



# Parliament

Journal





*Chairman of the National Council, Hon. Asser Kapere (right) with the Ambassador/Head of Delegation of the European Union to Namibia, Dr. Elisabeth Pape. Dr. Pape paid a courtesy call on Chairman Kapere on 25 February 2010.*

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Cover photo:

*The Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), His Excellency Jia Qinglin (left) and part of his delegation at the National Council, 25 March 2010.*

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# From the Editor's Desk

Parliaments around the world are challenged to play a critical role in ending violence against women. They do this through enacting laws that address and punish all forms of violence against women. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) emphasises that legislation provides the political space and sometimes the resources to address violence against women.

Looking at the situation in Namibia, violence against women remains unacceptably high and shocking. One out of three women in the country suffers violence at the hand of a male partner. A spot check from media reports this April already points to at least two gruesome “passion killings” involving male lovers. On April 22 a male teacher at Epembe in the Ohangwena Region shot and killed his girlfriend. The male teacher committed suicide. April 9, a farmer at Aranos in the Karas Region murdered his wife with a revolver in their common house. The husband has been arrested. Jealousy, misunderstanding and conflict within relationships are often cited as motives behind “passion killings”.

Looking beyond Namibia, the picture looks very similar. One out of two women world-wide is a victim of violence inflicted by a male partner; and one out of five is threatened with sexual assault. This is according to findings by the IPU released at the 10th International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in November 2009.

Violence against women happens everywhere – at home, at work, on the streets, in schools, during peacetime and during conflicts, noted the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). UNIFEM stresses that up to 70 percent of women world-wide experience physical or sexual violence by their male partners.

One simply concurs with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia and IPU President, Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, that: “The challenge that all parliaments and all governments face is that we have not done enough, despite the existence of well-documented international instruments to end violence against women. We must adopt laws that specifically tackle violence against women and must have the courage to enforce them.”

## Chief Justice Swears-in Fifth National Assembly

By Fanuel Katshenye

Chief Justice Peter Shivute swore-in Members of the 5th National Assembly (2010-2014) on 19 March 2010 in a ceremony boycotted by parliamentarians-designate from DTA, RP and RDP. The parties boycotted the ceremony pending an appeal which they lodged with the Supreme Court against the High Court's ruling on the November 2009 elections delivered on 4 March 2010. The appeal is set down for 31 May 2010. Until the case is settled, it should be kept in mind that the composition of the National Assembly and Government might be altered, depending on the outcome of the opposition parties' petition.

The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), Republican Party (RP), Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) together with the All People's Party (APP), Congress of Democrats (COD), Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN), Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC), National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO), and United Democratic Front (UDF), declined to accept the November 2009 National Assembly elections results as released by the ECN (Electoral Commission of Namibia) on 4 December, citing "vote rigging" and "irregularity" which they allegedly detected during the counting process. The parties then lodged an urgent application with the High Court, asking the court to give them access to electoral-related material due to alleged "irregularities". The High Court granted the parties access to peruse certain material from 24 December



*Members of the National Assembly affirming to uphold and defend the Namibian Constitution before resuming business of the day.*

2009 until 4 January 2010. This resulted in another application which the parties filed with the High Court asking it to either recount or nullify the elections results altogether.

The High Court heard the case from 1-2 March 2010 and consequently struck it from its roll on 4 March 2010 on technical grounds, thus paving the way for the swearing-in of Members of the 5th National Assembly elected through the 27 and 28 November 2009 National Assembly elections.

Fourteen political parties took part in the race for the 72-seat National Assembly. The participating parties were: APP; Communist Party (CP); COD; DPN; DTA; Monitor Action Group (MAG); NDMC; NDP; NUDO; RDP; RP; South West Africa National Union (SWANU); South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO Party) and UDF. MAG and NDMC did not field candidates for the presidential race and, together with the CP and NDP, failed to secure any seat in the National Assembly.

Nine of the contestants – APP, COD, DTA, NUDO, RDP, RP, SWANU,

SWAPO Party, and UDF – garnered votes ranging from one to 54 seats. In accordance with the results released by the ECN on 4 December 2009, the 5th National Assembly (2010-2014) shall be comprised of the political parties listed in alphabetical order below:

### **All Peoples' Party (APP)**

1. Ignatius Shixwameni

### **Congress for Democrats (COD)**

1. Ben Ulenga

### **Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)**

1. Katuutire Kaura  
2. Phillemon Moongo

### **National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)**

1. Kuaima Riruako  
2. Arnold Tjihuike

### **Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)**

1. Hidipo Hamutenya  
2. Steve Bezuidenhout  
3. Jesaya Nyamu  
4. Agnes Limbo  
5. Anton von Wietersheim

- 6. Kandy Nehova
- 7. Peter Naholo
- 8. Heiko Luckas

**Republican Party (RP)**

- 1. Henk Mudge

**South West Africa National Union (SWANU)**

- 1. Usutuaije Maamberua

**South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO Party)**

- 1. Hage Geingob
- 2. Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana
- 3. Nangolo Mbumba
- 4. Jerry Ekandjo
- 5. Utoni Nujoma
- 6. Alpheus !Naruseb
- 7. Abraham Iyambo
- 8. Petrina Haingura
- 9. Richard Nchabi Kamwi
- 10. Kazenambo Kazenambo
- 11. Joel Kaapanda
- 12. Erkki Nghimtina
- 13. John Mutorwa
- 14. Nahas Angula
- 15. Tjekero Tweya
- 16. Petrus Ilonga

- 17. Theo-Ben Gurirab
- 18. Immanuel Ngatjizeko
- 19. Pohamba Shifeta
- 20. Elia Kaiyamo
- 21. Albert Kawana
- 22. Bernhardt Esau
- 23. Doreen Sioka
- 24. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila
- 25. Paulus Kapia
- 26. Charles Namholo
- 27. Peya Mushelenga
- 28. Alpheus Muheua
- 29. Loide Kasingo
- 30. Priscilla Beukes
- 31. Erastus Uutoni
- 32. Billy Mwaningange
- 33. Marco Hausiku
- 34. Lucia Witbooi
- 35. Angelika Muharukua
- 36. Chief Samuel Ankama
- 37. Uahekua Herunga
- 38. Rosalia Nghidinwa
- 39. Willem Isaack
- 40. Nickey Iyambo
- 41. Sylvia Makgone
- 42. David Namwandi
- 43. Piet van der Walt
- 44. Lempy Lucas

- 45. Isak Katali
- 46. Tommy Nambahu
- 47. Elifas Dingara
- 48. Festus Ueitele
- 49. Juliet Kavetuna
- 50. Moses Amweelo
- 51. Evelyn !Nawases-Taeyele
- 52. Alexia Manombe-Ncube
- 53. Ben Amathila
- 54. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

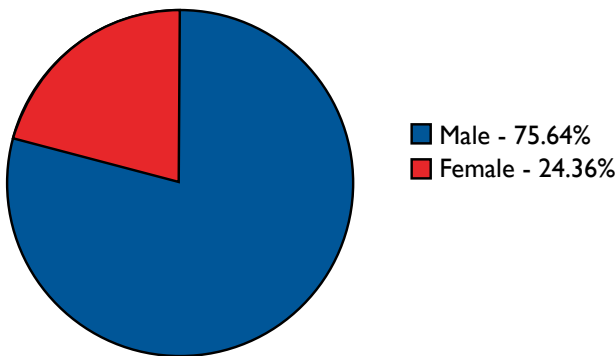
**The Six Non-Voting Presidential Nominees**

- 55. Ms. Sophia Swartz
  - 56. Ms. Maureen Jankowski
  - 57. Ms. Agnes Tjongarero
  - 58. Mr. Stanley Simataa
  - 59. Mr. Calle Schlettwein
  - 60. Mr. Peter Katjavivi
- Ms. Auguste Xoagus who ranked 36 on the SWAPO Party list died of natural causes on 3 December 2009, thus making Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, at number 55, next on the list.

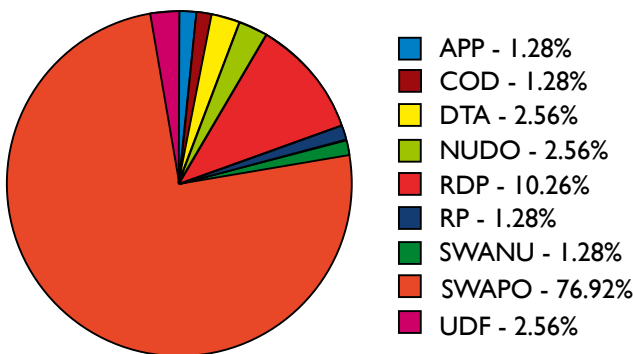
**United Democratic Front (UDF)**

- 1. Justus //Garoëb
- 2. Simson Tjongarero

**Gender representation in the 5th National Assembly**



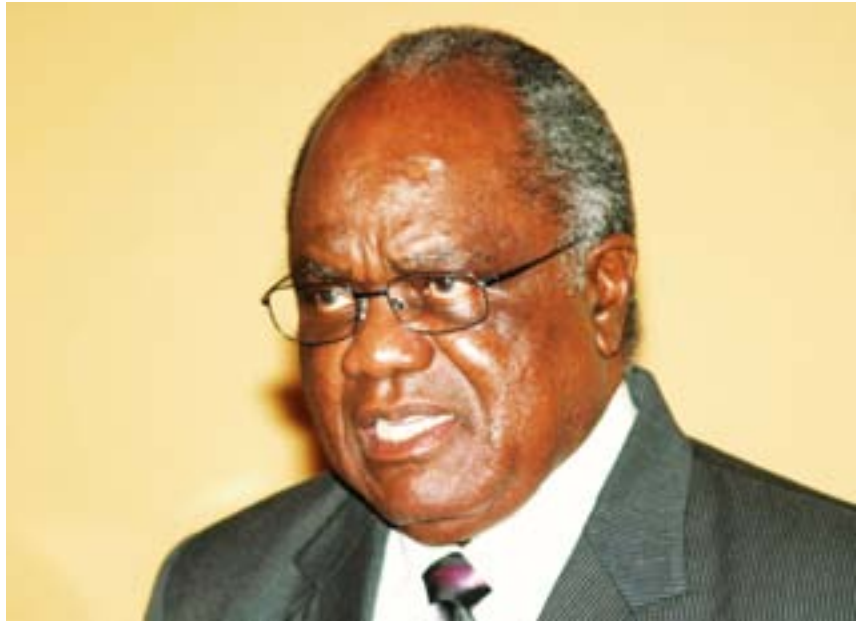
**Party percentage representations in the 5th National Assembly**



**Political parties constituting the 5th National Assembly**

PARTY	M	F	TOTAL
APP	01	-	01
COD	01	-	01
DTA	02	-	02
NUUDO	02	-	02
RDP	07	01	08
RP	01	-	01
SWANU	01	-	01
SWAPO	39 +3	15 +3	54 +6
UDF	02	-	02
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>78</b>

## Economic Crisis Worsened Unemployment and Poverty, President Pohamba



*President Hifikepunye Pohamba delivering his sixth State of the Nation Address in the fifth National Assembly.*

President Hifikepunye Pohamba says the State of the Nation Address which he delivered in the National Assembly on 27 April 2010 was taking place against the backdrop of the worst world economic crises in recent memory. According to the Head of State, the crisis, which started in 2009, had a negative impact on the performance of Namibia's national economy, the implementation of government policies and mobilization of resources to implement public programmes and projects. Below follows the abridged speech of the President.

The negative outcomes of the global economic crisis on Namibia were worsened unemployment and poverty. Decline in commodity prices resulted in scaled down copper and diamond mining activities. This had reduced income, particularly for families affected by retrenchments. To counter the impact of the economic crisis on the economy, Government increased public expenditure by an average of 27.9 percent over the previous Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). During this MTEF, public expenditure is projected to grow by 29.9 percent on average. Some measures employed to mitigate the impact of the crisis include the improvement in the remuneration of public servants; reduction in personal and corporate taxes; increase in the tax threshold exemption brackets for individuals; and VAT zero-rating for some basic food commodities.

Government has embarked upon reforms of performance and accountability of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to ensure value for money and service delivery. SOE performance agreements with line ministries will be phased-in during 2010/11 fiscal year, based on approved SOE business plans. This will enable Government to hold their management accountable to performance.

We continue to address the health needs of our people. One of the major concerns of public health in Namibia is the emergence of the H1N1 influenza. Seventy two (72) cases were confirmed, with one fatality. To limit the spread of infections, Government implemented a response plan, based on the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Our SWAPO Party Government is achieving targets to contain HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We have intensified measures to deal with resistant forms of tuberculosis, scale up provision of antiretroviral (ARVs), and fight stigma and discrimination against those infected and affected. The Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Namibia was launched. This is an initiative, supported

by the UN and other partners, for creating awareness in the communities on maternal and child health. With the assistance of the Government of the People's Republic of China, a state hospital is being constructed at Omuthiya. Completion is envisaged for February 2011.

Accessibility to specialised care has been enhanced with the operationalisation of the Cardiac Unit at the Windhoek Central Hospital. A Medical School has been established at the University of Namibia. The first intake of 57 students enrolled in February this year. The regulation on hospital fees, provided for by the Hospitals and Health Facilities Act of 1994, has been revised. From 1 April this year, vulnerable groups – senior citizens, persons with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children and war veterans – are exempted from user fees at public health facilities.

The implementation of the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) has started in earnest. It addresses the aspects of access, equity and quality in our education system. It seeks to ensure that the resources allocated to this sector translate into quantifiable outcomes.

Programmes are underway to provide in-service training for teachers to improve their competencies in teaching English, Mathematics and Science. This initiative ensures better pass rates in Grades 10 and 12. Our SWAPO Party Government will continue to provide study loans to the youth to mould an educated nation capable of addressing challenges of the 21st Century. I wish to emphasise the need to promote academic excellence at all levels of our education system – from pre-primary phase to tertiary institutions. This goal must be the pre-occupation of all stakeholders, especially teachers and school administrators.

The agricultural sector continues to enjoy priority of our Government. Specific attention is directed at the Green Scheme project for which an amount of 92.5 Million Namibia Dollars was allocated. The project aims at improving food security and nutrition, develop potential irrigation land by 2030 and to increase employment.

In the livestock sector, two outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in the Kavango and Caprivi Regions in 2009 were successfully overcome. This made it possible for the export of beef from the northern and north-eastern communal areas to South Africa and Angola under new agreements negotiated between the two countries.

Projects have been undertaken under the San Development Programme. These include income generating projects, scholarships at tertiary institutions and resettlement of San communities on farms. The provision of social grants to senior citizens, people with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children, and war veterans is continuing as part of the national anti-poverty strategy. Close to 8,000 Old Age Grant applications have been approved. More than 3,000 disability grant applications were approved.

More than 60 qualifying SME building contractors received training on tender procedures and project management. Another group of 150 is receiving similar training. A system

was also designed to issue SMEs with certificates that enable them to receive preferential tender rating by Public Tender Boards. Over 700 SME certificates have been issued to date.

Government has built Industrial Parks across the country. Over 57 percent of the entrepreneurs operating from industrial premises are women. Other support to SMEs includes the envisaged establishment of an SME Bank, and the acquisition and servicing of more land for the construction of industrial infrastructure. Cabinet has approved restrictions on the involvement of foreign nationals in the sub-sectors of retailing, hair dressing and intra-Namibia transport in order to open up more opportunities for Namibians.

A Concept Paper on the National Export Strategy was developed. Plans are underway to establish an Export Promotion Agency and to establish the Namibia Board of Trade (NBT) in keeping with a standing SACU obligation. The NBT will be responsible for tariff setting and investigating cases of dumping of goods into the Namibian market.

Government has proactively negotiated market access for Namibian products at bilateral, regional, continental and multilateral trading levels. These trade arrangements provide preferential market access for Namibian products and alternative sources of imports for the Namibian market. Our entrepreneurs must take advantage of these arrangements to trade more and earn foreign exchange for Namibia. Namibia and other SADC countries are currently engaged in negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union. Although we hope for a positive outcome, there have been some disagreements along the way.

Namibia's uranium mining industry has grown in recent years. New mines have been opened. Others will soon come on stream. To cope with the complexities of this growing sector, cooperation was initiated with strategic development partners

to draft a Uranium Policy, Legislation and Regulations to ensure safety and security of this strategic resource. It also ensures compliance with the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Namibia could become the 3rd largest producer of uranium in the world within the next two years.

Government has granted mining licenses to three investors for cement production – Ohorongo Cement at Otavi; Cheetah Cement at Otjiwarongo; and Karibib Portland Cement in Karibib/Usakos area. Ohorongo project will create about 300 direct and 2,000 indirect jobs. It has an estimated resource to last 300 years. Epangelo Mining Company was registered to enable State participation in the mining sector. It offers direct opportunity to the State to acquire mineral rights and participate in the exploration, mining and beneficiation of minerals of strategic importance.

Tremendous recovery was observed in most fish stocks. This gives us great confidence that our fish stocks will continue to improve. An amount of 350 million Namibia Dollars has been approved for the acquisition of a new modern and larger research vessel to facilitate multi-disciplinary surveys. The fisheries sector is also contributing to poverty alleviation through community aquaculture projects. Such projects boost employment creation efforts, poverty reduction and food security. Some 1.7 million fingerlings were produced, while 241 fish farmers received training.

The Permanent Joint Technical Commission comprising Namibia and Angola has appointed the Cunene Consortium to conduct an updated Techno-Economic Study of the Baynes Hydropower. Government has tasked NamPower to investigate the possibility of developing a small-scale hydropower plant along the Orange River. These investigations are at an advanced stage. The expansion of our national power grid is progressing well with major projects being completed. Government remains committed



to developing the Kudu Gas Field. The Gazprom International has been added as a new partner to the Production License, joining other investors – Namcor, Tullow Oil and Itochu – to exploit the gas resource. The construction of an 800 mega watt power station near Oranjemund is envisaged. Oil and gas exploration is continuing at a steady pace. Several exploration wells have been drilled in many concession blocks. To improve security of supply, NAMCOR will construct a commercial bulk storage facility in Walvis Bay. NAMCOR has also acquired a depot in Otjiwarongo, as part of its strategy to expand into the fuel downstream industry.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism launched the Tourism Policy and has commenced with drafting the Tourism Bill. Once enacted, the law will, among others, facilitate the entry of previously disadvantaged Namibians into the tourism sector. This is in addition to the conservancies where they are currently benefiting. Government will continue to support the Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR) with a view to increasing employment opportunities of our citizens. We will also continue entering into smart partnerships with neighbouring countries to maximize the economic benefits from the tourism sector.

Government is serious about improving the performance of the Public Service at all levels through focused Public Service Reforms. These include the launch of the Performance Management System, encompassing the development of Strategic Plans by all Offices, Ministries and Agencies. The Strategic Plans will guide institutions towards attaining higher levels of service delivery. In the near future, public servants will be required to sign Performance Agreements with their respective institutions.

Another public service reform tool is the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM). Progress has been made in the construction of NIPAM

premises and the development of its curriculum. This institution will transform the Public Service through training, strengthening management capacities, competencies and providing organizational development support.

Namibia will experience faster mobile broadband Internet access speeds soon, thanks to work by MTC to switch over from 3G to 4G Cellular Technology. This will make Namibia the first country to introduce 4G technology in Africa. Namibia is living up to her obligations in terms of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communication and Meteorology which calls for the enhancement of interconnectivity in the region and globally.

About 1.2 billion Namibia Dollars was spent on maintaining roads during the review period. Some major road construction projects underway include the Tsumeb-Katwitwi, the Rundu-Elundu, litananga-Omakange, Okahandja-Karibib, the Gobabis-Otjinene, Katima Mulilo-Kongola, and Oshikuku-Onandjaba Roads. The bitumen road network has grown by 17.5 percent since 2004. Much of this growth occurred from 2008 to date. The target for upgrading roads to bitumen standards, in line with NDP3, is 1,875 kilometers.

Several Feasibility Studies are underway to facilitate planning for the construction of more roads in the country. Regional Road Master Plans for Kavango, Ohangwena, Oshana, Omusati and Oshikoto Regions were revised. The revision of Road Master Plans for Otjozondjupa, Omaheke, Erongo, Kunene and Caprivi Regions are nearing completion.

Namibia's excellent road infrastructure, efficiencies in handling cargo and an accessible port, free of congestion, has enabled Namport to provide a more efficient channel for importers and exporters. It now takes less than 4 days for copper mined in Zambia to reach Walvis Bay. During the year under review, Namport signed long-term

agreements with Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe to establish dry dock facilities in the country.

Namibia's system of Government is based on the doctrine of the separation of powers which is at the centre of our democracy. It is based on an independent and impartial judiciary, the legislature and the executive. We are proud of the good work that our legal system is doing in protecting the rights of our people through constitutionally-based administration of justice. This good work must continue to ensure speedy justice in all matters before our courts. A High Court building was opened at Oshakati. Magistrates' courts were opened at Khorixas and Tsumkwe respectively. This is part of our drive to expand access to justice.

We will continue to pursue a foreign policy based on mutual respect and resolution of international disputes by peaceful means. Over the last 20 years, Namibia has become one of the shining examples of democracy, peace, stability and good governance in Africa. Our institutions of governance are growing stronger each passing year. Our capacity to deliver is improving and we are learning from our experiences and past short-comings to do things better.

I call upon Namibians to maintain unity, peace, stability, tolerance, mutual respect and national reconciliation. I call upon our nation to choose the ethic of hard work, honesty, transparency and patriotic zeal to contribute to nation building. I call upon fellow Namibians to take our country forward on the road to prosperity, social justice, greater freedom and liberty and the achievement of Vision 2030.

Embrace each other irrespective of status in society, race, ethnic origin, religious persuasion or gender. Live up to the noble ideals for which so many of our brave compatriots sacrificed their lives. Honour their memory by rededicating ourselves to the achievement of a shared dream and a common vision – to make Namibia a prosperous nation with opportunities for all to reach their potential.

## CPPCC Chairman Visits Namibia

By Fanuel Katshenye

The Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), His Excellency Jia Qinglin, paid a three-day official visit to Namibia from 25-28 March 2010 as guest of the Chairman of the National Council, Hon. Asser Kapere.

Chairman Jia, during official discussions with Chairman Kapere at the National Council, reiterated China's readiness to cooperate with Namibia in the areas of infrastructure development and construction. During his stay in the country, Chairman Jia paid courtesy calls on President Hifikepunye Pohamba; and on Founding President Dr. Sam Nujoma on 26 March.

The Chinese parliamentarian informed his Namibian counterpart that China would continue to offer scholarships to Namibian students to study in China. In addition, China would send medical doctors to assist Namibia as a way of strengthening ties between the two countries. As a token of friendly sentiment, Chairman Jia, on behalf of the Chinese Government, announced a grant of RMB50 million (an equivalent of N\$54, 1 million) to the Government of Namibia for developmental purposes. The grant was extended through the "Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation" that exists between the two countries. The newly-appointed Director-General of the National Planning Commission (NPC) and former Governor of the Bank of Namibia, Mr. Tom Alweendo, signed the agreement on behalf of the Government of Namibia.

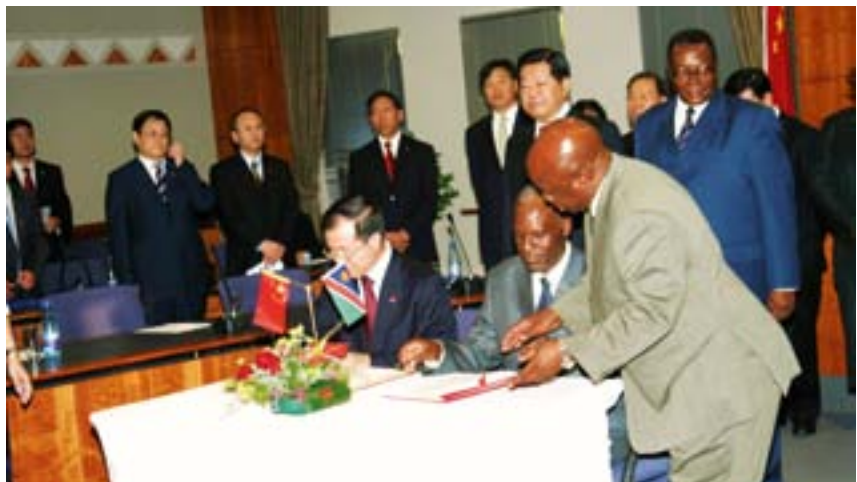


*His Excellency Chairman Jia Qinglin*

Four additional contracts were signed between Namibian and Chinese companies. These were the US\$15 million worth Purchasing Contract for 100 000 Tons of Namibian Coals, signed between Namibia's NBC Pty Ltd and China's Sumstar Group Corporation; the Namibian Marble Import Contract Intention to the value of US\$10 million, signed between Namibia Stone Processing Ltd and China Light Resources Import and Export Corporation. The Purchasing Contract of Namibian Fishmeal worth US\$2, 5 million and the Purchasing Intention of Namibian Fishmeal worth US\$3 million were both signed between China State Development and Investment Corporation (SIDC)

International Trade Co. Ltd and Namsof Fishing Enterprises Pty Ltd. During the same occasion, Chairman Jia, ranking number four on the Chinese leadership hierarchy, donated office equipment to the National Council. The equipment included 40 desktop computers, 34 laptop computers, 40 laser computers, 10 multiple-function machines, 20 digital cameras, 50 card file storage and 50 portable hard drives.

In his welcoming remarks, Chairman Kapere hailed the longstanding ties between the People's Republic of China and the people of Namibia, dating from the "time of our protracted and bitter liberation struggle".



*Chairmen, Asser Kapere and Jia Qinglin witnessing the signing of contracts between representatives for Namibian and Chinese companies.*

Chairman Kapere praised China for being amongst the most loyal supporters of Namibia's independence struggle waged under its liberation movement SWAPO of Namibia. He described Chairman Jia's visit as testimony and re-affirmation of the ever growing bond of friendship, cooperation and solidarity between Namibia and China. This is the third such high level visit to Namibia by the Chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC.

From the previous two visits, the National Council benefited from similar generosity. "Such gesture of solidarity and association will be entrenched in the memories of the Members of the National Council and the people of Namibia, and will never be forgotten," Chairman Kapere assured.

Namibia and China continue to enjoy strong fraternal and diplomatic relations anchored in many years of practical solidarity at both government and governing party levels. It was therefore Chairman Kapere's wish that the delegates, in particular the Chinese business people, would have an opportunity to engage their Namibian counterparts to increase

and strengthen business joint ventures in the future.

At a banquet held in honour of Chairman Jia and his delegation, Chairman Kapere emphasised that China, with other friendly nations, was instrumental in the attainment of Namibia's national independence and the subsequent freedom and dignity of its people. He underlined that the diplomatic relations between the two countries was based on shared values of equal sovereignty, mutual respect and benefit. Chairman Kapere observed that Namibia and China shared fundamental values and common views through existing platforms such as the Joint Economic and Trade Commission between the two countries.

Chairman Kapere believed that the signing of bilateral agreement between the two governments; and contracts between businesses from both countries would offer insights into bilateral co-operation and future joint business ventures. The deliberations during the next few days should be seen as yet another timely mechanism enhancing trade and economic co-operation between the two countries, said Hon. Kapere.

"I wish to reaffirm our strong desire to further develop our historical bond of friendship and to continue expanding bilateral co-operation between China and Namibia. The flagship of our relationship has been our common efforts to eradicate poverty and to ensure collective sustainable development...We will reward that spirit by doing the best for our people and making our own humble contribution to making Namibia and the world a better place for all to live in," he said.

"I found your keen interest in Namibia most profound and I am deeply impressed by your deep insights into the challenges (with which) our people are grappling and your concern for the welfare and development of Africa," explained Chairman Kapere.

According to Chairman Kapere, there were many opportunities for cooperation that the two countries could explore in areas of investment and trade. "We should, therefore, work together to actively explore specific areas to enhance trade, commerce and investments in order to increase economic growth and social development in our two countries," Kapere concluded.



Chairman Kapere receiving a laptop computer as part of the donation of office equipment from Chairman Jia.

## Budget Consolidates Fragile Recovery, Kuugongelwa-Amadhila



*Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila motivating the national budget in the National Assembly.*

When Finance Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila tabled the N\$28, 8 billion national budget for the 2010/11 financial year in the National Assembly on 30 March 2010, she declared: "I have no doubt that we shall all make our maximum contribution to ensure that our country recovers the gains lost through the effects of this (global financial) crisis, and to put our economy back on the high growth trajectory. Such commitment should reflect in the debate on the budget that I lay on the table in the House today."

The minister maintained that the proposed budget was a balanced approach aimed at consolidating a fragile recovery and stimulating the economy which must translate into employment creation, poverty reduction and equitable wealth distribution.

Extracts from the minister's budget speech, described by financial experts as "impressive", "overall good", "bad" and "disappointing to a certain extent", follow below:

Projections show revenue declined by 8.9 percent to N\$22.536 billion in 2010/11 and by a further 1.6 percent to N\$20.940 billion in 2011/12 before picking up again in 2012/13 to N\$26.214 billion, a growth of 25 percent in nominal terms.

Total revenue and grants will reduce to 25.2 percent in 2010/11 and

further to 21.2 percent in 2011/12, before recovering to 23.8 percent in 2012/13. This sharp decline is due to the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) revenue shocks whose income is set to decrease by 47 percent in 2010/11 and a further 45 percent in 2011/12.

To this end, government has taken measures to optimise existing revenue streams and identify new ones. We have introduced measures to strengthen tax laws compliance. This is yielding significant results as evidenced by the significant growth in revenue in the past years. We shall now extend our efforts to non-tax revenue, especially revenue from natural resources to optimise benefits from these resources. We are finalising the new environmental tax that was announced in the 2009/10 budget statement. This tax is envisaged to take the form of a duty on environmental damaging substances to not only raise revenue, but also protect our fragile environment.

Support from donor partners in 2010/11 will amount to N\$265 million through the State Revenue Fund and N\$ 2.2 billion outside the State Revenue Fund. This constitutes 9 percent of expenditure. Grants inside the budget will constitute N\$725 million over the

Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). This support targets human resource development, social welfare, growth enhancement and public finance management. Grants should be channeled through the budget in order to improve financial planning and accountability.

SMEs' development and broad-based economic empowerment will be intensified by additional allocations to the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN), AgriBank, and a Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) banking facility. A total of N\$339 million has been committed over the MTEF. Of the additional granted to public finance institutions, AgriBank will receive an additional N\$62 million over the MTEF to accelerate land reform programme. This promotes agricultural and aquaculture development which in turn creates employment and reduces poverty. AgriBank has further partnered with the Land Acquisition Fund to provide financial assistance to resettled farmers. N\$20 million per annum for the next three years is earmarked for this assistance. Government has agreed to allow contractors awarded tenders to cede their contract income as a security for the loans advanced by DBN. A special bridging facility, at concessional rates targeted for this category, has been

set up and additional N\$100 million is allocated.

I urge potential beneficiaries to fully utilise these new facilities and demonstrate responsibility by honouring their obligations as borrowers. The flexibility to relax collateral requirement should not be abused as it would erode the sustainability of the DBN. It would indeed be a slap in the face of government who trusted borrowers to be more responsible. Potential beneficiaries should use these funds in a manner that ensures that their businesses maximally contribute to the economy and benefit greater society.

Additional funding will cater for educational infrastructures, and expand financial assistance to students; strengthen vocational training and upgrade the skills of teachers. Further, we seek to optimise cooperation with non-state actors, especially churches, who are active in education. We do this by strengthening funding to non-government schools and hostels. In the tertiary field, a medicine and engineering schools will be established. An additional N\$1.25 million is provided to education over the MTEF. This brings the total allocation for the sector to N\$19.539 billion.

Health will receive additional N\$ 366 million to strengthen the fight against HIV and AIDS, TB and Malaria and to upgrade health infrastructure and equipment. Total health allocation increases to N\$8.171 billion over the MTEF, with allocations to increase old age grants to N\$500 per month. Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) grants are increased with N\$30 per month. In addition, school feeding programmes are to be expanded to 200,000 OVCs by 2013, from the current 160,000 beneficiaries.

In line with SWAPO-Party Government policy of promoting rural development, additional N\$257 million is proposed to accelerate provision of proper sanitation infrastructures in rural areas, small towns, villages and urban settlements. This brings total allocation to this sector to N\$2.869 billion over the MTEF. The National Housing Enterprise (NHE) will receive N\$50 million to accelerate provision of low-income housing. Further, NHE will cooperate with the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF) to expand housing schemes for civil servants to un-proclaimed areas. This will boost the housing provision programme, attract skills to and thus support quality health care and education in rural areas.

In terms of the SACU Agreement of 2002, the following increases in excise duties also labeled as 'sin taxes' are applicable with effect from 17 February 2010:

- Natural unfortified wine increased to N\$2.14 per litre;
- Sparkling wine increased to N\$ 6.67 per litre;
- Fortified wine increased to N\$4.03 per litre;
- Spirits increased to N\$84.57 per litre of absolute alcohol;
- Clear (malt) beer increased to N\$50.2 per litre of absolute alcohol;
- Ciders and alcoholic fruit beverages increased to N\$2.52 per litre;
- Cigarettes increased to N\$8.94 per packet of 20;
- Cigarettes tobacco increased to N\$ 9.73 per 50g; or to N\$194.6 per kg;
- Pipe tobacco increased to N\$ 2.70 per 25g; or to N\$ 108.08 per kg;
- Cigars increased to N\$47.66 per 23g; or by to N\$2072.31 per kg.

There are no tax concessions proposed for this financial year.



They all made maximum contribution to putting the economy back on the high growth trajectory (from left): Mr. Tom Alwendo, Director-General of National Planning Commission; Finance Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila; and Deputy Finance Minister Calle Schlettwein

## Legislature Plays Role in Poverty Alleviation

By Dr. Vincent Mwange

The leader of the Namibian delegation to the 122nd IPU Assembly Meeting, Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams says parliaments should undertake a critical review of the political, social and economic situation in their respective countries in the light of the rapid changes taking place in the world and their impact. She said this during the session of the IPU Assembly meeting held under the theme "Parliament at the Heart of Political Reconciliation and Good Governance" in the Thai capital, Bangkok.

Addressing the General Assembly meeting, Honourable Mensah-Williams said: "We are witnessing, in countries throughout the world, the expansion of prosperity for some, regrettably accompanied by an increase of appalling poverty for others. This clear contradiction is unacceptable and needs to be corrected through urgent actions."

She said parliament could play an important role to alleviate poverty and other social evils in our societies. "Our parliaments should utilise the socio-economic and political changes taking place in many parts of the world, the global tendency towards regional integration and the establishment of trading and economic blocs as well as the advances in science and technology. These, I believe, constitute major factors which can guide Parliaments to initiate mechanisms that could assist our governments to enhance cooperation with the international community for development."

The Namibian delegation leader said the socio-economic situation in Africa, for example, remained precarious



*Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams (right) talking to Ms. Z Drif Bitat, IPU Executive Committee Member, and Member of the Parliament of Algeria.*

today despite the many efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively. "Additionally, some of our countries are faced with an often excruciating external debt burden. Despite attempts and strong political commitment to them, it has not been possible to achieve our objective of laying a firm foundation for self-sustained development of our countries."

Honourable Mensah-Williams added that most countries had entered into structural adjustment programmes with the international financial and monetary institutions, mostly at heavy political and social costs. "But these are short-term measures and are by themselves insufficient to completely restore our economies to sound footing and lay firm foundation for future growth. Therefore parliaments can advocate for debt write-offs to relieve the burden on our governments. This in turn will contribute to political stability and socio-economic development in our countries."

She said with the expansion of global wealth of nations, life expectancy, literacy and primary education, access to basic health care and family planning, have increased in the majority of countries and average infant mortality has been reduced, including in developing countries. In addition, democratic pluralism, democratic institutions and fundamental civil liberties have expanded. "However, far

too many people, particularly women and children, remain vulnerable to deprivation, poverty, unemployment, violence, marginalisation and social disintegration. Many people, the majority of whom are women and children, live in abject poverty and go hungry every day. The majority of women, particularly in Africa, have very limited access to income, resources, education, health care or nutrition."

Honourable Mensah-Williams said: "While these problems are global in character and affect all countries, I acknowledge that the situation of most developing countries, particularly in Africa, is critical and requires special attention and action. Countries which are undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation, including countries in the process of consolidating peace and democracy, require the support of the international community. Equally, countries with economies in transition, which are also undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation, require the support of the international community as well".

She stated that the causes were numerous – lack of individual responsibility, bad government policy, exploitation by people and businesses with power and influence, or a combination of these and other factors. She therefore suggested that parliament could ensure the

enactment of a legislation that would lead to sustained economic growth and development, a national environment favourable to social development, eradication of poverty, enhanced productive employment, reduced unemployment, and a fostered social integration.

She further urged parliaments to intensify their resolve for gender sensitive legislation. "I believe that high levels of inequality will affect social cohesion and lead to problems such as increasing crime and violence. Parliament can also ensure gender-responsive budgets as a gender mainstreaming tool for more equitable allocation of resources." She concluded that there was a need to strengthen the capacity of parliament to play a meaningful role in governance issues, adding that the legislature should actively pursue its role as a bridge between government and civil society which was important for democracy.



Part of the Namibian delegation to the 122nd IPU Assembly Meeting (from right): Parliamentarians Arnold Tjiuiko, Barakias Namwandi and staff member Dr. Vincent Mwangi.

## Parliament at Heart of Political Tolerance

By Ndahafa Kaukungwa

Parliament is at the heart of political tolerance, national reconciliation and good governance. It makes laws and thrashes out compromises. "You sit people down, you knock their heads together, and you get them to negotiate. That is what the parliamentary chamber is for." This was said by the Speaker of the National Assembly and President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Honourable Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab when opening the 122nd IPU Assembly Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, held from 28 March to 01 April 2010.

Democracy, Dr. Gurirab said, had much to grapple with, and parliamentarians should remain realistic about what

they can do. "But if we believe in the principles and system of democracy, rest assured (that) it will deliver." The IPU President called for realism, level-headedness and a sense of hope.

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand opened the Assembly of the IPU in Bangkok, wishing the participants success and a smooth and productive meeting. The major parliamentary gathering would be "another crucial opportunity for parliamentarians to consult and discuss issues facing the international community collectively," she said, expressing the hope that the conference would strengthen democracy worldwide.

The Speaker of the Thai National Assembly, Mr. Chai Chidchob, expressed his hope that the world gathering of parliamentarians would help to generate greater opportunities for participation by the public in the many aspects of the democratic process. He referred to the variety of themes before the Assembly and its various bodies under the general

theme "Parliament at the Heart of Reconciliation and Good Governance." Echoing some of those issues, Mr. Prasobsook Boondech, President of the Thai Senate, said the world was still grappling with the imbalances between development and the need to protect a sustainable environment. These distortions, he said, found expression in natural disasters and epidemics, transnational crime and economic crises. "The IPU is well placed to push for the efficient resolution of such problems," he urged.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr. Trairong Suwankiri, referring to the separation of powers under a constitutional monarchy such as Thailand, said he was honoured, on behalf of the executive branch, to support parliament's activities. Cooperation between all branches was needed to solve the problems mentioned by his counterparts, including those raised by international organizations.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in a message read

by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, also alluded to the question of democracy. "Your chosen theme reflects the important insight that elections are not, by themselves, enough to make a democracy. What matters too is the quality of governance after the ballots have been counted. Parliaments play a central role in ensuring good governance," he stressed. Ban Ki-moon added that parliaments' legitimacy could be undermined in places where they were not representative of the population, pointing out that women accounted for less than 19 percent of parliamentarians worldwide and that in some multi-ethnic societies, large minority groups were not adequately represented in the legislature. The message also drew attention to three priorities on which the IPU had an important role to play: the Millennium Development Goals, nuclear non-



*Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab (centre) opening the 122nd IPU Assembly.*

proliferation and disarmament, and IPU, Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams, led the Namibian delegation which comprised of parliamentarians Vice-Chairperson of the National Council (Namibia), also Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting of the Women Parliamentarians of the Namwandi and Johannes Nakwafila. Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams, led the Namibian delegation which comprised of parliamentarians Vice-Chairperson of the National Council (Namibia), also Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting of the Women Parliamentarians of the Namwandi and Johannes Nakwafila.

## Significant Progress Made in Gender Equality

By Dr. Vincent Mwangi

Namibia's quest for democratic governance in the past 20 years has borne witness to significant progress in gender equality through government policies and programmes, which include the domestication of international conventions and national policies, as well as gender-related law reform. This view was expressed by the National Council Vice-Chairperson, Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams at the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York on 11 March 2010.

Honourable Mensah-Williams stated that the Government of Namibia had assented to several international

agreements for the promotion of gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Parliament ratified in 1992; the CEDAW Optional Protocol, ratified in 2000; the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action; and the African Regional Platform for Action which assert the need for gender equality. "These international documents have contributed to the Namibian national plan for gender equality and provided guidelines for all national gender programmes," she stressed.

The Vice-Chairperson further affirmed that "the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on the basis of gender. Furthermore, the Constitution recognises the previously disadvantaged position of women and supports affirmative action for the advancement of women within society by encouraging women to play a full, equal and effective role in the political,



*Hon. Margaret Mensah-Williams*

social, economic and cultural life of the nation", she emphasized. The Namibian Constitution also makes provision for laws to be enacted by Parliament that give women equal opportunities, equal pay, maternity leave and other benefits.

Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams informed the meeting that the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and



the UN CEDAW formed the basis for Namibia's gender policies and programmes. "The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW), has been guided by the National Communication Strategy in Support of the UN CEDAW. The MGECW is also tasked with implementation of the CEDAW," she stated.

She observed that many of the provisions in the UN CEDAW – such as the definition of discrimination, policy measures to end sex discrimination and affirmative action provisions paralleled and reinforced those established in the Namibian Constitution. "The implementation of the UN CEDAW document occurred at the same time as the introduction of the Beijing Platform for Action. All of these international documents provide the basis for the domestication of gender equality at the political structural level and lay the basis for nationally and locally generated definitions of the globalised gender equality movement," emphasized Honourable Mensah-Williams.

On the progress achieved by Namibia so far, Honourable Mensah-Williams stated that the country had made progress in the social and legal gender equality issues. "There has been significant progress towards reform of discriminatory laws, but this has not occurred without resistance from the male counterparts. Parliament has passed laws that govern women's right: Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996); the Affirmative Action Act (No. 28 of 1998); the Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000); and Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003)."

Women have begun to advance in government. There is now a significant number of women in top government positions such as ministers, permanent secretaries, directors, deputy directors and so on. "This is evidence that women's social status has improved considerably. Through government and political party policies, as well as pressure from civil society, there is a high number of

women participating in the political process and making significant strides in being elected in some government sectors. However, women as political leaders do not necessarily translate into women moving gender issues forward. Although there has been progress in women's greater political representation, there has not been a corresponding increase in levels of political influence," she observed.

On women power-sharing and decision-making, the National Council Vice-Chairperson noted that the number of women in political positions had increased, although women were far from achieving 50 percent representations in higher-level decision-making positions. "Political parties have been active in advocating women's rights, especially in the area of political power-sharing. However, there is no political party headed by a woman. Women are also under-represented in political parties at national, regional and local levels."

According to Honourable Mensah-Williams the greatest challenge to women's advancement in gender equality, power-sharing and equality in decision-making was men's negative attitudes and behaviours. "While women struggle for social, economic and legal equality, most men still continue with the outdated patriarchal beliefs, which not only form a stumbling block to this equality, but can also impede women's greater participation in power-sharing and decision-making...Such attitudes also impede women's greater participation in political power-sharing because men with such ideologies are less likely to vote for women candidates," she cautioned.

Honourable Mensah-Williams says despite the progress made by Namibia since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women cannot obtain gender equality in the social, economic and legal spheres of Namibian society without greater participation in power-sharing and decision-making structures. "In Namibia, the struggle for gender equality is not only played

out at the social and legal levels, but also in the political arena. Therefore, development of greater gender equality must simultaneously occur at the social, legal and power-sharing levels," she concluded.

An Inter-Parliamentary Union report shows that, in 2002, Namibia ranked 23rd in the world for women representation in parliament. In Africa, only Mozambique (ranked 10th), South Africa (11th) and Rwanda (21st) outperformed Namibia in the number of women represented in parliament. In 2002, 18 out of the 72 national assembly members were women. This data indicates that although Namibia is in good standing as far as Africa is concerned, and despite the country's political commitment to gender empowerment, Namibian women are still inadequately represented at most levels of government.

## SOEs Operate in Financially Charged Environment, Says !Gobs

By Dr. Vincent Mwangi

The Chairman of the National Council Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Economy Honourable Sebastiaan !Gobs says State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and government agencies play a significant role in the growth of the economy and the overall competitiveness of a country.

"Since they provide much-needed public services, such as housing, water, power, roads, and other services, State-Owned Enterprises and government agencies must be managed in the most professional and efficient manner." He said this at a training workshop



Hon. Sebastiaan !Gobs

themed “the best practices in leading and managing exceptional State Owned Enterprises/Parastatals and Government Agency Boards” held in Windhoek from 11-12 March 2010.

The objective of the two-day interactive training programme was to bring leaders and managers of State-Owned Enterprises and government agencies together to debate and define the key actions and behaviours that led to the creation, development and growth of winning State-Owned Enterprises and government agencies’ Boards of Management.

Honourable !Gobs reminded workshop participants that in Africa, State-Owned Enterprises and government agencies were operating in a dynamic and financially charged environment. “Among their many challenges is the need to align themselves fully within the development requirements of growing economies and to keep finances in good order, driven by efficiency and motivated by a deep commitment to reducing poverty and strengthening regional economies.”

He noted that the leadership and management of State-Owned Enterprises and government agencies were distinct fields of management

because of their unique environment. “They are unique in that their ‘owners’ are the government – the public – thus, the voters. Unlike in the private enterprises where there are clear profit motive and active shareholder participation in adjudicating and monitoring governance and leadership, such checks and balances are not that clear in State-Owned Enterprises and government agencies,” he noted.

!Gobs asserted that public sector institutions found it hard to comply, because they were protected from the competition that encouraged innovation as was the case in the private sector. “Therefore, they must organise themselves in ways that stimulate performance from within,” he advised.

The Standing Committee Chairman emphasized: “Key to the success of any organization or institution is the leadership and governance exercised by the Board. Therefore, quality leadership and governance is crucial for any organization to deliver public services. This leadership, combined with accountable internal management, guarantees that the organization is sustainable and actively contributes to the growth of the country.”

Honourable !Gobs, however, cautioned that many State-Owned Enterprises and government agencies in Africa had been run down due to managerial shortcomings and government interference in the running of the enterprises. “Some are even perennial loss-makers despite the monopoly positions they enjoy. Many State-Owned Enterprises and government bodies in Africa are not professionally-led and managed. Worst of all, there are no special training courses for leading and managing SOEs and government bodies at the institutions of learning in Africa.”

He says often SOEs and government agencies rely more on courts and other legal instruments to resolve their problems, “which is time wasting and takes away the management attention from its core duties”.

!Gobs further stated that SOEs and government agencies should not wash their dirt in the public because “that ends up in them losing their credibility with the public. Contracts are not managed well and, more often, the relationship between the board and the Chief Executive Officers are strained and stressed”.

He informed the workshop of the mandate of the National Council Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Economy which he presides. “The mandate of this Committee is to perform oversight functions on the financial activities of entities that receive public money such as municipalities, village councils and regional councils. The aim is to ensure that taxpayers get value for their hard earned money.”

The National Council Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Economy is guided by Rule 113 of the National Council’s Standing Rules and Orders which states that the Committee on Public Accounts and Economy must:

- Examine annual reports of the Auditor-General, as may be referred to the Council by the Assembly in terms of the Constitution;
- Examine incidents of financial mismanagement in the public sector;
- Deal with questions falling within the ambit of ministries and authorities concerned with Trade and Industries, Fisheries and Marine Resources, Mines and Energy, Economic Affairs, Finance and Environment and Tourism; and
- Perform any other functions as may be referred to the Committee by the Council.

Nevertheless, Honourable !Gobs opines that despite the legislative provisions that promote prudent financial management in the Namibian Public Service, one still finds financial misconducts in the form of unauthorized, irregular, and wasteful expenditure. “This has often led to many public entities getting a qualified

or adverse audit opinion from the Office of the Auditor-General. Clearly the Namibian Public Service still has a major challenge of ensuring adherence to legislative provisions on financial management.”

He says the adherence to the principles of effective, economy and efficiency

in the Public Service Delivery is an important and yet complex area of public management, “considering the recognition that those public resources are limited and that the priorities they should fund are huge”, he emphasised.

“It is important to ensure that the limited resources available are spent

in ways that achieve more value for money. Therefore the people managing SOEs and Government agencies should, in the first instance, possess the necessary qualifications and competencies to deliver on their mandates. Similarly, their mandates should be clearly spelt to ensure accountability,” he concluded.

## Disability Laws Toothless in Absence of Political Will

Despite enacting robust disability laws and policies, governments lack the political will to translate them into action, says a policy study on four Southern African countries.

According to the research study, Disability Policy Audit in Namibia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique, commissioned by the Southern African Federation for the Disabled (SAFOD) in 2008, people with disabilities do not enjoy their rights as full citizens because of weak policy implementation. This was despite that all the four countries had signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (UNCPRD), which holds government accountable for disability rights. In addition, the countries were signatories to other international human rights treaties, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1971 Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons and ratified the 1992 Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade for People with Disabilities.

The study, analysing disability policy and practice, further found that the Constitutions of all countries studied were explicit on the rights of people with disabilities and some had even

passed anti-discrimination disability legislation. The achievements, however, had been handicapped by poor implementation of the laws.

“Ostensibly, all the governments are committed to a rights-based agenda for disability policy and practice,” said the principal investigator of the study, Dr. Raymond Lang, from the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre at the University College in London. “However, from the evidence gathered during the course of this research, it has become abundantly clear that many politicians and senior civil servants do not have a clear and nuanced comprehension of the implications on implementing a rights-based agenda to disability.”

Part of the political inertia was due to the lack of in-depth understanding of the social model of disability as some governments viewed disability from a medical approach. Besides, governments were reluctant to ratify the Convention whose commitments included full implementation of inclusive disability policies, matched by the allocation of appropriate financial, personnel and technical resources. Namibia’s disability laws – though in need of fine tuning – were some of the inclusive in Africa with the country being one of the few in Sub-Saharan Africa that maintained a social safety net for the people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. For example, the Disability Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister in Namibia is writing a “layman’s guide” to the UN Convention in an effort to ensure across the board implementation of disability rights.

Lang (2008) said a possible explanation to the lack of political will in developing genuinely inclusive disability policies was a result of development challenges. Disability, owing to the competing demands of HIV and AIDS, chronic poverty, health care and industrial expansion, was not prioritised in national budgets. The policy audit study sought to identify the extent to which disability issues were included in national policy and legislation in the backcloth of UNCRDP which came into force in May 2008. Key information sources included government statistics, records, laws and policies whose impact was assessed through poverty level and access by people with disabilities to basic facilities. If non-disabled citizens suffered from access to education, good nutrition, medical care, and equal employment opportunities, the situation for people with disabilities was worse.

A semi-structured questionnaire and face-to-face interviews were used to collect data in addition to a literature review and focus group discussions. Samples of the study comprised mainly of government officials, politicians and leaders of Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs).

The “Stepping Stool to Inclusion” – a tool originally developed and used by the UK’s Department for International Development to assess those factors which either promote or militate against the effective social inclusion of disabled people in any given society – was used in analysing the findings. According to the “Stepping Stool to Inclusion”, the state; disability services and DPOs must be equal and interact

with each other in mutually supportive and reinforcing ways.

Governments, Lang (2008) recommended, should ratify the UNCRDP as a starting point to fully implement appropriate national laws on disability. Thereafter politicians should be made aware of the responsibilities of ratifying the Convention and improving the livelihoods of people with disabilities.

However, the study noted that despite disability inclusive laws guaranteeing equal access by people with disabilities to health, education, civil liberties, employment opportunities and other rights, discrimination and stigmatization remained huge obstacles to integration and inclusion.

Die-hard cultural beliefs and myths about people with disabilities being asexual have made people with disabilities vulnerable to sexual, emotional and physical abuse. For example, the study cited cases where women with disabilities have been raped and abused because "HIV positive men believe that sleeping with someone with disabilities will cure them of the illness."

The absence of robust disability statistics for planning, implementing and evaluating disability services, has also weakened the disability agenda in the four countries studied. Without the research evidence, the disability movement has no arsenal to fight discrimination and exclusion from development processes. Hence the research agenda on disability issues should be driven by people with disabilities to ensure it tackles their issues and is supported from the highest political office in the land. The suggestion for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the political sphere was commended for highlighting disability rights as human rights.

"During the last 20 years, Namibia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique have all included questions on disability within their National Census. However, it is highly questionable about how robust these are, and to

what extent such statistics provide an accurate analysis of the social, political and economic situation of disabled people," the research noted.

While disability service provision was the mandate of government ministries, financial limitation has prevented governments from this responsibility. Non-governmental organisations were actively involved in awareness raising, capacity building, rehabilitation and advocacy. However, limited resources and the wide needs meant that people with disabilities in remote rural areas were excluded from the essential services. The study confirmed that a majority of people with disabilities in rural areas were the most impoverished and had limited access to public services and job opportunities.

The study further posed the question of why strong inclusion and integration laws have not resulted in improved livelihoods for a majority of people with disabilities in the Southern Africa. Lang (2008) concluded that it was partly a result of negative attitudes to disability that viewed disability as charity issue and not civil rights. It is not the problem of people with disabilities but of society that has not adapted itself to including people with disabilities as an integral part of that society. In essence disability rights should not be granted by implication but must be regarded as human rights. Poor implementation of the disability laws has perpetuated illiteracy, unemployment, vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, poverty and a poor quality among people with disabilities.

This article was adapted from a research paper published by the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD), a regional network of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) whose main objective is to represent the collective voice and aspirations of people with disabilities in Southern Africa. It was formed in 1986 and today represents over 11 million disabled people in 10 countries through its programmes and projects designed to promote the rights of and welfare of people with disabilities as full citizens of their countries. Source: safod@botsnet.bw

## Beijing Goals Still Unmet, Report Finds

Beijing goals on women in politics are still unmet, a new Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) survey on progress and setbacks of women in parliament reveals. Fifteen years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, overall improvements have been registered in parliamentary and executive spheres of government. Still, the target of gender balance in politics is far off in too many countries, states an IPU report. According to the Secretary-General of the IPU, Anders B. Johnsson, "things have certainly improved, but not nearly as much as we would want them to".

The IPU survey indicates that by the start of 2010, the global average for the proportion of women parliamentarians reached a high of 18.8 percent, compared to 11.3 percent. This equates to an average 0.5 percentage point gain per year. Rachel Mayanja, the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues, noted that ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) had set a target of 30 percent women in leadership positions to be met by 1995. "We are a far cry from this goal. But we are determined to finish the Beijing agenda. We cannot afford any further delays in action to achieve the gender equality goals, including for women political participation," she emphasized.

The report states that while overall progress has been slow, some countries have progressed at a much faster pace than others. The number of parliamentary chambers reaching the 30 percent target now stands at 44 (16.7 percent) spread across 38 countries. This is a six-fold increase over 1995, when just seven chambers in seven countries achieved this goal. The range of 30 percent plus chambers

is diverse and includes 16 in Europe, 13 in the Americas, 11 in Africa and four in the Asia-Pacific region. The number of chambers with a membership of 10 percent or less women members has more than halved, from 62 percent in 1995 to 27 percent today.

The IPU survey on the other hand, reveals that challenges to women's political empowerment remain in all regions. Furthermore, the results of the survey indicates that in several parliaments there have only ever been a handful of women, and the number of parliamentary chambers where no women have seats has not shown any dramatic decline, dropping from 13 in 1995 to 10 today. According to the report women's advancement into leadership positions in parliament has been much slower than the improvement in access to parliament. From 24 in 1995, there were 35 women Presiding Officers at the helm of parliaments at the start of 2010.

The survey indicates that for women in the Executive and Heads of State, overall progress is even slower than at the parliamentary level. According to the survey, women count for just nine out of the 151 elected Heads of State (6 percent) in 2010, up from just eight women leaders in 2005.

The report says on average, women hold 16 percent of ministerial posts. In total, 30 countries have more than 30 percent women members, with Cape Verde, Finland, Norway and Spain achieving over 50 percent women ministers. At the other end of the spectrum, the number of countries with no women ministers has increased from 13 in 2008 to 16 in 2010. The majority of these States are found in the Arab region, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands.

Compared with 2008, the survey reveals, there is more diversification in terms of the portfolios held by women. As with previous years, however, women tend to dominate portfolios related to social affairs, children and youth, women's affairs, and increasingly the environment. Source: [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

## ACP - EU Hold Joint Parliamentary Sessions

By Ndaningweni Nghileendele

The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Parliamentary Assembly and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) held their 20th and 19th sessions respectively in Tenerife, Spain, from 24 March to 1 April 2010. The Parliamentary Assembly of the ACP Group of States enables its members to consult, exchange ideas, harmonise positions and negotiate in a coordinated manner with their European Union counterparts.

The membership of the Assembly, established on 15 April 2005 in Bamako, Mali, is drawn from Members of Parliament of the ACP countries. Sessions with EU counterparts are held four times a year. The ACP Parliamentary Assembly is divided into three Standing Committees – the Committee on Political Affairs, Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade, and the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment. Namibia is currently serving on the Committee on Political Affairs. The Political Affairs Committee met on 24 March to prepare for the joint meeting with the European Parliament counterparts on 27 March 2010 and to review issues of special interest to the ACP countries.

Members exchanged views on the draft report on the "role of free and independent media". They pondered over the question of whether journalists could be free and independent considering the funding they receive from external sources. They noted that journalists often tried to avoid their responsibilities and blame governments instead. Members also briefed each other on the political

situation prevailing in their countries. Leader of the Namibian delegation, Hon. Tommy Nambahu, updated the Committee on the political situation in the country, with specific references to Namibia's 20th Independence Anniversary on 21st March 2010. He also informed the Committee about the inauguration of the President; and the swearing-in of the new Parliament and Cabinet.

The Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly held on 26th March 2010, accredited non-parliamentary representatives from Madagascar and Niger, who were observers at the Assembly without the right to vote, but could speak on issues raised concerning their countries. The Assembly was addressed by its new Secretary-General, Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas who noted that ACP member-states had been faced with many challenges due to the global crises.

Chambas emphasised that climate change and the international financial crisis were far-reaching and needed concerted actions across national and natural boundaries. He noted that cooperation could lead to more development benefits as ACP countries sought to scale up the fight against poverty and recover lost ground due to the global recession. He revealed that the revised Cotonou Agreement, initialed by both ACP and EU, would be signed in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in June this year.

The ACP Assembly agreed to postpone debate on the draft report on the role of free and independent media to the next session in Kinshasa, DRC, in December 2010. Meanwhile, the Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly met on 29 March 2010. It highlighted the struggle against climate change, migration and the need to preserve the production of bananas. Speakers noted that the ACP countries could benefit from the EU, while ACP countries could also benefit from intensive trade and technological transfers from the EU countries. On the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs), it was noted that only a few ACP countries made notable progress. Important to the achievement of the MDGs were gender and political stability. The Assembly urged opposed undemocratic assumption of power, highlighting its correlation with poverty and political instability.

Co-President of the ACP-EU JPA, Mr. Louis Michel applauded the Government of Spain for increasing its development aid budget despite the economic crisis. He highlighted the problem of migration from Africa and the associated loss of lives and brain drain, stressing that the only way to prevent this was to provide development aid at country of origin. Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos said challenges facing the ACP-EU countries were, among others, stability, skewed development, sustainability and the economic crisis.

On Haiti, some speakers appealed for cancellation of that island nation's debt to afford it to start clean. They warned that the re-construction of Haiti should not be a quick-fix and should be fully owned by the government and people of Haiti. They also resolved that the sovereignty of Haiti should not be compromised; adding that trafficking of children in that country for exploitation and sexual abuse was unacceptable. They appealed with UNICEF to prevent child trafficking.

The EU Director-General for Trade Mr. João Aguiar Machado briefed the Assembly on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). A number of speakers cautioned that development assistance and EPAs negotiations should go hand in hand; interim agreements should be suspended in order to negotiate global agreements; EPAs should be negotiated taking into account the economic, social, cultural and environmental situations of the ACP countries; and that EPAs were in contradiction with Article 12 of the Lisbon Treaty.

The 21st Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly will take place

on 28 September this year in Brussels, Belgium. The next Joint Parliamentary Assembly will be held from 2-6 December 2010 in Kinshasa, DRC. The Namibian delegation was led by Hon. Tommy Nambahu, accompanied by Principal Parliamentary Clerk (National Assembly), Mr. NP Nghileendele, and Ms. Elina Ndadi, First Secretary at the Namibian Embassy in Brussels.

## APLESA Parliaments Convene in Malawi

By Paulina Shipahu

The 11th Annual Conference of the Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) was held in Blantyre, Malawi, from 12-16 April 2010. The conference, held under the theme "Innovative Initiatives in Library and Research

Services for Parliaments in the 21st Century", was organised by the Parliament of Malawi in collaboration with the APLESA Executive. It was officially opened by the Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi, Rt. Honorable Henry Chimunthu Banda.

APLESA has the mission, through networking and information resource sharing, to enable parliaments make informed decisions. Its main objectives are to promote cooperation and resource sharing among member countries; promote communication and networking among member-countries; and to establish an effective and efficient information delivery service for APLESA stakeholders.

APLESA is composed of 15 countries, with the following parliaments represented at the 11th Annual Conference: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Seychelles, a new member of the association, attended the conference for the first time. Namibia was represented by Ms. Marianne Geikhoibes, the Director of Library and Computer Services and Ms. Paulina Shipahu, the Library Assistant, both from the National Assembly.



*Delegates to the Annual Conference of APLESA pictured with the Speaker of Parliament of Malawi Rt. Hon. Chimunthu Banda (seated, 4th from left) and the Clerk of Parliament of Malawi, Mrs. Matilda Katopola (seated, 2nd from left).*

## From The Chambers



*Re-elected Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab.*

Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab has been elected Speaker of the 5th National Assembly, with Hon. Loide Kasingo as Deputy Speaker. Dr. Gurirab was the Speaker of the 4th National Assembly. Hon. Kasingo, a member of the SWAPO Party Central Committee, succeeds Hon. Doreen Sioka, MP, who has since been appointed Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

Hon. Kasingo became Member of the National Assembly in 1996. She served as Deputy Minister of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development and Deputy Minister of Home Affairs. From 2005 she has been a backbencher in the National Assembly, serving as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs.



*Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Loide Kasingo.*



*SWAPO Party Chief Whip in the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi*

Hon. Professor Peter Katjavivi has been elected SWAPO Party Chief Whip in the National Assembly. Prof. Katjavivi was a Member of the Constituent Assembly that drafted the Namibian Constitution in 1989. He thereafter became a Member of the National Assembly which was inaugurated in March 1990. He was first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia (1992-2003); Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union (2003-2006); Ambassador to Germany (2006-2008); and Director General of the National Planning Commission (2008-2010).

"I consider my election as a SWAPO Party Chief Whip in the National Assembly as an honour. In this respect, I wish to thank my SWAPO Party (colleagues) for the trust they have shown in me. I have undertaken this responsibility and will continue to count on the support of my SWAPO Party colleagues as well as gaining goodwill of members of the opposition," declared Prof. Katjavivi.

## Staff on the Move



Mrs. Rina Da Cruz has been appointed Chief Librarian at the National Assembly with effect from 11 January 2010. She formerly worked for the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) Fund as Head of the Information Centre.

Ms. Beulla Kazondovi has been appointed Private Secretary to the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly effective from 6 April 2010. Ms. Kazondovi formerly worked as Administrator at the SWAPO Party national headquarters in the Department of Economic Affairs.



Ms. Hilya Immanuel has been promoted and transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister as Chief Accountant with effect from 1 April 2010. She was working for the National Council as Senior Accountant.



## Staff on the Move

Mr. Ndinomwaameni Shinime has been promoted and transferred to the Ministry of Education as Accountant with effect from 1 February 2010. He worked as Assistant Accountant at the National Council.



Ms. Tjeripove Hoveka has been appointed as Private Secretary to the Director of General and Information Services at the National Council effective from 1 January 2010. She previously worked for the DTA Office at the National Assembly.

Ms. Namasiku Lizazi has been transferred to the Office of the Deputy Secretary to the National Assembly as Private Secretary. She formerly worked in the same position at the Office of the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.



## Staff on the Move




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Ms. Justine Katepe has been transferred and promoted as Trade Promotion Officer at the Ministry of Trade and Industry with effect from 1 December 2009. Ms. Katepe worked for the National Assembly as Assistant Parliamentary Clerk.

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Mr. Stanley R. Tsandib has been transferred and promoted as Foreign Administration Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with effect from 1 February 2010. Mr. Tsandib worked for the National Assembly as Assistant Parliamentary Clerk.




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Ms. Helena Udjombala has been on study attachment to the National Council since February 2010. Ms. Udjombala is a final year student of Journalism and Communication Technology at the Polytechnic of Namibia. "People are friendly and helpful at the National Council. I have learnt a lot about the role of the National Council as a law-making body," appreciated Ms. Udjombala. Her six-month attachment will end at the end of June 2010.



Chairman of the National Council, Hon. Asser Koperer (centre) pictured with representatives from Namibian and Chinese companies who signed various contracts, 25 March 2010, through the "Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation" that exists between Namibia and China.



*An eight-member delegation from the Committee on Internal Affairs of the German Parliament (Bundestag) paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Dr.Theo-Ben Gurirab on 15 April 2010. The Bundestag Committee deals with matters relating to security, civil rights, asylum, civil defence, disaster management as well as formulating policy on foreign citizens resident in Germany.*