

WELCOMING REMARKS BY HIS LORDSHIP, JUSTICE PETER S. SHIVUTE, CHIEF JUSTICE OF NAMIBIA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL VISIT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. RUBÉN REMIGIO FERRO, PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S SUPREME COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

SUPREME COURT, WINDHOEK, 11 SEPTEMBER 2024

Salutations

1. It is with great honor and privilege that we gather here today to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency, Dr. Ruben Remigio Ferro, and his esteemed delegation, Judge Pedro Medina Guitérrez. Your visit, Your Excellency, marks a significant moment in the strengthening of the close relationship between the judiciaries of Namibia and Cuba.
2. Allow me to begin by reflecting on the longstanding friendship between our two nations. Namibia and Cuba share a deep and abiding connection that transcends mere diplomacy. It is rooted in the solidarity and sacrifices made by the Cuban people during Namibia's long and difficult struggle for Independence.

During those crucial years, Cuba stood firmly by Namibia's side, offering support not only in words but through action, as many Cuban soldiers and professionals served in Namibia's liberation movement. Their contribution is forever etched in our national history, and to this day, we continue to cherish the bonds of friendship that were forged in those challenging times.

3. This enduring friendship has flourished not only within the Executive and Legislature but also in the realm of judicial cooperation. Our collaboration, formalised in 2016 through a Protocol of Cooperation between our respective judiciaries, stands as a testament to the importance of mutual learning and the exchange of ideas. It is a reflection of the values we share and the commitment both of our countries have to the rule of law and justice.
4. The purpose of this protocol is to foster the sharing of best practices and expertise between the judiciaries of Cuba and Namibia. Through this, we have sought to strengthen our

respective legal systems, and your visit, Your Excellency, speaks directly to the goals we established eight years ago. Today, as we stand here, we reaffirm our dedication to deepening these bonds, knowing that through cooperation, we can advance our legal systems to better serve our people.

5. During your stay here, we will have the opportunity to discuss various matters of mutual interest and contemporary challenges, such as the harnessing of technology to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of our judicial systems. As we live in a world that is increasingly reliant on technology, it becomes imperative that our legal institutions adapt and evolve. By embracing technological innovations, we can streamline judicial processes, making them more accessible to the public and improving the efficiency of case management. This will, in turn, contribute to the timely administration of justice, which is a cornerstone of any well-functioning society.

6. We eagerly anticipate the insights and perspectives that Your Excellency will bring to these discussions. Despite the differences in our legal systems, Your Excellency's vast experience, particularly within the Cuban legal framework, provides invaluable insights for us here in Namibia. We know that the Cuban judiciary, which last year celebrated the 50th anniversary of its People's Court System, is a model of resilience and dedication to upholding the rights and freedoms of its citizens. The reforms and innovations that have been implemented in Cuba over the years have ensured that justice remains accessible and equitable for all, and there is much we can learn from your experiences.

7. It is with great excitement that we also look forward to the master lecture Your Excellency will be delivering to our judicial officers, legal practitioners and judges' research assistants. This lecture, will provide us with insights into how the Cuban judiciary operates and the lessons Namibia can draw from Cuba's 50 years of experience in building a robust and people-

centered legal system. The knowledge shared during this lecture will undoubtedly contribute to the professional growth of our judicial officers and enrich our own legal framework.

8. In closing, Your Excellency, I wish to express our deepest gratitude to you and your delegation for accepting our humble invitation. Your presence here today strengthens the ties between our two judiciaries and reaffirms our commitment to continuing this partnership in the years to come. I sincerely hope that your stay in Namibia will be pleasant, and that you will have the opportunity to experience the warm hospitality of our people, as well as the beauty of our diverse landscapes and magnificent wildlife.

9. May the bonds between Namibia and Cuba, and between our respective judiciaries, continue to grow stronger with each passing year.

Bienvenido y gracias (welcome and thank you).