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**Speech at the PDM Electoral College by Hon. McHenry
Venaani**
Windhoek, 28th September 2019

**Vice President, Rev Jennifer van den Heever,
National Chairperson, Ricky Vries
Treasurer General, Hon Nico Smit
Secretary General, Manuel Ngaringombe
All Members of Parliament
All Members of the Central Committee
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am honoured to welcome you all to the Electoral College of the Popular Democratic Movement, as we vote for a list of candidates that will represent our movement in the National Assembly next year.

We are living in profound political times and there can be no doubting in these times that every vote matters, every voice counts.

Our Republic has never been more in need of change that brings betterment to all our citizens.

It's not just during election year that ordinary Namibians talk about development reaching all corners of our Republic. It is not just during an election year that our people are crying for jobs, economic development and an end to corrupt activities.

Talking about future matters and engaging our young people in conversations about politics and how it impacts them is as important as going out to cast our votes.

Early this week we adopted our national movement's manifesto called '**Strategy Namibia: Agenda for Change and Transforming the Nation**'. It is a document reflecting the

values, strategies and ethos that the PDM will deploy in the fight to push back against ever-increasing poverty and create that better future.

Talking about competence and efficiency, the purpose of us converging here is to hold our Electoral College, which will nominate capable individuals who are going to parliament.

In democratic countries such as ours, Parliament plays a very important role. Parliament members are elected to represent the people of the country. They also act as the voice of the people. Parliament, therefore, is accountable to the people of Namibia.

I urge all of us to vote for candidates of the highest quality, who will implement the commitments set out in the manifesto on behalf of all Namibians.

Candidates who have the abilities to lead and bring about change. Change, not only for those we like. It is not about selective opportunities for our children. Change is not about dishing out tenders to our friends and family members. Change is not for ourselves, but for everyone who calls this Republic home.

Leaders aren't born, they're made. Their qualities are the result of experiences which have shaped them and we have capable leaders with us here today. It isn't only the qualities of leaders that matter but also the people from whom they come and who hold them to account. That vital balance is what has often gone missing on the continent.

Ultimately, our candidates should be individuals who will nurture others and represent them to the best of their

abilities. They must possess clear vision, should be courageous, have integrity, honesty, humility and clear focus. In addition, they should also be strategic planners who believe in teamwork.

Worldwide, many parliamentarians are struggling to meet the growing expectations of citizens. Data suggests that citizens hold parliamentarians to account principally for the services that they are able to deliver outside parliament, not for their law-making role or their ability to oversee the executive.

‘Constituency service’ is the general term for what parliamentarians do to serve and represent the interests of their constituents.

Much has been said about Swapo’s two-thirds majority, and how voters have been fooled every five years, while the ruling party gobbles up State resources, to the benefit of the few. There have been no solutions to our pressing problems, only relentless looting. Our commitment is to the people of Namibia, not to a few Harambee loyalists, who are eyeing the looting of an already bare national fiscus.

We need to stand together now, or all our futures will be compromised even further and destroyed. We need to stand together and build an alternative in the interest of all Namibians. History lessons cannot fill the stomachs of our people. Looking back cannot take us forward.

As we speak, overall unemployment still stands at 37% while youth unemployed is at 43.4%, yet we have various ministries

returning money back to Treasury despite a worsening poverty crisis in the country.

As the PDM, we want all Namibians to know that together we can put an end to Swapo privilege and elitism, where you can only receive if you support a certain faction within the ruling party. Namibia is for all, not just a few comrades who tell the president what they think he wants to hear, while stuffing their own pockets with deals that mean nothing for the majority.

Today we say: Enough is enough!

Let us walk that road together to restore the dignity of all Namibians!

Let us not cry after the 2019 elections that Swapo is still robbing us. Let us not cry that the rich are getting richer, while we have no jobs so we can feed our children. Let us not cry because our votes have been wasted to send convicted Swapo criminals to parliament! The time is now. We can make that change. We can build a true government of the people together!