



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE ROSALIA NGHIDINWA, MP

MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION

OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**DURING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1951 CONVENTION
RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES AND THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1961 CONVENTION ON STATELESSNESS**

08 NOVEMBER 2011 AM

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Mr Chairperson,
Your Excellency the High Commissioner,
Distinguished delegates

Namibia welcomes the opportunity to be among the other Member States to commemorate the anniversaries of the 1951 and 1961 Conventions. My delegation commends your continued commitment to alleviate the plight of refugees and other persons of concern. Namibia aligns herself with the statement delivered by Lesotho on behalf of the African Group.

Mr Chairman,

The 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and 50th Anniversary of the 1961 Convention on Statelessness takes place at the backdrop of political upheaval and crisis in a number of countries around the globe. Consequently, thousands of these people have become refugees and or stateless due to the political situations and fear of persecutions in their countries of origin.

On this occasion, my delegation welcomes the opportunity to report on the position of possible accession to the two Conventions on Statelessness to which Namibia is not yet a State party and the reservations on the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

Mr. Chairman,

Namibia in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Office organised a preparatory meeting on 07 November 2011, attended by senior Government officials Parliamentarians and other UN Agencies. During the meeting, reasons for people becoming stateless, their plights and the strategies to address and mitigate the problems faced by stateless people were well articulated.

As part of the strategies of addressing the problems of stateless people and reducing the phenomenon of statelessness, my delegation pledges that the Namibian Government will carry out awareness campaigns on statelessness and to educate the Government machinery and the general public on matters of statelessness. Namibia will further improve birth registration from the current percentage of 67% taking cognisance of the fact that poor birth registration could attribute to statelessness. My delegation further pledges to increase registration points in the country, by opening more registration centres in the regions, cities and towns to enable all migrants entering the country to be registered in order to determine their origin.

Mr Chairman,

During the interactive dialogue session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in January 2011, a total of 120 recommendations were made of which 117 were accepted and three were rejected. Among the three rejected recommendations was the removal of the reservation of Article 26 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Namibia is not yet in a position to remove that reservation.

During the final adoption of the report in June 2011, the Namibian delegation has indicated that she was not yet ready to accede to the two Conventions on Statelessness. Namibia follows a monist approach with regards to International Instruments. In the light of the implications thereof, Namibia deems it essential to do a thorough study of the international Instruments to ensure that her domestic laws are harmonized first, to allow the laws to conform to the requirements of the international Instruments before signing and ratifying them.

Mr Chairman,

Although Namibia is not yet a State party to the Conventions on Statelessness, my delegation is pleased to inform that Namibia adheres to International norms and standards when it comes to the treatment of stateless persons and refugees. Equally, the Namibian Constitution also prohibits any form of discrimination.

Mr. Chairman

Despite all the efforts being made by the Government and people of Namibia to address statelessness and refugee situations in Namibia, the country still requires support from the International community in terms of human and material resources. In conclusion, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank UNHCR for organising this forum in its effort to find durable solutions to the problems of refugees and statelessness.

I thank you.