



Parliament

Journal





Entrance to the 158-seat National Assembly of Zambia



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Cover photo:
Liberian President Johnson-Sirleaf being welcomed to Parliament by Chairman of the National Council, Hon. Asser Kapere and by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab.
Photo courtesy of Die Republikein.

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From the Editor

Parliament Journal has extensively covered in this edition the visits undertaken by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, to various countries in Africa and beyond. The main aim of the visits is to campaign for the Presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) up for grabs in October this year. This campaign is almost nearing an end.

It is my wish and that of all Namibian compatriots for our Speaker to succeed in being elected to this important global parliamentary position. My wish is not for Speaker Gurirab to be elected merely for the sake of it, it is because of his track record of competency to do the job. He has stood the test of time through a series of diplomatic, ministerial and parliamentary postings in the span of his career. The trust that Dr. Gurirab has earned from the majority of Namibians has also been affirmed by many in Africa. The African Parliamentary Union (APU) has endorsed him as the sole candidate from the continent.

To prove Africa's support for and the competency that Dr. Gurirab takes to the IPU presidency, the following recognitions are worth citing: he has been nominated and endorsed by the Executive Committee of the 23rd SADC Parliamentary Forum Plenary Assembly in June 2007 in Windhoek; endorsed by the IPU Africa Group in October 2007 in Geneva; endorsed by Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) in February this year; endorsed by the IPU GRULAC Group at the 118th IPU Assembly in Cape Town in April this year. Besides that, he has received a series of verbal and written messages of support from the broader membership of the IPU.

Dr. Gurirab's vast wealth of experience stemmed from the various influential positions that he had occupied as SWAPO Associate Representative to the UN and the Americas from 1960 to 1962; Head of SWAPO Mission to the UN from 1972 to 1986; Member of the Namibian Parliament since 1990; Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1990 to 2002; Prime Minister from 2002 to 2005; and Speaker of the National Assembly since 2005 to date. Dr. Gurirab also served as the President of the UN General Assembly from September 1999 to September 2002.

There is no doubt that Dr. Gurirab is imbued with the required skills in handling national and international parliamentary issues. And this tells where his capability fits into being at the helm of the IPU whose objectives are to strengthen parliaments as democratic institutions, audit parliaments, provide technical assistance and advice, undertake research, and develop standards and guidelines.

Dr. Gurirab himself stresses: "I believe that globalization, multilateral negotiations, global warming and peace building efforts must be people-centred and inclusive towards the realization of world peace and security, democratic ideals, respect for human rights and eradication of poverty in the world."

I would like therefore to appeal to fellow Namibian compatriots from all walks of life to rally behind Dr. Gurirab's campaign for election as head of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and, hence, for him to be able to contribute effectively towards his democratic ideals.

GURIRAB INTENSIFIES CAMPAIGN FOR IPU PRESIDENCY

The Speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab has participated in a seminar of the African Parliamentary Union (APU) hosted in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in Rabat, Morocco. The seminar, under the theme “Africa and Migration: Challenges, Problems and Solutions”, was held from 22 to 24 May 2008.

Prior to the seminar, Dr. Gurirab, campaigning for the presidency of the IPU, met with the President of the Moroccan House of Representatives Mr. Mustapha Mansouri for bilateral discussions. The two Presiding Officers expressed mutual desire to promote bilateral ties between the two countries in socio-economic and at diplomatic levels.

At parliamentary level, the two Presiding Officers reflected on the need to establish a parliamentary friendship group between the two countries. The APU endorsed the nomination of Dr. Gurirab as candidate for the IPU presidency, a move that Morocco supports. Speaker Gurirab thanked Morocco for the support.

From Morocco, the Speaker's delegation headed for Caracas, the Venezuelan capital, on a campaign visit that lasted from 25 to 30 May 2008. Here, Speaker Gurirab had a closed-door meeting with the Venezuelan Deputy Minister for Africa, Mr. Reinaldo Bolívar. He held another closed-door meeting with the Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros.

Venezuela plays an important role in South America. The AU had a meeting with the Presidents of Latin America



Dr. Gurirab addressing the National People's Assembly of Venezuela

(Union of South Americans) to strengthen relations between Africa and South America. Venezuela is aiming at cooperating with African countries in the energy, food, communication and health sectors, by the year 2030. A summit of African and South American political leaders is planned for November 2008 in Venezuela.

In a televised interview in Venezuela, Dr. Gurirab pledged that, if elected President of the IPU, he would promote the fostering of South-South cooperation; address the issues of globalisation, poverty, unfair trade rules; and strengthen the parliamentary dimension at the United Nations.

Dr. Gurirab and his delegation also met with parliamentarians from the Latino-American Parliament. Their discussions centred on the Pan-African Parliament-Latino-American Parliamentary Summit, scheduled for 26 September 2008 in Venezuela, which will meet prior to the AU-Union of South America Summit in November 2008.

Dr. Gurirab also held discussions with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Venezuela, Honourable Celia Flores. The Venezuelan Speaker,

who strongly supports Dr. Gurirab's candidacy for the IPU presidency, requested the support of Namibia and Africa for Venezuela to host the 122nd IPU Assembly in Venezuela in 2010. At the conclusion of his visit there, Dr. Gurirab had the opportunity to address the unicameral National Assembly of Venezuela. He also presented a lecture on the “Political Outlook of Africa” at the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV).

From Venezuela, Dr. Gurirab proceeded to Cuba for discussions with the President of the National Assembly of the People's Power, Deputy Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada. Dr. Gurirab also held separate meetings with the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Bruno Rodriguez; Deputy Esteban Lazo, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Cuba and Vice President of the Council of the State; Mr. Oscar Martinez Cordoves, the Deputy Head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuban; representatives of the People's Power Municipal Assembly; and the Project Manager of the Varadero Tourist Resort which contributes about 38 percent to Cuba's economy.



Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab with the President of Cuba's National Assembly of the People's Power, Mr. Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada (center) and Namibia's Ambassador to Cuba, Ms. Claudia Grace Uushona (left) in Havana

Dr. Gurirab also met with the Acting Head of State of Cuba His Excellency Mr. Raul Castro. Castro and Dr. Gurirab exchanged views on the situation and the development of bilateral ties between the two countries. They also discussed topics of regional and international interest. At a meeting with the President of the Cuban National Assembly, Mr. Ricardo Alarcon, Alarcon reiterated the Cuban legislative body's support for Dr. Gurirab's nomination for the post of President of IPU in October 2008. The visit to Cuba, a country with "special relationship" with Venezuela, lasted from 30 May to 4 June 2008.

LIBERIAN PRESIDENT ADDRESSES NAMIBIAN PARLIAMENT

Liberia's affinity to Namibia must be viewed in the context that in spite of its many years of independence, the West-African nation could not consider itself truly free as long as other African countries continued to languish under colonial rule. This was said by the Liberia Head of State, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, when she was addressing a joint session of the Namibia Parliament on 15 July 2008 while on a three-day state visit to the country.

By this invitation, President Johnson-Sirleaf observed, Namibian Parliamentarians had paid deserving tribute to her distinguished

predecessors, Presidents William V.S. Tubman (1944-1971) and William R. Tolbert, Jr. (1971-1980), whose vision and leadership helped to shape Africa's response to the issues of African Unity and the total liberation of the continent from minority rule. Below follows the full text of the address by the Liberia Head of State:

Affinity with Namibia

I, and many other Liberians, feel a deep sense of pride and affinity with the people of Namibia. Liberia and Namibia have an intertwined history, heritage and indeed a common destiny. We believe that freedom, justice and the right to self-determination



President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf addressing the Parliament of Namibia
Photo courtesy of Die Republiekin

are inalienable rights that should be enjoyed by all peoples. As such, it is the moral responsibility of all freedom loving peoples to defend those rights within or across national frontiers. It was precisely this sense of moral duty that propelled my country, Liberia, the oldest independent Republic in Africa, to champion the liberation struggle of Africa from the shackles of colonialism and racism in all their manifestations. Due to its deeply rooted values and sense of history, Liberia, joined by Ethiopia, challenged the then apartheid South Africa's continued illegal mandate over South West Africa, now Namibia. It was in response to its historic duty as Africa's oldest Republic that Liberia provided diplomatic, moral and financial support to African freedom fighters and other nationalists in their just struggle against tyranny and oppression.

Indeed, SWAPO's esteemed leader and first President, His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma, recognized as the Father of the Nation, and other nationalists made several visits, to Liberia. In furtherance of the liberation struggle, they were received as true brothers and sisters. Liberia is proud of the role it played in the liberation struggle and the fight for the total emancipation of the African peoples now represented by 53 independent countries which today comprise the African Union.

Civil War

Whilst Namibia was celebrating on 21 March 1990, the epoch of a new era, its inauguration as a free, sovereign and independent State, Liberia was engulfed in a civil war which was the beginning of fifteen years of mayhem and carnage. Neither our longevity as the oldest independent African nation nor our experience as a forerunner in promoting peace and freedom in Africa and the world at large could have shielded our country from the gruesome and barbaric conflict which took the lives and created hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons. It destroyed institutions of governance as well as

significant physical infrastructure and social capital. The economy collapsed, impoverishing most of the Liberian population.

The 2005 elections were a watershed in Liberia's history. The people of Liberia declared loudly and clearly that they wanted an end to the war and government mismanagement, a new beginning based on peace, inclusive economic opportunities, and respect for justice and basic human rights. Liberians want security, freedom, and opportunity: in their everyday lives, freedom from abuse and oppression, and the opportunity to provide for their families. After more than two decades of misrule, violence and economic collapse, my people took the first bold steps on the long road in this direction.

Revitalization of Economy

We assertively embarked on the revitalization of our economy, quickly almost trebling the levels of budgetary income. We successfully completed a yearlong IMF Staff Monitored Program and have reached the Decision Point under a fully fledged Poverty Reduction Strategy. Moreover, we are well on the road to clearing the inherited US\$4.7 billion external debt and setting the course to write off that debt under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) process. With the support of our Legislature we initiated a process of reviewing all inherited commercial contracts and concession agreements that were questionable in terms of the national interest and are in the process of renegotiating these contracts while negotiating new ones on better terms in our mining, forestry and agriculture sectors. As a result, international sanctions on both our forestry sector and diamond sectors have been lifted and we have qualified for the United States African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

We have started to rebuild our institutions and strengthen the rule of law. We have completed a new anti-Corruption Commission which is

now before our Legislature. In this, we may have some lessons to learn from yours here. Our Civil Service Agency is well advanced in its badly needed reforms. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to promote national reconciliation is now fully operational. After years of seeing our infrastructure and basic services destroyed, we have made tangible progress in the rehabilitation of our roads, schools, and health facilities as well as in the limited restoration of some electricity and water to the capital city, Monrovia. We intend to steadily expand and rehabilitate this vital service to our people, outside the capital.

Achieving these goals will require the participation and strong commitment of all the Liberian people, including those in the Diaspora, working with the Government, Liberia's international partners, the private sector and civil society groups.

Confronting Challenges

While I have made reference to these national strategies to better the conditions of the Liberian people, we are mindful of the need for Liberia to work closely with other countries, particularly African countries, to unite our efforts in confronting the new challenges which we face. The global food crisis, the rising cost of oil on the world market, environmental degradation and the resulting global warming are a few of the urgent conditions which must be collectively addressed. Failing to do so could threaten not only our national security but the peace and security of the entire international community.

In addition to the looming food crisis, the challenge of promoting a climate of peace and stability is paramount if Africa is to achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Leading authorities and MDGs watchers have concluded that most African countries lag behind their European and Asian counterparts in meeting key benchmarks. Civil conflicts

and violence, as our experience in Liberia teaches, could undermine socio-economic progress and stifle national growth. It therefore behooves all African leaders to foster the spirit of national cohesion and unity and encourage the culture of tolerance and democratization.

Liberia believes that the holding of democratic elections is important; however, equally important are the processes of democratization and democratic governance. The Continent, over the last two decades, has made significant advancement in these two areas. Unfortunately, recent developments in few countries have rolled back some of the gains made on these fronts and cast doubts about the commitment of African leaders to sustain the forward march towards democratization and good governance.

On this we can only say that we cannot lose sight of the fact that we in Africa do not have the luxury to enclose ourselves in our respective political enclaves. Our national policy process must be cognizant of the region in which we find ourselves.

That is why it is imperative that our national public policy processes take into account what is happening in other places, particularly in neighboring countries in our region. The Liberian experience in this regard is clear. Instability, violence and economic hardships will cross borders, threatening the peace in other countries.

UN Mission in Liberia

I would like, on behalf of the Liberian people, to commend the Government and People of Namibia for their contribution of troops to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the gallantry and sacrifices they made so that our peace can be consolidated. The Namibian contingent in UNMIL was indeed true representatives of the values you all stand for and their performance was exemplary. We all are proud of their accomplishment and

I wish to express deepest gratitude on behalf of the Liberian people.

Finally, my presence in Namibia is evidence of my own desire and my country's to forge closer bilateral cooperation in all spheres with the Republic of Namibia. We have had the opportunity during this visit to observe the tremendous progress you have made as a nation, in so short a period of time despite the constraints and terms of national endowment.

We have exchanged views with the President and officials of Government and are convinced that there is scope for collaboration between our two countries. We were able to see your diamond industry in operation and have just returned from Walvis Bay where we shared in the experience and development of your fishing industry.

One of the highlights of my trip was a visit to the Moses van der Byl School where a large number of the 1400 students greeted me with happiness, showed me their desire to learn and gave a demonstration of culture from one of your regions. I was also received with warmth last night, at a gathering of women from many parts of Namibia. Some of you were there with me. I treasure all these memories and am going back to Liberia with them in my heart.

THE LIFE OF ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF

Ellen Johnson was born on 29 October 1938 in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, amongst the descendents of original colonists of Liberia – the ex-African slaves from America, who promptly on arrival set about enslaving the indigenous people using the social system of their old American masters as a basis for their new society. These descendants are known in Liberia as Americo-Liberians. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is Liberia's first elected female president, as well as the first elected female leader on the African Continent.

The social inequalities between indigenous Liberians and the Americo-Liberians has led to much of the political and social strife in the country, as leadership bounced between dictators representing opposing groups (Samuel Doe replacing William Tolbert, Charles Taylor replacing Samuel Doe). Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, often referred to as the "Iron Lady", rejects the suggestion that she is one of the elite: "If such a class existed, it has been obliterated over the last few years from intermarriages and social integration."

From 1948 to 1955 Ellen Johnson studied accounts and economics at the College of West Africa, a United Methodist high school, in Monrovia. After marriage at the age of 17 to James Sirleaf, she travelled to America in 1961 and continued her studies, achieving a degree from the University of Colorado in 1970. From 1969 to 1971 she read economics at Harvard University, gaining a masters degree in public administration. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf then returned to Liberia and began working in President



President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf
Photo courtesy of Die Republikein

William Tolbert's (True Whig Party) government.

She served as Minister of Finance from 1972 to 1973, but left after a disagreement over public spending. As the 1970s progressed, life under Liberia's one-party state became more polarised - to the benefit of the Americo-Liberian elite. On 12 April 1980 Master Sergeant Samuel Kayon Doe, a member of the indigenous Krahn ethnic group, seized power in a military coup and President William Tolbert was executed along with several members of his cabinet by firing squad.

With the People's Redemption Council now in power, Samuel Doe began a purge of government. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf narrowly escaped-choosing exile in Kenya. From 1983 to 1985 she served as Director of Citibank in Nairobi, but when Samuel Doe declared himself President of the Republic in 1984 and unbanned political parties, she decided to return. During the 1985 elections Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf campaigned against Doe, and was placed under house arrest.

Sentenced to ten years in prison, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf spent just a short time

incarcerated, before being allowed to leave the country once again as an exile. During the 1980s she served as Vice President of both the African Regional Office of Citibank, in Nairobi, and of (HSCB) Equator Bank, in Washington. Back in Liberia civil unrest erupted once more. On 9 September 1990, Samuel Doe was killed by a splinter group from Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia.

From 1992 to 1997 Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf worked as Assistant Administrator, and then Director, of the UN Development Program Regional Bureau for Africa – essentially an Assistant Secretary-General of the UN. Meanwhile in Liberia an interim government was put in power, led by a succession of four un-elected officials (the last of whom, Ruth Sando Perry, was Africa's first female leader). By 1996 the presence of West African peacekeepers created a lull in the civil war, and elections were held.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf returned to Liberia in 1997 to contest the election. She came second to Charles Taylor (gaining 10% of the vote compared to Taylor's 75%) out of a field of 14 candidates. The election was declared free and fair by international observers. Johnson-Sirleaf campaigned against Taylor and was charged with treason. By 1999 civil war had returned to Liberia, and Taylor was accused of interfering with his neighbours, fomenting unrest and rebellion.

On 11 August 2003, after much persuasion, Charles Taylor handed power over to his deputy Moses Blah. The new interim government and rebel groups signed an historic peace accord and set about installing a new head of state. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was proposed as a possible candidate, but in the end the diverse groups selected Charles Gyude Bryant, a political neutral. Johnson-Sirleaf served as head of the Governance Reform Commission.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf played an active role in the transitional government as the country prepared for the 2005

elections, and eventually stood for president against her rival the ex-international footballer, Mr. George Manneh Weah.

Despite the elections being called fair and orderly, Weah repudiated the result, which gave a majority to Johnson-Sirleaf, and the announcement of Liberia's new president was postponed, pending an investigation. On 23 November 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was declared the winner of the Liberian election and confirmed as the country's next president. Her inauguration, attended by the likes of US First Lady Laura Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, took place on Monday 16 January 2006.

On 26 July 2007, President Johnson Sirleaf, a divorced mother of four boys and grandmother to six children, celebrated Liberia's 160th Independence Day under the theme "Liberia at 160: Reclaiming the future." She took an unprecedented and symbolic move by asking 25 year old Liberian activist Kimmie Weeks to serve as National Orator for the celebrations. Kimmie became Liberia's youngest National Orator in over a hundred years and delivered a powerful speech. He called for the government to prioritize education and health care. A few days later, President Sirleaf issued an Executive Order making education free and compulsory for all elementary school aged children.

President Johnson Sirleaf is author of: *From Disaster to Development* (1991); *The Outlook for Commercial Bank Lending to Sub-Saharan Africa* (1992); and co-author of: *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building* (2002), a project of UNIFEM.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Johnson-Sirleaf



INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS ENDORSE NC STRATEGIC PLAN

Members of the National Council have in principle endorsed the institution's draft five-year strategic plan at a stakeholders' conference held at the coastal town of Swakopmund from 1-2 July 2008.



Members and staff of the National Council at the stakeholders' conference

In her opening remarks, the Vice-Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams, cautioned that the legislative authority could not add value to the country's development initiatives such as the national Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Plan (NDP3), if all the stops were not pulled out to attain national goals at an optimal level of service provision to the people.

Hon. Mensah-Williams saw the stakeholders' conference as "pivotal because in the absence of input from the key players at the National Council, the hard work that has gone into the preparation of the strategic plan would have been in vain. Just as importantly, time is of essence as we have made a commitment to the Office of the Prime Minister to adhere to the deadline set for us."

Hon. Mensah-Williams, Councillor for the Khomasdal North Constituency in the Khomas Region, requested her fellow MPs to "carefully listen to the queries needing our input and to guide our staff members with professionalism and a deep understanding of what they must surely have encountered through the strategic planning process."

We should also bear in mind, she said, that whilst the draft strategic plan was crafted by staff members, there were institutional issues which the staff hesitated to confirm as definite, and had decided to wait for this platform

to raise those issues. For example, she pointed out, there were strategic initiatives which made reference to one of the parliamentarians' primary responsibilities of upholding the letter and spirit of the national Constitution. Given that it was a task that directly referred to the functions of parliamentarians, parliamentarians should ensure that this was documented accurately. "Our main focus therefore should be to incorporate the desires and aspirations of our people in our day-to-day activities and to build an all-inclusive and consultative lawmaking process," she stressed.

She expressed confidence that the successful implementation of the strategic plan would bring to fruition an exemplary legislative body which prides itself in participatory democracy and a plan attained through loyalty, commitment and vigorous participation by all the stakeholders.

In his closing remarks, the Chairman of the National Council, Hon. Asser Kapere said a strategic plan was imperative and urgent because it would "open up and enhance the potential of the National Council as a public institution to promote and uphold a strong, dynamic parliamentary democracy based on accountability, transparency, integrity, legality, inclusiveness, honesty, trustworthiness and good governance."

The Chairman added that he was pleased that Members and staff of the National Council not only agreed on a revised vision and mission statement for the institution, but had also agreed on key success factors as a means to realise them. To succeed with our strategic plan, Kapere said, the institution needed to be one step ahead during the implementation stage by keeping in touch with the needs and aspirations of the electorate.

"I commend the National Council staff for their hard work on the National Council's Draft Strategic Plan. I know that we will continue to work hard on achieving our institution's goals as a team, with the Strategic Plan serving as a constant reflective mirror, with the ultimate goal of fulfilling the oversight and review functions of the National Council," Kapere complimented.

Day one of the conference, held in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), saw heated debate on the draft vision statement of the institution which was finally adopted with amendments. The financial perspective also attracted numerous queries from the Parliamentarians upon observing that the budget allocations per initiative were misplaced and confusing. The parliamentarians and the secretariat then agreed to refer the budget allocation under this perspective to the Strategic

Planning Committee. Thereafter, an ad hoc committee composed of parliamentarians and members of the strategic planning committee would meet to agree on the revised figures.



Hon. Jhonny Hakaye

SWAPO Party Chief Whip and Councillor for Okalongo Constituency in the Omusati Region, Honourable Jhonny Hakaye, described the conference as imperative, informative and educative. "We came to learn that as stakeholders we cannot do without the other. We all need one another and institutions can be strong if they build up good relations with all their stakeholders," said Hon. Hakaye, agreeing that "all critical issues of mutual concern" were incorporated in the plan.



Hon. Sebastiaan !Gobs

The UDF Chief Whip and Councillor for the Khorixas Constituency in the Kunene Region, Honourable Sebastiaan !Gobs said that a strategic plan was essential for all institutions and showed that Government was serious with the process as all the line ministries were doing it. "For us within the National Council, as members of parliament, it is very much needed that we have got a plan within which to work. This is a five year-plan. We are looking into whether we have achieved, at the end of the day, the goals and the aims that we have set ourselves. As it is a five-year plan, it is a continuous process. I think that everything has been covered because there were guidelines. One is just hopeful that this is going to be implemented as outlined in the plan. The plan needs evaluation and monitoring so that whenever an objective or an item has not been covered within a given period, it can be reviewed. It is a compact plan that has covered everything."



Hon. Ngohauvi Kavetu

The DTA Chief Whip and Councillor for the Opuwo Constituency in the Kunene Region, Hon. Ngohauvi Kavetu described the conference as good in that the National Council discussed how to manage and put up proper channels of governance and understand them. "As such it was a very constructive meeting, which will result in the National Council having direction from now onwards. As far as I can see, all issues on the table were covered and it was also done in such a way for everyone present to see. In my opinion, I am convinced that all issues presented have been adequately discussed."

Ms. Panduleni Shimutwikeni, the Secretary to the National Council, was equally impressed by the conference. "My impression was that the Members were very serious and committed to the strategic plan. Well, there were small issues that were deferred to a specific committee (Strategic Planning Committee), like the financial matters," said the head of the administration who participated in the proceedings of the two-day conference throughout.

Professor Earle Taylor of GILPD Consulting firm and who is also the appointed consultant to the National Council Strategic Planning Committee facilitated the two-day conference.

GOVERNOR URGES MPs TO INFLUENCE POLICIES ON SHELTER

Erongo Regional Governor has appealed to Members of the National Council to influence laws and policies that would give the country's poor in urban areas access to land to enable them to build their own shelters. Governor Samuel Nuuyoma cautioned that if parliamentarians failed to influence laws and policies that were related to shelter and affordable land, the country's national Vision 2030 might be compromised.

The governor made this appeal when he officially opened a workshop for the National Council's Standing Committee on Habitat at Swakopmund on 7 July 2008. According to the governor, the workshop afforded the committee an opportunity to evaluate the challenges facing the country and to map out ways of ensuring decent and adequate shelter for all citizens. "The Istanbul Declaration on human settlements reaffirms global governmental commitment to the objectives, principles and recommendations contained in the Habitat Second Agenda and pledges world-wide mutual support for its implementation," Governor Nuuyoma said.

The governor outlined that Habitat Second Agenda called for commitment: to fulfilling and realising the right to adequate housing; to the goal of sustainable human settlement; to the enablement and participation of key actors at all levels in human settlements and shelter development; to the goals of gender equality in human settlements development; to strengthening existing approaches to financing shelter and human settlements; to enhancing international cooperation and partnership in the implementation of global and national plans of action; to the attainment of the goals of the Habitat Second Agenda; and commitment to observing, implementing and monitoring progress towards those goals.

The National Housing Policy identifies the need to develop a national shelter strategy and a national programme

for housing. The Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD), in partnership with the UN Development Programme for human settlements, have developed an implementation strategy, called the National Shelter Strategy. The launch of the Build Together Programme (BTP) in 1992 was the most significant achievement of the National Shelter Strategy.



*Erongo Regional Governor,
Hon. Samuel Nuuyoma*

The only guarantor for democracy, Governor Nuuyoma said, was people making their own decisions at their own pace. The only guarantor of sustainable development was people participating in setting their own development priorities and implementing and evaluating them. "In pursuance of the Global Plan of Action, the provision of housing was one of the previous centralized functions of (the Namibian) Government that have been recently devolved to regional and local governments," the Governor said.

Mr. George Kozonguizi, speaking on behalf of the UN-Habitat Resident Coordinator, Mr. Simon Nhongo, said land was a limited resource and its ownership often a contentious issue. "The legal and political implications that surround land ownership can often facilitate corruption and conflict. Society's most vulnerable and disadvantaged are the ones who suffer when all is said and done. If we underestimate the value of land, we ignore one of the most basic human rights that exist and the right to a place in this world for every woman, man and child," he warned.

He said the symposium addressed most issues that were related to land

administration, accountability and management in the context of human habitation. All across Africa, countries found themselves in various crucial stages of development where transparency was necessary in all sectors. If these countries are to achieve the political stability and social equality that they strive for, then land management transparency must be prioritized as a core issue, he said.

In Namibia, Kozonguizi explained, the adult literacy rate was almost four times higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Namibia's Human Development Index in the Khomas Region was almost twice higher than that in the Caprivi Region. Although the redistribution of land had been taking place since independence, many disadvantaged Namibians do not have proper access to land and adequate shelter – one of the basic rights. "I believe that this symposium has started with the process of dialogue, with elected leaders who represent the broader spectrum of the Namibian society. It is also my hope that this symposium will begin with the process of educating stakeholders on Habitat Local Agenda 21, particularly the sustainable human settlements delivery that can facilitate equality and equity..."

In her closing remarks, the Chairperson of the Habitat Committee Hon. Ruth Nhinda described the symposium as an effective platform of interaction between parliamentarians and their various stakeholders. "The fact that a spirit of mutual understanding has prevailed during our discussions, points to our collective desire to run functional regional and local authority structures in our areas of jurisdiction," she said.

According to Nhinda, participants had gained the correct insight of what Local Agenda 21 entailed and what it demanded from national, regional, local and traditional leaders. "Each one of us now has an informed opinion on the enormity of the challenges that the nation faces in the provision of affordable public services, including decent human settlement to our communities, especially in the remote rural areas. We have therefore the duty, as direct representatives of rural and urban communities, to facilitate the provision of land for human settlement and to advocate for the introduction of a secure land tenure law," Nhinda said, adding that Namibia had citizens who were in need of shelter and many other basic amenities.

Hon. Nhinda suggested that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development; and the National Council and local authority councilors also participate in similar symposiums in the future. "This is important given the reality that we face common challenges in the provision of services to our communities and hence the need to coordinate our activities. We have much in common such that we need to plan together to uplift the living standards of our communities," she concluded.

The symposium, held in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), draws technical presenters from the UN-Habitat (Namibia); the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development; the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement; the Ministry of Health and Social Services; the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; the National Housing Action Group; the Municipalities of Windhoek and Swakopmund; the Urban Trust

of Namibia; the Association of Local Authorities in Namibia; the Polytechnic of Namibia, the Clay Housing Project of Otjiwarongo; the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia; the National Housing Enterprise; the Habitat Research and Development Centre; and the Namibian Coast Conservation and Management Unit. The Mayor of Rehoboth, Councillor George Dax, also attended the week-long symposium.

CIVIL SERVANTS COMMEMORATE AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY

The Office of the Prime Minister was progressing well in its efforts to set up the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) to train civil servants in various public administration and governance fields. This was disclosed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Libertine Amathila, when she was addressing public servants from different ministries, offices and agencies on 23 June 2008 in Windhoek. Dr. Amathila emphasised that it was befitting to recognise the value and virtue of all public servants throughout Africa and to thank them for the services they were rendering with dedication.

In 2001, African Ministers of Civil Service met in Windhoek, Namibia, for the 3rd Biennial Pan-African Conference. They adopted an Africa Public Service Charter, whose aim is to set standards that would restore prestige and dignity to the African Public Service and raise performance levels and competence in governments.

"It is important to note that in some instances, they do so under extremely difficult circumstances. The public servants are our heroes and heroines – our pride – who never lose their sense of responsibility to the people in the face of adversity and insurmountable challenges. We have a responsibility to play our part in helping those countries that are coming out of the trials and tribulations of conflict and rebuild their public institutions as the

only means that can enable them to effectively deliver services to their people on a sustainable basis," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Dr. Amathila's address was preceded by a video show in which members of the public – from a diverse cultural background – expressed mostly critical views on government services in Namibia. The majority of those interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with public services being rendered at the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration regarding the delay in processing applications for renewal or for new passports, permanent residence permits and birth certificates. State hospitals also came in for criticism because of the long queues which state patients have to endure before they are treated.

"Having heard the views, expectations, and disappointments of citizens in certain aspects of service delivery, it is incumbent on us to improve those services where concerns were raised to enhance citizen participation in governance. Improvement, however, should not just be in those areas that were raised in the video. We must generally strive to improve overall public service efficiency and effectiveness," she said.

The Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged that there were clear concerns from the citizens and users of public services ranging from negative to bossy attitudes and lackluster performance by some public servants.

She said through her recent experience in the regions, she had "noted that supervisors do not monitor the work of their subordinates with the excuse that there is no transport while other departments are able to visit the same communities," citing lack of coordination and communication among the different government institutions.

The 8th Anniversary of the Africa Public Service Day this year (2008) was commemorated under the theme "From Policy to Results-Based Implementation." The main purpose of the Africa Public Service Day is to bring public servants together to commemorate the value and virtue of service delivery improvement to the communities they serve; consider the working conditions of men and women who devote their lives to serve the public; encourage positive interest by citizens in the work of public administration; reward good initiatives; and promote professionalism.

Different government ministries, offices and agencies, including parliament, showcased their services at the occasion which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps accredited to Namibia and the civic organisations.

COMMITTEE HAILS SUCCESS OF GENDER BUDGETING WORKSHOP

According to Helen Leadbetter, Gender Responsive Budgets were tools and processes designed to facilitate a gender analysis in the formulation of government budgets and the allocation of resources. According to her, gender budgets are not separate budgets for women or for men. Rather, they are attempts to break down the government's mainstream budget according to its impacts on women and men.

The Chairman of the National Council Standing Committee on Gender, Youth and Information, Hon. Sebastiaan Karupu, said in his closing remarks that the various presentations were an

eye-opener and a school of thought. "I assure you that as of today, all members of the National Council will proudly, from an informed position, advocate for gender sensitive and responsive budgeting...My request (to fellow members) is that you apply the knowledge and practical skills acquired from this workshop, both at national, regional and constituency levels. To FES (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) thank you for making this workshop financially possible and we will continue counting on you for future assistance."

The way in which national budgets were usually formulated ignored the different, socially determined roles, responsibilities and capabilities of men and women. Budgets formed from a gender-neutral perspective ignore the different impacts on men and women because their roles, responsibilities and capacities in any society were never the same. These differences were generally structured in a way that left women at a disadvantage in society by creating inequality gaps.

Therefore, gender budgets were important tools for analysing the gap between expressed commitments by

governments and the decision-making processes involved in how governments raised and spent money. Gender responsive budgets could contribute to narrowing such gaps. Progress towards gender equality was slow, and this was in part due to the failure to attach money to policy commitments. Overall research showed that not enough attention was given to the impact of allocated resources and this served to perpetuate gender biases, although budgets offered the potential to transform gender inequalities.

Australia was the first country to develop a gender sensitive budget in 1984. In South Africa, parliamentarians together with non-governmental organisations, started working on gender sensitive analysis of budgets in 1995.

India's Union Budgets of 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 were an example of gender budgeting. The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) highlighted for the first time the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general developmental sectors to women. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) directed both the Central and the State Governments to



National Council MPs during a group discussion session

ensure that “not less than 30 percent of the funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women’s related sectors.”

It emerged through the various presentations that there was an increase in the repossessions of properties of the poor, especially houses, because of non-affordability to pay municipal services, rates and taxes that have accumulated over the years. However, it also came to light that most pensioners’ houses were occupied by employed people who are unwilling to pay for municipal services.

It is estimated that 75 percent of households in Namibia consist of those earning a monthly income below N\$2000-00, with over 100 000 households living in 200 informal settlements that have been identified in the country. Government spends N\$4million on informal settlements annually and a need was realised for a national programme to address informal settlements country-wide. Namibia’s Housing Policy of 1991 is being reviewed to cater for decentralization and the review process might be completed by the end of 2008.

The Urban Trust of Namibia (UTN) predicts that Namibia’s urban population growth would hit 35 percent by 2015. According to the representative of the trust, Mr. Sam Keiseb, the national economic growth rate currently stands at three (3) percent or a bit more, with unemployment hovering at 36 percent. This presentation revealed that the lack of skills and competency at most local authorities in the country were a real challenge, compounded by contradictions in the policies and laws, especially with regard to the provision of water and electricity in rural and local authority areas. With the exception of Windhoek, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay municipalities which are financially self-sustainable, it was observed that disaster management was non-existent at most local authorities in the country.

Ms. Sylvia Mundjindi, the Project Officer at FES, said the foundation was aware of many gender inequalities and inequities in many institutions in the country. “We cannot allow the situation to continue. The challenge for us donor agencies is to empower developmental institutions with the necessary skills to address gender inequality within the society. The challenge for policy-makers...is to apply the gender budgeting skills in your daily work and make an impact in your communities. Such actions would not only add value to your organisations and society, but will also motivate donors to fund more developmental activities. The four-day workshop demonstrated that gender inequality can only be addressed if we can change our attitude towards each other. Attitude change can only happen if men and women respect and regard each other as equal human beings with strengths and weaknesses.”

Furthermore, Ms. Mundjindi said, gender inequalities could only be addressed if more economic opportunities were opened up to women and girls to reduce poverty and unemployment. The reduction in poverty and unemployment, she concluded, would then contribute to sustainable development and healthy relationship between men and women.

During day one, a seven-member Resolutions Committee was constituted to work on the resolutions and recommendations that the workshop will adopt for consideration by the whole House of the National Council. A number of recommendations and resolutions were made with regard to Habitat Local Agenda 21; the National Housing Policy; Access to Housing and Services; Alternative Housing Solutions; Security of Land Tenure; and on Sanitation and Rural Water Supply.

NATIONAL COUNCIL STAFF VISIT PARLIAMENT OF ZAMBIA

A two-member team from the National Council's Division Research and Information Services undertook a comparative study visit to the Parliament of Zambia from 18 to 22 August 2008. The aim of the visit was to assist the National Council's Division Research and Information on how to improve its services to Members of Parliament. The visiting staff of the National Council familiarised themselves with the operations, structure and the various activities of the Research Department of the Parliament of Zambia.

The visiting National Council staff met senior officials, such as the Assistant Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and the Clerk of Parliament. Zambia has a unicameral Parliament compared to Namibia's Parliament which is bicameral. The Zambian Parliament has a larger staff component compared to the Parliament of Namibia. A staff component of more than 500 serves a total of 158 lawmakers, including 8 presidential nominees. This translates in a ratio of three staff serving one MP. However, this ratio is deceiving as the total number of staff includes non-officials such as cleaners, handymen, gardeners, Parliament Motel employees and other categories.

Standing in front of the entrance to the Zambian Parliament, one notices a light-blue flag of Parliament, with a mace across it, flying alongside the national one. To us this was another unique sight. Parliament of Namibia does not have a flag of its own. A flock of semi-tamed impalas grazing on the Parliament premises was another interesting sight for us. In fact the impalas are part of the property of Parliament which provides for their health care and feeding.



The National Assembly of Zambia was inaugurated on 26 October 1964

A Dark Day for Zambia

The visit of the National Council staff was marred by the death of the Zambian President. Since the end of June this year, Zambians from all walks of life and religious faiths have been conducting prayers for a speedy recovery of their ailing President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, admitted in a French hospital. On its evening news of 18 August, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) television quoted Vice-President Rupiah Banda as saying that doctors treating President Mwanawasa have described his condition as "serious". The next morning, the state-owned

Daily Times newspaper splashed a lead story, reading: "Levy's condition serious." The Post, a Lusaka-based independent newspaper, had the same lead story saying: "Levy's illness worsens." This news caused anxiety and pandemonium among Zambians. The death of the Zambian President was announced on 19 August 2008. President Mwanawasa passed on at 10:30 that morning. A state of despair and hopelessness engulfed most of the Parliamentary staff. The Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Mr. Amusaa Mwanamwambwa suspended the sittings of Parliament indefinitely as the national flag and that of Parliament were lowered to fly at half mast.



Parliament suspended its sittings following the news of the death of President Mwanawasa

Cabinet declared a seven-day national mourning which was later extended to 21 days. Zambia, with a multiple of church denominations, is predominantly Christian and God revering. The three main churches in the country – the Roman Catholic Church of Zambia, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia and the United Church of Zambia – played a major role in conducting national mourning services across the country. The majority of Zambians respected President Mwanawasa “He has gone with a vision. He had a vision and a purpose,” cried one mourner on ZNBC. “I hope the Lord will provide us with another leader like him,” said Tanganyika Francis, a Parliament staff.

On the whole, Zambians have described Mwanawasa in various positive forms, as a caring President, a brilliant lawyer, and an ardent farmer.”

UNIP, the veteran opposition political party described Mwanawasa’s death as “a tragedy to the nation and a dark day for Zambia.” Adding that the late Mwanawasa had “demonstrated that Zambians can live as a family” because he was “committed to the wellbeing of all Zambians.” Under the leadership of Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, UNIP ruled Zambia between 1964 and 1991 with majority seats in Parliament. Today, the party that governed Zambia based on “one-party participatory democracy” has one seat out of the country’s 158-seat National Assembly.

Dr. Kaunda personally described the late Mwanawasa as “a committed campaigner against corruption.” Dr. Frederick Chiluba, Zambia’s second Republican President and founder of the ruling MMD, had called on the nation to “exercise patience and understanding so that the period of mourning will not create problems.” The leader of the Patriotic Front, the main opposition party in Parliament which broke away from the MMD, described the death of Mwanawasa as the “most devastating moment” and a “great loss to the country and the world at large.”

The late President Mwanawasa, who, according to ZNBC, owned three farms and a law firm, suffered a stroke while attending an African Union (AU) Summit at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh on 29 June this year. He was transferred from Egypt to the Percy Military Hospital in Paris, France, where he died on 19 August 2008. Mwanawasa, 59, was buried in Lusaka on 3 September, the date he was supposed to celebrate his 60th birthday.

ZAMBIAN SCHOOL VISITS PARLIAMENT

Forty six Grade 12 pupils and six teachers from the Rhodes Park School in Lusaka, Zambia, undertook an educational tour of Namibia for the eighth time from 2-10 August 2008.

The pupils visited the coastal town of Swakopmund, the Palm Beach and the Marine Information and Research Centre. While in Walvis Bay, the pupils visited the Port of Walvis Bay (Nampont), before proceeding to Henties Bay, the Cape Cross Seal Colony and Dune Seven – the highest sand dune in Southern Africa.

In Windhoek the pupils paid a courtesy call on the University of Namibia, the National Museums and the Parliament, among others. At Parliament, the pupils were briefed on how Namibia’s two Houses of Parliament function, which invoked many questions from the learners.

According to the programme of the visitors, the aims and objectives of the tour, “is very significant to pupils in Grade 12 as they will be preparing to leave the school for higher institutions of learning.” Commenting on the trip, Mr. Abraham Katema, one of the learners’ leaders, described the tour as “successful”, a sentiment that was also expressed by the learners upon enquiry. Both the teachers and learners have expressed willingness to visit Namibia again.

PARLIAMENT EXHIBITION STAND TOPS RANKING

Parliament of Namibia won the best award of exhibition stand in the category Government Ministries at the Eenhana Trade and Business Expo held from 26-30 June 2008 at Eenhana town in the Ohangwena region.

The judges visited all stands listed in the category to be judged. The judging was done according to the following criteria:

- Conformity to Theme – 20 points
- Design and Impact – 30 points
- Product Information – 20 points
- Finish Cleanliness – 20 points
- Staff – 10 points.

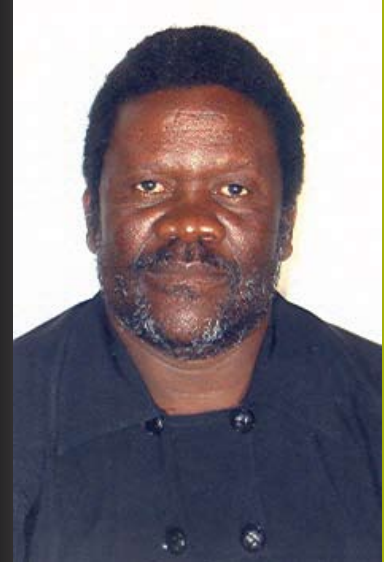
The purpose of judging was to encourage and help exhibitors to achieve high standards of display.

TRAINING PRODUCES PEER EDUCATORS

Six staff members from the National Council attended a peer education training session from 23-27 June 2008 at the eastern border town of Gobabis. The Peer Educators are the key people to the success of the National Council Workplace HIV and AIDS programme. The National Council's HIV and AIDS policy requires the appointment of the Peer Educators. They are responsible for the important component of care and support at the workplace with regard to HIV and AIDS related issues.

The training covered a wide range of topical issues related to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Among other topics covered were: How the HIV virus works, how to avoid infections, opportunistic infections, voluntary counselling, how to live positively with HIV and AIDS as well as HIV treatment. The six Peer Educators participated in the training by practical demonstration and through group assignments on how to convey the acquired skills. According to the training facilitator Ms. Marylou Grobbelaar, the participants displayed passion, dedication and commitment to being Peer Educators. She highlighted that the training would result in positive growth for the future. The staff members who have become Peer Educators for the National Council are: Mr. Brian Chaka, Ms. Anethe Utonih, Ms. Selma Namugongo, Mr. Valentine Awala, Mr. Eric Kletus and Mr. Samuel Kaxuxuena.

FROM THE CHAMBERS



Hon. Hans Booys has been appointed as SWAPO Party Chief Whip in the National Assembly. He replaces Hon. Hage Geingob who vacated the chair after being appointed Minister of Trade and Industry in April this year.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS UNDER ATTACK



Hon. Elma Dienda

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social and Community Development held a consultative meeting with stakeholders on 9 July 2008 at Parliament. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit the views of school principals, inspectors and other stakeholders on the school development funds. The Committee was particularly concerned with the lack of uniformity in payment of school development funds. Earlier this year, Congress of Democrats (COD) Member of Parliament, Hon. Elma Dienda tabled a Motion in the National Assembly highlighting the “exorbitant fees” that some state schools charge, which she said was equal to those charged by the private schools.

Article 20 (2) of the Namibian Constitution stipulates that “primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every

resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge”.

Defending their position on the fund, the educators cautioned politicians and the general public to refrain from the notion of free primary education, claiming that government subsidy to schools was extremely low to cater for their various needs. The principals explained that the difference in school development funds was necessitated by many factors such as the different facilities, infrastructures and activities that each school has to carry out. They said some schools had inherited a wealth of facilities from pre-independence administration that were indeed costly to maintain. Schools had to raise their own funds in order to keep their activities going. Some schools went as far as repairing their broken chairs and benches themselves because government allegedly does virtually nothing to replace broken items at schools.

The school principals referred to the constitutional provision which stipulates that the parents who could not afford to pay school fees could partially or completely be exempted from paying school fees. However, such parents should apply for exemption through the set procedures. It is expected of parents to apply for exemption well in advance in order to enable schools to plan accordingly. Parents, the principals argued, promised to contribute in kind when they wanted their children admitted in schools, but they had never come back until the children got into trouble again. The parents fought tooth and nail if they wanted their children to be admitted and cared less immediately after they secured places in schools, the principal maintained.

Ironically, some principals argued, there were parents who drove luxurious vehicles and at the same time claimed that they (parents) could not afford to pay for their children’s education. It all boiled down to the parents’ lack of commitment to their

children’s future.

Withholding financial reports due to non-payment of school funds was said to be one method that many schools resort to in an attempt to lure parents to the schools for mere discussions. The Committee felt that the practice punished innocent learners who were actually not responsible for paying school fees. Some principals acknowledged that this was inappropriate, but insisted that the practice worked in some way.

The Committee further wanted to know how often school development funds were audited, by whom and who drew up the budget. Khomas Region education inspector reminded the Committee of the schools’ financial year which starts from January to December. Three months after the closure of the financial year, explained the inspector, the financial reports must have been submitted to the regional offices for auditing. The inspector added that many schools had failed to submit their financial reports on time and some did not do it at all. On the budget compilation, the educators revealed to the Committee that the schools and their management proposed the budget and forward it to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the parents’ and school boards’ approval.

From the private school perspective, the representative of Gymnasium Private School disclosed to the Committee that the school charged N\$ 1850.00 per month per child and praised the tremendous co-operation that they received from the parents. The representative suggested that the government paid for the exempted learners rather than placing this burden entirely on school development funds. The principals requested members of the Committee to visit different schools to assess the situation on the ground for themselves.

BILL WATCH

ROAD TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT AMENDMENT BILL [B.2 – 2008]

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Road Traffic and Transport Act of 1999 to provide that certain appointments are not invalid merely due to the failure of the appointing authority to issue an appointment certificate. It further provides for the regulation of the renewal or the replacement procedure of driving licenses. It also authorises the Minister of Works and Transport to prescribe a grace period after the expiry of a license within which the driver may apply for its renewal. However, the grace period does not authorise the driver to drive a motor vehicle on a public road.

PLANT QUARANTINE BILL [B.3 – 2008]

The Bill provides for the regulation, prevention, monitoring, control and the eradication of plant pests, plant material, beneficial organism and soil. It empowers the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry to establish a National Plant Protection Organisation (plant protection unit) within the Ministry and appoint staff members to the unit to ensure the effective implementation of this Act. The Bill also authorises the Minister to appoint plant quarantine officers.

The National Plant Protection Organisation will be responsible to regulate the movement of plants and plant products within, into and out of Namibia. All plant material, plant pests,

beneficial organism, soil or packaging must be declared and presented to the plant quarantine officers. Importers of plants and plant products must hold permits to import these plants and plant products into Namibia. Any person who fails to comply with this provision commits an offence and, if convicted, will be fined N\$ 20 000 or two years imprisonment or both.

If a plant quarantine officer suspects that any plant or plant product poses any risk for the importation and spread of any pest, he/she may direct the importer to remove the plant or plant product from Namibia or to destroy it. If a plant quarantine officer reasonably believes that a quarantine pest is present on any premises, he/she may notify and direct the occupier of the premises to eradicate or restrict the spread of such pest.

The Minister may prohibit the sale, cultivation, breeding or movement of any plant material, plant pest, beneficial organism or any other thing capable of harbouring or spreading a plant pest for the purpose of protecting plant resources or the environment. The Bill provides that the powers of plant quarantine officers include, amongst others:-

- the right to enter and inspect any premises or land which he/she reasonably believes that it is being used for the sale, breeding, storage or treatment of any plants and plant products;
- stopping many vehicles which he/she suspects are transporting plants or plant products;
- requiring any person to produce a permit or certificate required in terms of the Act; and
- taking samples of any plant or plant product for examination purposes;

STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES GOVERNANCE BILL [B.5 – 2008]

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the State-Owned Enterprises Governance Act of 2006 to make different provision for the date with effect from which the constitution of the boards of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and the appointment of board members becomes effective. It validates the appointment of certain board members who were appointed under the provisions of any law, any constituent document, and memorandum of association or articles of association which have been repealed or amended by the State-Owned Enterprises Governance Act.

The Bill obliges SOEs to submit to the portfolio Minister for approval a statement on the investment policies of the enterprise. Such investment statement must include the standards and procedures to be applied by the SOEs in effectively supervising, monitoring and managing its investments. The statement must indicate the procedure to be followed when an investment matures and the money needs to be re-invested.

STAFF ON THE MOVE

Mrs. Chisengo Nikanor has been appointed as Personal Assistant to the Chairman of the National Council with effect from 15 July 2008. Before her appointment, Mrs. Nikanor had been working for the National Museum of Namibia's Department of Anthropology since 2001. She is a public administrator and anthropologist by profession.



Mr. Heinrich Mbendeka has been appointed as driver at the National Council with effect from 14 March 2008. Mr. Mbendeka, prior to joining the National Council, was employed at the SWAPO Party Headquarters in the same position.

Ms. Audrey Fay Gantana has been appointed as Private Secretary to the Vice-Chairperson of the National Council with effect from 4 June 2008. Ms. Gantana holds a Bachelors Degree in International Relations from the University of Pretoria.



Mr. Petrus Ngula has been appointed as cleaner at the National Council with effect from 9 June 2008. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Ngula worked for the Rossing Uranium as a labourer at Arandis in the Erongo Region.

OBITUARY

SWAPO Party Member of the National Assembly, Hon. Gabes Shihepo died of poor health on 14 July 2008 at the Ongwediva MediPark Private Hospital. He was admitted there a week earlier. Hon. Shihepo, 63, joined Parliament in October 1999, when Founding President, Dr. Sam Nujoma, appointed him as Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting. In March 2000, the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Foreign Affairs were merged. The late Hon. Shihepo became one of the two Deputy Ministers in the combined ministry.

In 2002, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting divorced from Foreign Affairs after which the late Shihepo went back to information as Deputy Minister. The same year, the late Shihepo, a teacher by profession, was elected a member of the SWAPO Party Central Committee. In March 2005, President Hifikepunye Pohamba moved the late Shihepo to the then newly created Ministry of Safety and Security as Deputy Minister, the position he held until his death. Shihepo is survived by four children and three granddaughters. His wife Justina died in 2006. The Parliament Journal conveys its sincere condolences to the children, relatives and friends of the late Hon. Deputy Minister Shihepo.



National Council employee Mrs. Ndapanda Shanyenga Simon passed away due to ill-health on 29 July 2008. The late Mrs. Simon joined the National Council on 15 September 1995 as a labourer. She leaves behind her husband Mr. Kambata Simon and the children. The Secretary to the National Council described the late Ndapanda as one of the exemplary employees at the institution who had earned enormous respect and admiration from management and fellow staff members. The Parliament Journal conveys its sincere condolences to the family, relatives and friends of the late Ndapanda.



A common platform for African peoples and their grass-roots organizations to be more involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent.

THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT : A BRIEF OVERVIEW

By Isabella Skeffers
Programme Officer, KAS

The Pan-African Parliament is the Legislative Organ of the African Economic Community. The body held its inaugural meeting in March 2004 in Ethiopia but now has its seat in Midrand, South Africa.

History of the Organisation

The genesis of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) should be viewed in the broader theme of African unity. The PAP did not emerge as an entity on its own but came about as a result of a series of events. The first of these notable events is the Abudja Treaty which was signed by the member states of the Organization for African Unity (OAU), in May 1991. The Treaty establishes the African Economic Community, with one of the organs constituting the community being the PAP. Article 14 of the Treaty thus provides that –

• In order to ensure that the peoples of Africa are fully involved in the economic development and integration of the

Continent, there shall be established a Pan-African Parliament.

• The composition, functions, powers and organization of the Pan-African Parliament shall be defined in a Protocol providing thereof.

This follows that a Protocol to the Treaty had to be established, in order to provide for the 'composition, functions, powers and organization of the PAP. The first step toward achieving this goal was taken in 1999 when the Assembly (one of the organs created by the Abuja Treaty), came together in Libya and adopted the Sirte Declaration which called for the expedited implementation of the institutions provided for by the Abuja Treaty, which included the PAP. A series of other consultative meetings followed, until July 2000 when the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly approved and adopted the Draft Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament.

Objectives of the PAP

According to the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament (2001), the objectives of the Pan-African Parliament shall be to:

- facilitate the effective implementation of the policies and objectives of the OAU/AEC and, ultimately, of the African Union;
- promote the principles of human rights and democracy in Africa;
- encourage good governance, transparency and accountability in Member States;
- familiarize the peoples of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African Continent within the framework of the establishment of the African Union;
- promote peace, security and stability;
- contribute to a more prosperous future for the peoples of Africa by promoting collective self-reliance and economic recovery;
- facilitate cooperation and development in Africa;
- strengthen Continental solidarity and build a sense of common destiny among the peoples of Africa;
- facilitate cooperation among Regional Economic Communities and their Parliamentary fora.



Permanent Committees of PAP

Ten Permanent Committees were created dealing with different sectors of life in Africa:

1. The Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
2. The Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs
3. The Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters
4. The Committee on co-operation, Internal Relations and Conflict Resolution
5. The Committee on Transport, Industry, Communications, Energy, Science and Technology
6. The Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs
7. The Committee on Education, Culture, Tourism and Human Resources
8. The Committee on Gender, Family, Youth and People with Disability
9. The Committee on Justice and Human Rights
10. The Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline

It is evident from this Article that the PAP is tasked with very important objectives, in that it is the job of the PAP to ensure that integration and economic development in Africa takes place in a responsible way, with due respect for principles of good governance, human rights, and the rule of law.

Namibian Participation in the PAP

As a member of the then OAU (now the AU) and by virtue of its ratification of the above mentioned Protocol, Namibia is also a member of the PAP.

The members of the PAP consist of elected members of the legislative bodies of the different Member States.

From Namibia, the following members were nominated by the National Assembly to represent Namibia in the PAP:

Hon. Dr. Hage Geingob
Hon. Immanuel T. Gurirab
Hon. Haikella Hakaye
Hon. Evelyn Nawases
Hon. Loide L. Kasingo

Conclusion

It is undoubtedly of utmost importance to have an oversight body, such as the PAP, in the Africa of today. Deputy President of South Africa (as he then was), Jacob Zuma put it succinctly as follows:

I think we all agree that one of the most important instruments of the AU is contained in the Protocol calling for the establishment of a Pan-African Parliament. This is so because a parliament in which the voices of all Africans are heard is a necessary tool, not only to deepen democracy but also to give expression to the aspirations of Africans everywhere.

The launch of a Pan-African Parliament will truly herald a new dawn for the peoples of Africa. It would, for the first time, at a continental level, give a voice to elected African representatives to monitor, and hold accountable the leaders of our time.

-Excerpt of address at the Meeting of Parliamentarians on the Pan African Parliament, Cape Town, 30 June 2003. www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/zuma0630.htm

For more information about the Pan African Parliament visit: <http://www.pan-african-parliament.org/>



Namibian Participation in the Pan African Parliament



1. Hon. Dr. Hage Geingob - no longer member of the PAP because he is now part of Cabinet in Namibia. There is now a vacancy, which will be filled by October, in time for the swearing in at the second annual session of the PAP.



2. Hon. Immanuel Tsudao Gurirab - Member of The Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters.



4. Hon. Evelyn Nawases-Taeyele - Member of The Committee on Gender, Family, Youth and People with Disability.



3. Hon. Jhonny Haikella Hakaye - Member of The Committee on Justice and Human Rights.



5. Hon. L. Loide Kasingo - Member of the Committee on Co-operation, International Relations and Conflict; Resolutions.

REGION

27-29 May 2008, Lusaka, Zambia
 Article by Barney Karuombe, Regional
 Integration Officer
 SADC Parliamentary Forum

Noting the rampant energy and indeed electricity crisis in southern Africa in particular, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentarians under the umbrella of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) met in Lusaka to review the energy crisis and propose measures to mitigate and overcome the negative impact of the crisis on the socio-economic development and welfare of the people. Namibia was represented by Hon. Chief Ankama who also chaired one of the sessions. Mr. Kudakwashe Ndlukula, the coordinator of the Polytechnic of Namibia's Renewable Energy Efficiency Institute (REEI) also shared with parliamentarians the value of promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency. In particular, he and other energy and electricity experts urged SADC governments to diversify from the conventional sources of energy to the more abundant renewable and other non-conventional sources such as solar, wind, gas and mini-hydros. The Hon. Kenneth Konga, MP, Minister of Energy and Water Development of Zambia officially opened the meeting and presented the SADC roadmap to addressing the energy crisis. Unlike many other regional meetings, this one included exhibitions an exposure visit by participants to the Kafue Gorge Hydropower Station which is the largest power station in Zambia. At Kafue MPs were exposed to the complexity of setting up and managing a huge power plant which has connectivity to the regional grid and can export and import electricity to and from other SADC member states. MPs also noted that the water being released after usage has the potential to run another huge plant (Kafue lower) if more national and regional investment could be attracted.

Considering that the Kafue Power Station and many others in other SADC countries were commissioned in 1960s and 1970s and only limited substantive investment was generally put in energy infrastructure parliamentarians called for increased public and private sector investment in this sector as otherwise the region and the continent will remain in darkness.

The workshop also emphasized that the regional pooling of resources to develop Inga Dam phase three in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the potential of making the power shortage in SADC something of the past as it will also export excess power to other African states and beyond. Although the relative peace in the DRC and most SADC states create a favourable environment for investors and governments to invest in this venture, the huge capital investment required remains a challenge. Private investors are generally skeptical about investment in the energy sector as return on investment is long term and the political situation does not always remain peaceful and where it does, governments may use their leverage to influence or curtail energy pricing, thus profits. In this regard, parliamentarians agreed to promote a policy and legal framework that will attract investment in the energy sector and electricity subsector in particular. Usually the building of large dams for electricity supply affects local communities and MPs were informed that due caution was taken during the development of Kafue as the local community continue to benefit from fishing and regulated usage of water during and after electricity generation.

Parliamentarians expressed concern that SADC governments were warned about the impending power shortage ten years ago but no proper preparatory measures were put in place and as a result, much of what is happening now is crisis management. Parliamentarians further expressed concern that whilst the majority of people (70%) live in the rural areas on average only 5% have access to electricity and the current power shortage is likely to slow down rural electrification programmes in many of the SADC member states. Since women are the torch bearers in managing rural economies, the implications on women and children's livelihoods are dire. Participants also committed to ensuring

that the SADC Energy Protocol of 1996 and other related regional instruments be domesticated and harmonized in order to ensure better results. Parliamentarians as representatives of the people who are affected by the energy crisis demanded that they be fully and continuously appraised by the Executive of measures at both the national and regional levels taken to mitigate and address the current energy crisis. In particular, MPs expressed an interest in following up on the implementation of the SADC Energy Ministerial Task Force (EMTF) resolutions. It is believed that the establishment of the long awaited SADC regional parliament could ensure better oversight and monitoring of SADC programmes and protocols for the benefit of the people. Challenges such as those related to energy, trade, environment, human resources and many others require regional approaches instead of national ones and a SADC Parliament is better able to facilitated interventions at that level.

In conclusion, participants emphasized that principles of cost reflective electricity tariffs be applied concurrent with pro-poor measures. It was stressed that the current power shortage should not be allowed to derail rural and peri-urban electrification initiatives and such initiatives should be accelerated to meet the demand. Improved electricity provision to the rural and peri-urban areas will not only serve sustainable developmental objectives but it will also improve on the burdens faced by women and health and education of children. Energy therefore was reiterated as a development imperative as it affects almost every aspect of human life. Whilst medium to longer term plans about the energy sector are being explored, participants agreed to promote energy efficiency and demand side management (DSM) measure as a matter of priority and in this regard encourage energy and other relevant portfolio committees to enhance oversight of the sector.







President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia receiving flowers from the Speaker of the Youth Parliament, Sharonice Bush, as Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab looks on: Photo courtesy of Die Republikein.