



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Opening Statement by H.E. Sabine Böhlke-Möller  
Ambassador/Permanent Representative

Review of Namibia's Initial Report by the UN Committee on  
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during its 57<sup>th</sup> Session

Geneva, Switzerland

23 February 2016

Mr. Chairperson,

It is an honor for Namibia to interact before this committee today. Namibia ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 22 years ago. We are pleased that we submitted our initial, first and second report for review by this Committee. The Ministry of Justice compiled the report with input from line ministries in consultation with NANGFOF, an umbrella organization for NGO's in Namibia. The challenges experienced in compiling this report were manifold.

Indeed, this is not the only significant factor marking today, but also the fact that 2016 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Covenant, an anniversary that we should all celebrate. Namibia pledges unwavering support for the initiatives planned for this jubilee and looks forward to participate actively therein.

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of my delegation, consisting of officials from the Ministries of Justice, Health and Social Services, Home Affairs and Immigration and Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation, we stand ready to answer your questions and respond to your comments to the best of our ability and will provide written replies where necessary.

We urge the Committee members to take into account the fact that not all ministries are represented here today by experts. This is due to various reasons, including budgetary constraints and competing priorities. Namibia was reviewed under the UPR mechanism in January this year and we have the Human Rights Committee review coming up on 07 March, which also coincides with the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, of which Namibia is a member.

Mr. Chairperson,

During the past 26 years, Namibia has established a good track record of political stability, prudent macroeconomic management, moderate economic growth and natural resource conservation. The economic growth has not generated enough jobs as the structure of economic production and trade has remained essentially unchanged. The country continues to experience prolonged drought due to climate change, and as a result Government efforts to address the interconnected problems of poverty and inequality in the country becomes even more difficult and challenging.

Mr. Chairperson,

We see The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as the cornerstone for the advancement of many other human rights. The protection and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights parallel to the protection of civil and political rights gave rise to the right to development, which brought together these two categories of rights. It is our submission that the two categories of rights should enjoy equal protection and should be promoted equally, with the same level of commitment expressed to both categories by the international community. The elevation of one category above the other creates an imbalance, which gives rise to many other problems, to the extent witnessed in the world today. We are convinced that civil and political rights without effective protection and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights will not bring about the desired outcomes anticipated by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as articulated in the resolution: "*The Future We Want*".

Inclusive Social Development, Environmental Sustainability, Inclusive Economic Development, and Peace and Security are goals that the Namibian Government wants to achieve and maintain.

We now look forward to engage with the Committee members on the issues of concern.

I thank you.