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ONE YEAR OF GEINGOB: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NAMIBIAN PRESIDENT'S HITS AND MISSES DURING HIS FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE



“After 25 years they (Namibian citizens) want food, clothing and shelter. They want jobs, better housing and good nutrition. They want a leader who will bring prosperity to the nation and they want that leader to act quickly.”

– President Hage Geingob, 21 March 2015

Introduction

On 21 March 2015, President Hage Geingob was inaugurated as the third President of the Republic of Namibia. Having received an overwhelming 87 per cent of the vote in the Presidential election on 28 November 2015, the popular Geingob assumed the role of Head of State with an enormous level of public confidence and great deal of public expectation.

Taking place on Namibia's 25th Independence Anniversary, Geingob's inauguration was a euphoric occasion, and the excitement in the air was palpable. Perhaps it was the promise of a fresher approach to governance. Or it may have been the

fact that the new President hailed from a minority ethnic group, signalling a new era of tolerance and a profound sense of national unity. Geingob's inauguration speech set an impressive and inspiring tone that stressed inclusivity, promised that, “No Namibian should feel left behind!”, and cemented this euphoria.

The new President committed to addressing a number of priorities for his administration, clearly stating that addressing “the socio economic gaps that exist in our society” would be the main focus of his administration. In this vein, he declared an “all-out war on poverty and concomitant inequality” and promised to work towards “catapulting the economy into a new period of faster growth, improved job creation and improved

service delivery". Beyond the socio-economic priority stated (and presented in more detail below), the President also promised to strengthen the governance architecture to ensure that government is able to effectively respond to these priorities; and called on the Namibian people to "stand together in building this new Namibian House."

It is against this background that this briefing paper provides a critical assessment of President Geingob's first year in office, drawing insights from a slew of documents, speeches, press releases and media reports issued since the President's inauguration. The paper also incorporates insights and scorecards from a handful of political, social and economic commentators.

Arranged in a format that assesses his performance on key issues earmarked as agenda-setting priorities (as communicated in his Inaugural and first State of the Nation addresses), the paper analyses the promises made, how these promises have been taken up over the course of the year, implementation measures underway, and Geingob's hits and misses in dealing with the noted issues. Beyond this assessment, the paper also provides some pointers for the way forward, that would – hopefully – contribute to steering Geingob's ship in a direction that will help Namibia achieve her massive potential and uplift the Namibian masses from the clutches of poverty and inequality.

The President's Promises

During Geingob's first few weeks in office, he delivered some key speeches that set the tone for what his priorities would be during his presidency. Chief amongst these speeches – in terms of highlighting his administration's priorities early on – were his inauguration speech [21.03.2015] and his State of the Nation Address (SoNA) [15.04.2015]. These two speeches form the basis for this analysis.

In his inauguration speech, in addition to emphasising continuity (President Nujoma had represented peace, President Pohamba represented stability, and Geingob would represent prosperity), Geingob clearly outlined his priorities.

"The main priority for the next administration will be addressing the socio-economic gaps that exist in our society. Therefore, our first priority will be to declare all-out war on poverty and concomitant inequality. Our focal point will be to address inequality, poverty and hunger and that will involve looking at a range of policies and interventionist strategies to tackle this issue."

In this regard, he noted a revised Government structure for his first term, that would better align existing Ministries to Government's objectives, enhance efficiencies, and make government more responsive in meeting these goals, i.e.: "poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities and disparities; sustainable economic growth and economic diversification; job creation; and improved service delivery."

"Our vision is clear. We plan to expand and spread the opportunities for growth and prosperity to be enjoyed by all Namibians in all parts of the country, with a specific focus on the disadvantaged sections of our population. We will do so by pursuing policies and strategies to safeguard macroeconomic stability, promote economic diversification and transformation of the Namibian economy to be more inclusive and resilient to internal and external shocks."

In his State of the Nation Address on April 21, which coincided with the opening of the 6th Parliament in 2015, Geingob made a recommitment to the many promises made in his inaugural address, this time adding more specifics to his plans.

Eradicating poverty again featured prominently as a national priority, and the President used the opportunity to announce various initiatives in this regard, including an increase in the old age pension, and the introduction of a food bank. He also highlighted the need to tackle poverty using a multifaceted approach. "We will, therefore, tackle poverty from all fronts, through safety nets, access to quality education, and by creating jobs and growing the economy," he said, highlighting the renaming of the Labour Ministry to the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Job Creation.

With regards to overcoming inequalities, he noted that the finalisation of the economic empowerment policy framework was long overdue and that consultation would resume on this policy framework. In this vein, in his comments on the economy, he also noted efforts to "raise the bar regarding transformation of ownership structures" including the restriction of ownership over natural resources, the finalisation of policies such as the Procurement Bill and the Retail Charter, the implementation of the Industrial Policy and the Growth at Home Strategy; and the support for local business.

Access to land and affordable housing has been a major theme on the national agenda, with the Affirmative Repositioning movement further placing the issue – particularly of urban housing – front and centre of much of the policy discourse. In this regard, the President reaffirmed his "personal commitment to addressing land reform and provision of affordable housing to all Namibians", and highlighted various (possible) measures to accelerate the delivery of serviced land and housing.

In the SoNA, Geingob also announced the introduction of free secondary school education, encouraged the private sector to do more with regards to skills development and training, and noted the importance of quality and affordable health services.

He touched on the issue of combating corruption, encouraging the nation to report instances of corruption in its many forms to the Anti Corruption Commission. He also highlighted the need for public officials to avoid conflicts of interest, and encouraged them to disclose their assets. In this vein, in a much welcome move, he announced that he would disclose his assets through

an independent assessment by PWC.

It was also in the SoNA that the President announced that in terms of holding elected leaders accountable, all Ministers and their Deputies would be required “to issue Ministerial Declarations of Intent that will constitute a contract with the public on delivery to which they will be held accountable”.

In both his Inaugural Speech and the State of the Nation address, Geingob highlighted and drove home a metaphor to illustrate his presidency’s emphasis on inclusivity – the analogy of The Namibian House. In the SoNA, he stated, “We are intent on building and maintaining a high quality house in which all its residents have a sense of shared identity. We are determined to build a house that will be a place of peace and refuge for all its children and a house in which no Namibian will be left out.”

Assessing the President’s Hits & Misses

President Geingob has drawn a great deal of praise for his policy pronouncements. His inaugural address inspired and gave hope of a new era in responsible and responsive governance and service delivery. Further, the tenets expressed in many of his speeches thereafter have demonstrated a renewed focus on enhancing efficiencies and accountability in the civil service, transforming the economy in a way that ensures competitiveness while addressing glaring inequalities, and addressing the reality of poverty in our nation.

However, during his year in power, the President has also drawn criticism on a range of issues, including his oversized government, the high perks received by his large team of advisors, inadequacies in the way he deals with corruption, and the slow pace with which the pronouncements he has made are being implemented.

We use the prominent themes in the President’s landmark speeches – specifically the inaugural address and his first State of the Nation address – to provide an overall assessment of Geingob performance almost one year since his inaugural speech, and to gauge whether he has delivered on his promises.

For the purpose of this paper, 12 thematic areas that formed the major points of the President’s tone-setting speeches, and that have come up in other pronouncements, were identified, and are being used. These include (1) overall democratic governance, (2) the economy, (3) poverty eradication and addressing inequality, (4) job creation, (5) service delivery, (6) effectiveness and efficiency in government structures, (7) nation-building and national reconciliation, (8) health, (9) education, (10) combating corruption, (11) regional and international relations, and (12) land and housing.

At the end of the analysis, scorecards of 10 political, social

and economic commentators assessing the President’s performance on each of these themes are provided. The commentators were asked to rate the President’s performance on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 noting very poor performance, 5 being average performance, and 10 meaning excellent performance by the President).

The commentators for this exercise (listed in alphabetical order of first name) include:

- Prof. Andre du Pisani, Professor Emeritus, UNAM, Chairperson: NCRST
- Dr. Elijah Ngurare, Political Commentator
- Graham Hopwood, Executive Director, Institute for Public Policy Research
- Gwen Lister, Chairperson, Namibia Media Trust and Founder of The Namibian
- Herbert Jauch, Labour Researcher and Educator
- Job Amupanda, Political Science Lecturer and Deputy Dean at the University of Namibia
- McHenry Venaani, President of the DTA of Namibia/Leader of the Official Opposition
- Dr. Michael Akuupa, Lecturer
- Naita Hishoono, Executive Director – Namibia Institute of Democracy
- Suta Kavari, Vice Chair, Economic Association of Namibia

The commentators also highlight their thoughts on Geingob’s major hits and misses, and provide some words of wisdom on the way forward.

Overall Assessment

On the whole, President Geingob’s performance in his first year of office has been a mixed bag made up of some great rhetoric, wonderful intentions, interesting policy pronouncements, and some sound action and consultation on certain policies. There have also been actions that have seemingly contradicted the positive rhetoric and some inaction on certain issues, raising question marks about how much progress can be achieved.

During his first year as President, Geingob has been saying all the right things – from declaring an all-out war on poverty¹ and declaring his assets as a means of promoting transparency and accountability², to providing tangible action with respect to national reconciliation, initiating consultation and early action on the urban land/housing crisis and reviving the policy review on economic transformation. That said, however, the President’s first year in office has been focused on laying the grounds for the action and change he wishes to implement.

In a way, the President has admitted as much, stating during the opening of the third session of the current parliament that 2015 was a year of talk, and 2016 would have to be a year of action. In the regard, he stated: “The year 2015 can

¹ Inaugural Address, 21 March 2015. State of the Nation Address, 2015.

² Geingob, H.G. 2015. Declaration of Personal Assets by His Excellency Dr. H.G. Geingob and Madam Monica Geingos, President and First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, 20.05.2015.

be described as a call to arms. It was the year in which as President, I endeavoured to rally the nation behind a shared Vision through themes such as, War on Poverty, War against corruption, No Namibian Must feel left out and Harambee. I am certain that by embracing these themes and applying them to our policy making decisions, one day we will be able to eradicate poverty. In 2016, it is time to turn words into reality, it is time to implement and therefore I refer to this year as the Year of Implementation.”³ That said, although the groundwork was being laid in his first year in office – seen with the stating and restating of the Poverty Eradication, Harambee, and Namibian House mantras, there is still plenty to assess of the President’s performance based on the promises made when he came to office.

The Hits

Geingob entered office on a titanic wave of support and with huge public expectation, and before taking the helm (i.e. during his time as President-elect), made some announcements that helped to set a strong tone for his presidency. In terms of service delivery, these included instructing those on the Swapo party list who would be serving in Parliament to submit their CVs to ensure that they were placed in offices where their expertise would best serve the nation. This was certainly a welcome move, which he noted in his 100 days self-assessment by stating: “As you are aware, Cabinet Ministers were selected and allocated to various ministries based on their qualifications and level of expertise, after thorough analysis of their Curriculum Vitae, which I had requested. These appointments have rejuvenated the people as well as the ministries themselves.”⁴ The President underlined the seriousness of this approach by naming and shaming those who had not submitted their resumes by the deadline.

As President-Elect, Geingob also announced the creation of the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare to fast-track efforts to address poverty, wealth inequality and food insecurity. In his words: “The establishment of the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare is meant to ensure the co-ordination, implementation and evaluation of government programmes aimed at poverty eradication. This Ministry comes as a realisation that poverty eradication programmes are cross-cutting, and are developed and implemented by various government ministries but requires focus and co-ordination.”⁵

The poverty eradication mantra has been present in most of the President’s speeches, and in his March 2016 meeting with former Presidents Sam Nujoma and Hifikepunye Pohamba, he made sure to explain that the Harambee Prosperity Plan “will complement our National Development Plans and Vision 2030.”⁶ It therefore, recognises and builds on your successes and achievements. It is designed to have high impact and take us closer to the attainment of Vision 2030.” The President has announced plans to reveal the Harambee Prosperity Plan during his 2016 State of the

Nation Address in mid-April 2016.

Encouragingly, there has also been positive action to follow on the promises made in his unifying inaugural speech. For example, he took action on increasing the old age pension grant from the meagrely N\$600 previously granted to the elderly to N\$1,000 in 2015 and N\$1,100 for the current budget year (with another increase expected in 2017), in an effort to help reduce poverty; and has announced the creation of food banks to reduce food insecurity in the country, which has now been budgeted for in the 2016-2017 budget. Analysts have cautioned that the food banks should not become a bureaucratic burden and efforts should be made to ensure the intended recipients of food aid are the ones who receive the support. In this regard, the exact modalities of the plan are still unknown, although the Cuban government will provide support and advice based on their own experiences. He has also announced the introduction of a Basic Income Grant, although the details are still far from clear.

Related to poverty reduction efforts and the extension of opportunities for all, the President has also done well in seeing through reforms set out by his predecessor for free secondary education. His major challenge with regards to education, however, is ensuring that learners receive high quality education to enhance their life chances, and to fully exploit their potential. A clear strategy to enhance educational outcomes remains unclear.

With regards to governance, President Geingob has also made various efforts to ensure that his administration is delivering on the promises made to the people. He requested all Ministers to submit their Declarations of Intent to “outline their promises to the public”. He held an induction seminar for Cabinet members early on in his Presidency “to take Cabinet through key important concepts, thinking and approaches that will mark the tenure of my Presidency. These include: good governance and ethics, poverty eradication, reduction of income disparities, accelerated economic growth, job creation and rapid industrialization.”⁷ And he ensured that Performance Agreements (in line with the Declarations) were set in place to monitor the performance of his Ministers.⁸

What is the Namibian House Vision?

“...the Namibian House Vision (is), namely: a prosperous House; a House free of poverty; a House where all members, irrespective of race, colour or creed, live together in harmony; and a House where no one shall be deprived of basic amenities and the required capabilities to help themselves.”

- President Geingob @ the National Conference on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication, October 26, 2015

³ Geingob, H.G. 2016. Statement at the Official Opening of Third Session of the Sixth Parliament, 09.02.2016.

⁴ Geingob, H.G. 2015. President’s speech on the Occasion of his 100 Days in Office. State House, 29 June 2015.

⁵ Geingob, H.G. 2015. Keynote Address at the Launch of the National Dialogue on Wealth Distribution and Poverty Eradication, 14.08.2015.

⁶ Geingob, H.G. 2016. Statement at the First Meeting of the President’s Advisory Council. State House, 08.03.2016.

⁷ *New Era Newspaper*, 2016. Minister’s performance agreements explained. *New Era*, 25.01.2016.

⁸ Geingob, 2015. Facebook Post on the Townhall meetings. <https://www.facebook.com/DrHageGeingob/posts/552578004898694>

President Geingob has worked hard to ensure he remains a true ambassador of his Namibian House analogy, in which “no Namibian should feel left out”, and, as promised, the focus of his efforts have remained on mending socio-economic gaps in Namibian society (particularly on poverty reduction). His public engagement through town hall meetings was evidence of this. According to his reports on these meetings, “During the period under consideration, we covered close to 14 thousand kilometers on road and by plane, sat into a collective 93 hours of town hall meetings, listening attentively to participants and meticulously documenting questions, observations and suggestions. We received in excess of 2400 questions and ideas from Namibians from all walks of life. We are committed to respond to all questions in a formalized manner.”⁹ At this stage, we can only assume that the formalized manner in which these questions will be responded to is in the embodiment of the Harambee Plan.

The President’s consultative approach could also be seen in his meeting with members of the Affirmative Repositioning movement on the issue of urban housing, engaging the public on social media platforms (particularly on his Facebook page), and ensuring that public input is sought on critical Bills such as the New Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework, which deals with the economic transformation he spoke of in his 2015 SoNA. He has noted that, “We will continue engaging and consulting with stakeholders like farmers, the media, trade unions, youth, women and the private sector. These consultations will go hand in hand with a drive towards implementation and transformation of workable suggestions into actions.”¹⁰ The 24 July 2015 consultations with the AR movement resulted in a plan to clear tens of thousands of plots countrywide for forthcoming housing projects aimed at low earners.

The President received praised – along with First Lady, Monica Geingos – for setting a personal example in declaring his assets. In his speech on that day, he stated that, “It is clear that in administering a nation, one has to be transparent and accountable. It is for this reason that I have decided to declare my assets in public, for your scrutiny.”¹¹ During that press conference, it was declared that, “Geingob’s assets are worth over N\$50 million while the First Lady’s assets range from N\$45 to N\$60 million in equity.”¹²

The table below presents the highlights of President Geingob’s time in office, as identified by the contributing commentators.

Commentators’ Perspectives on the ‘Big Hits’

Andre du Pisani	His State of the Nation Address (2015) and his regional consultations.
Elijah Ngurare	In a democracy, especially in an African country like Namibia, the President, once elected, must descend to the level of the led with simplicity and humility. Although, our President has by character, not measured up to this, I wish to regard as a notable highlights - when he decided to meet the Affirmative Repositioning (AR) land activists, the creation of the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and the increment to the old age pension.
Graham Hopwood	His own asset declaration and the move to performance agreements.
Gwen Lister	Good intentions.
Herbert Jauch	Some impressive speeches, for example the State of the Nation Address in April 2015 and the opening of Parliament in 2016. Emphasis on inclusivity and the eradication of poverty.
Job Amupanda	Distinguishing himself as President of Namibia and not allowing Swapo factionalism and cannibalism to cloud his judgement. No Namibian will ever forget what he did on 24 July 2016 [Meeting with AR leaders and coming to an agreement on land and housing provision].
McHenry Venaani	Town Hall Meetings: Sign of a participatory democracy and a leader who is willing to directly consult with the general public.
Michael Akuupa	The President’s meeting with Affirmative Repositioning movement on the issue of land was a highlight. Meeting with striking workers in the fishing industry. His emphasis on fighting poverty. His asset declaration. Town hall meetings.
Naita Hishoono	Staying healthy

⁹ Geingob, 2015. Facebook Post on the Townhall meetings. <https://www.facebook.com/DrHageGeingob/posts/552578004898694>

¹⁰ Geingob, H.G. 2015. Text to President Geingob’s New Year’s message broadcasted on NBC TV, 31.12.2015.

¹¹ Geingob, H.G. 2015. Declaration Of Personal Assets By His Excellency Dr Hage G. Geingob And Madam Monica Geingos President And First Lady Of The Republic Of Namibia. State House, May 20, 2015¹² Geingob, H.G. 2015. Text to President Geingob’s New Year’s message broadcasted on NBC TV, 31.12.2015.

¹² Mathias, Fikameni. Hage and Monica Declare Assets. *The Namibian*, 20.05.2015.

Suta Kavari

The President's sense of vigour and determination that we didn't really see in the previous administrations. The President's sense of purpose, particularly the poverty fighting resolve, is noticeable. He has touched and addressed some of the pertinent issues facing the country, and that sort of openness should be celebrated. The biggest hit is obviously the willingness to engage and consult - that bodes well for nation building.

• **Penny Akwenye**

Policy Advisor on implementation and Monitoring

• **Daisy Mathias**

Advisor on Youth and Enterprise Development

The Misses

Despite the above-noted 'hits', the President has also missed some key opportunities to really shine, and to respond to the pressing needs of our time.

While pushing the poverty eradication agenda, he has been seen to spend excessively on a big government (with some Ministries having more than one Deputy Minister), as well as highly paid advisors, some of whom reportedly earn more than Ministers.¹³ While the Constitution does provide for the President to have advisors, the pay packages awarded to these advisors and to the extra Deputy Ministers have raised concern amongst analysts, and has added an extra burden on the state's coffers at the same time as Namibia's debt rises to worrying levels. While the amounts themselves may not be huge in terms of the budget as a whole, an expanded executive is symbolic and potentially sends the wrong message about priorities.

As Andre du Pisani writes in an opinion piece assessing the President's first year in office (see the insert following): "Already, the proposed changes and the means of achieving them have put considerable additional stress on the public purse. This is even more so, as the superstructure of the State has expanded significantly, to the point where the architecture of the 'executive' State and the not inconsiderable wage bill for those who eat at the trough and other ornate representations of the State, such as luxury cars and immodest buildings, have developed a seemingly insatiable appetite."

The "A Team" announced by the President at his 100 Days press conference, 29.06.2015:

• **Etienne Maritz**

Executive Director in the Office of the President

• **John Steytler**

Economic Advisor

• **Albertus Aochamub**

Press Secretary

• **Inge Zaamwani-Kamwi**

Constitutional Advisor and Private Sector Interface

The size of the Executive, and the seeming excesses afforded to the President's advisors – dubbed the A team – have perhaps been the cause of the heaviest criticism the President has faced thus far. And while he means well in surrounding himself with the people he believes can best effect the change he wishes to create, many have continued to question the 'value add' of some of the advisors and what change they will actually effect. Indeed, given the expense of this team, and the clear need for transformation voiced by the President himself in his inaugural speech, one would hope for more concrete action. The President has announced that he will unveil the details of the Harambee Prosperity Plan during his second State of the Nation address, and there is hope that the socio-economic transformation that will come about as a result of the plan will bring about the prosperity the President has promised, and in so doing assure the nation of the advisors' value.

In response to the criticisms levelled with regard to the expense of the A-team (specifically responding to the criticism raised at The Namibian's #100DaysOfGeingob event), the President defended his selections, stating that: "There was commentary that the Namibian House is too expensive. I would like to say that any good house is expensive. Furthermore, one only worries about the expenses if the resources are being wasted without any delivery. It is therefore fair to give the Team Hage a chance and if it fails to deliver then you can pass a verdict. I have high expectations on the performance of these individuals, and will therefore be the first person to take them to task in case of non-performance."¹⁴

At the Opening of Parliament earlier this year, President Geingob stated that, "When I announced the appointment of the Presidential Advisors last year, it turned into a contentious issue, spear-headed by some in the media, despite the fact that the structure of the President's Office has always included advisors. I made it clear that I believe that leaders are often not provided with the appropriate personnel to help them make informed decisions on a number of important policy matters. I am pleased to say that the appointment of the Presidential Advisors is beginning to bear fruit even at this early stage. As President, I have been able to take decisive, evidence-based decisions within the past several months due to the excellent work of my advisors. I would therefore like to thank them and encourage them to continue to deliver."

And in countering criticism with regards to the size of the Executive, in the past, the President defended his team, noting that: "Much has been said about the size of the Executive and the enlarged structure of Government given the introduction of new Ministries. However, it is much ado with nothing. People fail to see the big picture and what we are trying to achieve by reducing wastage of resources which eventually links to our efforts to tackle poverty."¹⁵

¹³ Immanuel, S. 2015. Expensive Team. *The Namibian*, 30.06.2015

¹⁴ Geingob, H.G. 2015. Facebook comments regarding media coverage on the occasion of his 100 Days as President. <https://www.facebook.com/DrHageGeingob/posts/493879614101867>

¹⁵ Geingob, H.G. 2015. Statement at the Opening Ceremony of Cabinet Ministers Induction Ceremony, 09.04.2016.

The President has shown his defensive nature on several fronts, often claiming the media bends the truth, tells outright lies, or fails to understand his vision. In terms of media relations, while on one hand he has undertaken some attempts at consultation with the media, holding several press conferences and inviting media editors to State House, the President has also shown himself to become rather defensive with the media – both locally (e.g. issuing statements on controversial reports by the media¹⁶ and questioning their understanding of the policymaking process¹⁷) and international (as he demonstrated in his interview on BBC's HardTalk programme).

Despite the consultative town hall meetings, others have accused the President of not being open to consultation. This includes DTA President/Leader of the Official opposition, McHenry Venaani, who reproached Geingob for dodging him. In this respect, the President said:

As for the consistent comments made by the official opposition leader, Hon Venaani, I had not acceded to his specific request to see me, on the land issue, I have the following to say: As many of you may recall, during the process of amending the Namibian Constitution, I held several extensive and often protracted consultative meetings with all the members of the opposition in my then capacity as Prime Minister. Many of the opposition leaders made a number of key interventions which we adopted, amongst them being the 5 percent threshold for a party to be elected to the National Assembly, as well as the issue of not giving the 8 members of parliament nominated by the President any voting rights.

Sadly, after what we all believed were excellent deliberations held in a spirit of openness, many of the opposition leaders claimed that they were never consulted. I do not want to consult a person who would later on publicly deny that such consultation had taken place.

Now that we have formulated our vision we may inform them about our road map.

On fighting corruption, although the President set a positive personal example in declaring his assets, he has not insisted that members of Cabinet and other MPs be publicly accountable, and a new National Assembly asset register has yet to be published a year after MPs were sworn in. In this regard, although he has – in word – encouraged the disclosure of assets, he has missed important opportunities to show broader transparency and accountability by enforcing this practice at a broader level. Further, while his rhetoric on the fight against corruption has been strong, real action has been lacking, and there is some public skepticism about certain tenders that the President has been reported to have defended – e.g. the controversial airport tender and the Xaris deal, amongst others.

The President has also tried to distance himself from criticism on top-dollar spending that is deemed excessive, and when opening

the Third Session of Parliament on February 9th, 2016, he cited the separation of powers as a reason to remove himself from the discussion of a new parliament slated to cost over N\$2 billion. With regard to the parliamentary building, he simply stated that¹⁸:

I have received numerous messages from people imploring me to halt the construction of the building. In this connection let us all be reminded of the separation of powers between State Organs which I alluded to earlier. In terms of this, each of these State Organs has to act independently, and that is good because it provides for checks and balances in our democracy... This separation of powers dictates that the building of a new Parliament is a matter of the Legislature and not a matter of the Executive. Therefore, calls for the abandoning of plans to build a new Parliament building should be, if at all, directed to the Speaker of Parliament and not to the Presidency.

Another miss is that the President has not effectively spoken to the water and energy crises that Namibia is currently facing. While it has been reported that "Geingob is optimistic that the 'Harambee towards prosperity' plan will include solutions to fix those problems," policy pronouncements on this remain lacking to date. Needless to say, "In terms of electricity, Geingob said he had stopped the N\$23 billion Kudu gas project because it was too expensive while the Xaris project needed massive guarantees from the state."¹⁹

Unemployment (particularly youth unemployment) remains effectively unattended to, despite mentions of the problem in various speeches. Although the President has engaged the private sector on various platforms, this has not produced results in terms of job creation. Unlike the plans announced for welfare projects to ensure poverty reduction, when it comes to job creation and enterprise development, equally if not more important in reducing poverty and inequality, the Geingob administration has done little.

The table below presents the lowlights of President Geingob's first year in office, as identified by the contributing commentators.

Commentators' Perspectives on the 'Big Misses'

Andre du Pisani

Failure to fully comprehend the seriousness of the water and energy crises. A presidency that somehow sees the superfluous as very necessary. Too much of the 'high life' culture.

¹⁶ Geingob, H.G. 2015. Facebook post: Is the Namibian still telling it like it is? 25.11.2015. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/DrHageGeingob/posts/552845184871976>

¹⁷ Geingob, H.G. Statement on the Occasion of the First Cabinet Meeting of 2016. 02.02.2016.

¹⁸ Geingob, H.G. 2016. Statement on the Official Opening of the 3rd Session of the 6th Parliament, 09.02.2016.

¹⁹ Immanuel, S. 2015. Geingob makes more promises. *The Namibian*, 15.12.2015.

Elijah Ngurare	For me the problem has been the contradiction between his words and his actions. Talking about poverty eradication (not even reduction) yet bloating the top structures which means spending more money on a few people at the top; not on the masses. This can be seen in many Government Ministries having to cut on many projects (including capital projects) because there is no money yet the “presidency” can still afford to spend. The President’s spending doesn’t tally with that which he says he intends to achieve. For a cash-strapped Government like his, it is shocking that he is indifferent about a new parliament. In this regard, his lowlights includes the appointment of A Team (that relegated Cabinet to B team in terms of their remuneration) and his exclusion and marginalisation of non-friends.
Graham Hopwood	Hasn’t yet been able to change the civil service culture of slowness, inaction and complacency. This will be crucial in the second year.
Gwen Lister	The fact that the good intentions haven’t been translated into reality or they’ve been semi-implemented but haven’t gone the whole way.
Herbert Jauch	No meaningful concrete steps on how to reduce inequality, redistribute wealth in favour of the poor and eradicate poverty. No concrete and systematic approach is visible thus far.
Job Amupanda	-
McHenry Venaani	General disdain/contempt to any critics (academics or otherwise), some sections of media and opposition leaders.
Michael Akuupa	When he pleaded ignorance on issues that pertain to his salary and international travel. He uses the wrong platforms to address non-issues.
Naita Hishoono	Constitutional changes resulted in a bloated Parliament. Insufficient action on Reconciliation, Poverty and AR (Housing).
Suta Kavari	The President has been saying all the right things. However, we haven’t really seen tangible policy execution and implementation.

Professor Emeritus Andre du Pisani shares a thoughtful assessment of President Geingob’s first year in office, as presented below:

Hage Geingob - One Year As President

The question of Namibia, like that of Africa, is open-again. Many of the promises of an inclusive ‘Namibian House’ remain unfilled. Paradoxically, there is too much change and there is too little - as the promise of further ongoing transformation and the deepening of democratic governance, prove to be more difficult to achieve. The conversation about transformation, the means and modes of transformation and the ultimate purpose of government, seem to unfold in different worlds. The distance may, over time, prove to be costly to the country. Already, the proposed changes and the means of achieving them have put considerable additional stress on the public purse. This is even more so, as the super-structure of the State, has expanded significantly, to the point where the architecture of the ‘executive’ State and the not inconsiderable wage bill for those who eat at the trough and other ornate representations of the State, such as luxury cars and immodest buildings, have developed a seemingly insatiable appetite.

Under President Hage Geingob’s watch since he took power in a smooth, controlled transition, the possibilities, contradictions, and risks of meaningful political, economic, and cultural change in the post-colony have become sharply into relief. At another level, if the President and his team were to fail to deliver meaningful change at these different registers, then much of what he initiated would unravel and this in turn, would injure our broken Republic even more.

Intuitively, President Geingob, given his political knowledge, intuition, and memory, knows that transitions do not ensure democracy. He also knows the retreat of the former colonial powers do not assure material wealth and equality. He knows that the gap between expectation and reality is increasing, moreover, as his PhD-thesis, argues the relationship between accountability and power is hardly stable (hence his insistence on performance contracts, even if these are undoubtedly flawed in some respects). The line between the promise of reconciliation, transformation with continuity and undue waiting is increasingly unsustainable. He has enough of a sense of reality to inform his political logic and empowerment frameworks, such as the ‘Harambee Plan’. Herein lies hope for the future beyond 2017.

The President is enough of a pragmatist and a utilitarian to know that every Namibian counts for one, and nobody for more than one. One of his guiding principles comes from his utilitarianism, and through the metaphor of ‘The Namibian House’ he hopes to promote the greatest good of the greatest number. This utilitarian principle and associated political practice will not nec-

essarily endear him to every Namibian, for the political culture and practice of the past two decades often turned more on principles of blind loyalty, party loyalty, exiles versus those who stayed behind and forms of 'ethnic entrepreneurship' and patronage.

The more profound moral question to ask, is if the President, knows that the bite of the conscience can, as Friedrich Nietzsche reminded us, 'be indecent'? Based on the evidence available in the public domain, he has said 'yes' to democracy; 'yes' to more 'accountability' and 'transparency'; 'yes' to improved performance in service delivery; 'yes' to greater equality; 'yes' to social interventions that may alleviate poverty, and 'yes' to the understanding that the State can and should not be left out of the equation when it comes to his construct of 'progress'.

My cursory reading of the President is that he comes from a distinguished line of thinkers and politicians that regards the modernist and highly-contested notion of 'progress', principally in material terms. There is little evidence, thus far, of the fact that the construct of 'progress' is as much a non-material process that culminates in deeper self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-worth. In this latter understanding of the term 'progress', I find that the 'politics of empowerment', in all its different iterations and referents, amounts to little more than 'frozen music'. 'Progress' cannot happen and become more sustainable without self-awareness, creativity, and knowledge. It requires significantly more than productivity and access to public resources.

Considered together, the President in his ideas and politics is both a realist and a 'concessional idealist'. He does have a dream and a vision for this country and all its citizens. He has a depth of insight into the human condition and as a Pan-Africanist, he does think and care about Africa.

The best possible advice to the President comes from one of the key principles of Buddhism. It reads: "Happy is he who has overcome his Ego...Who has attained Peace...Who has found the Truth"
In these, I wish the President well.

André du Pisani

Professor Emeritus, University of Namibia (UNAM) & Chairperson of the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST)

All ideas are my own and do not represent UNAM or the NCRST

Beyond Year 1

On the whole, the President has done well in communicating his Vision, setting national priorities, consulting with various stakeholders, and unifying the nation behind the idea of 'the Namibian House'. However, there is scope for him to improve on the elements of holding his leadership to greater account, continuing to seek cost-cutting measures to make his big government more efficient and limiting the burden on the state purse, and implementing his vision in a way that does not add to the level of bureaucracy. Additionally, all the governance directives (e.g. performance agreements, etc) put in place should be effectively monitored and evaluated to ensure that Ministers and their teams are held fully accountable to their promises, and non-performance should not be tolerated, to ensure enhanced service delivery.

During his 2015 year end Press Conference, President Geingob mapped out his way forward, by stating that 2015 had been a year of careful planning, and that in 2016, the Harambee Prosperity Plan would kick into action. He stated: "Some have accused us of only talking and not implementing. Transformation is a process that first and foremost requires the adoption of a shared strategic vision that speaks to the aspirations of all. A period of planning is thereafter required to design suitable, coordinated and executable interventions that can respond to the complex problems we face and bring us closer to the prosperity promise." In this regard, he also took stock of the consultation that has taken place to date – particularly with respect to the townhall meetings, highlighting that the most "pertinent issues raised include drought and water crisis, potential electricity crisis, land delivery and housing, lack of funds for entrepreneurial activity, weak service delivery at local level and many others."

So, beyond Year 1, and, in fact, for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21, the action Namibians can and should expect is action towards the fulfillment of the Prosperity Promise.

The full details of the Harambee Plan will only be revealed on April 1st, 2016. As such, while it's broad features look good on paper thus far – addressing the key issues contained in Geingob's original election and inaugural promises – it is difficult to comment fully on its merits. Essentially, what will make Geingob's first term in office a success – particularly after a year of planning, is, truly, IMPLEMENTATION.

Geingob has outlined the "broad features of the proposed plan" as presented below:

The proposed name of the plan is "Harambee Towards Prosperity for All". Prosperity is our key promise. We can only move towards prosperity, if we pull together as a united team in the same direction; therefore "Harambee". The Swahili word Harambee has been selected, because it resonates well with the Namibian public. It was chosen as a word that all Namibians speaking different languages could get behind and is consistent with the ideal of "no one should feel left out".

It is an acceleration plan aimed at significantly reducing poverty levels, reducing inequalities and uplifting the living standards of all Namibians. The plan will not replace NDP4. It complements NDP4 and other developmental plans.

Developing a targeted, high impact plan, alongside existing national plans is not unusual or unique. To ensure flexibility and agility, countries around the world have from time to time, needed an additional push in the form of a complementary plan. It became more prominent during the recent global economic crisis, where almost all economies did some additional tweaking, despite having long-term plans.

At this initial stage the plan will be build on four pillars. Under each of the pillars, three to five critical success factors will be addressed. Currently, a total of sixteen critical success factors have been identified and proposed.

The four proposed pillars are:

- Social Development;
- Effective Governance and Service Delivery;
- Economic Development ; and
- Infrastructure Development.

*Source: Geingob, H.G. 2015. End of Year Statement by President Geingob, State House, 15.12.2015.

In terms of providing advice in moving beyond Year 1, "Some Words of Wisdom" from the commentators who contributed to this paper are noted below.

Some Words of Wisdom from the commentators

Andre du Pisani	See my written narrative
Elijah Ngurare	The President must be a President for all in practice. He is over 70 years old, it means his priority should not be how to dress well or how well he speaks the English language. He must showcase wisdom of leadership by planting hope and not fear amongst the populace. In so doing, he must not be a kambayimbayi at night plotting against others and emerge like an angel during the day. This done, it will ensure that there is no room for clique politics and theorising of issues. The President must therefore pay attention to the following: rural areas and informal settlements, genuine youth development and economic empowerment, people living with disabilities, poverty, drought, water shortage, power problem, lack of infrastructure in our schools, and issues of benefi-ciations with regards to our natural resources.

Graham Hopwood	Focus on a set number of goals aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment before 2020.
Gwen Lister	He must believe in himself in the role of President. He has all the skills and acumen to do a good job, but has to shake off defensiveness and looking over his shoulder, and realise that tough decisions and 'doing the right thing' will probably engender unpopularity among his peers but he must be prepared to take this risk and follow through if he wants to make a difference when it comes to realising his main goals of poverty elimination and reducing inequalities in Namibia.
Herbert Jauch	Focus on a few areas where a significant impact can be made. Follow up on your promises, for example on poverty, by implementing concrete and effective programmes.
Job Amupanda	He can be Namibia and Africa's greatest. He should not allow thirsty characters prevent and reduce his potential.
McHenry Venaani	The mastery of power lies in the art of listening: without listening to dissenting voices one cannot consolidate democracy and improve on one's own performance. The President should show greater will to engage dissenting voices – both big and small, both other leaders and ordinary members of the public.
Michael Akuupa	The President should learn to listen more and talk less.
Naita Hishoono	Leaner administration; spend money on the big issues like urban land distribution.
Suta Kavari	I don't think the President needs any words of wisdom from me. The President has a clear resolve and determination that should be given the necessary support.

Commentators' Scorecards

André du Pisani

Professor Emeritus, UNAM, Chairperson: NCRST

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	6/10	Some progress has been made in terms of performance frameworks and the declaration of personal assets. Cabinet, too, works better and makes more informed decisions – witness the shelving of 'Kudu' project.
Economy (incl. national budget)	5.5/10	Very much a holding operation with few innovations, but without compromising elements of macro-economic stability and policy predictability. Some economic fundamentals, however, are out of balance – notably public debt.
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	5/10	In a real sense, too early to score since 'the war on poverty' is multi-layered and medium-to long-term. The grammar of policy is relatively new.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	4/10	Precious few jobs have been created in the economy. Mostly short-term/ cyclical employment rather than productive employment. The civil service continues to grow.
Service Delivery	6/10	Some improvements in a few ministries and agencies, notably the Ministry of Home Affairs.
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	5/10	Overall effectiveness & efficiency fairly low – often very bureaucratic and slow to deliver economic-related services and public safety & security.
Nation-building and national reconciliation	6/10	Under the watch of the President nation-building and national reconciliation continue to be important seams in his bow. Evidence of some stasis in both due to the absence of a moral imagination.
Health	6/10	Some improvement in policy coordination and implementation. Notable success in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections.
Education	5/10	Still under construction, with some evidence that parts of the education system will improve – e.g. Vocational Education & Training.
Combating Corruption	6/10	If international corruption indexes are to be believed, the country has made some progress in the overall index.
Regional and International relations	6/10	Very little new in this realm, but overall, the country enjoys good standing internationally and in the region. There is a need to review policy and to improve strategy.
Land & Housing	5/10	Very little substantive progress, but high-level political commitments and articulations that these social policy domains will receive more focus and resources.
(You may add one more topic here, based on your area of expertise)	5/10	The absence of a moral imagination that can propel the nation and all its citizens forward.

Dr. Elijah Ngurare

Political Commentator

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	5/10	-
Economy (incl. national budget)	5/10	-
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	1/10	-
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	2/10	-
Service Delivery	4/10	-
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	4/10	-
Nation-building and national reconciliation	4/10	-
Health	5/10	-
Education	5/10	-
Combating Corruption	3/10	-
Regional and International relations	6/10	-
Land & Housing	4/10	-

Graham Hopwood

Executive Director, Institute for Public Policy Research

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	8/10	High marks for moving towards a performance-based administration.
Economy (incl. national budget)	6/10	Namibia needs to do more with less. The budget only partly addressed this issue.
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	5/10	The anti-poverty drive has been slow to get off the ground.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	5/10	The private sector appears discouraged by government's indifference to their role as job creators.
Service Delivery	6/10	Performance agreements should help here, but we've only seen limited progress so far.
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	7/10	There needs to be a greater focus on cutting unnecessary expenditure and more controls in place.

Nation-building and national reconciliation	8/10	The Namibian house analogy and 'no one should be left out' slogan has resonated with the general populace.
Health	7/10	The new minister and his top officials appear to be tackling long-standing problems with a fresh vigour.
Education	5/10	No one was expecting instant progress here, but the leadership in both ministries has not inspired confidence that necessary reforms are being introduced.
Combating Corruption	6/10	While the rhetoric may be impressive, action has been lagging behind e.g. MPs' asset declarations.
Regional and International relations	5/10	For a country that has such a strong Constitution and a generally good human rights record, we don't do enough on the international stage to promote such values. And links with North Korea are undermining Namibia's reputation.
Land & Housing	7/10	AR prompted government into action. It may not be all they wanted but plots are being cleared. We just need more houses to be built.

Gwen Lister

Chairperson, Namibia Media Trust

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	-	I would rate Geingob quite highly on this. I don't doubt his commitment to democracy, peace and stability; he is conciliatory in approach to all and not divisive. He also speaks out strongly against tribalism. He is inclusive in that he consistently reinforces birthright, regardless of race or colour etc and emphasises a spirit of belonging.
Economy (incl. national budget)	-	(See comments on poverty eradication).
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	-	A lot has been said about this, but very little done up to now. Poverty was 28.9% he said, when he made his State of the Nation, primarily due to pensions and grants, but the question is by how much has this figure reduced since April 2015? The increase in old age pension was a plus but that was already in the opening days of his first year in office. Despite committing a portion of his salary to poverty alleviation, I sense a lack of direction on poverty eradication in terms of coherent policy – lots of ideas but very little cohesion in approach, if one considers the confusion around the solidarity tax issue, the BIG or no BIG, etc. He promised to reduce the income gap, said we were 'moving in the right direction' – guess that is where the promised solidarity or wealth tax comes in – but nothing to date but confusion around this issue. Harambee is the slogan, but no food bank yet.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	-	See Education.
Service Delivery	-	-
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	-	-

Nation-building and national reconciliation	-	Again, Geingob has been above average in this area of governance. He has said nothing to alienate particular groups, ethnic or social, talks about the 'Namibian house' as one; consistently condemns tribalism, gender-based violence etc., although it is arguable the extent to which government agencies have been effective in dealing with these societal problems.
Health	-	Although Geingob noted in his State of the Nation that the Namibian 'house' cannot be productive unless healthy, no especially significant improvements in access to healthcare, and this doesn't seem to be a big issue on the President's agenda currently.
Education	-	Geingob emphasised the importance of affordable quality education in the eradication of poverty and inequality, but very little has been done in practice to improve the quality of education. It is doubtful whether his promise of free secondary education will reduce unemployment for above reason. He said literacy rate has increased to 90%, some areas even 100% - difficult to confirm unless one has access to the measurements. The promise to expand access to tertiary education through subsidies and grants etc, was challenged by the #feesmustfall demonstrations at both NUST and UNAM in the past months. It remains to be seen whether he will ensure prioritisation of vocational/technical training as a way in which to reduce unemployment.
Combating Corruption	-	The President promised ACC, courts and police to prosecute corruption without fear or favour, but this hasn't happened. Although he has been talking more about this scourge in recent months he is still a corruption denialist in a sense, citing Transparency International's fairly positive rating of Namibia in this regard. He did suspend, albeit temporarily, a few 'deals' which were questionable, overall he hasn't put his money where his mouth is and the Defence Minister's hotel stay was one opportunity for him to take a stand, which didn't happen. He made an attempt to set the standard by declaring his interests, but no Minister, neither the NA (bar the National Council) has as yet done the same and he doesn't seem to want to force the issue. He seems reluctant to tackle this head-on, merely 'encouraging' state and other agencies to prosecute cases of graft etc.
Regional and International relations	-	Geingob has been active and engaged in Africa and further afield, which, if not for the high costs incurred in the process, is a positive. However, Namibia's foreign policy remains mired in confusion and his ICC stance was questionable.
Land & Housing	-	When this issue was squarely placed on the public agenda by the AR, and Geingob immediately stepped in to defuse the situation, this was a positive, but again, progress has been tardy in with regard to providing decent and affordable housing. Again a strong policy guidelines seems to be lacking in this regard and the way forward is not clear.
Media	-	The role of the 'fourth estate', the media, has largely been marginalised by Geingob and treated as a 'necessary evil' despite promises of transparency etc. on his part. This was also evident in his interview with BBC's Hard Talk, where he came across as hostile to questions. He has held 'town hall' meetings all over the country, met with most other Namibian stakeholders, but only recently did he finally meet with editors of print media after nearly a year in office. Although he himself is active in 'social' (online) media, which is a good thing, he is not necessarily interactive on these fora. I would encourage him to develop ongoing relations with all media in the future and recognise their role not only in their importance of holding power to account, but also as critical partners in development.

Herbert Jauch

Labour Researcher and Educator

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	5/10	The President opted for an approach of reaching out through town hall meetings which were very broad and general. Thus it was difficult to focus on key areas and this approach has had little concrete impact so far. The appointment of multiple deputy ministers, advisors and the creation of new ministries was a costly approach that did not result in improved governance.
Economy (incl. national budget)	5/10	There was little significant change in economic policy in the last year. Mass unemployment remained unchanged.
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	5/10	After the promising state of the national address in March 2015, little progress was made in addressing poverty and inequality. No substantial interventions like a Basic Income Grant (BIG) were announced and instead a food bank was proposed which is insufficient and it stigmatises the recipients.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	4/10	No significant intervention was proposed yet and the proposals contained in the national employment policy of 2013 were not yet implemented systematically.
Service Delivery	5/10	Announcements were made regarding improved service delivery but this still has to be shown in reality
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	5/10	Likewise, promises were made but their implementation is still to be effected.
Nation-building and national reconciliation	6/10	Notions of the Namibian house where "nobody should feel left out" have emphasised the importance of inclusivity but this is not reflected in a programme of systematic redistribution in favour of the poor.
Health	5/10	Although the appointment of a new Minister was a promising sign, achieving affordable and quality healthcare for all is still a long way off.
Education	5/10	Likewise, education still faces many challenges before quality education for all can be achieved.
Combating Corruption	5/10	No significant change thus far compared to previous years.
Regional and International relations	6/10	Improved articulation of Namibia's interests and positions.
Land & Housing	6/10	It was a positive step to halt the crisis-riddled mass housing programme but no significant steps were taken yet to redistribute land and to secure adequate housing for all.

Job Shipululo Amupanda

Political Science Lecturer and Deputy Dean at the University of Namibia

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	8/10	As President of the country he does well on democratic governance. As party President it is worrying.



Economy (incl. national budget)	5/10	There is still no clear economic plan. There are signs of financial chaos although not publicly admitted. Let's wait to hear about Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP). It is interesting that HPP will run in parallel with NDP 5.
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	5/10	All we have seen is a declaration of Intent. It is like parents calling you to inform you about what they will buy you during the festive season that is still nine months away.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	4/10	The structure of the economy remains unchanged. The statistics agency had informed us that now there are more than 200,000 youth without jobs. They were forced to withdraw that truth.
Service Delivery	4/10	Everything remains the same as far as service delivery is concerned. Local authorities, one of the key zones of service delivery, are still zones of corruption. The President never gave direction on local authorities. Look at Rehoboth, Windhoek and other towns.
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	5/10	There are good chances and prospects of effective change.
Nation-building and national reconciliation	8/10	The Namibian House narrative has won the hearts and minds of thinking Namibians. The fact that it is subject to critical analysis shows that it has succeeded in entering the psyche of Namibians.
Health	4/10	There has been no clear direction on health. The status quo remains. The only thing we notice in health is the change in the leadership of the ministry. I am still to learn about the President's perspective on the health sector and direction going forward.
Education	7/10	Free primary and free secondary education has been implemented. On tertiary education, the president spoke about converting loans into grants. There are a lot of things taking place in the higher education sector.
Combating Corruption	3/10	Corruption is on 'Super-Aweh'. Xaris is a nickname for corruption. Kudu is the same. Fuel storage is the same, so is the Airport tender. These are billion dollar projects. The President comes across as reactive not proactive. He is often silent on corruption involving those close to him. The youth, through AR, made Minister ya Ndakolo pay back the money. Perhaps that is the correct path to take.
Regional and International relations	7/10	If there is an underlined strategy to his approach then he is doing exceptionally well. He did not rock the boat and performed excellently on multi-lateral platforms such as the UN, AU and SADC. He performed poorly in that interview with BBC. But I am still hopeful. Perhaps we must assist him to develop a foreign policy strategy. I don't think he will be opposed to it.
Land & Housing	8/10	There are good prospects. Land and Housing has the potential to make the President and Namibia an African success story.
Political Strategy	6/10	It would appear that the President applies two strategies to deal with one matter. For example, he would advise parliament to discuss the parliament building but his executives (also in parliament) block that very discussion. There are many similar examples of material contradiction. This strategy is not sustainable and if he is not careful people may switch off.

Hon. McHenry Venaani, MP

President of the DTA of Namibia / Leader of the Official Opposition

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	6/10	Perpetual refusal to meet and engage with opposition leaders - a surprising practice by a seasoned democrat. Positively: greater attempts at more direct engagement and consultations with broader public. I am encouraged by increased transparency and the constant communication in and with the media.
Economy (incl. national budget)	5/10	Budgetary projections of last year's budget and this year's one are far apart. There was a need to table a mid-year adjustment to the Appropriation Bill due to over-spending, despite fewer revenue streams.
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	5/10	Though it has been placed high on the agenda, which is a good thing, we are yet to see a clear policy and vision, aside from the proposed food banks.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	3/10	No discernable change and clear policy framework.
Service Delivery	7/10	The President must be applauded for introducing the Ministerial Performance Contracts. Some targets set by certain ministers though were very unambitious.
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	5/10	The change in introducing performance contracts is a good one. Yet to see a clear improvement in delivery (except Ministry of Home Affairs) or what the results will be. Time will tell.
Nation-building and national reconciliation	5/10	The 'Namibian Home' ideology is positive and seeks to foster unity and a common goal for all inhabitants of the home. The refusal to engage the SWATF leaders directly may pose serious threats for national reconciliation and nation building and perhaps even a security threat if not dealt with swiftly.
Health	4/10	No clear improvement in delivery and the controversial procurement of ARVs from Uganda without following the relevant procedure is worrying.
Education	5/10	Positive: Introduction of free secondary education. Negative: High matric failure rate and lack of clear policy and framework for vocational/artisan skills and schools development.
Combating Corruption	2/10	He is mute on GIPF Investigations and lack of auditing of the books of August 26.
Regional and International relations	7/10	The President must be commended for really reaching out in his first year of office and pushing Namibia's international agenda.
Land & Housing	6/10	The President's engagement of AR Leaders and the subsequent launching of the National Land Servicing Campaign was a bold move. The implementation of the mass servicing initiative remains unclear though.
Land Reform and Agriculture	5/10	No clear initiatives to modernise agriculture and ensure better food security. Also, the land reform issue is not being speedily dealt with.

Dr. Michael Akuupa

Educator and Researcher

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	5/10	-
Economy (incl. national budget)	5/10	-
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	4/10	Poverty cannot be eradicated. It may only be reduced.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	2/10	The job creation drive is very slow. In fact job creation should not be in the Ministry of Labour but may be the responsibility of an SOE.
Service Delivery	5/10	-
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	5/10	-
Nation-building and national reconciliation	3/10	-
Health	4/10	-
Education	3/10	-
Combating Corruption	2/10	He is not dealing effectively with tender irregularities in the country. (Xaris, International airport upgrade)
Regional and International relations	6/10	-
Land & Housing	2/10	-

Naita Hishoono

Executive Director, Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	3/10	-
Economy (incl. national budget)	2/10	-
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	2/10	-
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	2/10	-
Service Delivery	3/10	-
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	3/10	-
Nation-building and national reconciliation	5/10	-

Health	5/10	-
Education	3/10	-
Combating Corruption	1/10	-
Regional and International relations	4/10	-
Land & Housing	2/10	-
Effort to bring Civic Education Into Namibian Schools	0/10	-

Suta Kavari

Vice Chairperson, Economic Association of Namibian

Topic	Score	Comments, if any
Overall (democratic) governance	8/10	The President fares well when it comes to governance issues. There appears to be a clear separation of powers between the executive and legislature, if one takes the President's comments regarding the construction of the new Parliament building as an example when he referred it to Parliament. There hasn't been the sort of 'state-capture' of key government organs on the level that we have been seeing in South Africa, and I think that is something that should be commended.
Economy (incl. national budget)	6/10	What is happening in the global economy has a significant impact on the domestic economy, and is to some extent outside the scope of fiscal policy. But our fiscal policy has been largely reactionary due to years of overspending and banking on the good times. The government has no fiscal room to respond to an adverse downturn in the domestic economy without having to significantly breach debt levels and risk a credit ratings downgrade. The fiscal consolidation announced in the last budget was a welcome measure and a good step in reducing overall government. While not going far enough, it was the right approach in admitting that government cannot afford to spend money that it doesn't have. Spending should be earmarked for priority areas, and non-essential capital expenditure should be reduced. Careful management is needed to guide the economy through the current headwinds. We have the right people. That's a plus.
Poverty Eradication & Addressing Inequality	5/10	The President's energy in this fight is a welcome breath of fresh air, but the focus should rather be on poverty alleviation that is more attainable in our lifetime. While energy and attention hasn't really translated into tangible policies and how the fight will be tackled, initiatives from the Ministry for Poverty Eradication have not necessarily translated into much. But development policies and activities take much longer to attain their goals and objectives are taken in a sustainable development context. In that regard and given that poverty eradication is the President's marquee policy, time, room and the necessary resources should be given to policymakers in formulating coherent policies that seek to alleviate poverty in a sustainable development and not necessarily just improve on the Gini coefficient. We can have the best policies, but implementation is key.
Job creation (addressing unemployment)	5/10	Not a lot of attention, or policy proposals, have been given to job creation. But then again job creation is difficult to evaluate because it is difficult to measure.



Service Delivery	8/10	We can count ourselves lucky that we have access to (and there is no disruption in the distribution of) basic resources like water, electricity, and sanitation infrastructure.
Effectiveness & Efficiency in Government Structures	5/10	-
Nation-building and national reconciliation	6/10	-
Health	6/10	-
Education	6/10	-
Combating Corruption	5/10	-
Regional and International relations	7/10	-
Land & Housing	5/10	There is a housing crisis in Windhoek and certain parts of the country. The undoubted fact is that demand has far outstripped supply. The biggest issue lies with the servicing of land, and municipalities exacerbate the problem. To tackle this crisis, municipalities' capabilities to service land should be enhanced and the process speeded up. The President's response to the crisis and the AR demands spoke volumes, as did the emphasis on urban land servicing alongside the mass housing programme.

A Year in the Life of the President

Date	Event
21.03.2015	Geingob is inaugurated as the 3rd President of the Republic of Namibia. His inaugural speech is recognised as timely, unifying and setting objectives incredibly relevant for the Namibian context. He also outlines the 'Namibian House' vision in which 'no Namibian must feel left out'.
31.03.2015	Geingob holds his 1st Cabinet Meeting as President. At that meeting, he makes the first mention of an increase in the old age pension from N\$600 to N\$ 1,000. Later that day, during his budget speech, Finance Minister, Calle Schlettwein announces the pension increase, and sets out a budget that prioritises inclusive growth, poverty reduction, wealth distribution and service delivery.
02.04.2015	Geingob allows Marina Kandumbu into Parliament, despite the corruption charges against her. Notes that this is for the sake of 'inclusivity', but it sets a negative precedent for dealing with corrupt government officials.
10.04.2015	Geingob appoints the 14 Regional Governors. He issues them with terms of reference for their role as Governors, Appointment of Governors. (Governors issued with terms of reference of which they must abide)
17.04.2015	Geingob makes his first foreign trip as President, by making his first State Visit to Angola.
29.04.2015	Geingob attends the Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government.
20.05.2015	Geingob and First Lady Monica Geingos declare their assets. Their combined worth is reported as being around N\$111 million.
22.05.2015	President Geingob visits Tsumkwe in the Otjozondjupa Region. In his speech, he notes that following his declaration of all-out war on poverty on his inauguration, "I put a moratorium on foreign travel for Cabinet Ministers, stating that I want them to first familiarize themselves with the situation on the domestic stage so that they can become informed about all the relevant areas that need addressing by their respective ministries before they travel abroad and seek the necessary assistance and measures to address these issues."
30.05.2015	Deadline for Declarations of Intent from Ministers. Geingob publicly names those who haven't submitted their declarations on time.
14.06.2015	The African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government takes place in Johannesburg, South Africa. Geingob doesn't make a speech on the occasion, but issues a Press statement of his prepared speech, in which he launches a scathing critique on the International Criminal Court, saying "Some people are saying we are the ones who created the ICC. However, when one creates something to be an asset but later on it becomes an abomination, you have right to quit it since it has ceased serving its intended purpose," cautioning that "the International Criminal Court (ICC) must stay out of Kenya's domestic affairs."
28.06.2015	President Geingob marks his 100th day in office. He holds a Press Conference to highlight his achievements to date, and uses the opportunity to announce his Presidential advisors, whom he dubs 'the A-Team'.
24.07.2015	Geingob meets with members of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement to discuss the urban housing crisis, a week "ahead of the 31 July deadline that had been set by the land movement for the government to make available urban land for housing." The Namibian reports that "The government has struck a deal with Affirmative Repositioning movement leader Job Amupanda and has undertaken to embark on a programme to service 200 000 plots of urban land countrywide, starting next week." (Immanuel, 24.07.2015)
14.08.2015	Geingob launches the National Dialogue on Wealth Distribution and Poverty Eradication. Amongst other things, he announces that "Government is at an advanced stage of establishing a national Food Bank, with headquarters in Windhoek, and branches countrywide. The Food Bank will provide food and basic items to ensure that we are able to bring dignity to all our people. This is not promoting a culture of handouts, but a necessary intervention to assist the most vulnerable members of the Namibian House to have at least one nutritious meal a day."

17.08.2015	Geingob delivers his Maiden Statement at the 35th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, in Gaborone, Botswana.
18.09.2015	Geingob receives African Political Leader of the Year Award at the 7th African Leadership Summit in Washington DC.
22.09.2015	Geingob meets with Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations-Secretary General at the UN, and “recruit(s) him in the Namibian War Against Poverty.”
22.09.2015	Fordham University confers an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters on Geingob
25.09.2015	Geingob delivers Statement on “Ending Poverty and Hunger,” at a sideline event during the United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda .
29.09.2015	Geingob attends 70th United Nations General Assembly Debate, where he says he “outlined our achievements in nation building, and used the platform to inform the International Community on our various developmental initiatives such as the war against Poverty and Hunger, mitigating the effects of Climate Change, Gender Equality, our position on Palestine and Saharawi Democratic Republic, the African Union’s position on the United Nation reform, and our involvement in maintaining International Peace and Security”.
04.11.2015	The Namibian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) hosts a dinner in President Geingob’a honour.
06.11.2015	Geingob opens the Strand Hotel in Swakopmund, taking stock of various elements in the national economy while engaging private sector players. He states, “There have been several experts that have warned us not be reckless in our pursuit of economic transformation. Let me reassure all of you that we have been very careful in formulating these policies. It is best to wait until our plans unfold before adopting any alarmist responses. Currently our debt stock stands at 25-30% of GDP. Experts agree that it is safe to take it up to 46%. However, for us 35% is the ceiling and we don’t intend to go beyond that.”
12.11.2015	President Geingob is the keynote speaker at the inauguration of the Southern African Customs Union Headquarters Building in Windhoek.
30.11.2015	Asset declaration of Members of Parliament completed, but the register of their assets is not availed to the public.
05.12.2015	Geingob attends and delivers statement at the opening ceremony of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. There, he states that “In Namibia and in Africa, we value the special relations we share with China. FOCAC is the ideal platform for us to build upon those relations for the purpose of mutual benefit. We therefore look forward to engaging with the Chinese people to discuss further cooperation and investment. Similarly, we thank our host for providing us with this opportunity. So as we deliberate on our future, we say long live the friendship between Africa and the People’s Republic of China. Long live FOCAC.”
31.12.2015	Geingob issues New Year message on NBC TV in which he highlights aspirations for the following year, stating: “Namibians can look forward to a year where Government preoccupies itself with removing economic and social obstacles, which prevent Namibians from fulfilling their full potential. As a nation and as individuals, we must allow ourselves to be ambitious, we must allow ourselves to dream but most importantly, we must live our dreams. My dream is to deliver on the prosperity promise through an efficient, transparent and accountable Government.”
15.01.2016	Geingob opens the Consultative Summit of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State on the Reform of the United National Security Council (UNSC) in Windhoek, and highlights a number of important concerns on the position of the security council. He states: “The present position of the Security Council does not reflect the broader principle of equitable geographical representation. This is neither representative nor democratic. It is imperative that the Security Council be enlarged to reflect the present day geo-political realities. This will enhance its democratic credentials and give legitimacy to its work. In this context, Namibia reiterates the call of the Africa Union for the comprehensive reform of the Security Council, to make it more democratic, transparent and ipso facto serve humanity better.”
31.01.2016	Geingob attends the 26th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



02.02.2016	Geingob holds his first Cabinet meeting of 2016, and on the governance front, highlights elements of his Prosperity Plan, stating that “one of the sub-pillars of our Harambee Prosperity Plan will be to strengthen and enhance performance management across all levels of Government by ensuring that performance contracts are reviewed on a regular basis, and by refining performance targets to be measurable, attainable and realistic.” He also reemphasises that 2016 will be a year of implementations, stating, “come the first of April, we will introduce the “three I’s” to use the words of Mr Ban Ki Moon to effect change, namely Implementation, Institution Building and Investment.”
04.02.2016	Geingob opens the 2016 Legal Year, encouraging the legal fraternity to speed up trials. He says “I have also declared 2016 as the year of implementation. I think you will agree with me that when you promise speedy trials and improvement in the area of timely delivery of judgements, you understand the importance of putting in place mechanisms that will ensure that you deliver on your promises.
09.02.2016	Geingob opens 3rd session of the 6th Parliament, and in his speech, stresses the need to implement during this year, points out that the Harambee Prosperity Plan will be introduced at the next state of the nation address, and reassures parliament and the nation that the Namibian economy is thriving. He says “Unlike what some wanted to portray, the Namibian Government is not broke. To the contrary, we are a credit worthy Nation and the long-term outlook for Namibia is positive.”
08.03.2016	Geingob holds 1st Presidential Advisory Council meeting with former presidents Sam Nujoma and Hifikepunye Pohamba, where he presents the Harambee Prosperity Plan to his predecessors, noting that the Plan “will be an acceleration or impact plan aimed at significantly reducing poverty levels, reducing inequalities and uplifting the living standards of all Namibians. It will not, as I noted before, replace NDP4.”



About the Author

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About Democracy Report

Democracy Report is a project of the IPPR which analyses and disseminates information relating to the legislative agenda of Namibia's Parliament. The project aims to promote public participation in debates concerning the work of Parliament by publishing regular analyses of legislation and other issues before the National Assembly and the National Council. Democracy Report is funded by the Embassy of Finland.

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