



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

By

**Hon. Erastus Uutoni, MP
Minister of Urban and Rural Development**

**At the Occasion of the launch of the 2024 Electoral Calendar,
Democracy Awareness Campaign**

**07 February 2024
Mercure Hotel
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

Director of Ceremonies,
Dr. Elsie Nghikembua, Chairperson and Commissioners of Electoral
Commission of Namibia
Hon. Ministers, Deputy Ministers Present
Hon. Members of Parliament Present
Mr Peter Shaama, Chief Electoral and Referenda Officer
Executive Directors of Offices, Ministries and Agencies
Chief Executive Officers and Managing Directors of Public Enterprises
Representatives of Political Parties, Associations and Organizations
Members of Management and staff present of the Electoral Commission
Members of the media
Distinguished invited guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning!

It is indeed my great honour to officiate at the launch of the 2024 Electoral Calendar and Democracy Awareness Campaign. This year, Namibia in addition to four other SADC countries; South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, and Mozambique will be holding Presidential and National Assembly elections.

Democracy is a strong plant, difficult to eradicate once it has taken root in people's minds and our societies. But it is also a plant that requires care and which must be nourished if it is to remain healthy and thrive. All democracies need to pay relentless attention to the education of citizens, the timely registration of voters, the conduct of regular free and fair elections which are the cornerstone of our democratic society. By implication, democracy presents an opportunity for citizens to exercise their fundamental rights to choose their representatives and have a say in shaping the future of our nation.

Over the last few years, we have witnessed a worrisome trend which may threaten our democracy if not addressed. The low turnout of voters during polling is a major concern, with only 60.8% of registered voters turning up to cast their votes during the 2019 Presidential and National Assembly elections.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen

An informed voter is a strong citizen. Hence, a key dimension that forms an integral part of securing meaningful voter participation and the

promotion of a fully-fledged electoral democracy is Civic and Voter Education. Centrally, Civic and Voter Education ensures the readiness, willingness and ability of voters to participate in electoral activities. It imparts basic voter information which enables every voter to arrive well prepared at the polling station and vote on voting day. As evidenced by the trend of civic and voter education incorporation in most legal frameworks of African countries, such as constitutions and legislation, the role and significance of civic and voter education in the enhancement of voter participation in the democratic electoral processes have increasingly gained prominence on the continent.

The Civic and Voter Education Awareness Strategy adopted by the Electoral Commission of Namibia in the build-up to the conduct of the 2024 General Registration of Voters (GRV) and National Elections will form the basis for delivering Democracy Awareness Campaign, under the theme “***Enhancing Electoral Democracy through Electoral Processes***”. Both the GRV and Awareness Strategy form part of the launch of the Electoral Calendar.

The campaign will focus on raising awareness about the significance of participating in elections and voting, as well as fostering a sense of civic duty and engagement among citizens. It will ensure sensitising understanding about the importance of voter registration among eligible citizens and encourage individuals who meet the voting eligibility requirements to register and participate in the electoral process.

Overall, the campaign aims to create comprehensive and inclusive civic and voter education initiatives that encourage and facilitate citizen

participation in the democratic process. Promoting awareness and providing timely, accurate, accessible information will ensure that all eligible citizens have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights to register and vote.

As stakeholders, we have a collective obligation to address low voter turnout. Therefore, I urge you all to play your part in upholding the integrity of these electoral processes. It is only through our collective efforts that we can guarantee free, fair, and credible elections.

To enhance service delivery, the Electoral Commission of Namibia has developed a Service Charter which will enable the Commission to roll – out its Electoral Calendar thereby ensuring its commitment towards delivering its mandate. This Service Charter will form part of the launch. Hence, it should be accessible to all key stakeholders including the voters.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Now, let me draw your attention to the core business of the day, the launch of the Electoral Calendar.

The Electoral Calendar that we are launching today was developed in preparation for the upcoming elections. As provided for in the Electoral Act No. 5 of 2014, the Commission recommended to the President key statutory dates to be promulgated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Electoral Act of which the President has granted approval. The dates are as follows:

(a) **General Registration of Voters:**

03 June – 01 August 2024

(b) **Nomination of Candidates:**

14 October 2024 (Independent Candidates, if any)

16 October 2024 (Political Parties and Public Sitting)

(c) **Voting Abroad, Voting for Sea-going Personnel and Members of the Armed Forces:**

13th of November 2024

(d) **Election Day:**

27th of November 2024

In conclusion, I urge us all to work together to ensure that the upcoming General Registration of Voters (GRV) and Presidential and National Assembly Elections are conducted in a transparent and accountable manner, reflecting the will of the people through implementing this Calendar.

I have full confidence that with the adoption of the Electoral Calendar, we are taking a significant step towards success of the aforementioned electoral processes scheduled to take place during 2024.

I wish to sincerely extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Commission, Management and Staff of the ECN for their continued commitment to upholding the sound principles of democratic governance and look forward to success of these crucial electoral processes.

I also wish to thank all the stakeholders who have diligently contributed towards the preparation and planning for these elections, ensuring the smooth functioning of our democratic processes.

Last but not least, I wish to thank you all for your attention and let us strive towards a brighter future for our country through the power of democratic elections.

I now have the singular honour to declare *The 2024 Electoral Calendar, Democracy Building and Awareness Campaign and the Service Charter officially launched...!!!*

I Thank you