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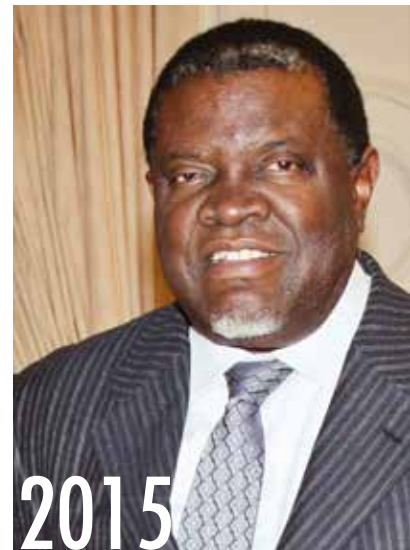
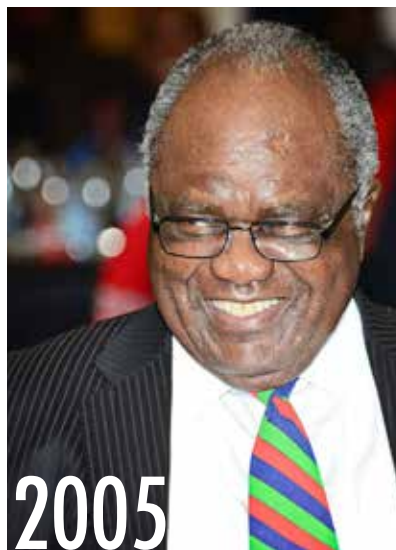
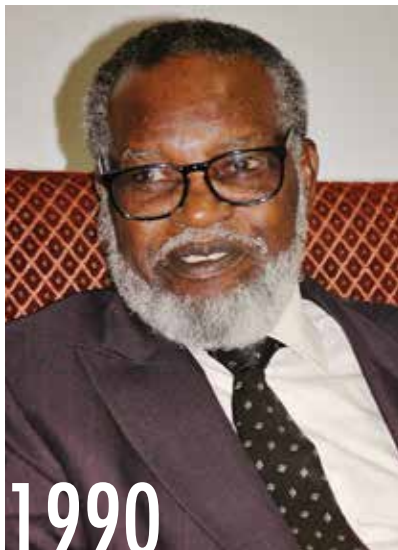
25TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY EDITION

REPORT



21ST
MARCH
1990
2015

HAPPY 25TH INDEPENDENCE NAMIBIA



As we celebrate the silver jubilee as a free Nation, we remember the many sacrifices made by our compatriots during the struggle for national independence. These sacrifices inspire us to continue to build a Namibian Nation as envisaged in Namibia Vision 2030.

Kalahari Holdings (Pty) Limited wishes all Namibians a memorable and rewarding silver jubilee. May peace, stability and prosperity continue to be the hallmark that defines our Nationhood.



**KALAHARI HOLDINGS
(PTY) LIMITED**



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Congratulations...

The Managing Director, Management and Staff of Namibia Wildlife Resorts congratulate His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob on his inauguration and assumption of duty. We also congratulate all members of cabinet on their appointments. We have full confidence that Dr. Geingob and his team will take over from where his predecessors left off, and continue to steer Namibia towards prosperity for all. We wish him and the entire cabinet the best of luck as they take up their assignments.

NWR
namibia wildlife resorts

MANAGEMENT SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT EVERYONE IS ULTIMATELY A SHAREHOLDER IN THE NAMIBIAN ENTERPRISE AND THUS IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF EVERYONE THAT ALL ARE PROPERLY TAKEN CARE OF

ASSESSING THE FIRST QUARTER

President Hage Geingob has started his term in office by making all the right noises, as he should.

However, it is what follows that he will ultimately be judged on. And in this regard, with especially the increase in the social grant to the elderly, the administration has gotten off to a good start.

By the same token, a good start is what Namibia has definitely gotten over the past 25 years.

That said, if we were to consider the country a new business, then Namibia has just emerged from its first quarter, and the question is what have we learned from this period, so as to readjust for the second quarter and beyond?

In this of course we have to consider lessons learned and data gathered – of systems and processes and the nuances in conditions and environments – in order to assess the impacts and health of our endeavours and plan out the way forward.

Considering Namibia in this light, we can certainly assert that the results of the first quarter have been mixed – a lot of progress, a lot of lag, a lot of missteps and even some failures. On the whole we can say the picture is largely promising, and ripe with potential.

However, this does not mean that we should be overly positive about our approaches, merely that to a large extent we have been lucky so far – a significant factor in entrepreneurial success – and that we have to be wise enough to realize that even in those areas where we can claim success

we probably still could have achieved more.

That said, important gains have been made across a wide spectrum of socio-economic sectors and no-one can deny that Namibia is much better off than it was 25 years ago. Even so, on important indicators, many, if not most, people's lives have hardly budged beyond hardship over the years.

So the important question begging an answer at this stage is: To what extent can we build out opportunities so as to draw more people at an increased pace into the economic mainstream, thereby improving living standards, social conditions and satisfaction – even happiness – levels across the board?

In answering this question, necessarily our management team plays a crucial role. For given that we are still somewhat wobbly on our feet as an enterprise, despite all the potential, things can still go wrong and set us back considerably.

This is where visionary and accountable management with a mind to execute their duties responsibly is of critical importance.

In this regard, the executive management team has largely prosecuted their duties in a satisfactory manner, while not exactly having been exemplary or above reproach in how they have acted towards those lower down in the structures.

The latter is evidenced by the loud grumblings coming from some quarters of the rank and file in recent times, many of who consider themselves, rightly or wrongly, outside the income sharing. This is largely because trickle-down economics has failed to deliver to any significant degree.

Consider that since independence 25 years ago, while the country's GDP has shot up, inequality too has spiraled out of control, to the extent that the gap between the well-off and the poor has pushed Namibia literally off the charts. This is no exaggeration, for a management type chart exists that shows how Namibia and South Africa fall outside the measurement boundaries on inequality.


This is worrying, and is something that cannot be left to stand unaddressed, for this introduces instability into the structure of the enterprise.

Inequality of course speaks to the quality of health, education and general welfare afforded the majority, and on these factors a great deal more needs to be done.

For in the end, management should not forget that everyone is ultimately a shareholder in the Namibian enterprise and thus it is in the interest of everyone that all are properly taken care of.

The threats of course are hubris and corruption at the top, which could make the whole structure crumble from above if care is not taken and such instances are immediately and decisively dealt with, and are of course seen to be dealt with.

In the final analysis, the majority of steps taken to here and those being stepped into come across as taking the enterprise in the right direction.

It behooves every single one of the stakeholders in this enterprise to ensure this remains the case. 

OUR COUNTRY

BUILT FROM GENERATIONS OF

PEACE

STABILITY

& PROSPERITY.

THANKS TO THE BRAVERY
OF **OUR PEOPLE**
WE HAVE REACHED
FOR SUCCESS AND CAN
CELEBRATE GROWTH.

WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE OVER
**5000 DIVERSE
NAMIBIANS**
IN OUR TEAM.

VIVA TO US ALL!
TOGETHER WE CREATE
A PROSPEROUS FUTURE.



Sven Thieme
Executive Chairman



CREATING A FUTURE. ENHANCING LIFE

STATE OF DEMOCRACY

A DEMOCRACY IN SEARCH OF DEMOCRATS

DEMOCRACY CAN ONLY FLOURISH WHEN THERE IS A CRITICAL MASS OF DEMOCRATS WILLING TO MAKE THE SYSTEM WORK, WRITES **GRAHAM HOPWOOD**

Ten years ago IPPR researchers Christie Keulder and Tania Wiese coined the phrase 'a democracy without democrats' for Namibia. The expression was a reference to an Afrobarometer finding that only just over half of Namibians favoured democracy over other systems such as military or one-party rule.

The conclusion was worrying – a large proportion of Namibians did not see much value in the democratic system that had been put in place after decades of valiant struggle against apartheid colonialism. Democratic consolidation appeared to be faltering.

Since then regular Afrobarometer surveys have found that more and more Namibians think democracy is preferable to any other form of governance. In last year's survey it was 74 percent – up from 64 percent in 2012. It is somewhat reassuring then that in 2014 almost three-quarters of Namibians now recognise democracy as the best system. This trend is the same for younger respondents as it is for older Afrobarometer respondents. In 2014 only 6 percent of younger Namibians said they did not understand what democracy is.

However, there were some Afrobarometer responses that gave pause for thought – 36 percent of respondents felt they should avoid criticising government; 37 percent said it was more important to have a government that can get things done even if the public has no influence over what it does; and 43 percent felt that too much media reporting on negative events, like government mistakes and corruption, only harms the country. These results

THE CONSTITUTION...



indicate that high proportions of Namibians are not yet willing to exercise their full democratic rights even if they generally feel free in the country (91 percent said they were free to say what they think).

One of the issues facing Namibia at the start of the 21st century is that while many people have started to recognise the importance of democracy, the inevitable follow on – robust plurality and diversity in opinions – is not seen as quite such a good development. Instead there is a tendency for citizens to feel they should go with the flow of the commonly-expressed view or always concur with the views of the ruling political elite. It is seen as too much trouble and possibly counter-productive for individuals to express a different position from the view emanating from the top. This is not a phenomenon affecting only the ordinary, impoverished, disempowered Namibian. Even the country's academics have failed to pronounce themselves on the country's deleterious research laws and regulations, as noted recently by Professor Andre du Pisani in comments on academic freedom.

For Namibia to make progress in terms of democratic develop-

ment we need to see a reduction in the percentage of people that feel they should avoid criticising government from 36 percent to a figure that is negligible. Critical debate is crucial if good governance is to be achieved. Furthermore, we can only forge sound and workable policies out of the crucible of open dialogue. All too often government figures are quick to claim critics 'have no mandate' instead of listening carefully to the points being made.

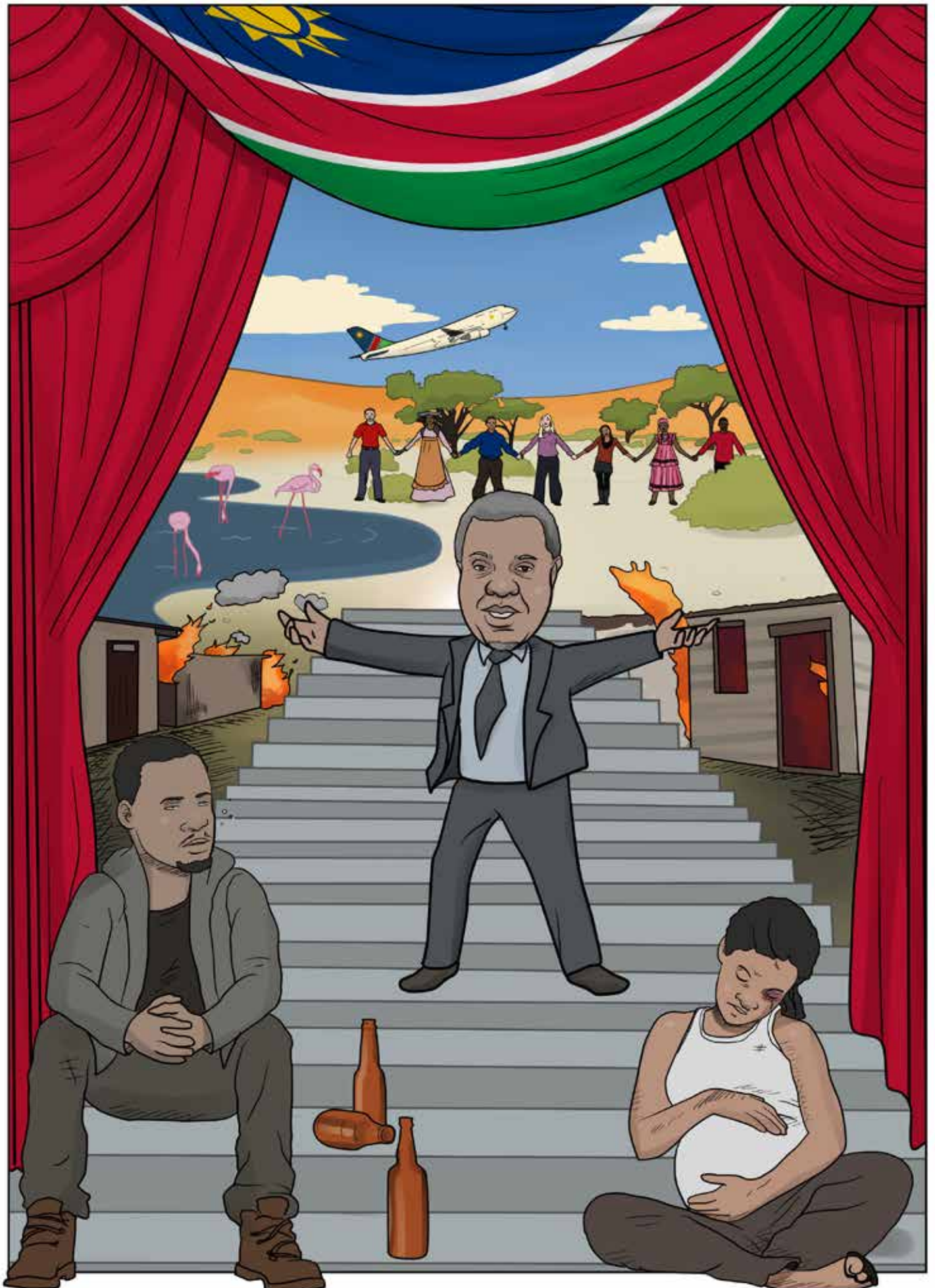
There are other reasons why we need more critical thinkers. Namibia is a democracy where over 80 percent of the electorate voted for one party in the last election. Yet, increasingly we need independent people to serve on the range of oversight bodies that are supposed to ensure that abuses of power do not take place. Such bodies cannot be stocked primarily by people who are either too timid or too concerned with showing off their political loyalty to take up impartial positions. Already many of these institutions – some of them constitutional – are widely seen as compromised and weak. They are quick to clear the politically connected of any charges or accusations. They dodge and delay making any findings that could be seen as critical of the pow-

ers that be. It takes an unusually enlightened form of political leadership to create and give succour to institutions intended to oversee, check, and call to account those who have power.

Namibia remains one of Africa's most stable and enduring democracies – something we can all be proud of. But having consolidated democracy over the past 25 years, there is a sense that we are now entering a new phase of democratic development. Younger, less partisan Namibians are starting to make their voices heard on a range of issues. Increasing urbanisation (Namibia is now split 50:50 in terms of the rural/urban divide) is fuelling rising frustrations (witness the recent protests over access to land and housing) and creating opportunities to raise demands for more accountable government. Leaders will have to become better listeners – more responsive and less dismissive. Democracy can only flourish when there is a critical mass of democrats willing to make the system work. **i**

Graham Hopwood is the Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

ONE NAMIBIA ... ONE STRUGGLE



THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS SAID IT – THE WALK IS GOING TO BE WALKED. IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIETY THAT HAD BETTER BE THE CASE, ARGUES **FREDERICO LINKS**

DECONSTRUCTING GEINGOB

Recently inaugurated as the third president of the Republic of Namibia, Hage Geingob, has, not so subtly, anointed himself as being the inflection point in Namibia's historical trajectory.

While the Nujoma presidency was about the concretising of the conceptual manifestation of the new Namibian nation state and the Pohamba presidency was the consolidation of the national legislative and governance framework, Geingob is casting himself as the man to unlock an era of prosperity on the foundational achievements of his predecessors.

The new president's rhetoric to date is laden with promises of ramping up efforts to overcome the myriad of still stubbornly entrenched socio-economic maladies plaguing Namibian society, while at the same time elevating the country as a progressive beacon and economic success story on the African continent.

In his inaugural address on 21 March 2015, Geingob stated: "The main priority for the next administration will be addressing the socio-economic gaps that exist in our society. We have been successful in establishing a robust governance framework and implementing sound macroeconomic policies. The prerequisites for a prosperous nation include good constitutions, peace and democracy. People eat decent food, live under decent shelter and enjoy decent employment. Therefore, our first priority will be to declare all-out war on poverty and concomitant inequality. Our focal point will be to address inequality, poverty and hunger and that will involve looking at a range of policies and interventionist strategies to tackle this issue."

What is clear then, as per presidential statements to date, is that state resources will be marshaled as never before to come to the

aid of society. Going by the new president's pronouncements, and campaign messaging from even before the 28 November 2014 elections, the governance principle of the Geingob administration will be efficiency.

This could off course be seen as an admission that over the last 25 years many things have not exactly gone according to plan and



that there is much to criticize in the way the state and society have evolved, or not, over the quarter century.

And it can be said that as a result of this wonky, but still right-way-facing, developmental direction, an often perceptible society-wide sense of unease and muted dissatisfaction had come to lightly cloud the last years of the Pohamba presidency.

It is arguably largely as a consequence of this that Geingob garnered more votes in presidential polls than either Nujoma or Pohamba did in the past. For this is where Geingob comes in, despite all the talk of continuity, preaching an emboldened mandate and projecting a sense of being liberated to mold the future as he sees fit.

Whether this projected optimism is soundly grounded is of course questionable, but it does to a great extent reflect the popular sentiment from below, and Geingob being the astute politician that he is, with a highly sensitive political radar, is making all the right utterances, stating from the inauguration podium: "The overwhelming mandate given to the Swapo Party and its Presidential candidate is a clear indication of the confidence my fellow citizens have in Swapo and in me. But it is also an indication of their high expectations."

BREAKOUT REACTIONARY

Against this backdrop, and unsurprisingly, the new president's pronouncements appear to have gone down exceedingly well with most citizens, many of whom find themselves mired in the sort of conditions Geingob has declared all-out war on. Many, if not most, Namibians find themselves fending for survival in very trying personal economic conditions, so in the eyes and ears of so many a little hope is long overdue.

But this optimism and hope is largely founded on signature proclamations – anti-inequality, anti-unemployment and pro-poor – from presidential platforms, and in this Geingob has certainly not deviated from the Nujoma and Pohamba script. Just as his predecessors, Geingob has started off by promising miracles, with the difference being that he has just done it with a lot more gusto than the other two.



Of course this is purely an early reading, but the levels of optimism have to be questioned, for what does not seem to have been priced into the pervasive popular enthusiasm for the Geingob presidency is that by all accounts it is standing on somewhat shaky ground.

This is reflected in the composition of the Geingob Cabinet, which to a great extent reflects considerable compromise, for how else can one explain the top-heaviness of the Executive.

This necessarily brings into sharp focus the efficiency emphasizing pronouncements.

While the creation, slicing and splicing of ministries are couched as a reorganizing initiative aimed at gearing the state towards greater responsiveness and accountability, it does not quite wash, but rather looks to be a way to top-load government with friends and foes alike, in both an appeasement and pay-off exercise.

In this regard, considerable arguments, based on past evidence and experience, can be raised against how Geingob is going about enlivening the notion of efficient government – by seemingly needlessly expanding the landscape for bureaucratic pitfalls and bungling – but it's probably too early to come to credible conclusions.

However, on the face of it, efficiency hardly looks to be best served by what has transpired and will play out over coming months and years.

NEW FLAME

Considering all this – especially the idea

of perceiving himself as a historical inflection point – what is required is for Geingob to come out the blocks at a swift gait, for five years is not a long time in politics and promises can get stale fairly quickly.

This is a significant consideration at this juncture of Namibia's journey, for Geingob finds himself facing a pressure factor which neither Nujoma or Pohamba had to deal with to any real extent – marked demographic shift.

Namibia has been undergoing significant demographic change over the last 25 years, to the extent that today, those who were born shortly before and during the 1990s – the millennials – are coming of age in various ways just as Geingob steps into the presidency. This is something that cannot be ignored politically and economically, for this demographic cohort is the game-changer into the future.

Look no further than the youth-led land demonstrations of late 2014 and early 2015 as an indication of this population segment making itself heard more and more on the socio-political landscape.

The danger for Geingob and the ruling party is that if they insist on going along as they have to this point, which almost seems to be what is earmarked – even though some youthful appointments have been made to Cabinet, but largely as a token bow to calls for such – then they run the risk of increasingly alienating an intrinsically impatient, and significant fraction, of the population. The generational gap is thus something that needs active consideration as

this administration takes office and rolls out its schemes.

It is important for the new president then to set the right tone – not just in speeches but in actions as well – for that is arguably exactly why the youth turned out for him during the election as they have – the “high expectations” factor. And this means that if Geingob talks efficient government, then he should live efficient government.

If the administration's responses are perceived as tardy or obfuscatory, it runs the risk of further stoking already smoldering embers of very real unhappiness out there in society.

What the millennial cohort wants is exactly what they are being promised – “People eat decent food, live under decent shelter and enjoy decent employment” – otherwise they could just unleash the destabilization of society. Namibia would not be the first country in which this has happened, and not the last.

So Geingob and his administration need to walk the walk from here on out – pandering to the interests of elitist associates and political cronies will be a sure way to lose popular affection.

All-in-all the new president comes out on a pretty good wicket and the game is his to lose.

That said, ultimately, at this stage the fact is that anything can happen. i

Celebrating

Years of Independence



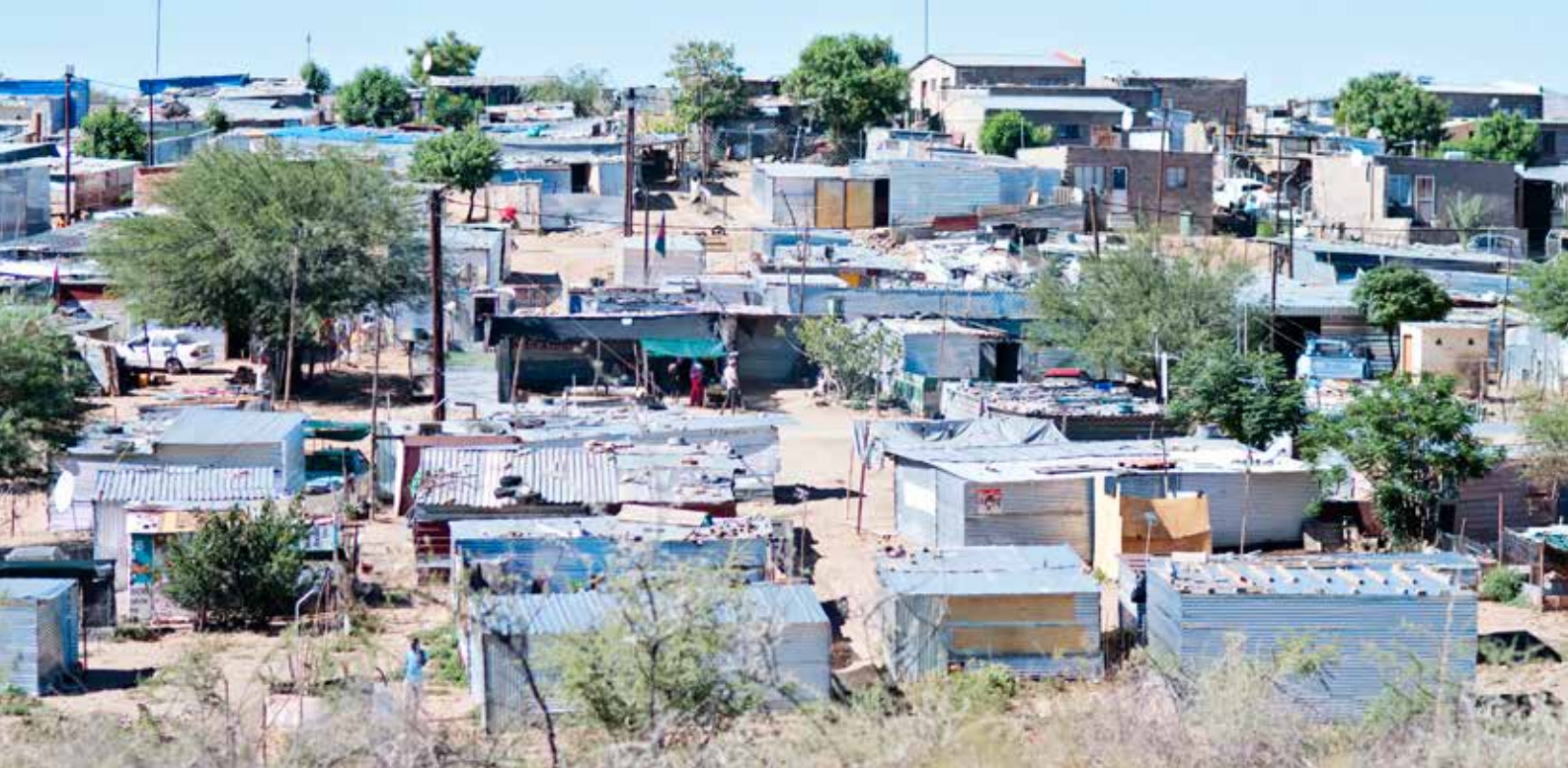
The Board, Management and Staff of The Namibia Tourism Board wishes our fellow Namibian a Happy Independence Day!!! May we continue to develop Positive Spirit of Patriotism, Ambassadorship, National Culture towards our Motherland. We also would like to Congratulate the President Elect , Hon. Hage Geingob and wish him well in leading the nation to a *Brighter and Productive* tomorrow. Last but not least, we thank Hon. President Hifikepunye Pohamba for excellent leadership.



Namibia Tourism Board

www.namibiatourism.com.na

BURNING LAND



LAND OWNERSHIP REMAINS A DYNAMIC TOPIC THAT IS FAR FROM SETTLED, WRITES **BRIGITTE WEIDLICH**

Namibia celebrates its 25th anniversary as a sovereign state this year, and its land reform initiative was introduced 20 years ago in 1995, making significant strides, despite criticism from within ruling Swapo party ranks, over the years.

The process has been peaceful and slow to date, but a threat has emerged recently as thousands of youth have started demanding urban land to build dwellings on.

This comes as house and farm prices have escalated dramatically over the past decade, practically taking ownership of both commercial farmland and urban plots out of reach of most Namibians.

A shortage of policy direction, the lack of

collaborative funding mechanisms between central government and local authorities to service virgin land for commercial and housing purposes and the frequency of farms rejected by the state through the 'willing seller, willing buyer' method, are now recognised as endangering progress.

It is projected that 56 percent of the population will live in towns by 2025 and only 44 percent in rural areas, according to the National Statistic Agency (NSA).

The almost forgotten 'Vision 2030' document mentions that even "75 percent of Namibia's population will be urbanised by 2030". These changing demographics would require the government to relook its land reform efforts.

HOW IT STARTED

Namibia has about 69 million hectares (ha) of arable land that can be used for agriculture. About 33,6 million ha are situated in communal areas and 36,1 million ha is freehold land. A year after Independence the new government held a national land conference in 1991 to discuss ways for peaceful land reform.

The major outcomes were that ancestral land rights would not be recognised and redistribution would be based on the 'willing seller, willing buyer' (WSWB) principle.

In 1991, white individuals owned 6,123 commercial farms, accounting for 34,6 million hectares (ha) or 95 percent of 36,1 million hectares of arable land.

Only 181 commercial farms were owned

by blacks in 1991, excluding the Rehoboth Gebiet, while 382 farms (2,9 million ha) were owned by foreigners. Government owned 64 farms as well as 20 experimental farms inherited from German and South African colonial authorities. Companies possessed 55 farms (728,882 ha) then. Churches owned 22 farms (totalling 222,365 ha) in 1991.

In 1995, the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act was promulgated, keeping the WSWB principle, but a significant tweak since now requires white commercial farmers to first offer farms for sale to the Lands Ministry. If the Ministry wants to buy the farm for resettlement purposes it makes an offer to the farmer. If it is not interested the farm owner receives a waiver certificate and the farm can be sold on the open market. Recently however some waivers contain the condition that the farm may only be sold to willing buyers who hail from a previously disadvantaged background.

envisaged 15 million ha farmland, have been transferred either through farm acquisitions by the Ministry for resettlement purposes, private sales, auctions or affirmative action loans.

According to the latest available official figures, the Ministry acquired 2,7 million hectares of commercial farmland, leaving 2,7 million hectares – or 450,000 ha annually until 2020.

Another five million ha of unused communal land will be portioned off into small farming units. To date the Ministry has measured 1,537 small scale commercial farming units on under-utilised land in seven northern regions, totalling 10 million ha land. On these units about 6,730 families are to be resettled by 2020.

Also in 2006, the Ministry introduced a land tax commercial farmers must pay annually. The Lands Ministry established the National Land Reform Forum in 2012.

existing infrastructure on farms after they were bought for resettlement, complaints that farming units of roughly 1,000 ha each are too small for livestock production, lack of technical support for beneficiaries, and illegal leasing of allocated resettlement units, are but some of a multitude of issues that have surfaced over the years.

Recently well-to do civil servants like the permanent secretary of the Lands Ministry received land on a resettlement farm as did retired Mines and Energy Minister Toivo ya Toivo, who turned 90 last year.

“What are the criteria applied? Is resettlement now for the well-connected and the new elite?” An angry resettlement applicant recently asked.

“Top government officials with a high salary get resettlement and often they have applied much later than us normal mortals, who are waiting many years.”

OWNING A PIECE OF LAND, OR GIVEN A LEASE RIGHT ON LAND DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY BRING PROSPERITY. NOT EVERYONE IS A NATURAL FARMER AND RESETTLED INDIVIDUALS FACE NUMEROUS CHALLENGES, SUCH AS LACK OF EXPERIENCE, FUNDS, MARKETS AND FARMING IMPLEMENTS.

These buyers can buy farms with loans from the Affirmative Action Loan Scheme (AALS) offered by the state-owned Agricultural Bank (AgriBank) since about 1993.

Solvent buyers can also buy farms via a straight loan from any commercial bank if they qualify.

POLICY SPACE

The National Resettlement Policy was made public in 1997 and the National Land Policy followed in 1998. The Communal Land Reform Act was passed in 2002. The first white-owned commercial farm, Ongombo West, was expropriated in 2005. Government paid N\$3,7 million for it. Even so, to date, expropriation criteria have still not been spelt out, and the reference in Namibia's Constitution of such expropriation being in line with the “national interest” is widely regarded as being too vague.

The Lands Ministry published its ‘Land Reform Report and Strategic Action Plan’ in 2006, which was compiled by a team of experts and mainly financed by Germany, Britain and the US. The action plans outlines the Ministry's target for altogether 15 million ha to change ownership to previously disadvantaged Namibians by 2020.

Of the 15 million hectares, government would procure 5 million for resettlement, while individuals will be assisted to acquire the remaining 10 million ha on the free market via the AALS.

Already 9,4 million ha, (60%) of the

The consolidation of the two existing Land Reform Acts into one single law is ongoing.

In addition, people living in rural areas can apply for registration of land rights on land parcels of 20 hectares. They receive a certificate and can use it as collateral when applying for bank loans.

MIXED SUCCESSES

Owning a piece of land, or given a lease right on land does not automatically bring prosperity. Not everyone is a natural farmer and resettled individuals face numerous challenges, such as lack of experience, funds, markets and farming implements. Some only want a piece of land “they can call home”, wrote Erika von Wietersheim in the book “This is my Land”, published in 2008.

“We should know that we are not going to solve our poverty problems through land reform, but we can at least help those who have received access to land to be a bit more successful,” former Prime Minister Nahas Angula is quoted as stating in the book. Angula was Prime Minister at that time.

WHERE TO GO?

While government vaguely admitted here and there over the years that resettlement might not have brought the successes everyone had hoped for, it nevertheless is staying the course on resettlement, instead of bringing necessary changes needed. Inefficient bureaucracy, slow and tedious application processes for resettlement, vandalism of

URBAN LAND REVOLUTION

So far, Namibia's land reform has mostly focussed on farmland. Urban migration from rural areas to towns is increasing while municipalities can hardly cope with expanding informal settlements.

In November 2014, a group of Swapo Party associated youth activists occupied an unserviced plot in Windhoek's Kleine Kuppe suburb and called it ‘Erf 2014 – repositioning’.

The episode has since spawned a popular movement – Affirmative Repositioning – which kicked off with a mass land application demonstration at the City of Windhoek shortly before the November 28 National Assembly and Presidential elections. Roughly 14,000 applications were submitted. This mass action was followed by a application demonstration countrywide on 27 February 2015.

Separate from this, in December 2014, approximately 2,000 people at Swakopmund occupied unserviced land at the outskirts of the town, led by Gotthard Kandume, founder and president of the Christian Democratic Voice political party, which participated in the November 2014 elections.

These mass actions around the issue of affordable urban land have come to signify that an old land-related issue has arisen with new urgency.

How government responds to this compounding challenge is still an open question.



Student Fund launches Nationwide Awareness Campaign

The National Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) has launched a Nationwide Stakeholder Engagement Project in collaboration with National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

The NSFAF is particularly concerned that there are members of the public, mostly parents and community leaders, who lack correct information about NSFAF and its operations. Because of this lackage coupled with a number of existing misconceptions, some potential applicants for financial assistance end up not applying with the Fund. Oftenly most of the misconceptions owe their origins from some teachers who are not fully acquainted with the Fund's award requirements and are thus providing wrong and inadequate information about the Fund to learners. This inaccurate information includes, pronouncements such as that the learners who have not done well during their Grade Mid-Year Examinations (August) should not apply and they will not be funded, while the Fund only looks the final Grade 12 results whenever they become available for the purpose of award consideration. Another worrisome misconception is associated with some parents (fathers specifically) who when their children are asking for proofs of income and identity documents (e.g IDs) for the purpose of the application for financial assistance, they think is for submission to the maintenance court for support/maintenance claims. The nation further lacks information on the importance of recovery and how the success of the latter will contribute to the sustainability of the Fund. The distinction between loans and grants as well as the circumstances under which the latter may be converted into the former, is further an area that lacks clarity amongst the Fund's users.

"It is on the strength of the above mentioned lackage/misconceptions/gaps that the two-month long Nationwide Stakeholder Engagement Project was penciled in order to correct the missed-facts" says Mr. Fillemon Wise Immanuel, Company Secretary and Corporate Communications Manager of the NSFAF. Immanuel added further that "the majority of Namibians, particularly in the rural areas are not well-informed about the objectives of NSFAF and the role it plays in the development of the Namibian society, hence the Fund saw 2015 as an opportunity to educate the rural citizens on its affairs".

Through the ongoing nationwide information campaign,

the NSFAF seeks to provide the general public with detailed and accurate information on the operations of the Fund. The Nationwide Stakeholder Engagement Project was designed to run over a period of two months, covering the period from 2 March to 2 May 2015.

In justifying the need for this massive exercise, the Fund says that "More often than not various stakeholders lack information on how students can access financial assistance from it and further as to how they can be players in aiding the realisation of this goal,". The public, particularly parents and other interested parties are often fed with incorrect information about the Fund's products and services and the procedures to access these. Citizens also lacks concrete understanding of the importance of repayment of loans by former beneficiaries and how this is in the interest of the nation in the long-run.

The NSFAF further stressed that dissents amongst citizens as to whether the Fund should give 100% loans or grants continue to fly, suggestive of a gravest lack of information on the provisions of the NSFAF Act, which provide for a hybrid approach.

Background

The former bursary scheme was focused primarily on training people for the civil service, which was already oversubscribed. Upon realizing the none-sustainability of the above mentioned arrangement and its exclusive department, government decided to expand the coverage of the financial assistance offered by NSFAF. This new arrangement translated into a hybrid approach, in terms of which the Fund is offering both loans and grants to all Namibian citizens that qualified. Priority fields of study, being the areas in which the country lacks critical human resources started enjoying consideration under the hybrid arrangements todate. This approach has been highly commended as a way through the country's human and economic development needs are met, or where economic growth will create employment opportunities. Despite the awarding of financial assistances to students that has been increasing over the years, success on recovery remain wanting.

The Fund has over the years warded off negative criticisms relating to the manner in which the entity has been operating

while under the Ministry of Education. This has to a certain extent affected the reputation of the organisation up to its current form, SOE that it is. Therefore, high level interventions such the Nationwide Stakeholder Engagement is justified in order to create awareness through dissemination of correct information to all key stakeholders.

Who qualifies for Financial Assistance?

NSFAF's award process for financial assistance is based on equitable, transparent, inclusive, fair and indiscriminatory principles. Any Namibian who stands proof of meeting following criteria, can benefit:

- Obtained 25 points & at least an F in English from grade 12 in five subjects (for degrees & studies in Namibia, but for Education & Law one needs atleast E in English), for studies outside Namibia, E is the least requirement in English).
- Or obtained 20 points & F in English from grade 12 in five subjects and possess post grade 12 qualification at level 5 of Namibia Qualification Authority),
- Or Obtained 25 or 20 points as above with less F in English, but improved English programmes offered by Institutions of Higher Learning.
- Or Admittance through Mature Age Scheme (restricted local institutions)
- For low and Medium Priority Fields of study, students combined parental income should not exceed N\$750 000.00 per annum.
- Applicants needs 35 points and atleast E in English from grade 12 for Medical and Engineering study outside Namibia, while 30 points and E in English (atleast) from grade 12 is the requirement for any other degree course.

The list of the priority fields of study is reviewed annually and can be obtained from NSFAF offices. The Fund does support both full-time, part-time and distance students. Funding for part-time and distance students who are making is only for tuition fees and the beneficiary's salary must not exceed N\$300 000.00 per annum. Proof of admission is a must in each instance.

their loans when they have completed their studies. Through honouring this obligation, former beneficiaries are not only living up to their contractual expectations, but also effecting the social responsibility towards the sense of doing for others and ultimately contributing to the sustainability of the Fund.

The repayment for loans at NSFAF is based on an income-contingent model, which means that one should first earn an income and repays as s/he earns. This effectively means that only those who are working and earning taxable incomes that are expected to commence with the repayment. The Fund does send out statements to each debtor showing how one owes and how much s/he must pay back each month.

It is the responsibility of loan beneficiaries to keep in touch with NSFAF and to inform the Fund of any change of address. Loans are repayable to NSFAF when: a period of six months has lapsed since the student has completed his/her studies; s/he has found employment; s/he is earning a threshold salary; s/he have not completed his/her studies, but committed breach of contract, or s/he negotiated or accepted different terms under the loan/grant agreement or s/he received another loan/bursary outside the agreement.

Financial assistance given in a form of grant can be converted to a loan, in certain circumstances as provided for in terms of Grant Repayment the regulation(s).

Is the former beneficiary who is unemployed or still studying expected to repay?

If the former beneficiary is unemployed or still studying s/he is not expected to pay after the lapsing of the six months, until when s/he is done studying and/or got employment and starts earning an income. This literally means that repayment is expected from employed former beneficiaries and not students or unemployed. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the former beneficiary who is unemployed or still studying, while his repayment is due to inform the Fund of such a status (provision of a written proof, in a form of an affidavit may be necessary).

Former beneficiaries are advised to stay in contact with the Fund and make sure that information such as their employment status and personal details, including address and cellphone numbers, are up to date. By paying NSFAF study loan, one is paying it forward to someone else who needs it just as much as the former beneficiary needed it.



Repaying the student loan

All former beneficiaries of the financial assistances that were given loans are expected to repay

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ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS ARE STILL HAMSTRUNG BY
LEGAL AND RESOURCE DEFICIENCIES, WRITES ELLISON
TJIRERA

GRAFT FIGHT REBOOT NEEDED

As Namibia celebrates a quarter of a century into her political independence from the yoke of colonial rule, taking stock of governance challenges of which corruption is but one becomes imperative.

Even though incidences of perceived and real corruption are not solely post-independence phenomena, confining an assessment of the state of corruption in Namibia to between 2006 to the present gives us an indication of what progress has been made or not.

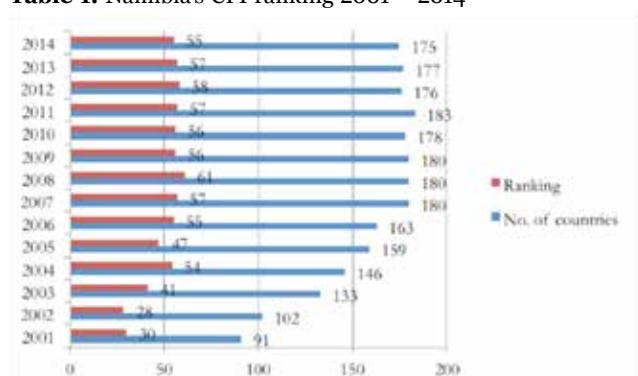
The year 2006 is momentous in the annals of the fight against the cancer of corruption which can metastasise uncontrollably in the midst of weak institutions and legal inadequacies. It was during the second year of former President Pohamba's presidency that the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) started with its operations, three years after it was established by the Anti-Corruption Act No. 8 of 2003. Today, there are four ACC offices countrywide, including the headquarters in Windhoek. The other three are in Swakopmund, Oshakati and Otjiwarongo.

TI CPI

Namibia's ranking on the Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI) shows that it has been slightly far from the middle, more towards the extreme of the most corrupt than the very clean. This suggests that corruption in Namibia is not as yet endemic but there is a serious cause for concern. On various occasions, the CPI findings have been rubbished by the Director of the ACC – Paulus Noa – for being too perception-based and that TI officials never visit the office of the ACC to obtain 'hard' information on efforts made in the country to fight corruption.

Interestingly, Paulus Noa was recently quoted in one of the dailies saying the improvement in ranking (CPI 2014) for Namibia indicates that TI is recognising Namibia's commitment to fighting corruption and promoting good governance.

Table 1: Namibia's CPI ranking 2001 – 2014



THE MOST CORRUPT

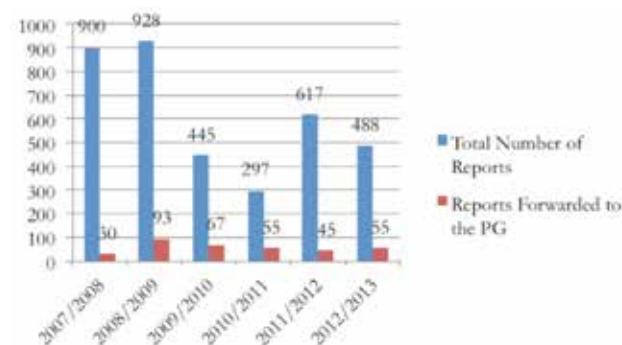
Successive Afrobarometer surveys have shown that government officials and police lead the pack of institutions perceived to be the most corrupt. They have invariably been followed by tax officials and the judiciary. However, for the first time since 2003, government officials and police are not perceived to be the most corrupt institutions in the country, as business executives now top the list.

CORRUPTION METASTASISING OR ACC FLOUNDERING?

Almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents in Afrobarometer's 2014 survey said that corruption has increased in Namibia over the past year. This could well be because of the failure to follow through on high-profile cases combined with low conviction rates.

The low conviction rates are in part due to few reports being forwarded to the Prosecutor General (PG) for prosecution. Between 2007 and 2013, the proportion of reports on alleged corrupt practices referred to the PG by the ACC had been below 20%. For the period 2009/2010, only 2% of cases resulted in convictions while 42% of reports were deemed unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Table 2: Reports to the PG



Another disturbing issue that came to the fore recently relates to allegations reported in one of the dailies that the Director of the ACC, Paulus Noa, 'abuses his discretionary powers to shut down investigations when prominent people are involved'. It was also alleged that Noa 'warns suspects of investigations against them and coaches them'. Notwithstanding that Paulus Noa rubbished these allegations as devoid of truth, they have a potential of inflicting a serious dent on the credibility of the ACC, credibility which is very difficult to regain once squandered.

According to the latest (2014) results from the Afrobarometer, two-thirds (65%) of citizens think that the government of Namibia is doing “fairly badly” or “very badly” in the fight against corruption. This shows a sharp increase in negative public evaluation, from 41% in 2008 and 56% in 2012. It could safely be argued that these perceptions are shaped by a plethora of high profile cases involving millions of dollars that have been dragging on for a long time without any convictions in sight.

What has happened over the years is that high profile cases frustratingly dragged on such that an impression that the rich and famous escape prosecution for their corrupt offenses has been created. At the same time many such cases involving political figures and their associates are seemingly swiftly dealt with and pronounced as 'clean' when in many instances there appears to be a *prima facie* case for thorough investigation.

In spite of this, and puzzlingly, given the expressed view that government is not faring well in dealing with corruption, a majority of respondents in the latest Afrobarometer survey do not consider corruption a widespread problem in the country that the government should address. That is to say, corruption is yet to gain salience as a pressing public policy issue. For most Namibians issues such as unemployment, poverty and inequality

QUO VADIS?

The time is perhaps ripe to seriously consider the much talked about specialised court to enable the fast-tracking of corruption cases. This will go a long way in improving public confidence in the anti-graft campaign since at the moment many cases appear to be stalled within the court system.

Moreover, there has been considerable discussion of the inadequacy of statutory provisions relating to the protection of whistleblowers. Nothing came of this and President Pohamba has stepped down without having signed into law an important piece of legislation in the overall architecture of the fight against corruption.

Last we forget, 'zero-tolerance towards corruption' was an aphorism that Pohamba assumed high office with. We can now accept that he has underdelivered on this pledge and for this reason assert that as a matter of urgency, a stand-alone piece of legislation with robust safeguards to protect whistle-blowers must be brought to bear on the landscape of anti-corruption laws. 1



THE STATE OF THE HEALTH SECTOR
REQUIRES RENEWED FOCUS, ARGUES
RACHEL COOMER

GREAT PROGRESS, BUT STILL CRITICAL

At independence, Namibia inherited a curative healthcare system that provided racially segregated services. Clearly not a structure that would be viable or appropriate for independent Namibia, the system was revised with the intention of providing a primary-care based service with a focus on prevention. The state-based health services, which include donor funding, have been supplemented by private medical aid funds, including PSEMAS, the government medical aid provider.

After ten years of independence, reports on the state of the healthcare system (admittedly government-associated reports) were positive. In the book *Health in Namibia* (published in 2001 for the 'Support to Primary Health Care Project' of the Ministry of Health and Social Services) the authors stated that "great progress has been made since independence on making the health system more equitable and accessible".

A Bank of Namibia working paper published in the same year also found that "ten years after independence, half of Namibians have access to primary health care services. Social and health indicators for Namibia have improved during this period".

However, recent reports have been less positive, to the point where even "government-associated" reports have struggled to find a mainly positive outlook. Most recent has been the Presidential Commission of Inquiry in 2012 "to look into the activities, affairs, management, and operations of the Ministry of Health and Social Services, with the overall aim of improving the health system in the country". The Commission's report is not for late-night reading for fear of giving nightmares – listing critical staff

shortages, decaying infrastructure and the absence of essential equipment, amongst a myriad of problems and challenges.

The report noted that "it was a painful experience for the Commission to see the state of dilapidation and decay in which many hospitals, clinics and health centres are". It has been nearly as painful to read the frank details in the report – the report is broad in its assessment of problems but also detailed in highlighting failures at specific hospitals. Take for example this statement: "Most hospitals were dirty and unkempt. At Windhoek Central Hospital, for example, the dirty condition of the floor of the main theatre and adjacent areas was shocking."

In contrast, whilst the quality of public healthcare has been declining, the private sector has solidified its position. If you have a private medical aid plan in Namibia, it is often possible to get an appointment on the same day that you call and hospital stays become almost like holidays, as due to a relatively low pressure on beds, doctors can keep their patients in for one more day of observation.

KEY QUESTION

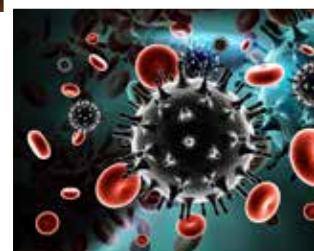
The key question is why, at 25 years of independence, are some state-provided healthcare services so poor whilst private healthcare has few similar problems – despite the latter only being funded by a fraction of the population (the majority of people in Namibia use state services as less than 15 percent of the population can afford or have employers who pay for private medical aid plans)?

NDP4 cites health financing, governance, availability of healthcare professionals, access to services and HIV/AIDS

and TB as the key challenges faced by the healthcare sector. The government provides six percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to healthcare each year. This allocation, while inevitably not enough, is proportionally more than is spent in many countries, and it should be alleviating some of the more pressing needs of the sector. More funding for healthcare is needed, but this is not the answer in isolation to the problems the healthcare sector is experiencing.

This is because no matter what amount of funding is provided, it has to be spent properly or it is money wasted. The 2012 Commission report found "bureaucratic methods of attending to issues and to the lack of a culture of quick and effective implementation of ideas or projects that have been worked out". The report also noted the wastage of funds as "many a time very expensive equipment is ordered without any consultation with the end users. An unacceptable degree of resource wastage was noted whereby equipment was procured but found not to be useful by the users themselves. The sad fact is that this equipment is lying unused for years, become obsolete and spare parts might not be available in the market".

Good governance is critical. In the healthcare sector as elsewhere in Namibia, responsibility for maintenance and renovations appears to be continually passed in a circle. The Ministry of Works and Transport thinks that it is the duty of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. The Ministry of



Health and Services thinks that it is the duty of the Ministry of Works and Transport. The public of course doesn't care whose duty it is but simply wishes that they didn't have to visit hospitals where "toilets/bathrooms are not working, taps are leaking, and sewage running freely on the premises".

Good governance is critically needed to ensure that recommendations and plans – which Namibia is exceptionally good at making – are actually implemented.

MORE NEEDED

The availability of healthcare professionals and access to services is intrinsically linked to financing and governance. At independence, Namibia's vision was to implement a primary healthcare-based service. Over the last 25 years, clinics have been built and mobile clinics have circulated in order to enact this vision, but they are simply not enough to meet the needs of the population. More facilities and more healthcare professionals are needed.

According to the Ministry of Health and Social Service annual report 2012/2013 (the most recent available), 88 percent of posts in the state healthcare sector are filled. This leaves 1371 posts unfilled. This is one

of the many reasons why patients can be found queuing all day to see a healthcare provider. Specialist healthcare is also a problem. In 2012/2013, specialist doctors in the employ of the State (all 58) were only found in Windhoek, Oshakati and Rundu. In light of the need for more facilities and more staffing, it comes as no surprise that nearly one-third of women surveyed in the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey said that distance to a health facility is a problem – whether it is for a visit to a GP for a simple infection or to see a specialist about something more complicated.

HIV has been the defining disease of independent Namibia and over the last 25 years, the government – with donor-driven funding – has understandably focused on fighting HIV/AIDS. The upward trajectory of HIV infections has been reversed but has it been at a cost to other healthcare needs? Into the vacuum has stepped the private medical aid providers. Fortunately access is not race-based but it is economically divided.

Donors and non-governmental groups have even looked at the viability of providing private medical services for economic groups who cannot currently access them.

But this should not be the answer to the problems of the state healthcare system. Private healthcare reduces the pressure on the state health care system but it also reduces the pressure to improve it and does nothing to address long-term needs – such as the healthcare of the elderly, many of whom may lose their private medical aid when they retire. One of the benefits of PSEMAS, the government medical aid, is that the benefits continue after retirement.

FRAGILE SYSTEM

At independence Namibia inherited a fragile healthcare system and vulnerable population; at 25 years post-independence, for different reasons, Namibia still has a fragile healthcare system and the vulnerable population that uses it is often unable to call for better service provision and is forced to endure the problems of the healthcare sector. With a new political era about to start, we can only hope that Namibia looks very seriously at the healthcare sector and provides the necessary leadership, governance and resources to address the needs of the system.

1

PERSISTING CONCERNS

HIV has been the defining disease of independent Namibia. Before 1986, there were no reported cases in the then South-West Africa. The infection rate rapidly rose over the next twenty years until it reached a peak in 2002 with an estimated 22% of pregnant women infected with HIV/AIDS. Since then the infection rate has started to decline, with the 2014 sentinel survey reporting an infection rate of 16.9% amongst pregnant women.

HIV infection has placed a huge burden on the healthcare system and Namibia's achievement in dealing with the disease and reducing the infection level is to be applauded. Patients receive antiretroviral therapy, mother-to-child-transmission is being reduced and life-expectancy for people living with HIV/AIDS has increased. Namibia can be proud of these achievements.

But what of other healthcare

problems? As time from independence has passed, it seems that progress made in many areas of the healthcare sector has stalled, and in some cases even reversed. Following independence, maternal mortality rose rather than declined and is now back at the level it was at independence. Lack of resources for emergency obstetric care is a key factor. But there are other more basic – and ongoing – problems.

Take for example, the finding that the percentage of women who saw a doctor on a continuous basis during pregnancy (four or more times) has declined from 70% in 2006/7 to 63% in 2013. This is a problem of accessibility, of availability, of waiting in endless queues that do not move. Similarly, the latest Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) also reports that whilst 88% of births in the last five years were delivered by a skilled provider, this is average is calculated from 73%

of women in the lowest wealth quintile who delivered their baby with a skilled provider compared to 98% of women in the highest quintile who delivered their baby with a skilled provider.

At independence, the racial divide over healthcare provision was abolished. However a new divider has appeared: Economics.

Another finding in the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey is that 1 in 26 children die before reaching age one, and 1 in 19 children do not reach age five. This means that in your typical Namibian child's pre-school class of 20, one of his or her friends will not get to celebrate their fifth birthday. The level of infant and under-five mortality has declined since independence but there has been little notable reduction since 2000. Fifteen years without improvement is too long. Lives are literally at stake.

Namibia is also starting to be affected by health care issues that,

until now, have been masked by the impact of HIV. For example, the DHS reports the blood pressure of over 2,000 women and 1,400 men and found that 44% of women and 45% men were hypertensive. However, only 20% of women and 13% of men had ever been told they were hypertensive by a healthcare professional. Whilst the survey is not intended to provide diagnostic information to the participants, the results are indicative of the potentially widening discrepancy between healthcare problems suffered and healthcare received in Namibia. Another area affected by accessibility, availability, and waiting in endless queues that do not move?

Namibia must also consider other future problems – not least multiple-drug-resistant TB; a worldwide concern but one with particular relevance to Namibia where HIV and TB co-infection is common.

1

UP ALL THE WAY



TO MAINTAIN STELLAR GROWTH OF THE LAST 25 YEARS, IMPORTANT ISSUES NEED TO BE ADDRESSED NOW, WRITES **JACKIE ASHEEKE**

// You've come a long way baby!" was a 1970s snappy cigarette advertisement referring to the progress of women's equality. It is now applicable to the tourism industry in Namibia at the dawn of its second 25 years as an independent nation.

There is no doubt that a statistical review of tourism in 1992 vs. 2013 would reveal raw growth numbers that show tourism as a success story. Indeed, there is much to celebrate. In 1992, there were 20,000 tourist arrivals and by 2013, Namibia recorded 1.18 million. Also in 1992, 10,000 jobs were generated by tourism, while in 2014, it was estimated that 72,000 jobs, direct and indirect, owed their existence to the travel and hospitality sector.

Namibia has grown up to be a world class tourism destination that no longer primarily caters

to South Africans and Germans as it did 25 years ago. It now welcomes visitors from over 50 different countries as wide spread as Iceland, Japan, India, and Brazil. Larger numbers of tourists from the SADC region, German speaking Europe, other EU nations, North America and China, also flock to our desert vistas, picturesque coastline, adventure tourism opportunities and awesome national parks.

Namibia's notable commendations from world class travel magazines and media outlets are not a fluke, but a true representation of the hard work and financial investment by the private sector and government. Many travellers know that Namibia is not just a destination, it's an experience.

Tourism growth and development should not be measured only by generalised arrivals

figures. The ebbs and flows of the tourism products on offer in Namibia also tell a story about tourism in Namibia over 25 years.

There have been hotel closures like the old Continental or Berg hotels and ascendancies like the new Hilton Hotels in Windhoek and the rebuilt 'Strand' hotel in Swakopmund. The amazingly successful Gondwana Chain of Lodges started with the Canyon Lodge built nearly 20 years ago at old Farm Karios in the south has now grown to be 15 modern lodges around the country.

The rise and fall of the Namibia Country Lodges chain, the re-imaging of the old O&L Namib Sun Hotels into the Protea brand and the arrival/departure of the renowned German-based Kempinski brand from Namibia are notable industry events over the last 25 years.

The archaic Kalahari Sands Hotel that was a mainstay in downtown Windhoek before Independence finally received a much overdue modernisation and renovation, while the old Safari Motel has bloomed into the enor-

mous Safari Hotel and Conference Center. Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR) at Independence were no-star, bakkie-and-braai campsites geared for South African colonial civil servants which have transformed into more than two dozen high quality resorts located in breathtakingly beautiful areas inside national parks.

A long list of tour operators have entered/left the market, merged or changed names while 'old hats' like SWA safaris, Springbok Atlas, Cheetah Tours and Pack Safaris still charge ahead in the 21st century with a modern vision and thriving businesses.

The last 25 years has seen government take quantum leaps to reach the goal of using state resources to broaden the base of who benefits from tourism in Namibia. The change of beneficiaries from tourism concessions on state land, phasing out the old Permission to Occupy (PTOs), the 1998 Act that began the communal conservancy program, specials to promote domestic tourism and various



the dunes, the national parks and state protected areas and coastal towns and surrounding locations.

The report stated that the vast majority of tourist arrivals was largely South Africans with a significant number of Germans. According to that study, the industry was asleep technologically but highly in tune with wildlife issues and conservation and well-skilled in satisfying their clients' service/activity demands. The white paper predicted a medium term explosion of growth, profitability and expansion of the tourism sector.

The recommendations from that white paper included the creation of NTB for training, marketing and regulation of the industry, establishment of a government statistics agency to record tourism data, separation of NWR from GRN, tightening of regulations to prevent environmental degradation,

and a past President of HAN and FENATA, were active in tourism before Independence and helped build the thriving industry that exists today.

While these two stalwarts in the tourism sector as well as other current industry players were interviewed for this article, it must be noted that many people, most who are no longer with us, made significant and well appreciated contributions to build tourism in Namibia before Independence and since then.

GRN and the tourism industry must work closer together; "nothing can be achieved by Government working alone or the industry working alone; we each need each other," were words of praise for the first Minister of Tourism, the late Hon. Nico Bessinger and the previous Minister, Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndeitwah, along with wishes that the new tourism minister follow those two examples of leadership and partnership. The call for more

HAN, which was originally called the Hotel/Innkeeper's Association, now has more than 500 members. "Over the past 10-15 years, the tourism industry has ... gained the recognition it deserves in terms of the impact and economic standing it has within the Namibian economy ... Today, tourism is ranked among the top three [economic] sectors in terms of contribution to the GDP and employment creation ..."

At Independence, tumult and uncertainty killed tourism dead for those first few months; no one came. The peak season then of July – September was blank. No one booked; they were frightened of the change; we were uncertain as well. The new Namibian government now required passports to be used to enter the country. The South African tourists, who were the majority of those spending money for holidays in Namibia at that time, entered mostly on the old 'Book of Life'. Most South Africans, in those

NAMIBIA'S NOTABLE COMMENDATIONS FROM WORLD CLASS TRAVEL MAGAZINES AND MEDIA OUTLETS ARE NOT A FLUKE, BUT A TRUE REPRESENTATION OF THE HARD WORK AND FINANCIAL INVESTMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND GOVERNMENT.

support mechanisms for new tourism ventures by previously disadvantaged Namibians are moderately successful paths to addressing the significant imbalance in diversity amongst those owning and controlling tourism operations.

LOOKING BACK

Looking back nearly 25 years, in 1991, the newly independent Republic of Namibia contracted a team of foreign consultants to prepare a 'white paper' on tourism. Among other things, it described the tourism industry in Namibia at Independence as insular (German and Afrikaner dominated) with cottage businesses led by hunting outfits, a few hotels in Windhoek and Swakopmund, a couple of guest farms and a handful of tour operating companies. Other than trophy hunting, the product on offer was mainly wildlife viewing,

maintaining Namibia as a niche market destination, and sponsorship of public information campaigns about tourism. It is a success for tourism in Namibia since Independence that these achievements have been largely implemented with GRN working together with the private sector.

Interviews with key long-time players in Namibian tourism reveal a composite picture of growth and development that helps tell the story of tourism over the last 25 years. Volker Grellman, the doyen of professional hunters in Namibia and one of the founders of the Namibian Professional Hunting Association (NAPHA) over 40 years ago and Johnnie Hamman, Managing Director of the Safari Hotel and Conference Center and one of the original founders of the 'then' Hotel Association of Namibia in 1987 (now called the Hospitality Association of Namibia - HAN)

funding for marketing at the NTB was universal.

In looking forward at tourism in the next 25 years, there is strong support for key tourism legislation that has been idling for years (such as the Wildlife Act and updates to the NTB Act), better support for national parks, more state funds for communal conservancies, and an end to poaching.

days, did not have passports as they never travelled outside the region. As the passport requirement was effective instantly, there was no time for people to organize and prospective South African visitors cancelled their trips.

But, the industry worked well with the first Minister of Tourism. Due to his efforts, Cabinet adjusted their position and



allowed the law requiring passports to come into effect January 1, 1991 rather than immediately. That one action made a world of difference and allowed tourism to revive during the first uncertain year after Independence and forged a positive bond between the industry and the government.

POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES

For professional hunting, some of the positive changes include the entrenchment of hunting ethics and a fully international hunting clientele. Trophy hunting has caused game populations to grow to levels never before seen. A controlled hunting industry working hand-in-hand with communal conservancies, MET and nature conservation NGOs, since independence has made hunting a conservation tool. Hunting outfits market trips for specific animals which are counted and controlled by MET who then issues licences for hunts. Significant revenues

are being paid over by hunters to communities for the right to hunt in conservancies or in concessions and this has given wild game in rural areas high financial value. This value has increased awareness and 'ownership' of those animals by the local people, who in turn, protect them and the habitat of the game.

Still, there are negatives that threaten the next 25 years of tourism success. There are unscrupulous hunters out to make a 'quick buck' who ignore NAPHA rules and international standards. MET is overwhelmed with the applications for licences and the administration/supervision of the hunting programme. And clearly a small number of local people are assisting in the poaching of rhinos and elephants. These areas require attention immediately.

Bottlenecks near the iconic locations block tourism growth now and will do so in the next 25 years as well. Rental cars, tour

vehicles, qualified tour guides, and bed availability around the country (outside of cities) are fully booked from mid-June through November. This is an area that needs to be addressed perhaps with a future legislative framework for tourism development in zones based on market demand.

For the next 25 years, the industry and GRN contemplates expansion into the Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing and Events (MICE) market and has hosted several successful international events. These programmes bring profits and increased temporary job creation. But, increased arrivals for events held in the peak season are hindered by the finite number of airline seats available.

The next 25 years has to answer these questions: How can a monthly conference for 500-1000 people at each event occur during a peak season that welcomes at least 400,000 leisure

tourists at the same time? The role of Air Namibia and other airlines are going to be even more critical to future tourism expansion.

To keep tourism growing in the next 25 years, Namibia must maintain its reputation as a safe, value-for-money destination, increase air access, build up existing markets and find new ones, attract more small/medium international events in the off-peak season, increase support to communal conservancies, end poaching, upgrade airports, increase market-smart accommodation near iconic locations, improve tourism training, provide cheaper financial capital for expansion, educate different Ministries about their role in tourism, and generate more commitment by interested young people to stay in the sector as a lifelong career.

The next 25 years of tourism growth has a long 'to do list.' **T**



Happy

25th Independence Namibia!




May we grow and prosper in peace

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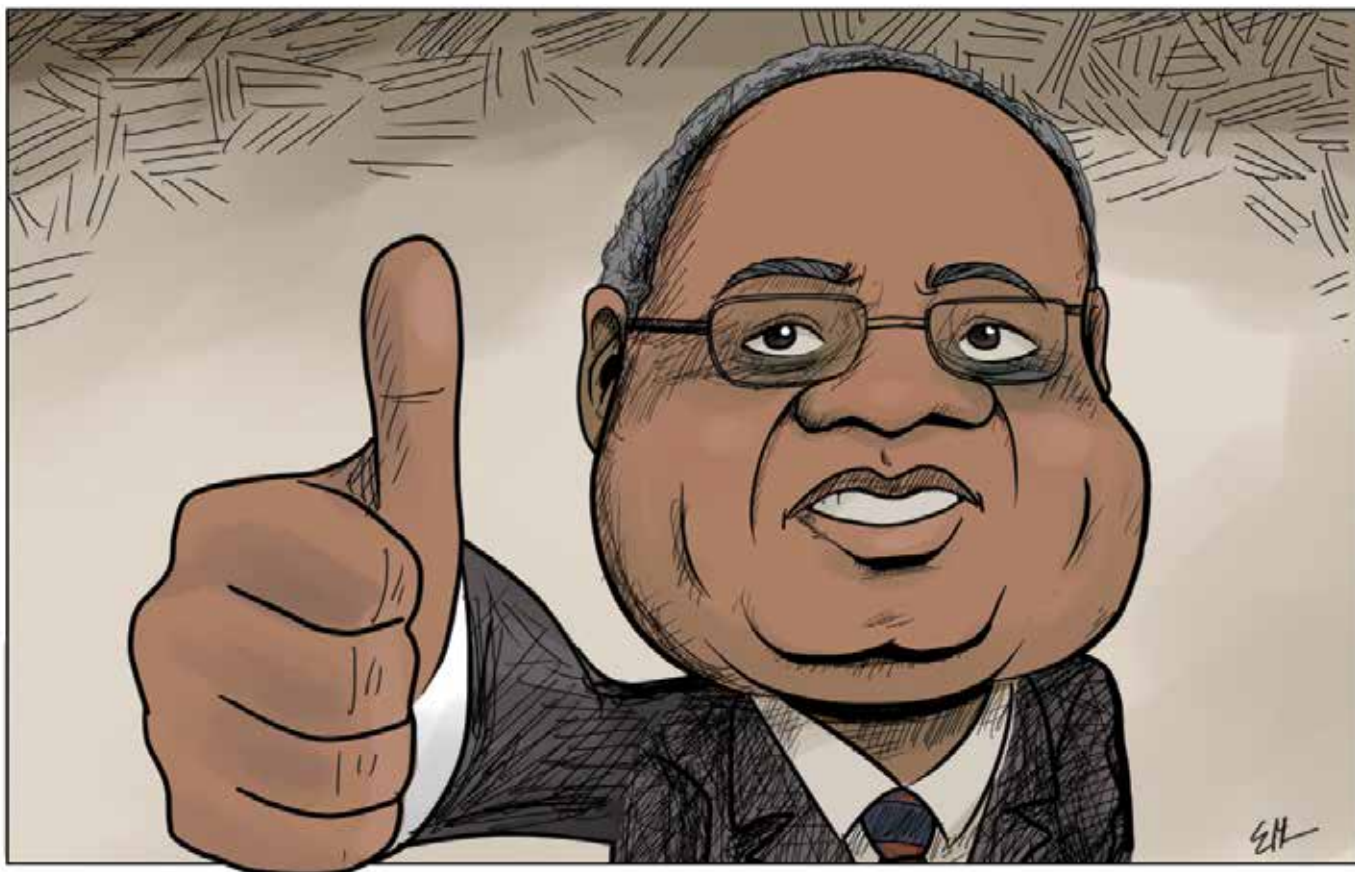
Green Enterprise Solutions (Pty) Ltd.

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Tel: (+264) 61 416 300 **Fax:** (+264) 61 402 652 **E-mail:** sales@green.com.na **www.green.com.na**



THE RELUCTANT PRESIDENT



PRESIDENT POHAMBA IS FAR FROM BEING A DRIVEN IDEALIST BUT HE IS AN ESSENTIALLY DECENT MAN WHO, PERHAPS UNKNOWINGLY, HAS SET A TEMPLATE FOR BETTER GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA. ULTIMATELY, WHETHER THIS WILL BE ENOUGH TO CEMENT HIS REPUTATION AS A GOOD LEADER IN THE EYES OF HISTORIANS REMAINS UNCLEAR. HIS FAILURE TO TACKLE NAMIBIA'S POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN ANYTHING MORE THAN A HAPHAZARD WAY MAY YET BLOT HIS RECORD AND MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR HIS SUCCESSORS.

The 1990s did not suggest that President Pohamba was Head of State material. Prior to assuming the presidency in 2005, Pohamba held three ministerial posts and for a time was Minister Without Portfolio in Cabinet. He was Minister of Home Affairs for the whole of Swapo's first term in office. President Sam Nujoma then appointed him to the Fisheries and Marine Resources Portfolio from 1995 to 1998. Somewhat controversially he was appointed as a Minister

without Portfolio in 1998 so that he could focus on his duties as Swapo's Secretary General.

There was another reason why Nujoma appointed Pohamba as a minister without a job description. Nujoma had decided by 1998 that he wanted to serve a third term in office even though Namibia's constitution limited him to two five year terms. As a result he needed his closest comrade to ensure there was enough backing in the party and in the country for a constitutional amendment that would allow Namibia's founding

president to serve three terms. Pohamba played a key role in paving the way for Nujoma's third term.

Pohamba remained Nujoma's most trusted confidant and his role in securing the third term no doubt went some way to securing his position as the founding president's most likely successor.

In 2001, he was appointed as Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation – a post which he held until his elevation to the highest office on March 21 2005. His atti-

tude to his ministerial work was summed up by his comment when he was handed the Lands portfolio in January in 2001. On being asked whether he had been appointed to initiate a Zimbabwe-style-land-grab, he said: "I don't intend to do anything apart from what is in existence and the procedures followed by my predecessor."

There is an irony in the fact that Pohamba, as Lands Minister, was muttering the same mantra in 2001 as he was repeating 14 years later when he left the highest office



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in the land. When he came into office as Lands Minister, government's policy was under fire for its slowness in redistributing land from mostly white commercial farmers to landless blacks. The 'willing buyer willing seller' approach was amended in 2004 with an announcement that expropriation would now be used. But the announcement was not made by Pohamba, but rather by then Prime Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab in a special address on television. Pohamba's cautious nature and his belief in the rule of law probably ensured that very little actually happened in the way of land seizures. Both as Minister and President, Pohamba was more likely to urge white farmers with large tracts of land to give up portions of their farms for resettlement than actually force them through expropriation orders. He was still doing this in 2015.

PARTY PROGRESS

While Pohamba's ministerial career was mostly unimpressive, his progress within Swapo's structures was more discernible. At the first post-independence Swapo congress, Pohamba was re-elected to the Central Committee and the Politburo, and continued to serve as Swapo's Secretary for Finance.

At the 1997 Swapo Congress he was chosen as party Secretary General, replacing the ailing Moses Garoëb. Five years later, with strong backing from Nujoma, he was elected unopposed as party Vice President. As part of his positioning of Pohamba as heir apparent, Nujoma made sure the Swapo Congress in 2002 knew of his track record when he nominated him as party vice-president. Nujoma told delegates that Pohamba had twice risked his life for the sake of Swapo – both when he returned to Namibia in 1962 to undertake mobilisation work and when he accompanied Nujoma in March 1966 to test whether the South Africans were prepared to negotiate. Again in 2004 Pohamba's role in the history of Swapo and

his status as Nujoma's anointed candidate were crucial in securing the presidential nomination.

Pohamba was selected as Swapo's presidential candidate for the November 2004 elections at an extraordinary party congress held in May of that year. Pohamba, who had been nominated by Nujoma, gained 341 votes against Hidipo Hamutenya's 167 in a run-off ballot. Nujoma's decision to sack Hamutenya as Foreign Affairs Minister just days before the Congress undoubtedly damaged his campaign, although from the margin of victory it would appear that Pohamba's support was strong enough to win him the nomination anyway.

There is a little doubt that Pohamba was a reluctant presidential candidate. Pohamba's rivals for the job were far more openly eager to fill the top post. Hage Geingob had been dis-

and corruption in public life. I, therefore, make a solemn pledge to you my compatriots and fellow citizens that I shall set a personal example."

Nujoma's approach to tackling corruption had mostly been piecemeal – appointing occasional presidential commissions of inquiry to investigate scandals in state-owned companies. An Anti-Corruption Act had been passed in 2003 but the agency it envisaged – the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) – had not been set up during Nujoma's time in State House. In a rare show of decisiveness Pohamba moved to set up the ACC and it was officially launched in February 2006 – within a year of his inauguration. At the point, it did appear that Pohamba would take a far more pro-active approach to dealing with corruption than turned out to be the case.

THERE IS A LITTLE DOUBT THAT POHAMBA WAS A RELUCTANT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.

missed as Prime Minister in 2002 ostensibly for campaigning too openly to be Nujoma's successor. Pohamba saw himself as the continuity candidate.

Nujoma's decision to back Pohamba was vindicated by his sheer popularity in the country. Pohamba went on to win an overwhelming mandate in the 2004 Presidential election – gaining 625,605 votes (more than Nujoma ever had). His share of the vote was 76 percent, slightly less than Nujoma's in 1999.

PRESIDENT POHAMBA

Pohamba was sworn in as president on March 21 2005. His inauguration speech was marked by effusive praise for his predecessor, calls for national unity, and a strong emphasis on continuity in terms of policy priorities. The two sentences that drew most attention were a direct commitment to fighting corruption: "As before there will be zero tolerance for waste

While few doubt his personal integrity, some observers feel he has failed to impose his personal standards on fellow Cabinet members and other senior figures in Swapo. Since its inception, the ACC has been accused of only focusing on 'small fish'. No Cabinet member has ever faced charges under the Anti-Corruption Act, although a permanent secretary with strong party links was convicted while a former head of the army has had a bank account frozen under the Prevention of Organised Crime Act.

Pohamba was also criticised for failing to release the reports of the several commissions of inquiry set up by Nujoma. The public inquiries into irregularities at state-owned companies and agencies such as the Social Security Commission and the Roads Contractor Company produced scandalous testimony yet the final reports were kept away from prying eyes at State House and police investigations

petered out. Pohamba chose not to release the reports allegedly because they pointed to unsavoury goings-on at the top of the party.

For a president generally regarded as 'clean' he has occasionally been accused of receiving inappropriate benefits. The first was when the Chinese government was reported to have given scholarships to the children of a number of Cabinet ministers and other leading Swapo figures, including to his daughter Ndapandula. Pohamba claimed he had no knowledge of his daughter's plans to study in China although it was clear that the Chinese embassy had specifically offered the scholarships to handpicked families in the ruling elite. The Chinese Embassy refused to cooperate with an ACC probe into the issue.

In 2012 it also emerged that Pohamba had been given 14 hectares of communal land by a local chief in the Kavango region – not his traditional area. Pohamba was among a number of high-ranking officials given tracts of land. While there was nothing illegal about the arrangement, it was unclear why the President, who owns a commercial farm, would take land in an area where poor rural communities have a greater need for agricultural land. Pohamba was unlikely to have been the instigator in seeking such benefits.

NUJOMA'S SHADOW

When Pohamba came to power in 2005, his initial Cabinet appointments differed little from Nujoma's – largely based on the Swapo 'old guard'. He even created new ministerial posts and kept the Minister without Portfolio designation for the party Secretary-General.

When Pohamba took over Swapo was still recovering from a fractious period in which several leading figures had left the party to join Hidipo Hamutenya in a new opposition party – the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP). In this context, it may have been understandable for him to risk no further ructions by sidelining other

leading figures in his Cabinet choices. However, he continued to be conservative in his choices. As his second term started in 2010 he kept 14 of his ministers in the same positions while promoting a handful of deputy ministers. Even with another very strong performance in the 2009 elections, in which he took 75 percent of the vote or 611,241 votes (only slightly down on 2004), he did not appear to feel he had a mandate to act more decisively.

Only after the 2012 party congress, which elected his heir apparent in the form of a new presidential candidate, did he make some bold choices. He replaced Prime Minister Nahas Angula with Hage Geingob – who had secured the position in a tough three-way fight with Justice Minister Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana and Local Government Minister Jerry Ekandjo.

In his ten years in power he only sacked one Minister – when he dropped Youth Minister Kazenambo Kazenambo in 2012 following a string of provocative statements.

Pohamba's second term was generally disappointing. He did not introduce new blood and technocratic skills into Cabinet, while any sense of urgency only developed in the last couple of years when he suddenly appeared to realise he had little to show for his ten years in power and therefore needed some legacy projects.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Pohamba received wide praise for being consultative and collegial in his approach to governance. In his parliamentary profile before he was elected president he listed his legislative interests as: Dialogue and multi-party law-making. He regularly called in leaders of opposition parties for consultations at State House. Although, it may not have been a deliberate strategy this effectively neutralised the opposition so that they found it hard to criticise him.

This approach marked him out as more inclusive and less authoritarian than Nujoma. He

also did not indulge in verbal attacks on gays and lesbians, whites, 'Boers' and 'imperialists' as his predecessor did. Pohamba is noticeably modest in his tastes and eschews a luxurious lifestyle. When he came to power he made a point of sometimes using commercial flights instead of the presidential jet and of reducing the size of the presidential motorcade from Nujoma's time. He did move into the controversial North Korean-built State House complex, which had been built during Nujoma's last term in office. Latterly, he also agreed to receiving post-presidency benefits such as a N\$35 million mansion.

Pohamba also cut down on foreign travel undertaking only a handful of state visits to other countries each year. However, this also reflected his lack of interest in foreign policy matters. Pohamba played a marginal role in the Southern African Development Community. His year as chairman of the regional body – in 2010-11 – passed by without any discernible progress on regional integration. Swapo's close ties with Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party made it impossible for Pohamba to play any kind of mediating role in the ongoing Zimbabwean crisis. The only sign that Pohamba could be more flexible than his predecessor came when the Namibian president met leader of the Zimbabwean opposition, Morgan Tsvangirai, in Namibia in 2011 when the latter had been appointed as Prime Minister in a unity government.

POLICY CHOICES

One of the main criticisms of the Pohamba presidency has been its lack of focussed policy formation and implementation. Policies were often created 'on the hoof' to fend off problems. These included the Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth (Tipeeg), which was introduced in 2011 in response to a 2008 labour force survey that said the unemployment rate

was 52 percent. Tipeeg, which largely focused on fast-tracking state infrastructure projects that were already planned, produced few permanent jobs. A more chaotic policy option, which was put into action with little planning or research, was the mass housing scheme launched in 2014, which aims to build 185,000 housing units by 2030. In its early stages the programme was blighted by reports of poor planning, corruption, and waste.

Some of the achievements likely to be cited as his legacy include major infrastructure projects such as the development of the Walvis Bay port, the building of new roads and the construction of new government buildings. Major foreign investments such as the Ohorongo cement project and the Husab uranium mine have also become a reality during his time in office. However, critics point out that his government has achieved little when it comes to development projects that are fundamental to the economy such as shifting Namibia away from power imports from South Africa and significantly upgrading the rail network.

Progress on education has essentially flat-lined during Pohamba's time in office with secondary school results improving only marginally. Pohamba recognised that the health sector was in crisis in 2012 when he appointed a commission of inquiry. The commission's report, tabled in 2013, contained some damning findings. The quality of public health facilities was described as "below acceptable standards". During his time in office he kept the same Minister of Finance, Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, whose budgets have been widely praised for maintaining fiscal discipline. As a result government was able to increase spending following the 2009 economic downturn in attempt to help Namibia weather the global storm.

LEGACY

Pohamba has been credited

with making Swapo a more open and tolerant party during his time in power. When he came into office in 2005, Nujoma remained active in party politics as President of Swapo. This was the status quo until the 2007 congress when Nujoma made way for Pohamba to head both party and government. By being less authoritarian than his predecessor Pohamba unintentionally encouraged freedom of expression and sometimes dissent.

In this sense Pohamba can be seen to have played a crucial role in moving Swapo from liberation movement to a modern, democratic political party.

The fact that Swapo held a competitive three-way contest to select its presidential candidate without the rancour of 2004 that led to some members leaving to join the RDP, was testimony to his tolerant leadership style. Pohamba did back Geingob as his favoured candidate but not in a manner which made rivals feel the playing field was not level.

Pohamba's willingness to bury hatchets was made clear when he asked the leader of the opposition and his erstwhile comrade Hidipo Hamutenya to speak at his 30th wedding anniversary in August 2013. It was a scene that would have been inconceivable a few years before.

As he stood down as head of state, Pohamba's essential decency appeared to be the emerging narrative in assessing his legacy and was a key factor in his winning the lucrative Ibrahim Prize for African leadership. Tales of delayed implementation, slow delivery and missed opportunities were only a sub-text in that narrative.

Hindsight may eventually look more closely at his missteps and inaction. Perhaps Pohamba should have served for a single term in which he opened up political space and had a calming effect on the nation before making way for a more dynamic leader who could have tackled Namibia's socio-economic problems with far more vigour. **I**



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