



Parliament

Journal





The Speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab with Hon Asser Kapere, Chairperson of the National Council, and Rt Hon. PM Dr. Hage Geingob and Chief Justice Peter Shivute.

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President Pohamba flanked on the right by Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab and on the left by Hon. Asser Kapere.

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From the Editor

Investment in e-Parliaments essential for development of democracy

Ending the digital divide among and within countries and investing in the necessary infrastructure is essential to the development of democracy, a global conference on e-Parliaments has highlighted.

The World e-Parliament Conference has shown that whilst a commitment by national parliaments to use e-technology to become more open, transparent and accountable to their citizens is being increasingly implemented, not all parliaments are able to progress in the same way or at the same pace. A lack of technological infrastructure as well as human and financial resources remain the main obstacles.

The three-day conference jointly organised by the South Korean National Assembly and IPU in Seoul concluded on 10th May with a call for a greater level of cooperation between parliaments and support to the legislative bodies to help bridge the divide.

Bringing together MPs and parliamentary staff from 90 countries, the conference nevertheless acknowledged the significant progress made on using new technology, including social media networks, to engage citizens in the work of parliament and to better connect them to their elected representatives.

Initiatives included inter-active communication between citizens and their MPs that abolished barriers of distance and geography, the ability of citizens to propose and comment on draft legislation and a push to make parliamentary data open and accessible online.

Whilst the development of e-parliaments is empowering citizens and parliaments alike and leading to more transparent politics, it is also resulting in new challenges and barriers. MPs in particular highlighted the need for digital privacy and a clearer definition on boundaries between privacy and open data.

Despite the emergence of new trends in digital communications in recent years, participants stressed access to new technologies as a key determinant of a successful e-Parliament and strong, participatory democracy. (Source: IPU News Release)

PRESIDENT POHAMBA OPENS PARLIAMENT

• Michael Muuondjo

President Pohamba opened the Ninth Session of the Fifth Parliament on February 11, 2014 in Windhoek under the theme “Promoting Oversight Effectiveness Towards Ensuring Transparent National Budgeting Administration”.

According to the President, the theme is relevant and timely as the nation continues to seek ways and means to manage public resources more efficiently, implement national development projects more effectively and to bring about positive and tangible improvements in the lives of the citizens through targeted interventions.

Pohamba further said, one of the most important tools in the implementation and realisation of government programmes is the budget. It is, therefore, vital that there are adequate mechanisms to

ensure transparent and accountable administration and utilisation of public resources that are allocated to various public institutions through the Appropriation Bill every Financial Year. It is of paramount importance that the resources allocated are utilised for the intended purposes.

It is also important that transparency and accountability are reinforced at all levels of governance and at all times. This is the only way to build and maintain strong and accountable public institutions with the requisite capacity to carry out their respective mandates.

“In the spirit of the principles of the separation of powers, Parliament is constitutionally entrusted with an oversight function over the activities of the executive branch of the State. This is a crucial cornerstone of our constitutional democracy. Over the years, our Parliament has carried out its oversight and accountability functions through the work of the Public Accounts Committee and other

measures,” stressed Pohamba.

“Last year, the Public Accounts Committee hosted the first ever National Accountability Institutions Conference under the theme: *Working Towards Coordinated Strategies in Strengthening the Accountability Process in Namibia*. This was the first time that both Houses of Parliament came together to strategise about accountability in governance. These are welcome initiatives in promoting good governance and consolidating the capacity of our institutions to ensure transparency and accountability,” he acknowledged.

“The challenge facing our nation now is the disturbing trend in our society of violence against Namibian women, by Namibian men. It is, indeed, sad and tragic that hardly a day goes by without reports of brutal acts of violence and killings of women and children at the hands of men. In the face of this epidemic of violence, many of our citizens are appealing to the Government to find ways and means to stop the killing of women in our country,” Pohamba said.

“I believe that our society needs to carry out a deep introspection and reflection in order to get to the root causes of such evil and cruel deeds. We need to look at ourselves as a nation and identify the causes of such destructive behaviour that has no respect and no regard for human life,” he emphasised.

Pohamba further said this demands deliberate and concerted action by all of us, including Government, churches, community-based organisations, community leaders, education authorities, Traditional Leaders and parents.

He called upon parents and guardians to teach children, from a very young age, the values of self-respect and respect for others by teaching them to be law-abiding citizens with empathy and love for themselves and their fellow human beings, since violence is not acceptable.

“The inculcation of these values must start at home and extend to school where our youth are moulded to become responsible adults. My appeal to Namibian men is that the



President Pohamba and the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab.



Members of the Namibian Defence Force parading in front of the Parliament Building during the Official Opening of Parliament.

violence must stop. The killings must come to an end," he stressed.

The President also called upon the criminal justice system to ensure that anyone who perpetrates a violent crime faces the full wrath of the law. "The full measure of the law must be brought down forcefully on all those who disregard other human beings. Justice must not only be done, it

must be seen to be done. Those who engage in such heinous acts deserve no mercy. Let us work together as a nation to root out the evil of violence against women and children from our society," he emphasised.

The President wished all the lawmakers a productive 9th Session of Parliament and expressed confidence that they will do their utmost to serve

the people whom they represent as their elected representatives.

"I call upon our Members of Parliament to spread awareness and encourage all eligible Namibians to register as voters during the ongoing registration of voters. Only persons who are registered as voters will be able to participate in the forthcoming elections," he concluded.

PRESIDENT POHAMBA'S LAST STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

- Michael Muondjo

Article 32 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia provides that the President of the Republic shall attend Parliament each year during the consideration of the official budget. During such session the President shall address Parliament on the state of the nation and answer questions posed by the opposition leaders. Therefore, President Pohamba whose term is coming to an end on 21 March 2015 delivered his last State of the Nation Address in the National Assembly

chamber on 28 March 2014.

The State of the Nation Address highlighted government's achievements and challenges during the 2013/2014 Financial Year, in addition to some of the major policy interventions that government would carry out in the new Financial Year.

Pohamba said the current financial year saw our country continuing to enjoy peace and stability, as we have done, since the attainment of our national independence. The institutions of the State have continued to function and to fulfill their constitutional roles, thereby making it possible for our

people to enjoy their fundamental human rights and basic freedoms.

In the policy arena, the nation has made encouraging strides in various aspects of public administration, service delivery, economic growth, employment creation, poverty alleviation and the empowerment of communities to pursue better and more rewarding lives. Through initiatives such as the Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment Creation and Economic Growth (TIPEEG), Government was able to stimulate the creation of thousands of both permanent and temporary jobs in different sectors of the economy.

"We are proud that over the last twelve months, Namibia has received several international accolades and favourable economic ratings for the good work our country is doing in

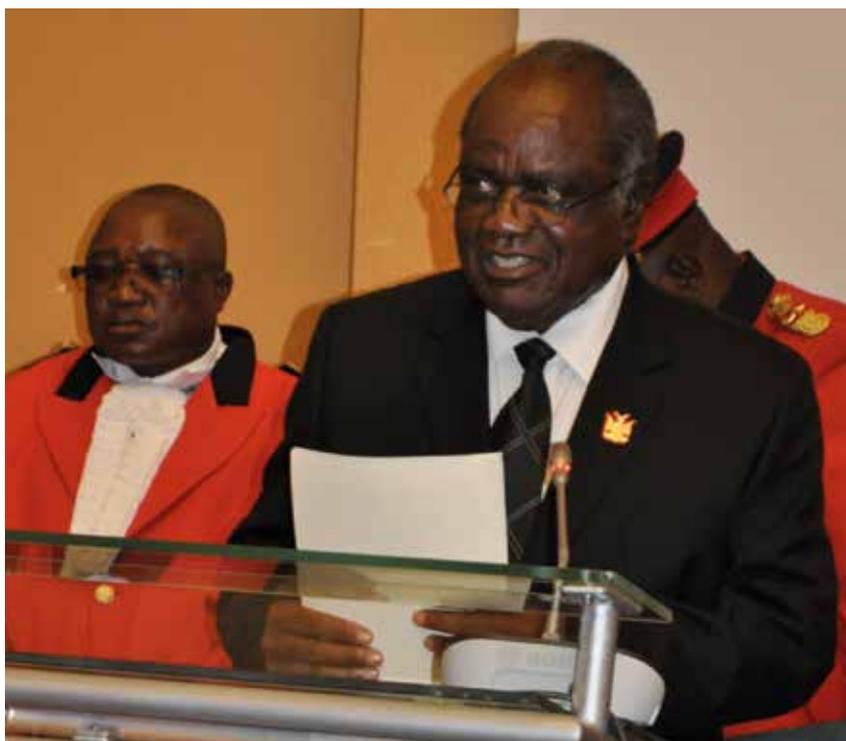
the areas of media freedom, economic performance, and sound macro-economic management. Other successes were recorded in the fight against malaria and combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, including the reduction in Mother-to-Child Transmission of the virus," he noted.

Pohamba further indicated that Namibia's macro-economic environment continued to be stable over the reporting period. This resulted in improved economic growth and increased development and investment in different sectors. Since 2010, the economy has shown sustained growth rates averaging above 5 per cent per year.

"The purpose of the civil service is to deliver quality services to the public. The culture of effective and efficient service delivery must therefore permeate the whole system. That is what the public expects at all times in its interactions with Government. Furthermore, the civil service is the engine driving the execution of policies and programmes. Without a competent, professional and efficient civil service, Government will not be able to deliver. I wish to emphasise the urgent need for all Offices, Ministries and Agencies, and Regional Councils to improve service delivery at all levels", he stressed.

He urged the Accounting Officers, Chief Regional Officers and Chief Executive Officers of Local Authorities to ensure the finalisation and speedy implementation of Strategic Plans in all institutions and by all staff members, during the new Financial Year, without exception. Those who do not carry out their duties or comply with Public Service Rules must be dealt with sternly.

The President maintained that Namibia's commitment to gender equality is unquestionable. Namibia adopted domestic policies and acceded to regional and international treaties and protocols, such as the SADC Protocol on Gender, which calls for 50/50 representation of women in decision-making positions. "We believe that by implementing these commitments, and by empowering more Namibian women to participate



President Pohamba delivering the State of the Nation Address.

in decision-making processes and leadership roles, we will unlock immense energy and potential for the development of our nation," he said.

"The nation condemns all forms of gender-based violence and other criminal acts, which have been perpetrated against Namibian women and children. I wish to state again that the Government will continue to combat this evil relentlessly, including through the implementation of measures that I announced to the Nation on 21st February this year," he said. He commended the nation for joining hands in condemning gender-based violence, and for speaking with one voice during the National Day of Prayer against this evil, which took place on 6th March 2014.

The President stated that education is the foundation for our country's socio-economic development and prosperity. It is through education that we will unlock the full potential of our people and enable them to contribute to the social and economic development of the nation. We will continue to plan and make the necessary investments in order to modernise the sector, and make it more responsive to the socio-economic and development needs of

our country. The year 2013 saw the introduction of the Inclusive Education Policy, which will regulate and guide the inclusion of all Namibian children in teaching and learning activities.

"Since the abolition of the payment of school development fees in public schools in 2012, enrolment figures at pre-primary and primary school levels have increased significantly. At pre-primary school level, enrolment increased from under 15,000 learners in 2012, to more than 24,000 in 2013. Similarly, Grade one enrolment increased from under 66,000 to more than 74,000 learners in 2013. From 2016, the payment of school development fees will be abolished at the secondary school level. The current school curriculum will be reviewed during the 2014/2015 Financial Year. Panels of experts will participate in the preparation of content, as well as teaching and learning materials of various subjects. The revised curriculum will be implemented through a phased-in process, starting in 2015," he noted.

"Despite challenges, our education sector has won international recognition. Last year, Namibia was awarded the 2013 UNESCO

International Literacy Prize for our efforts in improving the quality of life of disadvantaged adults and out-of-school youth," he said.

"Our Government remains committed to ensuring that our nation has access to a working, reliable, affordable and accessible public health care and service delivery system. We are, therefore, sustaining substantial public investments in health infrastructure, training of personnel, procurement of medicines, as well as the strengthening and modernisation of our policies and health administration systems. It is for this reason that I appointed a Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Health Sector in 2012. The Commission has made many valuable recommendations, which are being implemented across the health sector in order to improve the quality of services," he noted.

"We are making deeper in-roads in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Over the last three years, notable reductions were recorded in new infections as the campaign on zero new infections, and zero HIV-related deaths gained momentum," he stressed.

Pohamba is pleased that Namibia has received international recognition and praise for our achievements in the fight against HIV/AIDS. "While we are encouraged by these commendations, all Namibians must continue to combat this pandemic relentlessly, to prevent new infections. An HIV-free generation is within reach," he said.

He further said, adequate shelter is one of the most basic needs for dignified human existence. Therefore, the country will continue to do its best to ensure that more and more Namibians enjoy access to this basic necessity. According to statistics, the housing backlog in Namibia stands at 100,000 units. This number increases by more than 3,000 units every year. In supporting existing initiatives, the Government launched the National Mass Housing Programme to address the challenge. The plan is to build at least 185,000 houses over the next 17 years at a cost of N\$47 billion. During the 2014/2015 Financial Year, Government aims to build more than 5,000 houses in different towns across the country.

The Programme is being implemented alongside other housing provision initiatives such as the Build-Together Programme and support to the Shack Dwellers Association. Government has also initiated amendments to the Pension Funds Act to enable pension fund members to access their pension benefits and invest in building their own houses, including in non-proclaimed areas, such as villages.

"For our economy to grow and for our country to prosper, we need to have world class physical and communication infrastructure. Our roads, railways, harbours, airports, and bridges must be in a good state to serve as effective conduits to facilitate economic activities and the smooth movement of people. During the period under review, various road and bridge construction projects were completed around the country. Namibia is determined to take full advantage of its geographic location as the gate-way to the Southern African Region. Towards this end, our Government is implementing strategic initiatives that will put our country in a position to become a modern transport hub for imports and exports to and from Southern Africa," Pohamba said.

Mining continues to be an important pillar of the national economy. The sector has continued to attract significant foreign investments, thereby confirming Namibia's status as one of the most attractive countries in the world for foreign investors in mining.

Some of the new mining ventures in the country include the Husab, Otjikoto and B2Gold Mines, which are currently under construction. The construction of the Tschudi Mine near Tsumeb, will start soon. These projects will contribute to the Gross Domestic Product and export earnings. They will also create thousands of employment opportunities, contribute to the revenue and boost economic development.

Government has also taken steps to address concerns about the slow delivery of justice and to reduce the back-log of cases in our courts. For this purpose, mobile courts will be set

up to try the cases at affected Police Stations around the country. Moreover, dedicated courts will be established to handle traffic offences, while measures will be introduced to ensure that Prosecutors maximise their allocated time in courts.

The President commended the Namibia Defence Force for the sterling work it is doing in protecting the territorial integrity of the Republic and praised them for their good work in peace-keeping operations as well as assistance to civil authorities during national emergencies such as the drought and outbreak of diseases.

"There should be no doubt about our commitment to combat corruption. While recognising challenges experienced, we welcome the progress made so far in the investigation and prosecution of cases of corruption. No effort should be spared to ensure justice and bring perpetrators to book. In order to fight this evil more effectively, the long over-due whistle-blowers and Witness Protection Bill is currently receiving attention. In addition, as of January this year, two dedicated courts have been established in Windhoek to handle cases of corruption," he said.

"This is the last time that I am addressing this joint sitting of our legislature as Head of State and Government. I, therefore, take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and profound gratitude to all our lawmakers and their respective parties for the co-operation and support rendered to me as Head of State and Government over the years," he concluded.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ATTEND 130TH IPU ASSEMBLY

- Ndahafa Kaukungua

A delegation of Members from the Namibian Parliament, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab attended a weeklong session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held from 16- 20 March 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland. The delegation comprised of the following Members: Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams (Chairperson of the IPU-National Group), Hon. Heiko Lucks, Hon. Maureen Jankowski, Hon. Teopolina Mushelenga, Hon. Barakias Namwandi and Hon. Bernadinus Shekutamba.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, which will celebrate its 125th anniversary on 30 June 2014, brought together more than 700 parliamentarians from 147 countries, including 48 Speakers of Parliaments, and 215 women MPs, to meet under the theme “Renewing our commitment to peace and democracy” and to cover issues relating to peace, democracy, human rights and

sustainable development around the world.

The Women Parliamentarians in attendance unanimously elected Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams as President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians for a two-year term. Hon. Mensah-Williams also served the IPU in various capacities such as a Member of the IPU Executive Committee (2007-2010); Vice-President of the IPU (2008-2010) and Vice-President of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians (2010-2011).

Hon. Teopolina Mushelenga chaired the Drafting Committee on the Emergency Item: “*Helping to restore peace and security and consolidate democracy in the Central African Republic: The contribution of the IPU*”. In a resolution on the crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR), IPU Members strongly condemned the continuing violations of international humanitarian law and widespread human rights abuses by armed groups,

whilst underscoring the need for perpetrators to be held accountable. The IPU members of parliament have been called to pressure their governments to respond to appeals for humanitarian action to help the large and growing number of displaced people.

A panel discussion was held focussing on the contribution of Parliaments towards a nuclear-weapon free world. The Namibian delegation during its presentation by Hon. Namwandi stated that, though Namibia is ranked the 5th largest producer of uranium worldwide; the country ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on 15 April 1998. “In this respect, Namibia does not support the use of its uranium for nuclear weapons or explosive nuclear devices,” he said. The IPU called on Members to commit to a series of actions to make the world nuclear-weapons free.

The Namibian delegation also participated in a panel discussion that focused on the protection of children’s rights, and in particular, unaccompanied migrant children and preventing their exploitation in situations of war and conflict. Hon. Jankowski reiterated the importance of securing a safe environment for children and that “children’s rights must be respected during armed conflicts as children continue to pay a heavy price and remain the most vulnerable in conflict situations”. IPU urged Parliaments to enact specific legislation that will protect girls from human trafficking, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence and amend legislation to prevent children from being recruited as child soldiers.

In another panel discussion on risk-resilient development, taking into consideration the demographic trends and natural constraints, the deliberations centred on a new sustainable development agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after 2015. Hon. Lucks, in his presentation stressed the importance of parliamentary oversight and stated that “Parliamentarians have an essential role of ensuring that their respective countries are prepared to mitigate the far-reaching



The Namibia Parliament Delegation who attended the 130th IPU Assembly and related meetings held from the 16 - 20 March 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland. In the picture (from left to right) is Hon. Heiko Lucks, Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams (Chairperson of the IPU-National Group), Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab and Hon. Teopolina Mushelenga (back row)

effects of natural disasters, fluctuating demographic dynamics and climate change,” he said. Noting that poorly planned and unmanaged urbanisation, endemic poverty and weak governance were important drivers of risk, IPU called for all MPs to take immediate action to review existing legislation on reducing risk from disasters.

Hon. Lucks also attended meetings

of the newly established Forum of Young Parliamentarians. The forum is a permanent body of the IPU dedicated to enhance the quantitative and qualitative participation of youth in parliaments in the IPU. Members of Parliament younger than 45 years old will meet bi-annually in order to broaden diversity and inclusiveness by increasing the presence of young

parliamentarians at IPU Assemblies. The IPU urged all countries to include young Members of Parliament in their delegations.

Cameroonian Martin Chungong was elected as the new Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the first African to hold this post in its 125 years of existence.

FINANCE MINISTER TABLES 57.6 BILLION BUDGET

- Ndahafa Kaukungua

Finance minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila tabled the N\$57.6 billion national budget in the National Assembly for the 2014/15 financial year on 19 February 2014 under the theme “Inclusive Growth and Fiscal Sustainability, Jointly Doing More with Less.”

According to the minister, the last year’s fiscal policy stance was indispensable given the tremendous challenges facing Namibia, particularly in the areas of employment creation and poverty reduction.

The budget statement focused mainly on economic and financial developments in 2013/14, strategic policy interventions and medium term economic outlook.

The minister stated that Namibia has made considerable progress in many spheres, attributed to the proactive socio-economic development policies that were implemented. Below are the highlights from the minister’s speech and the record of achievements:-

- consistent investment in democratic governance, peace, stability and strong domestic institutions,
- maintenance of macroeconomic stability and fiscal prudence,
- expansion of the economy by two and a half times since 1990,

- expanded access to education, health and basic amenities,
- an extensive social safety net system, which contributes to pushing back the frontiers of poverty and vulnerability,
- good physical infrastructure in the domains of telecommunications, sea, road and rail transport, water and secure power supply,
- positioning Namibia as the dream destination for local, regional and international tourists,
- financial stability, thanks to prudent and rigorous financial regulatory framework and good risk management systems, which enabled us to weather the effects of the global economic crisis, and
- a relatively efficient tax system with revenue productivity improving from 23.7 percent in 2003/04 to over 32 percent by 2012/13, thereby enhancing the capacity of the State to expand service delivery to the nation.

Priorities of the Budget:

The **first** priority for the budget is to continue entrenching macroeconomic stability as a necessary condition to bolster economic growth and sustainability of development outcomes. This requires expenditure expansion to be well targeted and that we live within our means and do not encumber our children with



Finance Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila tabling the National Budget.

unsustainable debt burdens.

The **second** priority is to expand the economy to achieve high economic growth rates with jobs, by investing in infrastructure and through a gradual drive to enhance the industrial sector in the country.

The **third** priority is to foster human resources development and skills formation by maintaining priority attention to education, health and the provision of social amenities and social safety nets in order to raise the standard of living for our people.

The **fourth** priority is to curb waste and bureaucracy which is costing the Government and hampering the initiative of those who wish to contribute to economic growth and job creation.

“Our economy displayed remarkable

resilience despite the uncertainties and volatility in the international markets. GDP is estimated to have expanded by a respectable 4.8 per cent in 2013. All sectors except crop farming, electricity and water are estimated to have recorded positive growth rates. Sectors that have contributed to this achievement through double digit growth rates are livestock and construction,” the minister noted.

The minister said that inflation rate averaged 5.6 percent in 2013 and edged downward to 4.9 per cent in January 2014. Gross fixed capital formation expanded by 17 per cent in

real terms during 2013, while private consumption expenditure remains robust with a rate of expansion of 9.5 per cent being projected. Foreign direct investment during the first three quarters of 2013 jumped to an impressive N\$6 billion, compared to N\$1.5 billion during the same period in 2012 whereas foreign reserves stood at N\$14.5 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2013, which was equivalent to 9.19 weeks of import cover. While this level of reserves is sufficient to maintain the currency peg, measures must be found to boost reserve levels over the medium term.

“Through this budget, Government is consolidating the economic and financial stability of the country, incentivising economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication, emboldening industrious workers to work and earn more for their own good and the prosperity of their families, assisting the youth to continue to invest in their skills and their future and supporting the people in need, protecting the vulnerable and honouring the elderly,” she concluded.

Budget Allocation per Ministry/Office/Agency

VOTE	TITLE	AMOUNT N\$ (000)
01	President	614 966
02	Prime Minister	639 436
03	National Assembly	177 126
04	Auditor General	97 193
05	Home Affairs and Immigration	543 333
06	Police	4 288 095
07	Foreign Affairs	900 783
08	Defence	6 606 077
09	Finance	3 466 228
10	Education	13 068 166
11	National Council	103 496
12	Gender Equality and Child Welfare	721 101
13	Health and Social Services	6 066 803
14	Labour and Social Welfare	1 811 729
15	Mines and Energy	869 453
16	Justice	730 930
17	Regional and Local Government and Rural Development	2 648 988
18	Environment and Tourism	725 368
19	Trade and Industry	1 000 518
20	Agriculture, Water and Forestry	2 618 452
21	Prisons and Correctional Services	800 962
22	Fisheries and Marine Resources	368 748
23	Works	675 361
24	Transport	4 055 755
25	Lands and Resettlement	590 026
26	National Planning Commission	233 749
27	Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture	709 245
28	Electoral Commission	374 680
29	Information and Communication Technology	566 864
30	Anti-Corruption Commission	54 792
31	Veterans Affairs	1 558 243
	TOTAL	57 686 666

NATIONAL COUNCIL WOMEN CAUCUS ATTENDS THE CSW58

- Anethe Mtambanengwe

The National Council Women Caucus headed by its Chairperson, Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams, attended the 58th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 58) in New York. The CSW 58 started on 10 March 2014 with participants drawn from all over the globe calling for accelerated efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) before 2015 and a stronger post-2015 agenda. The other National Council delegates were Hon. Hilma Nicanor, Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs and Vice-Chairperson of the Women Caucus, Hon. Ruth Nhinda, and Hon. Rosalia Shilenga.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main organs within the UN. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at UN Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

The focus of the CSW 58 was on the Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls and Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

Speaking at the side meeting titled Empowerment of Women and Girls, the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance and Gender Links called for a stronger post-2015 SADC Gender Protocol (SGP), which is a Southern Africa regional instrument and roadmap to equality that breaks

MDG3 into 28 time-bound targets. The Protocol is currently being used by SADC Member States as a yardstick to advance gender equality in different spheres of society.

As much as the SGP can help inform and enhance the global post-2015 on achieving gender equality, so too can the global agenda improve the post-2015 SGP targets, in areas like climate change and environmental sustainability, women's lack of access to information and technology and more explicit language on sexual reproductive health rights. These emerging issues must be addressed and need to be included in the post-2015 framework.

While participants noted that many countries have made strides in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, they highlighted the need for governments to learn from the challenges in implementing the current MDG framework, to ensure that the post-2015 agenda is more effective.

Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams chaired the side meeting on **Legal Enforcement of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** as key to sustainable development, progress and challenges. Gender-based violence was a key topic of discussion in this session and several strategies were discussed on how this global problem can be addressed. It was suggested that for women to be free from gender-based violence, they first have to be empowered socially and economically and given equal opportunities in education. Special focus was put on violence against women, gender equality and women's rights.

Parliaments all over the world are given a task to be more proactive and go beyond what has been already



Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams

achieved and aim at implementing the MDGs that focus on economic and social rights to eliminate gender discrimination.

The Deputy Chairperson also chaired the second side meeting at the **Crossroads of Sustainable Development and Gender Equality: Role of Parliament** where the outgoing Secretary General to the IPU, Mr. Anders Johnson delivered opening remarks and informed the meeting that IPU has done a lot to ensure equal representation of women in Parliaments. The Secretary General stated that there has been a 21.8% increment in women representation in parliament in the last 10 years, which is good but instead there is a need for improvement in this regard. He further stated that there will be no progress and development in any country in the world where women are discriminated. Women need to have access to land rights, education and health facilities.

It was concluded that the implementation of the MDGs will require the in-depth examination of parliamentary capacities and of internal oversight and legislative processes in all parliaments, that the lessons from the MDGs implementation through parliaments are useful to help re-strategise as we move toward the SDGs, that the women empowerment goal in the MDGs should be made a goal in the SDGs. The participants felt that there should be a coordinating structure to advance the MDGs through the committee system; however this will depend on the specific

make-up of the parliament, the rules that govern its functioning, its overall capacities in terms of staff, resources and also the strength of the existing committee system. To see progress

in improving the lives of women and girls, we must hasten and deepen our efforts before 2015 and that all efforts need to focus on closing persistent implementation gaps by building on

lessons and challenges and improving existing instruments like MDG3 which deals with the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment.

GENDER EQUALITY AND FAMILY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CONDEMNS GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

- David Nahogandja

The Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Family Affairs held a press briefing on 11 March 2014 to express its views and condemn the escalation of Gender-based violence (GBV).

The Gender-based violence plague is destroying and tearing the nation apart. "We are such a small nation yet the media is dominated by stories of domestic violence daily. Browsing through the newspapers you come across horrific headlines such as: "toddler pleading in vain for moms life", "girl stabbed 25 times", and "baby raped" and so it goes on and on. It saddens me to say it has become a norm to read about murder and rape daily," said Committee Chairperson Hon. Alexia Manombe-Ncube.

During the press briefing the Committee recognised and appreciated the prayer day initiated by His Excellency, President Hifikepunye Pohamba as well as religious leaders joined by the masses at a prayer session held a week earlier at the Sam Nujoma Stadium in Katutura. The prayer day demonstrated commitment and interest that the society has in curbing Gender-based violence.

Hon. Manombe-Ncube continued to say that "we as a Gender Equality and Family Affairs Committee would like to reiterate what the President stated on February 11, 2014 at the Opening of the 9th Session of the 5th Parliament when he called for the cessation of

all forms of violence against women and girls in the country. Similarly, the Prime Minister, Dr. Hage Geingob has also condemned these primitive acts and has called for an end to it".

The Committee members stated that the Political Bureau of SWAPO proposed certain measures to decide on interventions that must be introduced by Government in order to further address the alarming situation of Gender-based violence. "Our Committee is in agreement with these measures suggested and therefore would like to emphasise some of these measures," Hon. Manombe-Ncube affirmed.

The Committee proposed that, if it's found to be necessary, some of our laws be amended not only in respect of providing stiffer sentences, but also to tighten the requirements for bail granting in cases of GBV. Furthermore, the Committee suggested that persons who are accused and convicted of GBV offenses should be denied parole. "We, as Legislatures, should strengthen our laws. It is our duty to protect our people, and to deter future offenders from committing these atrocious, barbaric crimes," she stressed.

In order to reduce future incidences of GBV, the Committee called upon the Ministry of Education to ensure that school curricula include aspects of educating the youth on GBV, as well as to introduce an anger management programme. This will expose children to non-violent alternatives, providing them with conflict resolution and

anger management skills alongside respect for others and tolerance of diversity so that violent behaviour in adulthood will be prevented. The Committee urges the parents to play their role in this fight by teaching their children respect for themselves as well as for others.

"Vigorous country-wide campaigns against GBV should be initiated involving government leaders, members of Parliament, religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders, civic organisations, regional councils, local authority councils and the community as a whole. As a Committee, we have already started working with traditional leaders but the relationship should be strengthened and ongoing," the Chairperson emphasised.

She also encouraged the Police force to give more hands to GBV cases and to assist in the fast tracking of these cases during investigations as well as in courts. The Committee believes this can certainly save a lot of lives.

Hon. Manombe-Ncube called for counselling to be provided not only to the victims of GBV and their families but also to the perpetrators, as anger management counselling can assist in deterring offenders from committing such crimes. Women often have nowhere to turn to and it is essential that they are protected. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare should ensure that safety houses are built for victims to have a safe haven to turn to when threatened. "It is our hope, as a Committee, that these measures will assist in the battle against GBV. It remains imperative that we as leaders should come together in this battle. We should change the way we raise our children, teaching them morals and giving them equal roles in our homes," she concluded.

NETWORKING WORKSHOP OF SADC GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIPS

- Ndahafa Kaukungua

The Parliament of Namibia convened the first ever gathering of SADC Parliament Government Chief Whips in Windhoek from 27-28 February 2014. The workshop brought together Government Chief Whips from 8 SADC Parliaments.

The Networking Workshop emanated from the discussions between Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi and Hon. Lukuvi, the Tanzanian Government Chief Whip during his familiarisation tour to Namibia in 2011. The networking workshop was aptly themed “*Enhancing Parliamentary Democracy and Good Governance in SADC Region*”. Its overall objective was to enhance and reinforce the understanding of the concept, role and function of Government Chief Whips and further create a platform for sharing experiences.

Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab in his official opening address emphasised the role of elected parliaments as the building block upon which representative democracies are built,

thus “there is an absolute need for us to ensure full development of the three branches of government – the executive, legislature and judiciary, to be able to complement each other so as to ensure democratic consolidation on the continent”.

He also stressed the importance of the Office of the Government Chief Whip as being key to the various political views represented in parliament because it serves as a facilitator bridge, accessible by all political parties in various parliaments.

The Government Chief Whips from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, South Africa, Zambia and Namibia shared their experiences and expectations and were in agreement that such a forum is necessary for strategic networking by sharing experiences in the SADC Region and consolidate the role of the Chief Whips in order to adapt to the evolving needs of modern Parliaments.

The delegates benefited from presentations by experts that created an opportunity to enhance the understanding of the changing trends to the concept, the role and

functions of Government Chief Whips the Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures in Southern Africa, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and Standardising Parliamentary Rules and Procedures in the SADC Region.

In her closing remarks, Hon. Ruth Nhinda thanked all the participants and presenters for sharing their individual wisdoms and experiences with tremendous generosity. The next meeting of the Government Chief Whips will be held in Angola on a date yet to be determined.

The functions of the Government Chief Whip amongst others, are:

- to get the Government’s business through Parliament, and in particular to secure the Government’s majority in votes on its legislative and policy programme.
- The Government Chief Whip is responsible for working with the line Minister for timetabling and securing the passage of measures and working to successfully complete the Government’s legislative programme. The Government Chief Whip’s main tools in achieving this are the management of quorum in terms of attendance so as to maximise the votes and the persuasion of members to vote with the government.
- The Government Chief Whip not only operates as an important link between the government and the parliamentary party, but also provides a link between the government and opposition parties and other important figures in the parliamentary system and presiding office within Parliament.
- The Chief Whip also attends regular weekly Parliamentary Standing Committee meetings, regular meetings of the key figures to discuss the arrangements of business at Parliament.
- The other roles of Chief Whips are to be in daily contact among the key figures to deal with on-going matters, agenda and timetabling issues, the key during the passage of legislation and other government business and to hold discussions between the Whips on both sides.
- Liaise and coordinate affairs of Parliament by working closely with the Presiding Officers of Parliament, the Prime Minister (as Leader of the



SADC Parliament Government Chief Whips who participated in the Networking Workshop in Windhoek from 27 - 28 February 2014 at the Windhoek Country Club Resort.

Government Business in the House) and Whips of various parties represented in Parliament. The Chief Whip should be seen as a bridge between the

Government and various political parties to ensure proper communication and coordination of matters relating to the affairs of Parliament.

DEVELOPMENT AID WORKSHOP

- Brian Riruako

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PAC), in collaboration with the European Union Parliamentary Support Programme and Konrad Adenauer Foundation held a workshop on Development Aid Oversight from 21-22 February 2014 at Okahandja Lodge. The workshop was a first of its kind for Members of Parliament of both Houses and key stakeholders in the accountability process. The workshop was conducted by an expert in the field of Development Aid, Dr Jeff Balch, AWEPA Director of Research and Evaluation, who shared his experiences and knowledge on the subject of Development Aid Oversight.

Development Aid in all its forms plays a major role in supplementing budget deficits and contributes to poverty eradication and improvement of social and economic well-being of people, more so in developing and least developed countries of the world. More often, Aid is attached to a number of conditions, which need to be carefully scrutinised by Parliament. Beyond passing legislation relating to national development strategies and MDG plans, Parliaments can also play an implementation role through their scrutiny and oversight function.

Parliaments should also, as part of their effort to exercise effective budget oversight, work together with their countries' Supreme Audit Institutions. The outputs produced by Audit Institutions are above the political fray that can help Parliaments, in particular, Public Accounts Committees to ask

governments more searching and better informed questions about the management of aid and other public resources.

"It is therefore imperative that all accountability institutions work together in a well coordinated manner to ensure transparency in the management of Development Aid and other public resources," Balch said. The PAC also had a two day workshop in August 2013, which brought together all stakeholders in the accountability process in Namibia from the Media, Civil Societies and government institutions under the theme 'Working towards coordinated strategies in strengthening the accountability process in Namibia'. The purpose of the Conference was to foster closer cooperation and coordination of activities of the accountability institutions in Namibia.

Namibia received its fair share of Official Development Aid (ODA) of N\$ 256 million (2010) and N\$ 285 million (2011). The aid is channelled through donor agencies and audited by private companies thereby rendering PAC no role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the expenditure, as PAC is mandated only to review and examine financial reports audited by the Office of the Auditor-General.

Parliamentarians should work together to enhance the effectiveness of aid in many ways, by being active

participants in demanding accountability, getting involved in dialogue and processes that specifically relate to aid and seeking ways to ensure it is utilised in ways that meet the actual needs of the people. Parliamentarians play an important role in pushing for a greater focus on monitoring the impacts of aid and other development resources, pushing for fuller financial reporting and better financial information from both government and donors. Parliament can also call for access to regular and timely progress reports on the implementation of plans and budgets.

In some countries, the capacity of Parliament and its relevant Committees to engage with budget implementation and approval has been significantly enhanced by the establishment of non-partisan, independent Budget Offices and Committees that have the technical capacity to analyse the budget and to help Parliament and parliamentarians to understand what can be complex technical documents.

The theme for this year session of Parliament "Promoting Oversight Effectiveness Towards Ensuring Transparent National Budget Administration" was clear on what is expected of parliamentarians in executing their oversight role.

The President of the Republic of Namibia, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, made it clear in his opening address of Parliament that one of



Participants at the Development Aid Workshop

the most important tools in the implementation and realisation of government programmes is the budget. "It is therefore, vital that we have adequate mechanisms to ensure transparent and accountable administration and utilisation of public resources that are allocated

to various public institutions through the Appropriation Bill, every Financial Year," he stressed.

"It is of paramount importance that the resources allocated are utilised for the intended purposes. It is also vital that we prevent wastage and misappropriation of public

resources and that transparency and accountability are reinforced at all levels of governance and at all times. This is the only way we can build and maintain strong and accountable public institutions with the requisite capacity to carry out their respective mandates," the President said.

CPA AFRICA REGION CHAIRPERSON VISITS MOZAMBIQUE

- Anethe Mtambanengwe

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Africa Region Chairperson Hon. Lucia Witbooi, MP, visited Mozambique and Botswana CPA Branches during April 2014. She was accompanied by the Central Africa Sub-Region Representative, Hon Jean Kapata. The objective of the visit was to encourage the branches to establish CWP Chapters and also to explain the CWP Strategic Plan 2011-2015 and to share ideas on how to promote women's participation in politics and advance the cause of women in general.

Hon. Witbooi and her delegation met three civil society organisations dealing with issues affecting women. In Mozambique, they met the Association of Women in the Legal Career and Women and Law in Southern Africa. In Botswana, they met the Kagisano Women's Shelter. The meetings were organised to discuss how women representation and involvement can be increased and why it is important to advocate for women to be included in decision making positions. The Chairperson and Hon. Kapata urged for women representation, including quotas being set aside for women so that 40 percent of CPA Parliaments achieve 50% women's representation by 2015 and ensuring 50% women participation in all CPA organised meetings by 2015.

During the visit it was observed

that Mozambique had a fairly high representation of women in the National Assembly with ninety-six (96) women Parliamentarians in a Parliament of 250 members. This was largely attributable to the proportional representation electoral system the country had adopted and the policy of the ruling Frelimo Party to have a quota system in which 40% of the seats in the National Assembly is reserved for women. The aim now is to ensure that the representation of women in the Parliament of Mozambique would increase to above 50% in the October 2014 elections.

Meanwhile in Botswana, the National Assembly had only five (5) female Members of Parliament, out of a National Assembly comprising sixty-one (61) members, thus the representation of women in the House stood at a dismal 9%. In addition, four (4) of the women Parliamentarians are Cabinet ministers and this

makes it difficult for Botswana to be represented at international fora for women where only backbenchers are required.

The number of women Parliamentarians in Botswana had continued to decline with each election. Hon. Tshireletso explained that Botswana's non representation at CWP level was due to the fact that there were only four women parliamentarians who were also saddled with Cabinet responsibilities and had to participate in international portfolios. It was highly doubtful that the country would achieve the desired 50% threshold in the 2014 elections because during the primary elections held earlier this year for the upcoming elections in November 2014, the women that got nominated as candidates from all political parties were only thirteen (13) of the sixty-one (61) constituencies. In addition, their adoption was not a guarantee that they would win the seats. The National Assembly of Botswana attributed the few number of female Parliamentarians to the simple majority electoral system employed by the country.

It was observed that countries such as Mozambique that had the proportional representation electoral



Hon. Jean Kapata and Hon. Lucia Witbooi (middle) with the chairperson of the Botswana Parliamentary Caucus on Women, Ms. Botlogile Tshireletso in Mozambique.

system were performing better in increasing the representation of women in the House than countries like Botswana which employed the simple majority electoral system.

The delegation then indicated that to prevent the number of women Parliamentarians from dwindling, there was a need to tap into the young generation and encourage them to pursue a career in politics. In this regard, it was observed that there was a need for CWP to put in place a

mentorship programme to encourage young women to venture into politics.

In order to increase the representation of women in Parliament, the meetings in both Mozambique and Botswana came up with the following resolutions:

- CWP should partner with civil society organisations dealing with women's issues to urge them to give women candidates both financial and moral support;

- prior to elections, CWP should meet with the leadership of political parties to encourage them to nominate more women to contest elections;

- CWP should lobby for the implementation of the quota system so that a certain number of seats are reserved for women; and

- CWP should establish a mentorship programme to encourage young women to venture into politics.

APLESA HOLDS 15TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- Vincent Sinalumbu

The Association of Parliamentary Libraries for Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) held its 15th Annual Conference in Lusaka, Zambia from 07-11 April 2014. Countries that participated were Angola, Botswana,

Kenya, Mozambique, Mauritius, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and a representative from International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

In his opening speech, Rt. Honourable Justice Dr. Patrick Matibini, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia commended the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) that was represented at the conference for its unwavering support for championing the cause of libraries on the global level.

"I note with satisfaction that this is the second time that Zambia is

hosting an APLESA Conference. Some of you may recall that Zambia hosted the 4th APLESA Conference in 1998 at Parliament Buildings. I am also glad to note that the theme of the Conference: "Legislative Information and Parliamentary Libraries Exploring New Frontiers," will offer you an opportunity to explore new and exciting ideas in the provision of information which will ultimately result in the improvement of our various parliaments and having informed parliaments," he said.

Matibini said it goes without saying that to have well informed parliaments in a multi-dimensional way, encompassing the economic, social,



Participants at the 15th APLESA Conference 2014.

institutional and physical elements of parliaments, will demand making necessary adjustments, which include:

- Promoting co-operation and resource sharing among members of Parliament;
- Promoting communication and networking among members;
- Promoting capacity building among members; and
- Promoting best services in service delivery.

“This conference also provides us a perfect opportunity to learn from parliamentary libraries with the best knowledge provision practices by focusing on expectations, expertise, and evaluation of projects and proposals for the future,” he added.

The Speaker further said that while he was aware that a remarkable amount of knowledge exchange has taken place over the last few years, it is his earnest conviction that libraries must continue to share information each and every day using

the available technology-based tools at our disposal, so that we can achieve the aggressive growth goals that you will set for yourselves this week,” he concluded.

On his part, the Minister of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, Dr. John Phiri, reiterated the vision of the government of the Republic of Zambia regarding the critical role of libraries as we move into the future and the need to encourage and improve reading in Zambia.

“We have embarked on a vigorous programme to enhance the important role of libraries as they affect all our development efforts in all sectors. It is our understanding that national development and democracy can only thrive if equal and unrestricted access to information is guaranteed at individual and community levels through libraries from an early stage,” he stressed.

The topics discussed at the

conference amongst others were: Parliamentary Libraries as Enablers of Parliamentarians in Africa’s Transformative Paradigm, Connected Libraries: How to Effectively Engage Users, New Trends in Information Services for parliament Libraries: Reflection and Challenges, How Parliament Libraries and Research Services can develop Communication Strategies which can provide Access to Information about parliament, the Establishment of Institutional Repository – A Case of the Zambian Parliament, Parliamentary Websites in SADC-APLESA and Legislative Library and Research Environment.

Parliament of Namibia was represented by Mr. Vincent Sinalumbu, Ms. Rina Da Cruz and Mr. David Nahogandja from the divisions of Research, Information and Library services. The 16th APLESA Conference will be held in Nairobi, Kenya during April 2015.

NATIONAL COUNCIL TAKES PARLIAMENT TO //KARAS REGION

- Anethe Mtambanengwe

The National Council held its 2nd Regional Session at the Schützenhaus, Keetmanshoop in //Karas Region, from 22-30 April 2014 under the theme “Bringing Parliament closer to the people”. The Session was attended by various members of the community in the region. The deliberations focused mainly on the Appropriation Bill of 2014 as passed by the National Assembly. Few reports from National Council Standing Committees were also tabled and adopted by the Session.

In his keynote address, Hon. Bernardus Swartbooi, the governor of the //Karas region urged Members

of Parliament to address issues that are affecting the nation at large as representatives of the people and ensure that such issues are taken up with line ministries for implementation.

He said apart from the hard work and seriousness of parliamentary duties, time was created for the Members of Parliament to conduct town hall meetings with the community of Keetmanshoop and //Karas Region at large and also visit community projects such as the Fonteintjie Acqua-culture project, Naute Dam and others. The parliamentarians hosted lunch for the senior citizens of Keetmanshoop town.

The Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Asser Kapere, from his part assured the people of //Karas region that the concerns raised during the town hall community meetings will be conveyed to the relevant government institutions for actions.

Kapere was impressed to see that the //Karas Region is advancing in terms of economic development with projects/initiatives such as: the opening of the Southern UNAM

Campus in Keetmanshoop; the recently opened Keetmans Mutual Mall; the extension of grapes and dates projects to Naute Dam; the envisaged Neckartal Dam project; the railway line between Lüderitz and Aus that is progressing well; the ongoing tarring of the road between Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund; the TB ward under construction at the Keetmanhoop District Hospital and the Mass Housing project that has already started in Keetmanshoop in February this year, and many others.

The Chairperson praised the staff of the National Council for a well organised and successful 2nd Regional Session and said that the overwhelming success of this Regional Session of the National Council has inspired the parliamentarians to look forward to the Third Regional Session with renewed eagerness and new concepts. He also thanked the whole //Karas Region community, the Governor, the //Karas Regional Council for their dedicated support during the hosting of the Session.



Members of the National Council pictured at the official opening of the 2nd Regional Session in //Karas Region, (seated left to right) Honorable Governor of //Karas Region Bernardus Swartboo, Chairperson of the National Council Asser Kapere, Deputy Chairperson Hon. Magaret Mensah-Williams, the Mayor of Keetmanshoop Hon. Moses Titus and Hon. Jan Scholtz, Chairperson of the Management Committee.

FIRST AFRICAN SECRETARY GENERAL FOR IPU

Cameroonian Martin Chungong has been elected as the new Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the first African to hold the post in its 125-year history.

A record attendance of IPU Members made their choice on the closing day of the 130th IPU Assembly in Geneva.

Chungong, who is the current IPU Deputy Secretary General, will take over from Anders B. Johnsson who officially retires at the end of his fourth mandate on 30 June this year.

Chungong had worked in the Cameroonian parliament for 14 years before joining IPU in 1993. His career

at the Organisation has focused on developing and leading programmes aimed at strengthening parliaments by being more modern, representative and effective institutions that are better able to fulfill their democratic mandate.

“This is a truly exciting time to take on this challenge. Issues relating to peace and democracy are at the heart of many of the major issues facing the world today,” says Chungong. “People everywhere are demanding more from their political representatives and from their parliaments in a rapidly evolving age. My commitment is to

help parliaments meet this challenge head-on.”

The Secretary General elect ran against two other candidates – Shazia Z. Rafi (Pakistan), former Secretary General of Parliamentarians for Global Action and Geert Versnick, former Belgian MP.

He speaks fluent English and French as well as Cameroonian dialects.

Chungong will be IPU’s eighth Secretary General since the Organisation was created in 1889. All previous incumbents have been Europeans. (Source: IPU News Release)



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

THE WATER CRISIS AND GLOBAL WARMING IN NAMIBIA AND SADC REGION

• Clemence Tashaya

EENHANA – The socio-economic future of communities in Southern Africa depends on agriculture, fisheries, mining, manufacturing, tourism and industrial development to generate employment and growth. This can only be achieved if water of acceptable quality and quantity can be availed and supplied in time at the right locations and at low cost to support the planned and expected socio economic development in the region. The effects of global warming has made the water issue a crisis in Southern Africa thus threatening the region's food security and socio-economic development initiatives.

Much of SADC is arid or semi-arid and rainfall is variable, often unreliable. The region, especially Namibia experiences regular wet and dry spells, that is, several years of abundant rain followed by periods of scarcity. Droughts have also occurred in the region throughout recorded history and global warming is among the major causes. Thus the increased severities of these droughts are directly related to human activities and in some cases have some natural explanation.

Water availability is variable, both spatially and temporally. Groundwater is an important throughput in southern Africa during the dry season and year round in the arid zones. Seasonal variations and unreliability of precipitation make irrigation much more important in the region than might otherwise be the case. Irrigation is often regarded as a way of increasing agricultural productivity without increasing the amount of land under production as seen in most countries in the SADC region.

According to the Deputy Director of Rural Water Development and Planning in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Aina Ileka,

irrigation accounts for three-quarters of all water used in the region. She says of this 40-60 percentage of the water drawn from rivers and dams is lost before it reaches the land under irrigation, mainly through seepage and evaporation.

“This not only throws away a valuable resource, but also causes serious environmental problems such as soil salinisation and waterlogging. Such conditions are undesirable for crops and other plants and ultimately remove land from production,” she says

Southern Africa has an estimated 9.1 million hectares of land where productivity could be improved through irrigation. About 1.8 million hectares are already under irrigation. While irrigation is desirable in some cases, it is often used to grow crops with low economic value. In Botswana and Namibia less than 60 percent of irrigated crops are of low value. This is an uneconomic use of water requiring some form of agricultural subsidy.

“Also, river basins, lakes and coastal areas in Southern Africa are subjected to various mining operations, because of the existence of products such as coal, iron, gypsum, salt, soda, coral sand and gravel. Examples are extraction of gold by mining companies in Namibia, soda ash in Makgadikgadi in Botswana, gypsum and iron ore in Kafue Flats in Zambia, salt in Etosha, Namibia, coral sand along the coast of Tanzania and Mozambique and coal along the Zambezi valley,” she explains

One of the main effects of mining is the contamination of water by soluble substances and toxic liquid effluents. In Namibia diamond and gold production has also polluted and created many useless river beds. Mineral processing in the SADC region contributes more than a million tonnes of sulphates to the environment annually. In South Africa, for example, regular tests at more than 40 sampling points in



Clemence Tashaya

the Vaal catchment area show that mine dumps on the East Rand leach into Rietsput stream, among other toxic chemicals, “alarming levels of sulphates” that exceed European standards of surface water.

As demands for potable water continue to increase world-wide so have human impacts on freshwater systems. Water used for domestic purposes, industry or agriculture is frequently returned to its original source polluted or contaminated with chemicals or other harmful substances, reducing the amount of good quality water.

Aina Ileka also notes that population growth, increasing urbanisation and industrialisation all contribute to the increase in waste and water pollution in Southern Africa.

“The main sources of pollution are found in urban areas and major development such as mines, irrigated and other rain-fed commercial agricultural farms as in the two Kavango regions in Namibia. Water contaminated with poisons from agricultural farms, mines and industries runs through some areas where it may be used for drinking and washing or watering livestock and gardens. Cholera and other water borne diseases are often found in water contaminated with untreated human waste and sewage,” she says

Excessive use of nitrogen-based fertilisers pollute the soil, resulting in acidification which releases toxic

substances, impairing the growth of crops. About 2 000 sq km of land in Namibia are acidified. Of the world's 0.62 percent volume contained as fresh water, about half of this volume is below a depth of 800m and not easily available for use on the surface. Ground water is important through Southern Africa during the dry season and year around in arid zones, especially in Namibia which is a naturally dry country.

Extensive droughts have afflicted Namibia in recent times, particularly during the seasons: 1946-47, 1965-66, 1982-83 and 1986-87. The 1991-92, 1994-95 and 2000-2008 and recently

the 2012-2013. The 21st century years have been described as the most severe years in Namibia embalmed with the melting of economic situation prevailing in the country to date which is being caused by the EPAS disagreements. These years were also major El Nino years. El Nino has an effect on weather over a quarter of the world's surface. It develops as the warm waters of the tropical Pacific, spread eastwards in concert with shifting patterns of atmosphere pressure. These natural warming events alter weather patterns worldwide, causing droughts in Namibia and other parts of Southern Africa and

contributing to their severity.

Namibia in Southern Africa is party to about 80 percent regional and international environmental treaties and conventions, some of which have shaped the region's policy thinking. International conventions on environment are a new phenomenon in Southern Africa as they are throughout the Africa continent.

Participation is clearly tempered with national interests of individual countries but regional conventions embody a new resolution of work together as a SADC regional block.

PARLIAMENT HOSTS FIRST EVER CONFERENCE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY



Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab opening the Energy Conference at Parliament during April 2014.

• Dennis U. Zaire

Namibia has succeeded to host its first conference on Renewable Energy at Parliament. The conference was organised by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economics, Natural Resources and Public Administration and took place on 4-5 April, 2014. It was made possible with the generous support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation together with the EU- Parliamentary Support Programme and USAID. The conference, among others, considered the following topics: The current status of the Energy Sector in Namibia, Energy options available in Namibia, the Independent Power Producer Framework: current status, success stories and challenges experienced, Renewable Energy feed-in tariffs and associated regulations for Namibia electricity sector; regional experiences and lessons from other countries.

The conference was officially opened by the Speaker of the National



Dr. Bernd Althusmann with other participants during the first conference on Renewable Energy at Parliament.

Assembly, Hon. Dr. Theo Ben Gurirab and was addressed by the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economics, Natural Resources and Public Administration, Hon. Ben Amadhila. In his contribution, Hon. Gurirab stated that “It is no exaggeration that as a country we are faced with threatening power crises.” He went on to state that “the demand for electricity by far outstrips supply, as a result of import dependency and our limited local and regional electricity generation capacity.” For

the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung the new Resident Representative, Dr Bernd Althusmann, enhanced the importance of developing a Renewable Energy Feed-In Law. “To talk about the chances of renewable energies in Namibia and to see the impacts of climate change especially in Africa, these are two sides of the same coin,” Dr Althusmann said. On his part, Hon. Amadhila stated that “Namibia spends about N\$1 billion to import electricity from South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, while these countries face crises

of their own to meet their energy demand.” Further, he stated that unless a deliberate decision is taken, Namibia’s economy will be negatively affected by electricity shortages, which will also have further negative impact on investment, in particular in the mining sector, the creation of jobs and Vision 2030 objectives.” Hon. Amadhila believes that market conditions should be made more attractive with targeted incentives to attract investments in the electricity sector.

The Minister of Mines and Energy, Hon. Isak Katali on his part said that “Namibia is sparsely populated, with only one third of its 2.26 millions inhabitants living in urban centers. This makes provision of services, such as electricity, much more challenging.”

The conference also benefitted from contributions by Hon. Sise J Njikelana, Chairperson of the South African Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Energy, Prof M. Elmissiry from NEPAD, as well as other international and local experts.

The conference passed important resolutions that will serve as a backbone for further steps to be taken at the legislative level. A final report will be tabled in Parliament during the course of the year. Representatives from a broad variety of organisations showcased their energy efficient and solar powered products and also disseminated information on their products and businesses.

The conference was a huge success and attracted positive comments from the participants. “It was really an eye opener and many issues regarding renewable energy became very clear to me,” said Hon. Katuutire Kaura, MP.

Meanwhile, a second conference is envisaged to take place in September 2014.



Left: The Minister of Mines and Energy, Hon. Isak Katali.

Bottom right: Hon. Ben Amadhila during his contribution.



Dr. Bernd Althusmann, the resident representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Staff on the Move



Mrs. Mary M. Chunga was transferred on promotion from the Ministry of Youth, National Services, Sport and Culture to the post of Director, Directorate General Services, with effect from 01 April 2014.



Ms. Linea N. Hanghome was appointed as a Human Resource Practitioner, Sub-Division Personnel Services, with effect from 01 April 2014.



Ms Itambu Taimi N.N. was appointed on 07 January 2014 as Personal Assistant to the Chairperson. She was previously employed at the Polytechnic of Namibia.



Mr Nowaseb Augustinus was employed as Internal Auditor at the Ministry of Finance, and he was transferred and promoted to the National Council as Chief Internal Auditor Grade 6 on 01 January 2014.



Ms. Bessinger Mara Eva was first appointed in the Public Service at the Ministry of Health and Social Services as Switchboard Operator on 1st April 1986. She was promoted to the post of Principal Clerical Assistant on 1st May 1988 in the same Ministry. She was transferred to the National Council as Assistant Parliamentary Clerk Grade 7 on 1st September 1997, the position she held until her retirement on 31 March 2014.

Intern



Ms. Otilie Ndapewadi Ndeweda, a Human Resources Practitioner at the National Council is studying Bachelor of Information Technology and Business Computing at the Polytechnic of Namibia. She is currently doing her Internship at the National Assembly, effective March 24, 2014.

Intern



Mr. Teofelus Amunyela is final year IT student (Majoring in Systems Administration) at the Polytechnic of Namibia and is doing his Internship at the National Assembly effective April 01, 2014.

Intern



Ms. Paulina S. Dumeni is a final year IT student (Majoring in System Administration, Networking and Computer Technician) at the International University of Management and is currently doing her Internship at the National Assembly effective April 01, 2014.



Kids from different schools in Windhoek lined up with Namibian flags at the Parliament Garden during the Official Opening of Parliament.

