



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology on behalf of the Namibian government takes this opportunity to wish the media in Namibia and beyond, a happy and progressive celebration of the 2018 World Press Freedom Day. The day was born out of recognition of the vital role that journalists and the media in general play towards the upliftment and development of societies the world over.

As a government, we take note of the unwavering and unbreakable spirit of journalists despite the challenges they face. The media has continued to act as a relenting voice of the voiceless in its toil to expose corrupt practices and administrative malpractice, which if not exposed could be detrimental to the growth of society.

Equally, we are also conscious of the reality that for this role to be fulfilled, the media needs a favorable policy and legal environment, which exist as stipulated in our constitution. The Namibian government fully subscribe to the Windhoek Declaration, a framework that we cherish so much not only because of its key durable principles, but because its birth in Windhoek, places Namibia as a beacon of press freedom.

Thus, we reiterate our commitment to the defense and protection of the rights of journalists in Namibia and beyond. We do this by asserting our willingness to interact with the media and allow for the recognition of the rule of law that governs the operations of journalists in our country. His Excellency, President Dr. Hage Geingob, who in his address to Parliament during the delivery of the 2018 State of the Nation Address, reiterated his support to media freedom and vowed

to ensure that Namibia's press freedom ranking improved not only in Africa, but in the whole world.

Our government's willingness and commitment to work with the media, is part of our country's implementation acceleration plan, the "Harambee Prosperity Plan". This is a clear testimony that the Namibian Government values the media as close partners and allies in the development of our country.

We can only build a better nation and a better world for all, if everyone's rights including that of the media, are guaranteed.

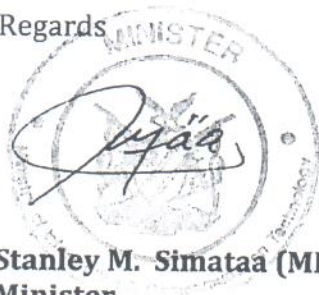
However, we are cognizant of the fact that in spite of our achievements in advocating for media freedom, more still needs to be done. We can therefore not be complacent. It is against this background that we have been working tirelessly in collaboration with all stakeholders, to expedite the enactment of the Access to Information Legislation. Once enacted this legal framework will consolidate our foothold as one of the countries in the world with truly empowered citizens.

It is sad that our country has lost its position on the African continent as a champion for media freedom in the just released 2018 Press Freedom rankings by the Reporters Without Borders. We commit ourselves to objectively analyze the reasons for such a decline and further devise an appropriate intervention strategy with the indulgence of all Stake Holders so as to reclaim our number one spot on the continent.

The Namibian government remains committed to the independence of the media and will not impede their operations.

On behalf of the Namibian government, I wish all journalists and the Namibian nation fruitful celebrations of the World Press Freedom day on May 3, 2018.

Regards

The image shows a circular official seal. At the top, the word "MINISTER" is written in a semi-circle. In the center, there is a stylized signature in black ink. The seal is surrounded by a decorative border.

Stanley M. Simataa (MP)
Minister