



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Closing Remarks by  
Hon. Dr Peya Mushelenga, MP  
Minister of Information and Communications Technology,  
at the occasion of the  
World Press Freedom Day's Global conference, Safari, Windhoek,  
03 May 2021**

Your Excellency, Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director General;

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps and developmental partners;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Director of proceedings,

Today, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021, marks 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the landmark Windhoek Declaration since it was sealed right here in this beautiful accommodation establishment on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1991. During that time, the Republic of Namibia was just **One Year, One Month and Ten Days old**, emerging as a determined new nation, putting to shame the colonial legacy and forging ahead with a new era of hope, freedom, peace and sustained prosperity, as one nation in unity.

It is therefore a poignant moment not only to us as Namibians, but to all freedom and peace loving citizens of the world that 31 years down memory lane, Namibia, as a product of the global community, continues to shine as a beacon of hope and freedom, rule of law, democracy and justice for all as enshrined in its Constitution, which among others seeks to promote the dignity, unity and integrity of all our citizens irrespective of their colour, religious, ethnicity or tribal orientations.

In other words, democracy is well entrenched in Namibia's governance architecture. To date we have three consecutive presidential hand-over of power through democratic processes. Our World Press Freedom ranking speaks volume of itself and our media fraternity bears testimonies of how conducive media environment is in relation to other parts of the world. And the holding of this prestigious international event is a clear demonstration of Namibia's unwavering commitment to a free, independent and pluralistic press.

The media is significant for both didactic and hedonistic reasons. A free press provides considerable literature needed to soothe the souls of those who feel down in society and acts as a master vigilante of the depressed, the bored and despondent suffering in silence whose voices may

not be heard for one or other reason. Furthermore, the media provides safe spaces to amplify issues that bedevil society and voice the voices of the voiceless as well as reaches out to everyone else going through melancholy. The artfully written feature stories encourage and also provide literary pleasure that promotes a reading culture needed for a knowledge-based global economy.

Regarding this befitting theme of this event, *Information as a Public Good*, Namibia has especially during the COVID-19-pandemic learnt that there is a place for both, public and private media houses. Do we always get the balance right? I would dare say it depends on which side of the fence you stand. But we do realise that there needs to be equitable share that reaches both parties in the arena of the media industry.

The much bigger challenge for not only Namibia, but for Africa and the world at large, is clearly to find a solution where income is distributed on a fair basis, considering that the bigger electronic platforms earn the biggest share, while simply relying and basing their modus operandi on data mining. That is likely to require political intervention on an international scale, if we want to seriously address this inequity in the media industry. A small country such as ours will not be able to force a policy change by private enterprise of the size we are talking of.

All in all, I would think that the media environment still allows for improvement, that lies in the nature of the beast, but having listened to various speakers and interest groups, more specifically to members of our media fraternity including the two Namibian Champions of the World Press Freedom Day 2021, I am convinced that Namibia is on the right track to turn Information into a functional public good.

Director of proceedings,

As we are about to disembark from this four days' engagement, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and appreciations to the orderly and principled manner in which both in-person and virtual participants conducted themselves. I have no doubt that the various lecture series, presentations and contributions will further cement and enhance our desire to jealously defend and safeguard press freedom and the safety of our journalists all over the world.

To this end, I would like to thank our development partners, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), European Union and so many others, including the civil society organisations and more particularly the media fraternity, academia and judicial community. You have all worked relentlessly in ensuring that Namibia seizes this opportunity to rekindle the country's history of being the seat of the Windhoek Declaration that culminated in the annual global celebration of the World Press Freedom Day 2021 all over the world.

Furthermore, I will be failing in my duty if I do not single out the following sponsors, who responded to our requests generously both in kind and money: Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN), Confidante Newspaper, Development Bank of Namibia (DBN), Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Embassy of the Republic of the Netherland; European Union (EU); First National Bank Namibia; High Commission of India; Huawei Telecommunication Technologies Namibia; Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS); Namibia Media Holdings (NMH); New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC); Telecom Namibia; The Namibian Newspaper; Namibia University of Science and Technology and the University of Namibia.

I further would like to thank the partners who have provided technical support, more specifically WiTel, Salt Essential IT, ConsoAV, One Africa Television, Telecom Namibia and my team who worked tirelessly in ensuring that this event is successful.

Our special congratulations and well-wishes to Madame Maria Ressa from the Philipines for winning this year's UNESCO / Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Award, a prestigious award awarded to those who have made extraordinary contribution to the defence and promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world

Your support to realise this global event goes a long way in enhancing 'Information as a Public Good'.

To our guest who travelled from all over the world, hope you enjoyed your stay in our capital and I invite you to explore the rest of Namibia, the land of wide open spaces!

You have been wonderful guest and it has been a pleasure hosting you.

**I thank you!**

