Our money, our pride, know your currency"

I thank you for your kind attention.