



Parliament

Journal





Gobabis' Wennie du Plessis Secondary School learners on a tour of Parliament, July 2010.

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Cover photo:
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Speakers and Presiding Officers at their 12th Conference in Kampala, Uganda, August 2009. The Chairman of the National Council, Hon. Asser Kapere was one of the participants.

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From the Editor's Desk

•Fanuel Katshenye

SADC Heads of State and Government met in August this year in Windhoek to consolidate peace and security in the region. Evolving through a number of transformation stages, SADC started as the Frontline States (FLS) grouping in April 1980. The focus was to bring an end to colonial and white-minority rule in Southern Africa. It then changed into the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1989. Eventually, SADCC transformed itself into today's Southern African Development Community (SADC) on 17 August 1992. In actual fact, the FLS dissolved only in 1994 after South Africa's first democratic elections.

It was indeed gratifying to see Namibia taking over the chairmanship of the SADC block from the DRC this year. Congratulations to President Hifikepunye Pohamba for taking on the mantle of chairmanship and best wishes in steering this relatively peaceful regional block to prosperity and much success for the next 12 months. Over the past 30 years of existence, SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) have gone through trying moments en route to realising one of their objectives – deeper regional economic cooperation, integration and cohesion. Some plausible successes the regional organisation has achieved were the attainment of independence and democracy in Zimbabwe (1980), Namibia (1990) and democracy in South Africa in 1994.

All has not been smooth sailing for SADC. The community had to cope with many social, developmental, economic, trade, education, health, diplomatic, defence, security and political challenges. They faced all these challenges in a regional block with abundant natural resources able to roll back the scourge of hunger and unemployment. They faced challenges posed by civil conflicts that in many cases were instigated by former colonial powers and detractors who rejoiced over branding Africa as the so-called “dark continent” where there is no hope other than conflicts and misery.

As SADC Heads of State and Government convened in Windhoek to celebrate 30 years of existence and achievements, so is there high public expectation for beneficial outcome from the summit. I wish SADC leaders, meeting from 16-17 August, to deliberate in the best interest of the region. The region expects SADC to drive its own agenda in its push for greater economic development and regional integration. Gone are the days when former colonial powers dictated from the comfort of their presidential palaces elsewhere on how African leaders should think and behave. Gone are also those days when some African leaders embraced incitement from outside to engage in conflicts with neighbours over petit disputes. The fact that SADC negotiators rejected the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs) in its current form is worth noting. An unwise, hasty decision taken in this regard would negatively impact on the lives and wellbeing of SADC citizens for decades.

SADC media too should play a positive role in projecting an image of SADC in the 21st Century. Eurocentric media had harmed SADC's image at its infant stage and at the peak of the liberation struggles. The African media may have contributed to the harm as they jumped on the Eurocentric media bandwagon by not reporting anything good about Africa, but hunger, poverty and civil conflicts. The time has come for SADC media, and local NGOs, to inform the outside world in equal measure about both positive and negative developments taking place in the region. Not only negative things happen in SADC and Africa, we have many positive stories to tell as well.

As a SADC citizen, I pin high hope on our leaders emerging from the 30th jubilee summit stressing more on tangible regional solidarity, peace and security as the basis for deeper economic cooperation, regional integration and cohesion.

China and Namibia 'All Weather Friends'

• Fanuel Katshenye

The bilateral relations between China and Namibia was based on respect for each others' sovereignty, mutual trust and founded on Namibia's liberation struggle which China had supported morally, materially and financially. The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, His Excellency Wu Bangguo, and the Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), His Excellency Jia Qinglin, expressed these sentiments at separate meetings with the Chairman of the National Council of the Parliament of Namibia, Honourable Asser Kapere. Chairman Kapere paid an official visit to the People's Republic of China from 20 to 28 August 2010 at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart, His Excellency Jia Qinglin.

According to Chairman Wu, ranked number two in the Chinese Government leadership, Chairman Kapere's visit and Namibia's participation at the EXPO 2010 in Shanghai had enhanced relations between the two countries and their legislatures. The economies of China and Namibia, said Chairman Wu, were complimentary to each other, adding that in 2009 China had an economic growth of nine percent which increased to 10 percent in mid-2010. He said China's trade with Namibia was based on mutual benefit and he foresaw trade between the two countries going beyond material trade, stressing that Namibia was important to China in Southern Africa as Namibia could facilitate trade relations with China. Thus, Chairman Wu hoped to witness more similar visits to China by Namibian Parliamentarians.

After 33 years of opening up, Chairman Wu explained, China had embarked upon a massive rebuild of the country and its economy, underlining



Chairman Asser Kapere (left) with Chairman Wu Bangguo

that China placed priority on food security for its 1,3 billion people – the largest population in the world. He emphasised that the bilateral relations between China and Namibia were founded on Namibia's liberation struggle which China had supported morally, materially and financially.

Consequently, he pointed out, a total of 16 visits to China by Namibia's Founding President Dr. Sam Nujoma had further cemented the excellent relations between the two countries after Namibia's independence. Chairman Wu described China as "still one of the largest developing countries" in the world, but admired Namibia's "impressive achievements in national reconciliation" and "economic development" with a view to improving the living standards of its people. Chairman Kapere appreciated the 20

years of diplomatic relations between Namibia and China which, he said, was based on people-to-people and government-to-government collaboration. He appreciated China's position of being not only a "developing country", but also a "world economic power" with steady relations with African countries, hoping that such relations would build bridges of economic development between China and the African countries. He thanked Chairman Wu for the hospitality accorded to his delegation and expressed sympathy with the Government of China about the devastating floods that hit parts of the country during his visit, saying Namibia was also prone to similar catastrophes, caused mainly by drought and floods.

Chairman Kapere endorsed the idea of more MPs from both countries visiting



Chairman Asser Kapere presenting a souvenir to Mr. Feng Guogin (right), Chairman of the CPPCC Shanghai Committee, after discussions.



Chairman Asser Kapere and Chairman Jia Qinglin (right) vowing to enhance parliamentary relations.

each others' countries to exchange information on issues of common interest. The Namibian legislator suggested cooperation in various fields which the Chinese lawmaker undertook to consider seriously. Chairman Wu thanked Chairman Kapere for showing sympathy with the Chinese Government and people over the recent floods, drought and earthquake which was affecting regions in the Sichuan Province.

Chairman Kapere then proceeded on to separate discussions with his

Chinese counterpart, His Excellency Jia Qinglin, the Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). According to Chairman Jia, Chairman Kapere's visit had strengthened relations between the two countries' legislatures. Chairman Jia visited Namibia from 25-28 March 2010 during which he hosted a reception in celebration of the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Namibia and China.

Chairman Jia urged promotion of trade cooperation between the two

countries given that "China possessed the technology and the market" that would facilitate trade with Namibia. He believed that the China-Africa Youth Forum being arranged to convene in Namibia was testimony to mutual cooperation, saying China and Namibia shared common challenges in improving the living standards of their citizens.

Chairman Kapere commended the Government, the Communist Party and the people of China for assisting Namibia during its liberation struggle, underlining that the independence of Namibia was built on that early foundation. He believed that his visit would strengthen the bond of friendship that existed between Namibian and Chinese Parliamentarians and thus make it easy for future similar contact.

Applauding the progress so far made in the Namibia-China relations, Chairman Kapere hoped to see cooperation accelerated and expanded to cover education, mining and agriculture. He reiterated the need to implement the stalled bilateral agreement between the two countries on improving road transportation in Namibia. Chairman Kapere proposed cooperation between the two countries in agriculture and mining which Chairman Jia promised to consider seriously.

Chairman Jia maintained that Namibia was China's "all-weather friend" in Africa as both countries had fought for sovereignty, characterising relations between the two countries as strong and built on a solid foundation over the past 20 years. According to Chairman Jia, the good relations between the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National Council of Namibia was further affirmed by the two high level visits to each others' countries this year during which ideas were exchanged on legislation, governance and improvement in the living standards of their people. He said he was pleased to meet Founding President, Dr. Sam Nujoma at the official opening of the 2010 EXPO Shanghai, emphasising that Dr. Nujoma was an old friend of China whom China would never forget.



The delegation visiting the Namibia Pavilion at the EXPO 2010 Shanghai.

Chairman Kapere's delegation visited various places of economic significance in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Beijing. In Tianjin, the delegation visited, among others, the Dongjiang Trade Port Zone, and the Five Avenue Area where the first Premier of the People's Republic of China, the late Zhou Enlai, underwent school at the then famous Nankai Middle School. In Shanghai, the sites visited included the Namibia Pavilion at the EXPO 2010 Shanghai, the Pudong Sunqiao Modern Agricultural Development Zone; and the Shanghai Electric Heavy Machinery Base. The famous Great Wall was among the places visited in and around Beijing, in addition to the HQ of the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), and the Huawei Technologies Company.



Chairman Kapere's delegation (from left): Director in the Chairman's Office, Mr. Thomas Shipo; Hon. Frieda Siwombe, Hon. Hafeni Ndemula, Hon. Asser Kapere, Hon. Stefanus Mogotsi, Ms. Panduleni Shimutwikeneni, Secretary to the National Council; and Mr. Fanuel Katshenye, Deputy Director for Research and Information Services.

Dr. Gurirab Addresses World Speakers

• Staff Reporter

The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab said that parliaments and the IPU had over the last ten years worked with increasing effect to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and that the union would do more to achieve more goals.

Addressing the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva, Switzerland, Dr. Gurirab said to achieve accountability, democratic institutions should be strong and resist the temptation to trim down the rules of multiparty democracy. He assured participants at the conference, held from 19 to 21 July 2010 and organised by the IPU, that public faith in parliament and how to improve the performance of the legislature according to basic democratic criteria was something that he would take very seriously. Dr. Gurirab's abridged speech follows below:



IPU President and Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, urging democratic institutions to resist temptation to trim down the rules of multiparty democracy.

I take great pleasure in welcoming you to this August gathering. I thank you for coming in large numbers to this summit, the first to be held in Geneva. I express my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, both for allowing us to meet at the United Nations European Headquarters and for honouring us with his presence this morning.

This is a special occasion. It is an event on which I have a very personal perspective. The year 2000, the dawn of the new Millennium, found me,

as foreign minister of my country, presiding over the United Nations General Assembly. My job was to coordinate the many negotiations held among the member states about what would be written in the final text – the UN Millennium Declaration.

One of my most salient memories of that time is of my colleagues, fellow ministers, and many of your colleagues, Speakers of Parliament, requesting me to ensure there was a reference in the text to the vital role of parliaments. That was accepted. In the event, the Millennium Declaration signed by all

the world's governments expressly resolved "to strengthen further cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in various fields, including peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights and democracy and gender issues."

Today's parliamentary summit therefore flows from the Millennium Declaration. It gives us an opportunity to assess progress and give direction. In two months, the United Nations is convening a high-level summit to assess progress towards the MDGs. We all know that the record is uneven. We also know that the economic and financial crisis is not making matters any easier. We call upon you, Mr. Secretary-General, to help us recapture that moment of hope, vision and solidarity that prevailed in 2000 if we are to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

We are here to provide you with our support. Over the last ten years, parliaments and the IPU have worked with increasing effect to help achieve the MDGs. Later today we will table a report setting out progress and identifying further steps we can take. As you will see, the IPU has not been resting on its laurels, and will be doing more in the months and years to come.

On my way to Geneva, I joined the women Speakers of Parliament in Berne. For the sixth consecutive year they met to discuss their role as women Speakers and leaders. At their meeting they debated in particular MDGs 4 and 5 on child and infant mortality and maternal health. I found their deliberations impressive and instructive.

This was my second such encounter. Once again, I benefited from their insights and vision for the future. Together the women Speakers share incredible experience, knowledge and insight into why countries have not made greater progress and what we need to focus our energy on. We are not lagging behind because the laws are not there. It is because we continue to live in male-oriented societies



Dr. Gurirab (centre) at the official opening of the 6th Meeting of Women Speakers, held from 16-17 July 2010 in Berne, Switzerland.

dominated by stale mindsets and prejudices. Vision and leadership are needed in all countries and the women Speakers offer you their support as we redouble our efforts to create more equal and just societies.

I congratulate UN Secretary General for your vision and leadership. I commend you in particular for having achieved agreement to establish a United Nations body exclusively dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment, known as UN Women. This is yet another area where the IPU with its expertise, network and political outreach can be of huge assistance to you. We look forward to establishing a very close working relationship with this new body, building on our experience with UNIFEM, the Commission on the Status of Women, and other entities.

We are here to debate the major crises in the world, to discuss how to improve the common good through greater accountability. We are here to discuss how we in our parliaments, individually, jointly and through the IPU, can work for greater accountability. To achieve accountability, democratic institutions must be strong. They must resist the temptation to trim down the rules of multiparty democracy. They must weather the storms. The question of public faith in parliament and how to improve the performance of the legislature according to basic democratic criteria is something that

I take very seriously.

No parliament is the same. Our parliaments are all marked by distinctive traditions, branded with the imprint of the past. But we must all accept that democracy is an ideal that is never quite perfected in practice. It needs to be constantly reinforced through constructive criticism from within our parliaments and by our peers as well.

The theme of our meeting is securing global democratic accountability in a world in crisis. Over many months, we have seen the global economy reel from the aftershocks of an initial financial crisis. As if to underscore how vulnerable we are, just last week a tiny imperfection in the latest cell phone wiped billions off a company's balance sheet.

It sometimes seems as if we have governments, banks, lawyers and industries, and on the other hand there are people working heroically whose dedication is seldom rewarded. Ending these crises has to mean more than saving the economy. If the people are left out of the solution, there is no solution. Both the UN and the IPU are about "we the people". That is the vision and the challenge.

We must be ready to ask the real, often uncomfortable, questions. Sometimes it seems we have our priorities completely wrong. When

you stop for a moment and think of the staggering amounts that countries spend purchasing weapons, large and small, you may well be justified in asking yourself if much greater security would not be achieved if a portion of the same amounts were spent on the people.

Likewise, corruption represents a clear threat to development. It diverts resources away from development, distorts market mechanisms, undermines the rule of law and destroys public trust. By working harder to ensure transparency and accountability and working more closely in support of national audit institutions, parliamentarians can do more to fight corruption.

As leaders of parliaments we can do more. A year ago, when the IPU met in this town to discuss the financial crisis, I said that the best kind of support we can provide to our governments is stringent oversight. That surely is one service we can provide, to make sure that promises are lived up to. When I say oversight, I mean the best kind of oversight. I mean scrutiny that is so searching that it leads to something being done. Holding government to account in the finest parliamentary tradition of doing the best we can for the people who elected us.

Of course, crises are not only triggered by natural disasters or dysfunctional financial systems. We know many others – food crisis, climate change, man-made disasters, the list is endless. Organized crime is on the rise and terrorism continues, seemingly unabated. The IPU absolutely and unequivocally condemns terrorist acts wherever they occur. I declare the IPU's solidarity with the people and governments of Uganda, Iran and Iraq which have most recently borne the brunt of these cowardly and inhuman acts.

These acts of terror constitute clear threats to peace, democracy and freedom. We can do much more in our parliaments to ensure that policies and laws are in place to implement existing international agreements; and that this fight does not take place at the expense of fundamental human

rights and freedoms. We should also pay greater attention to the need for our governments to reach an early agreement on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Another complex area of crisis concerns nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The IPU welcomes the call for a nuclear-free world made at the recent Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in New York. The IPU has endorsed your five point plan, Mr. Secretary-General, and we are committed to working in tandem with you to mobilize the much needed political will in support of an early agreement to rid this world of the scourge of nuclear arms.

Our role as parliaments is to bridge the divide. It is to reiterate that the common good must come first. And where governments are not able to talk to each other, our role in keeping the channels of dialogue open can be crucial. That is why for the last ten years we have been building bridges between the multilateral and the local, by helping to bring the agenda of a tormented world, the business of the United Nations, back home to the parliaments. There will be no new multilateralism without democracy at its core. And there will be no democracy without strong parliaments.

The Millennium Declaration sets out a

vision for how we can together create a better world. The Heads of State and Government at the time recognized that parliaments and the IPU must be essential parts of the strategy for attaining that vision. In the last ten years we have made considerable progress. But we also have a long way to go. I am convinced that in today's globalized world our parliaments can bring something unique to international cooperation - a deeper understanding of the inner workings of democracy.

I do not advocate a role for parliaments inside the United Nations, but rather strengthened cooperation through the IPU. That is why I ask for your support in achieving a strong relationship between the United Nations and the IPU. Parliaments, and the IPU, can do much to support the accountability that is at the heart of the global agenda. I call on you all to assist us in forging a strategic partnership with the United Nations at the service of people everywhere.

Because of the role I have been privileged to play to help give birth to the Millennium Declaration, I feel more than most a sense of responsibility for its fulfillment. I also know that it will not happen by itself. It needs all of us working together over the next five years if we are to stand there, in 2015, and proudly proclaim that we have met the Millennium Development Goals.



From Left: IPU Secretary-General, Mr. Anders Johnsson, Dr. Gurirab, and the Speaker of the Swiss Parliament, Ms. Pascale Bruderer-Wyss at a press briefing before the start of the conference.



Need For More Financial Systems Oversight

• Staff Reporter

The scale and scope of the world crises that parliaments were called to act upon transcended many disciplines, ranging from the economic, environmental, security, to cultural disciplines. The world was so inter-dependent to the extent that events that occurred in faraway places had instant bearing on countries' individual and collective prosperity and security.

The current global financial crisis, climate change, and terrorist acts attested to this fact. Our countries, irrespective of their economic and military sizes, could all be victims. These concerns were expressed by the Chairman of the National Council, Honourable Asser Kapere, when he addressed the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 19 to 21 July 2010,

Chairman Kapere said the challenge that faced parliaments was ensuring that democracy reflected the values and beliefs of the citizens about how their governments should function. "Thus, any democratic process should give birth to legislations that guarantee citizens' rights and the rule of law. Moreover, to address many of the crises the world is facing, parliaments must promote democratic principles that reconcile the competing political interests, which many a times are the cause of world's adversities," Kapere warned.

The current global economic crisis, Chairman Kapere observed, reminded

parliamentarians of the need for an international financial system that enhanced integrity, transparency and accountability. "Therefore, I urge parliaments to enact laws that will allow authorities to have more oversight and regulation of financial systems, both at national and international levels. We are told that the G20 (Group of Twenty Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors) represents some 85 percent of the world economy and two-thirds of the world population. But, needless to say, the G20 is not accountable and neither does it represent 85 percent of the poor in the world."

On climate change, Chairman Kapere cautioned that there was a need to strike a balance between development and climate change. Our peoples' livelihood is based on agriculture, which was increasingly being threatened by climate change and the lack of development intensified poverty that put pressure on the agricultural resources that sustained the livelihood of the people. Parliaments, especially in developed countries, could influence their respective governments to finance and transfer technologies that addressed the adaptation and mitigation needs in developing

countries, said Chairman Kapere.

The Namibian legislator acknowledged that the financial crises had given rise to fear and distress, and only by confronting the causes rather than the symptoms through cooperation and inclusivity could parliaments play a meaningful role in global peace and security. "We must continue to insist on reform and strengthening of multilateral institutions in a manner that promote democracy, transparency, accountability, gender sensitivity, tolerance, and most importantly consistency in conflict resolutions," he urged.

Chairman Kapere reaffirmed Namibia's continued association with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and commitment towards the achievement of a world-wide parliamentary dialogue that worked for peace and cooperation amongst the peoples of the world and for the establishment of global accountable democratic institutions.

Chairman Kapere was accompanied by National Council Parliamentarian Phillemon Ndjambula, the Secretary to the National Council and the Special Assistant to the Chairman.



National Council delegates to the Speakers' Conference (from left) Secretary to the National Council, Ms. Panduleni Shimutwikeneni, Hon. Phillemon Ndjambula and Hon. Asser Kapere.

NETS Students Explore Lawmaking Process

• Ambrosius Amutenja

Nine students from the Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary (NETS) in Windhoek visited Parliament on 22 July 2010 to see a real example of democracy and to gain a better understanding of the concept. Lecturer in African Social Issues at the seminary, Mrs. Florence Matsveru, accompanied the students.

“We are so grateful that Mr. David Nahogandja, the Chief Liaison Officer at the National Assembly, afforded us the opportunity to visit the parliament building. It was a time well-spent for our students and for me,” said Mrs. Matsveru.

The Chief Liaison Officer briefed the NETS students about the history of Parliament, the process involved in lawmaking and how the two Houses of Parliament interact with each other. The officer also explained the role of citizens in the legislative process.

Mrs. Matsveru, a national of Zimbabwe told Parliament Journal that one of the topics being dealt with in the African Social Issues class was democracy, and Namibia being a democratic country “we wanted to see a real example in order to gain a better understanding of the concept. The reason why we do African Social Issues is that we want to be relevant to the context of Africa, particularly Namibia.”

Responding to a question on why theological students were interested in visiting parliament, Mrs. Matsveru said the church existed on earth, and theology was done to serve God and the people better. Parliament makes decisions for the people we serve. In essence, what we do as a church can influence the decision-making process of our parliament. It is our desire to contribute to good decision-making for the good of Namibia. Also, it is our duty to pray for our leaders. We need to have a good understanding of how they operate so that we can pray more specifically.

Lecturer Matsveru explained: “The students commented that the visit to the Namibian Parliament was very enlightening, and they could connect with what they had just learnt about democracy. One student presented a lecture on democracy and most of his examples were from the Namibian Parliament. Personally, it was my first time to enter a parliament building and I was really impressed with what I saw and what I learned – the arrangement of seats, the accommodation of all political parties, especially the empty

seats waiting for their opposition owners, and the offices for opposition parties. I could tell that Namibia is truly a democratic country. There is a lot I could say, but the important thing is we learned a lot from our visit and I believe Christian leaders need such enlightenment if they were to make a real impact on the lives of the Namibian people.”

NETS, according to Mrs. Matsveru, is an inter-denominational college catering for all churches whose students agreed with the college’s statement of faith and uphold the evangelical values of the seminary. Students are sent to NETS by their churches with a view to becoming pastors in those churches when they finish. However, some become Christian leaders in other capacities. Some go for further studies and others work for government.

Established in 1991, NETS started with classes in January 1992 as a new ecumenical project built on an evangelical foundation. To date, the seminary has about thirty residential students and more than six hundred studying by distance.



NETS ecumenical students seeking to better understand the concept of democracy.

Credit Scheme Rescues Needy Communities

• Fanuel Katshenye

They are self-employed and highly motivated to engage in business to make a living and employ others. They are desperate to access loans from local commercial banks to expand their small-scale businesses. However, the commercial banks shun them for lack of collateral as security for their loans. These are mainly women from the community of the Arandis Constituency in the Erongo Region who have teamed up and turned to the Erongo Micro Credit Scheme for limited loans to expand their businesses.

Erongo Micro Credit Scheme is a public-private-partnership arrangement between Rössing Foundation – a civic organisation; Bank Windhoek – a private enterprise; and the Erongo Development Fund (EDF) – a community trust. The scheme was created in 2008 to represent and cater for those in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector who do not possess collaterals. The potential beneficiaries from the fund are the economically disadvantaged communities in the region who are in desperate need of financial assistance to make business and employ others. The scheme thus responds to small-scale business needs which range from acquiring equipment, stock, and working capital to other micro-enterprise needs in the region. The loan amount that the fund can advance is limited between N\$1000-00 and N\$10 000-00 per business. At least 50 percent of the beneficiaries are required to be female.

The Erongo Development Foundation, a charitable educational trust, was established in 1996 to address the



Hon. Asser Kapere in discussion with potential beneficiaries from the Erongo Micro Credit Scheme at the Arandis Constituency Office, 28 May 2010.

developmental needs of the coastal region. The foundation promotes actions, programmes and projects that foster human development, equitable distribution of resources and access to credit for the disadvantaged in the region. Chairman of the National Council and Councillor for the Arandis Constituency, Hon. Asser Kapere, is chairperson of the Erongo Development Foundation.

Bank Windhoek had until 2008 financed 500 clients – managing businesses all over the country, creating

wealth, income and jobs for many, said Bank Windhoek's Chris Matthee. By September 2008, a total of 70 SMEs were trained in business management; 54 had completed business plans and qualified for loans; while 33 had received loans from the bank, including eight SMEs from the Arandis Town at an incredible 100 percent repayment rate. Fifty-six small and medium enterprises received certificates from Chairman Kapere in 2009 after successfully completing their financial management and business planning training course in Swakopmund.



Mr. Lysias Uusiku

According to the Rössing Foundation's Community and Sustainable Development Officer, Mr. Lysias Uusiku, "small and medium enterprises in the region wish to grow but cannot access credit from the commercial banks because they do not have collaterals. So far it has been proven that people who have no collaterals are trustworthy, dependable and can pay back the loans advanced to them," Mr. Uusiku clarified.

The Erongo Development Foundation, says Uusiku, deposits a quarter of the security money into Bank Windhoek. The bank then administers the whole finance as per bank requirements. This product has a very low interest rate (2 percent) as compared to any other loan provider because it is meant for the rural poor, he disclosed.

Towards the end of May this year, scores of applicants flocked to the EDF to apply for micro-credit to expand their businesses. Among them was Ms. Lydia Awises, the owner of Eren & Chen Needlework based in Arandis. Eren & Chen Needlework recently received a contract from Major Drilling – a local company in the region – to produce protective clothes for its employees. Ms. Awises needs N\$20 000 to expand her needlework business. "I want them to help me because I have difficulties with finances. I produce clothes but there is no market. The place from where I operate is also small. I need a big place to extend my work. I am probably looking for twenty thousand Namibian Dollars and I will be able to pay it back," Ms. Awises related desperately.

The other applicant, Ms. Martha Pietersen, the owner of Paggy Copy Centre, just a stone throw from the Arandis Constituency Office, needed N\$10 000 to expand her internet corner. "I need a little bit of money – ten thousand Namibian Dollars. I work with an internet corner and I just need to extend it so that it can grow from small. I will be able to pay back the loan," assured Ms. Pietersen. Ms. Elizabeth Hoëses, another small-scale

businesswoman and owner of Hoëses Needlework, needed some \$10 000 also to improve her business.

Ms. Helena Gabriel, the owner of Ikondjela-mwene Meat Market in the town needed a loan to add a section to sell boere wors and minced meat in her market. In addition, she intends to employ a male employee strong enough to cut meat into pieces. Ikondjela-mwene is Oshiwambo for "set your-self free".

To qualify as beneficiaries from the credit scheme, applicants have to adhere to certain conditions set by Bank Windhoek. The applicant must be a Namibian citizen or have permanent residency; must be a resident of the Erongo Region; must be the owner and manager of the business; should not have any other employment; should not be recipient of verifiable monthly allowances in excess of N\$2000-00; must contribute at least 10 percent of the capital required as security; must not have other loans for the business; must have been in business for at least 12 months; must be between 21 and 75 years old and capable of running a business. The business must be known within the boundaries of the region. Shebeens, gambling houses, brothels and other "socially undesirable

ventures" do not qualify, the bank cautioned.

The application requirements include a one-page company profile, identification document, a marital certificate (where applicable), at least two witnesses such as a pastor, a councillor, a police officer or a traditional leader to confirm the existence of the business in a given constituency. The successful applicants are provided with pre-funding free training in both stock control and financial management. However, they are obliged to submit a business plan to the selection committee for funding consideration.

According to Chairman Kapere, poverty and unemployment were the major challenges facing the community of Arandis. This had resulted in the inability of some community members to settle their municipal bills in the town. The other challenge is defaulting customers who submit false information when purchasing goods and services on credit. "Due to the efforts towards self-reliance, there are small-scale industries for survival in virtually every household backyard in Arandis. The scheme assists us in our programme of poverty alleviation," Chairman Kapere underlined.



Arandis' women with a business focus (from left) Ms. Lydia Awises, Ms. Martha Pietersen and Ms. Elizabeth Hoëses. At least 50 percent of the credit scheme beneficiaries should be women.

Parliament Beauty Impresses Gobabis Learners

• Ambrosius Amutenja

Fifty learners from the Wennie du Plessis Secondary School in Gobabis visited Parliament on 30 July 2010 to see where their laws are made and to experience how the two Houses of Parliament operate.

Ms. Cori Molelekeng, the teacher of Development Studies and English at this government school who accompanied the learners, told Parliament Journal: "The aim of our visit to parliament is to give our students the opportunity to see and know about the lawmaking body of our government and to see where laws are made; to encourage our learners to become interested in what is happening in their country and know more about our government. They also came to see the parliament building that they only see on television."

Expressing their excitement and admiration of parliament, the learners from this eastern town in the Omaheke Region felt honoured and described their historic visit as an "interesting experience". School Head Boy, Ken Magudu said: "Going to Parliament was a very interesting experience because we got a chance to view the two Houses inside and to know how they operate. However, I expected to see or meet a minister or the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, it was an awesome experience."



Learners from Gobabis' Wennie du Plessis Secondary School on the floor of the Chamber of the National Assembly.

Another learner, Leoni Freeman, said: "I felt very honoured to be in the Parliament and the House of Review. I like the way things are organised, such as the sitting arrangements. The building is clean and one can see that there is order in our government." Learner Oanthata Olibile has a different view altogether: "I was not very much impressed. I wanted to see some of the ministers. But I like the beauty of the building and the friendliness of the staff."

The learners consisted of the top ten academic performers of Grades 8-12 at the school during the November-December 2009 examinations, according to Ms. Molelekeng, who emphasised that the learners' visit to Windhoek was a reward for their hard work. During their one-day visit in the capital city, the learners visited, among others, the national museum, Heroes' Acre, the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) premises and the Polytechnic of Namibia.



Chamber of the National Assembly

Kapere Bids Indian Diplomat Farewell

• Staff Reporter

The Government of India is constructing a Faculty of Mining Engineering at Ongwediva at the cost of N\$5 million which is expected to benefit students of information and technology. This was disclosed by the Indian High Commissioner to Namibia, His Excellency Mr. Tsewang Topden when he paid a farewell courtesy call on the Chairman of the National Council, Hon Asser Kapere, on 17 June 2010.

Chairman Kapere expressed satisfaction with the cordial relationship that exists between India and Namibia.

India is host to 110 Namibian students whose number High Commissioner Topden forecasts to double in the near future. The outgoing High

Commissioner undertook to work towards the enhancement of the living conditions of Namibian students in India when he returned home.



Chairman Kapere (right) receiving High Commissioner Topden.

SADC PF Welcomes Proposed Reforms

• Staff Reporter

The SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) held its 27th Plenary Assembly from 27 May to 5 June 2010 in Livingstone, the southern tourist city of Zambia. This was the second time that the Parliament of Zambia hosted the forum's Plenary Assembly. In 2003, the Assembly held its 14th Plenary in the same city. Held under the theme "Towards Facilitation of Free Movement of Persons in SADC", the 27th Plenary issued a communiqué on 3 June in which the following were discussed:

The Plenary deliberated on Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures; the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); Reform of the Inter-

Parliamentary Union (IPU); the Pan-African Parliament and Regional Parliamentary Institutions and the Trafficking of Women and Children. An update on the status of negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) was presented by a representative from the SADC Secretariat.

Ten Presiding Officers and 46 Members of Parliament from 12 member countries – Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – attended the conference. Mauritius and Seychelles extended apologies.

His Honour George Kunda, MP, SC and Vice-President of Zambia, officially opened the Plenary on behalf of the President of Zambia, His Excellency Rupiah Banda, on 31 May 2010. In his keynote address, Vice-President Kunda reiterated the call by the late President of Zambia, Mr. Levy Mwanawasa and recently by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, for unequivocal

support for the establishment of a SADC Parliament. Vice-President Kunda emphasised the importance of free movement of persons and goods across the region for regional integration and intra-regional trade.

Prince Guduza Dlamini, MP, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Swaziland and Chairperson of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, urged Vice-President Kunda to engage other SADC Heads of State and Government to seriously consider and approve the establishment of a SADC Regional Parliament at the 2010 Summit to be held in Namibia in August 2010. Prince Dlamini reiterated that SADC Parliament would ensure greater benefits for SADC citizens through enhanced ratification, domestication and implementation of SADC Protocols and other decisions and instruments.

Host Speaker, Mr. Amusaa Mwanamwambwa, welcomed delegates and expressed his Parliaments' appreciation for the honour of hosting the 27th Plenary Assembly. He called



Hon. Amusaa Mwanamwambwa, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia.

upon Parliamentarians to continue supporting the fight against HIV and AIDS as the pandemic remains a poignant threat to citizens of the region.

Regina Musokotwane, MP, Chairperson of the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC) welcomed the ongoing constitutional review process in Zambia. She called for the process to guarantee the rights and participation of women in the development and leadership of the country. While welcoming the opportunity presented by hosting the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup by South Africa, the RWPC Chairperson warned against the potential upsurge in trafficking of women and girls during the event.

In her vote of thanks, the Speaker of Parliament of Botswana, Hon. Dr. Margaret Nasha thanked Vice-President Kunda for accepting to officially open the 27th Plenary Assembly. Noting the apparent unequal gender representation at the Plenary, Dr. Nasha expressed hope that one day the representation of women would be more obvious.

While applauding the adoption of the Protocol on the Facilitation of

Free Movement of Persons in the SADC Region by the Heads of State and Government in August 2005, this Protocol is yet to enter into force. Only four countries have ratified it. The Plenary called upon Parliaments to urge their governments to ratify the protocol in order to strengthen socio-economic cooperation and regional integration. This is notwithstanding their fears for national security, spread of communicable diseases, cross-border crimes and influx of illegal migrants.

The Plenary welcomed the proposed reform of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to make it more effective in executing its mandate. Noting that the IPU President, Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, is resident in the SADC Region, SADC PF expressed its support for facilitating the IPU Presidency through providing the necessary human and financial resources.

Mindful of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the targets set for 2015, the Plenary emphasised the need for governments to scale up efforts towards the attainment of these goals and the need for Parliamentarians to increase oversight on this matter.

Having noted the current status of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) negotiations between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)

states on the one hand; and the European Union (EU) on the other, the Plenary reiterated the need for governments to consider the long-term benefits for the people of the Region and urged Parliaments to continue playing the oversight role on this issue.

Noting progress on the finalisation of the Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures in the SADC Region, the Plenary welcomed this development as the outcome document will be an important point of reference on best practices for Parliaments in the region.

The Plenary noted elections held in Namibia in November 2009 and Mauritius in May 2010, which were judged to be free and fair by the SADC PF Observer Missions. The Plenary congratulated these Member States for consolidation of democracy in their respective countries.

Having noted with concern the current gender imbalance in Parliaments where women are in the minority, thus posing a challenge to the pursuit and attainment of the 50/50 gender representation in politics and decision-making positions as required by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, the Plenary recommended greater efforts in the advocacy for the engendering of structures and processes of political parties, especially ahead of primary elections. The Plenary further urged countries that are still to do so to



Speaker of Namibia's National Assembly, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab (left), speaking to Dr. Esau Chiviya, SADC PF Secretary-General

ratify the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

In recognising the important role that the youth plays in SADC in respect of plural democracy and inclusive governance, the Plenary urged continued inclusion of the voice of the youth in the affairs of the SADC Region.

Cognisant of the impact of HIV and AIDS on the SADC Region, and the central political role that national parliament play in ensuring that financial and programmatic interventions are sustained over time, the Plenary underscored the need to guaranteeing that national processes by Parliaments on HIV and AIDS, technical support by researchers and other capacity development programmes, are not compromised. The Plenary further appreciated the support received from the Swedish and Norwegian Governments towards HIV and AIDS programme. It reiterated the need for aggressive resource mobilisation to ensure consolidation of the gains made under the programme, including the Model Law on HIV and AIDS.

The Plenary noted with keen interest the proposal to enhance and operationalise the collaboration and cooperation between the SADC Secretariat and the SADC Parliamentary Forum. The Forum encourages this initiative and generally the cooperation between and within the various regional organisations, in particular the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in order to ensure greater benefits for the SADC citizens through enhanced synergies.

Noting the Secretariat's comprehensive proposed reforms and the accompanying new organogram, the Plenary resolved that the process of the new Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 be the basis for any such reforms.

The Plenary adopted the constitutional amendment to include French as one of the official languages of the Forum. The date and venue of the 28th Plenary Assembly will be announced in due course.

Kenyan Parliamentarians Compare Laws On Pastoral Communities

• Ambrosius Amutenja

A five-member parliamentary delegation from the National Assembly of Kenya visited Namibia in May this year to study Namibian legislation and policies on pastoral people's lives. Kenya has a population of a little over 39,4 million people.

The Kenyan Parliamentarians, mainly from that country's Maasai pastoral (nomad) community, were interested in familiarising themselves with pastoral representation, empowerment and economic activities related to agriculture, tourism, water provision in arid and semi-arid areas. In addition, the east-African nation lawmakers were keen on learning about Namibia's legislative and policy framework that assist pastoral communities to improve their socio-economic situation.



Hon. David Ethuro Ekwee, head of the Kenyan delegation.

The Kenyan delegation visited Uitskoms, a San Resettlement community some 166 km north-east of Okahandja in the Otjozondjupa Region. The San people living at Uitskoms settlement are previously farm labourers dismissed and dumped along the roads by their former farm employers. They were historically marginalised, hunters and nomads by nature.

The Namibian Government has constructed 32 houses at the settlement, a school with two teachers and a clinic with a nurse. Uitskoms Settlement is home to 760 residents, 100 cattle and 50 small stocks of which 20 percent belong to government. It is a 7000 hectare farm where government is busy upgrading its surrounding fence to introduce game farming with a view to attracting tourists to the area and to supplement the income of this marginalised community. Government runs similar projects in six other regions where all income generated is kept in a community trust fund. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry provides training to residents of the farm in crop production, cattle farming and grazing methods.

In the Kunene Region, the delegation paid a courtesy call on Governor Dudu Murorua who briefed them on government's decentralisation policy. The governor was accompanied by the Councillor for the Sesfontein Constituency. From Sesfontein, the delegation visited Opuwo District Hospital in the Opuwo Constituency, the Himba Village in the Okanguati area where they spend half a day interacting with and taking photographs of the Ovahimba community. Here the delegation was fascinated to learn that the Ovahimba and their livelihood closely resembled that of the Maasai and other communities in Kenya.

Found mainly in Southern Kenya (africaguide.com), the Maasai believed that their rain God Ngai granted all cattle to them for safe keeping when the earth and sky split. They worship cattle because it is their main source of economic survival as opposed to education. They prefer to remain nomadic herdsmen, moving as their needs necessitate. This is becoming more difficult in modern times as their open plain disappears.

The Maasai are the southern-most Nilotic speakers and are linguistically most directly related to the Turkana and Kalenjin who live near Lake Turkana in west central Kenya. According to Maasai oral history and the archaeological record, they

also originated near Lake Turkana. Maasai are pastoralist and have resisted the urging of the Tanzanian and Kenyan governments to adopt a more sedentary lifestyle. They have demanded grazing rights to many of the national parks in both countries and routinely ignore international boundaries as they move their great cattle herds across the open savanna with the changing of the seasons. This resistance has led to a romanticizing of the Maasai way of life that paints them as living at peace with nature. Women and young children care for sheep and goats while the young men and boys are responsible for herding the highly esteemed cattle. Formerly, their diet consisted almost entirely of milk and milk products which now includes maize meal and rice for most.



Kenyan delegation (from left): Delegation Secretary, Ms. Perpetual Muiga; Hon. Hussein Ali Mohamed; Hon. Nkoidila Ole Lankas; Ms. Lily Sambu, Deputy Kenyan High Commissioner to Namibia.

The Kenyan delegation was accompanied by the National Assembly's Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economics, Natural Resources and Public Administration, Hon. Ben Amathila, the Kenyan Deputy High Commissioner

to Namibia, Mrs. Lily Shambu and by parliamentary staff from the National Assembly. The delegation chose to benchmark on Namibia because of the similar situation with theirs and the good relationship that exists between the two countries.

South African Learners Tour Parliament

• Ambrosius Amutenja

A group of 115 learners from the Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School in South Africa's Limpopo Province visited the Parliament of Namibia recently. The visit was part of the learners' educational tour to gain a better understanding of how fellow African countries gained their independence and to learn how they are doing, according to the learners' spokesperson.

Spokesperson and President of the Students Representative Council at the school, 18-year old Kgaogela Maputla told Parliament Journal: "We have come to visit Namibia to have a better understanding of African countries and how they gained their independence and how they are doing. I understand that Namibia gained her independence in 1990 and that its first President (Dr. Sam Nujoma) ruled for 15 years. Understanding where Namibia comes from was very simple with the help of museums."

Responding to whether their coming to Namibia was worth the effort, he replied: "I personally believe it is worth it because you must understand your roots before you go elsewhere. In this case, coming to Namibia helped me understand that apartheid was almost everywhere, not only in South Africa, but also in Namibia."

Mr. Rakgoale Mokuadi Benny, a teacher and leader of the delegation, described Namibia as a good country in terms of

obeying the law, adding that "the people are very joyful." The learners visited famous sights in Windhoek, including the railway station, museum, Heroes Acre, Old Location and Parliament. Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School is a government school specialised in teaching mathematics, science and agriculture. It hosts learners from Grades 8-12. Six teachers and two parents accompanied the South African secondary school learners.



Students from South Africa's Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School in the Chamber of the National Assembly.

Security Committee Conducts Induction Workshop

• Prof. André du Pisani

A successful induction workshop under the theme “Governing Security in Namibia” for the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security took place in Swakopmund from 2-6 August 2010. The workshop was opened by Hon. Samuel Nuuyoma, the Governor of the Erongo Region (in a speech read on his behalf) and facilitated by various resource persons from across the security sector.

As part of an ongoing programme for building capacity in the legislature, the workshop coalesced around a number of themes that were vital for the Security Sector Governance in a constitutional democracy, such as Namibia. Other themes included the principles and practices that characterise the foreign policy and relations of the country; the centrality

of parliamentary oversight and its gradation in the context of Namibia; different constructs of security and their referents; the primacy of intelligence and its relation to other statutory security providers; an introduction to defence economics and budgeting and the politico-security complex in Namibia and how it relates to the architecture and mandates of regional and continental complexes such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU).

The resource persons were Hon. Peya Mushelenga, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Ben Likando, Director of the Namibia Central Intelligence Service [NCIS]; Major-General V. H. Hifindaka, Deputy Inspector-General of the Namibian Police; Major General E.D. Ndaitwah, Chief of Staff Operations and Training of the Namibian Defence Force; Mr. Joseph Kasheya, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration; and Professor André du Pisani from the University of Namibia.

Through an interactive methodology that comprised briefings, lectures and syndicate work, the participants to the workshop benefitted greatly from the knowledge and experience of the resource persons. To its credit, the committee also undertook in situ visits

to a fishing company in Walvis Bay and to the state-of-the-art desalination facility north of Swakopmund. The workshop was generously funded and effectively co-organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Namibia.



Hon. Peya Mushelenga

Legal Affairs Committee Holds Induction Course

• Saima Nakuti Ashipala

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs held an induction course for its members in Tsumeb from 26-27 July 2010. The course was held in the context of the “Continuous Parliamentary Capacity Building”, a joint programme between the Parliament of Namibia and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) established in 2007.

The objective of the induction course was to orient committee members with their terms of reference and mandate; to briefly introduce parliament and its mandate to the members as well as to review Namibia’s constitutionalism vis-à-vis the committee’s mandate. Other objectives included tips and hints on being an effective Member of Parliament; reviewing and deriving a work plan for the committee and



Participants at the workshop

enhancing co-operation and collegiality amongst committee members.

The workshop discussions focused around the mandate and certain duties of the committee and its members. From the statutes and the presentations made, the duties of the committee clearly came out as to consider, consult and liaise on any matter the committee deems relevant to the Offices, Ministries, Agencies, State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Parastatals responsible for the Attorney-General; Electoral Commission; Information and Broadcasting; Justice; Ombudsman; Petitions; and Regional and Local Governments.

Mr. Barney Karuuombe from the SADC PF presented on the relationship between the Namibian Constitution and the laws passed by parliament; and also on the triple roles of Parliamentarians – which are representation, lawmaking and oversight. Former DTA lawmaker, Mr. McHenry Venaani, also made an elaborative presentation on the role and functions of Parliamentarians. Mr. Johan De Waal, former Member of the National Assembly, presented on how to become an effective Member of Parliament.

A work plan was drafted for the committee and was agreed upon. It was explained and understood that

committees were indeed the engines that inject vibrancy in Parliament. However, it was also felt, a committee could only be as effective as the debate it generates; hence workshops of this nature are essential in equipping committee members and enhancing parliamentary services through effective committee services.

Those who attended were Parliamentarians Elifas Dingara, Ben Ulenga, Ignatius Shixwameni, Juliet Kavetuna, Alexia Manombe-Ncube, Lucia Witbooi, Billy Mwaningange, Sylvia Makgone, and Festus Ueitele. Mr. Josef Motinga and Mr. Manasse Zeraeua from the secretariat also attended.

From The Chambers



DTA President Katuutire Kaura (right) flanked by his party Vice-President Phillemon Moongo attracted media attention during their belated swearing-in ceremony.

Two parliamentarian-elects from the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) were sworn in on 29 June 2010 as duly elected Members of the National Assembly. The Chief Justice Peter Shivute swore in party President Katuutire Kaura together with party

Vice-President Phillemon Moongo in a ceremony witnessed by some ordinary party members. The swearing-in follows the DTA's withdrawal from its boycott of the 19 March 2010 swearing-in ceremony of Members of the National Assembly elected through

the November 2009 Presidential and National Assembly elections. The DTA and eight other opposition parties have rejected the November 2009 election results, alleging "rigging and irregularities" in the electoral process.

Staff on the Move



Dr. Vincent Mwange

Dr. Vincent Mwange has been transferred on promotion from the National Council to the Ministry of Defence with effect from 14 May 2010. Dr. Mwange has been Chief Information Officer in the Directorate General and Information Services since July 2003.

Ms. Jacqui Prince

Ms. Jacqui Prince has resigned from the National Council with effect from 1 June 2010 to join the private sector. Ms. Prince has been Administrative Assistant to Secretary to the National Council (2000-2005) and Special Assistant to the Chairman of the National Council from 2005 to June 2010. Ms. Prince joined the National Council in March 2000.



Mr. Himuvi Abednego Mbingeneeko

With effect from 1 July 2010, Mr. Himuvi Abednego Mbingeneeko has been appointed Special Assistant to the Chairman of the National Council in the Directorate Chairman's Office. Since June 2003, Mr. Mbingeneeko had been working for the City of Windhoek as Computer Aided Designer (CAD) and GIS (Geographic Information System) Operator. He replaces Ms. Jacqui Prince who resigned from the National Council in June this year.

Staff on the Move

Mr. Tudiminapo Amenenge Shindume

Mr. Tudiminapo Amenenge Shindume has been appointed as Assistant Accountant in the Directorate of General and Information Services at the National Council with effect from 21 June 2010. Mr. Shindume is a first-time employee and a third year B-Tech part-time student at the Polytechnic of Namibia. Mr. Shindume replaces Mr. Ndinomwaameni Shinime who was transferred on promotion to the Ministry of Education in February this year.



Ms. Wilmary Visser

Ms. Wilmary Visser has been promoted from Deputy Chief Legal Counsel to Chief Legal Counsel in the Directorate Legal Services at the National Council with effect from 1 July 2010. Ms. Visser joined the National Council in April 2004.

Mr. Tutu Haukena

Mr. Tutu Haukena, the former Private Secretary to the Director of Library and Computer Services at the National Assembly, has been transferred and appointed to the position of Assistant Parliamentary Clerk at the Directorate Committee Services with effect from 1 August 2010. Mr. Haukena joined the National Assembly in December 2008.



Staff on the Move



Ms. Hilde Kazongominja

Ms. Hilde Kazongominja, formerly a typist at Auxiliary and Office Services at the National Assembly, has been transferred and appointed in the position of Private Secretary to the Director of Library and Computer Services with effect from 1 August 2010. She replaces Mr. Tutu Haukena who has since been transferred to the Directorate Committee Services in the National Assembly.

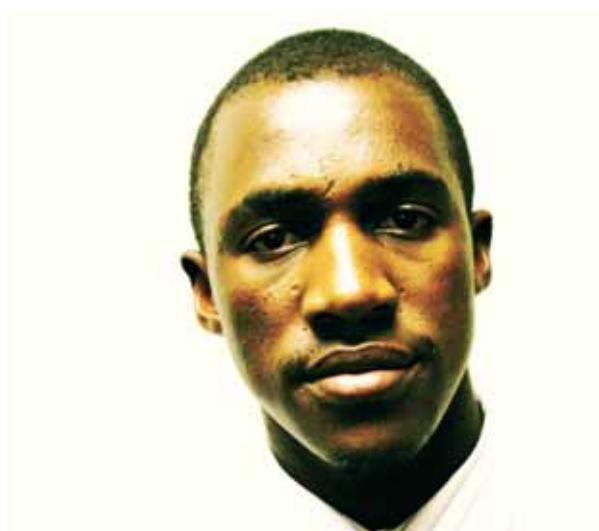
Mr. George Shinyala

Mr. George Shinyala, formerly Personal Assistant to the Minister of Works and Transport, has been transferred on promotion to the position of Principal Parliamentary Clerk in the Directorate Committees Services at the National Assembly, effective from 1 August 2010. Mr. Shinyala is not new to parliament environment. He worked for the National Council from 1995 to 2007 as Chief Control Officer before his transfer to the Ministry of Mines and Energy in March 2007.



Mr. Brian Chaka

Mr. Brian Chaka resigned from the National Council in December 2009 and has since been appointed as Legal Advisor to the Namibia Airports Company effective from January 2010. In April 2007, Mr. Chaka was promoted to Principal Legal Counsel in the National Council. He was transferred on promotion from the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General to the National Council as Legal Counsel in July 2005.



The Lawmaking Process in Namibia

• Staff Reporter

A law can be defined as the whole system of rules that everyone in a given country or society must obey. The purpose of law is to maintain peace and order within a given society. The Namibian Constitution is the highest law in Namibia. All laws in Namibia should conform to the Namibian Constitution.

How a Bill Becomes Law

A bill is a proposal for a law. Bills are introduced to Parliament in two ways: a minister can propose a law through a government bill; an ordinary Member of Parliament (MP) can propose a law, a private citizen or a non-governmental organisation (NGO) can propose a law which is known as a "Private Member's Bill". In addition, the President, the Cabinet, a Government Agency or the Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC) can also suggest a law.

In practice, the lawmaking process starts when a minister determines the need for a new legislation. The minister first consults with the Attorney-General's Office for legal advice. The Attorney-General is there to ensure that the intended draft law conforms to the Constitution. The responsible minister undertakes a series of lobbying and consultations on the intended law. Some ministries circulate draft laws for public comments or hold consultative meetings to obtain public input. However, not all ministries reveal to the public the law they plan to table before Parliament.

The Cabinet

The responsible minister drafts a law and submits it to Cabinet for approval. Cabinet refers the draft law to the

Cabinet Committee on Legislation (CCL) with a motivation letter explaining the necessity for the draft law. The CCL decides whether the draft law should be taken to Cabinet; or whether legal advice or further consultations are necessary. Normally, three people serve on the CCL: the Minister of Trade and Industry, the Attorney-General, and the Minister of Justice. No draft law will move forward until the CCL approves it. Once the CCL approves the draft law, then the entire Cabinet approves it in principle. The draft law, the motivation letter prepared for the CCL and the Cabinet resolution approving the draft law are then forwarded to the Ministry of Justice for drafting.

The Ministry of Justice arranges legal drafters to finalise the draft law. The draft prepared by legal drafters is then sent back to the sponsoring ministry, the CCL and the Attorney-General for approval. Changes to the draft may be suggested at each of these drafting stages. When the drafting process is completed, the draft law is then ready for tabling before Parliament.

The National Assembly

After approval by Cabinet, the sponsoring minister tables the draft law before the National Assembly. Once, in the National Assembly, the draft law is called a "bill". A Private Member's Bill needs no Cabinet approval. A bill introduced in the National Assembly

passes through three stages – the First Reading, Second Reading, and the Third Reading Stages. The Secretary to the National Assembly reads the title of the bill at the beginning of each of these stages.

During the First Reading, the bill is read for the first time. The sponsoring minister or a private member introduces the bill and it becomes public document. At this stage, the bill can be availed to any member of the public who has interest in it. No debate about the bill takes place at this stage.

At the Second Reading stage, the Minister or a Private Member who tables the bill explains the necessity of the bill. At this stage, members discuss the details of the bill. If there are serious objections, the bill is either voted on or referred to an appropriate Parliamentary Committee for further scrutiny. Members of the House can approve or reject the bill in principle. If a bill is rejected by more than half of the members present, the Bill is said to have been taken "off the table". However, it may be re-introduced within 30 days of rejection with or without changes. During this stage, the bill may be referred to a relevant Parliamentary Committee for detailed examination.

The Committee Stage

When the principle of the bill is



When the sponsoring minister introduces the bill in the National Assembly, it becomes public document.

approved, it goes to the Whole House Committee. Here, all Members of the House examine it clause-by-clause. The Speaker/Chairperson asks for leave and the Deputy Speaker/Vice-Chairperson chairs the Whole House Committee. The Chairperson of the National Council and the Speaker of the National Assembly are also referred to as Presiding Officers. Both the National Assembly and the National Council have the powers to establish committees to consider bills on different topics. Any Member of the House can propose amendment to a bill at this stage, including the sponsoring minister. The Whole House Committee may also refer a bill to a Parliamentary Committee for detailed discussions.

Parliamentary Committees are smaller groups of Members of Parliament who have special knowledge on certain topics. Members are elected from all political parties in the House to examine bills and other documents in details. Committees are created for specific areas such as economics, human resources and so on. Committees seek input from experts or the broader public by inviting individuals or by holding public hearings. Interested persons or groups can lobby any Member of the National Assembly/National Council to influence change on a bill.

On the basis of its findings, a Parliamentary Committee may recommend changes on specific clauses of the bill to the Whole House Committee. However, a Parliamentary Committee does not deal with the main principle of the bill. Once the House adopts the recommendations, the bill proceeds to the Third Reading. At this stage a majority vote of the House is required to approve the bill. No further debate is allowed during this stage.

The National Council

Once the National Assembly has approved the bill, it is referred to the National Council for review. The National Council takes maximum 30 days to debate an Appropriation Bill.

The other bills take the National Council maximum 90 days to debate. The legislative stages followed in the National Council are the same as those followed in the National Assembly. These are the introduction, First Reading, Second Reading, Committee Stage and the Third Reading Stages. A Parliamentary Committee of the National Council can hold public hearings on a given bill if the need arises.

The National Council may take three different actions before sending a bill back to the National Assembly: first, approve the Bill as is (confirming the bill); second, suggest changes to the bill; and third, object to the principle of the bill. If two thirds of Members of the National Council approves the bill, then it is passed. The approved bill is sent back to National Assembly who sends it to the President for signature. If the National Council passes the bill with amendments, the bill is sent back to the National Assembly for further discussion. However, the National Assembly is not obliged to adopt the amendments. If, after reconsideration, two-thirds of the Members of the National Assembly reject the proposed amendments by the National Council, the amendments shall not be incorporated in the bill.

The President

The National Assembly sends the approved bill to the President of the Republic to sign it into law. The

President only signs a bill that is approved by two thirds of Members of the National Assembly. If the President disagrees with a bill and refuses to sign it, the National Assembly must vote on it again. The National Assembly may make some changes to the bill not signed by the President.

However, if two thirds of Members of the National Assembly again approves the bill as is, then the President cannot prevent that bill from becoming law. If the President agrees with the bill and signs it, the bill becomes law. The new law is published in the official government newspaper – the Government Gazette – as an Act of Parliament. The law comes into force from the date indicated in the Government Gazette. Signature by the President is one way through which the executive contributes to the lawmaking process.

The Courts

In case the President refuses to sign a bill which he/she thinks is in conflict with the Constitution, the court may be asked to intervene. If the court determines that the bill is in fact in conflict with the Constitution, such bill cannot become law. However, if the court finds that the bill conforms to the Constitution, the Bill is sent back to the President to effectively sign it into law. Interestingly, this scenario has not been experienced yet in independent Namibian legislative history.



The National Council takes maximum 30 days to discuss an Appropriation Bill and maximum 90 days to debate other bills.

Evolution of Parliament Building

• Staff Reporter

In 1910, German Imperial Governor Bruno von Schuckmann announced the construction of an Administration Building for then “German South West Africa”.

Originally, three designs were submitted to the “Reichskolonialamt”. A German architecture office in Berlin approved the design by Gotlieb Redecker – a German architect – due to cost-effectiveness, suitability and lighting. Imperial German Secretary of State Friedrich von Lindequist, summoned Redecker to Germany to affect final alteration to the original plan. Tenders for construction were invited and Sander & Kock, a German construction firm, won it. The building was completed at a cost of 450 000 Deutsche Mark.

News spread that a government administration building would be constructed at a site on a mountain

slope dividing central Windhoek from Klein Windhoek. Citizens, including German Members of the Landesrat, protested at the move and handed in a petition. The petition demanded that the administration building be centrally located. A prominent Member of the Landesrat, Mr. Gustav Voigts, joined the petition which the Landesrat itself had endorsed.

On 17 April 1912 Sander & Kock started with construction. By November 1913, construction was completed ahead of schedule. Windhoek residents nicknamed the building “Tintenpalast” (Ink Palace) after noticing typewriters entering the complex. Except for wood, lime and sand that were locally produced, other materials were imported from Germany and the Cameroon. Cameroon then was a German colony under Governor Theodor Seitz (1904-1915).

On 11 May 1914, the “Landesrat” assembled for the first time in the Tintenpalast. However, the Landesrat was disbanded following the surrender of German troops at Khorab in July 1915. A new Legislative Assembly was only moved into the building in 1925. It was followed by various administrative offices, including that of the Administrator-General.

Since 1926, the “Tintenpalast” had been the seat of the South African-appointed Legislative Assembly. Of late, it was the seat of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) of South West Africa. The Parliament Gardens in front of the Parliament Building was developed during South African rule in 1931. In 1934 the development of the gardens was completed with its different shapes.

In 1950 the two wings of the building were extended. Since 1985 the building has gone through a number of renovations, but has retained its original German architecture. For example, December 1996 saw the completion and inauguration of the Chamber of the National Council by then President Sam Nujoma; and the installation of a ramp and a lift to provide access to people living with disabilities to the Chamber of the National Assembly in 2004. A major renovation to the library and various offices was done in 2009. The same year witnessed an upgrade to install a lift to allow access by people living with disabilities to the Chamber of the National Council. Completion of this upgrade is expected by the end of 2011.

Additional source: Justus Grebe.



Between 1926 and beginning of November 1989, the “Tintenpalast” had been the seat of apartheid South Africa-appointed Legislative Assemblies.



South Africa's Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School students in the Chamber of the National Assembly, July 2010.



Students from Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary toured parliament in July 2010.