



SWAPO United, SWAPO Victorious, Now Hardwork...

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## SWAPO PARTY Political Programme

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Adopted by the first Congress of SWAPO in an independent Namibia  
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Republic of Namibia

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**THE SOUTH WEST AFRICA PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION  
(SWAPO) OF NAMIBIA**

The bottom of the page features a large, horizontal representation of the SWAPO flag, consisting of three horizontal stripes of blue, red, and green.

## **POLITICAL PROGRAMME**

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

After more than a century of a long a bitter struggle for independence, in which tens of thousands participated over the generations many gave their lives, Namibia is today a free democratic, sovereign and independent country.

It was the heroic struggle of our forefathers against colonialism and imperialism that provided the necessary inspiration for SWAPO to carry out a modern struggle for national liberation. In this regard, SWAPO pays tribute to our forefathers like Hendrik Witbooi, Samuel Maharero, Mandume ya Ndemufayo, Iipimbi ha Tshirongo and other heroes and heroines of the early days.

With the achievement of Namibia's independence, the long cherished dream of the founding fathers of SWAPO has been realized. A new era dawned from the dark nights of apartheid colonialism. The achievement of independence has ushered in the establishment of a secular and unitary state whose government institutions, political process and procedures are designed to create a democratic society in which individual rights and popular participation in public affairs are guaranteed in the Constitution.

For all those Namibian patriots who participated in the struggle for national liberation, under the banner of SWAPO, the 21 March 1990 marked the decisive turning point in the history of our country. It is a day when SWAPO fulfilled its historic mission with honour when the founding President of SWAPO and of the republic of Namibia, cde. Sam Nujoma performed the historic and moving act of proclaiming to our people and to the world at large, the birth of the Namibian nation.

As the organized political and military force, which after standing in the vanguard of the struggle for over three decades and whose follows risked their lives in the anti-colonial underground, in prisons and concentration camps, in exile and on the battle front against the apartheid army, SWAPO emerged victorious, thus earning for itself a glorious chapter in the history of this country. The name of SWAPO has become a symbol of faith, confidence and progress. For this reason, Namibia's young and future generation should know something about the difficult road which the party has trodden since its founding.

The historic development of SWAPO, up to the present time, can be discussed in terms of four important phases. The first of these was the very birth of the movement which was occasioned by the felt need to provide an organizational expression and national platform to spontaneous and scattered anti-colonial activities which characterized our society during the latter half of the 1950's. These activities took the form of localized about strikes and student and community protests against the specific injustices of colonial rule, such as, land expropriation, the infamous contract labour system and arbitrary township relocations. These activities also found expression in the petitioning to the United Nations concerning South African racist oppression in Namibia. Most significant among these anti-colonial activities was the Windhoek uprising of December 1959 during which several people were killed and many others wounded by the South African colonial police.

With the passage of time, and especially, against the background of the brutal repression of the peaceful anti-colonial demonstration in Windhoek in December 1959, it became clear to Namibia's then budding nationalist leaders that they could not possibly conduct an effective struggle against the ruthless apartheid colonialism without a political organization that was capable of providing leadership and direction. In response to this demand, SWAPO was formed on 19 April 1960, submerging one of the then active anti-colonial groups, namely, the Ovambo People's Organisation (OPO) and, subsequently, the Caprivi African National Union (CANU). These two organizations came into existence on the initiatives of Andimba Toivo ya Toivo and Brendan Simbwaye respectively, both of whom are contemporaries of Sam Nujoma and therefore, belonging to the legion of pioneering Leaders of Namibia's national liberation movement in that they were among those who have had enough courage and foresight to respond positively to the demand of the time and rose to the occasion to arouse a people that lived a life of political apathy and mistrust of its own and strength to shake off the yoke of colonial oppression.

After its founding, SWAPO spent months discussing with other anti-colonial organizations in the country about possible forms of cooperation in the common struggle against foreign domination. The discussions produced little concrete results as far as the mounting of joint action was concerned.

Therefore the embryonic movement immediately focused its attention on the consolidation of its organizational structure in the country through the establishment of regional branches and external offices. It also launched a programme of recruitment by which scores of Namibians were organized and sent abroad for academic education, military and technical training during the first of the 1960s.

Frightened by the deepening and broadening dimension of SWAPO's liberation activity, the apartheid regime resorted to more brutal methods of repression. One such a measure was the banning of all public meetings in the country in December 1963. Scores of SWAPO activists were also subjected to repression in the form of dismissals from jobs and schools, banishment to remote corners of the country and house arrest. Furthermore,

the regime began to use more and more the notorious colonial strategy of divide and rule in an effort to frustrate the activities of the liberation movement. In this regards, Pretoria set up the Odendaal commission in 1964 to draw up a plan for the balkanization of Namibia into several Bantustans, the so called homelands.

As the dialectics of repression and resistance intensified, it became necessary for SWAPO to advance the struggle to a new phase, namely armed struggle. This phase started with the training and establishment of underground guerilla cells in the country. One such as a cell was the Ongulumbashe base, at which the first shots of the liberation war were fired on 26 August 1966. Thus, the latter half of the 1960s saw sustained efforts by SWAPO's guerilla army, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) to reinforce its ranks with more and more recruits and to build up caches of arms and ammunition in various parts of the country.

To counter this process, Pretoria rounded up many of the leading SWAPO leaders, including Comrades Andima Toivo ya Toivo, Eliaser Tuhandeleni and passed the draconian terrorism Act to try them and condemn them to decades of incarceration on Robben Island.

But, while the enemy was tightening her grip on the movement inside the country, the leadership abroad called a SWAPO Consultative Congress at Tanga, Tanzania, during the months of December and January, 1969/1970 to work out a new programme of action for the intensification of the struggle on all fronts. The Congress adopted several resolutions important among which was the creation of new organization structure, such as, wings.

Among the other wings that were created at the Tanga Congress were the SWAPO Youth League, the SWAPO Women's Council, the SWAPO Elders Council and the national Union of Namibian Workers as an affiliate organization. This important development marked the third phase of SWAPO's historical evolution. The streamlining of the movement's organizational structure was accomplished by the decisions and directives for the movement to step up its political work with a view to intensify and broaden the struggle on all fronts. Such decisions and directives, which formed the movement's programme of action of action, were communicated to SWAPO activities in the country through its underground network.

The immediate results of the implementation of that programme was the rise in mass of anti-colonial militancy actions in the country, as demonstrated by the 1971/1972 general strike by the workers and the daring activists of the SWAPO Youth League during the 1971/1974 period. These activities resulted in the arrest and imprisonment at Robben Island of many youth league leaders, like comrade Nashilongo Taapopi, Jerry Ekandjo, Martin Kapewasha, and others. The apartheid regime also mobilized, in that period, its puppet chief in rural areas to conduct a programme of mass public floggings. With the subjective condition thus created throughout the 1970's, through mass anti-colonial, political and labour activities it became possible for PAN to exert more and more military pressure on the South African army of occupation thereby imposing a heavy burden of the cost of war on the colonial power. It was in the face of that heavy burden of the cost

of war that South Africa agreed to sit down at the negotiating table by accepting the proposal of the five Western powers for a peaceful settlement of the Namibian colonial question. Thus from 1977 to 1989, SWAPO carried out the struggle on the basis of a three pronged strategy, viz, the waging of the armed struggle and political mass mobilization and negotiating for the adoption and implement that Security Council resolution 435 of 1978. However, to force South Africa to implement that resolution, PLAN had join forces with the Angolan army (FAPLA) and the Cuban internationalist soldiers in the decisive battle of Cuito Cuanavale and Chipa, thus making it possible for the 1989 independence elections to take place.

The fourth of the struggle was the battle for the conquest of state power through the ballot box in 1989, followed by the establishment of the SWAPO Government on 21 March 1990, a momentous event which announced the awakening of a new life for our people.

Such has been the road upon which SWAPO has trodden and fought with courage and self-sacrifice for a better future. That has been the celebrated life of SWAPO, movement born and bred in the crucible of the struggle and steeled to be ever self-confident, achievement oriented and optimistic. SWAPO is thus well placed to lead the Namibian people towards a bright future.

## **THE PRESENT TASKS**

The four main tasks before SWAPO in the present and immediate future are the continued democratization of the Namibian society, economic development, provision of social justice and the building of the nation.

This is to say, while all the important democratic principles, such as, the right and freedoms of the individual, universal adult suffrage and the right to form political parties, associations and interest groups, are enshrined in the constitution and legal order of our Republic, there is still a lot to be done to institutionalize democratic political processes and procedures through on-going political education of the masses of our people. This is one of the major tasks which SWAPO is called upon to perform.

As the ruling and indeed, dominant political party in this country, SWAPO has to define more clearly the role of the state in the country's socio-economic development. In other words, despite the broad consensus in the country to allow the private sector to play an important and unimpeded role in the economy, the majority of the Namibian people still expect the state, over which SWAPO supervises, to play a key part in the country's economic development, especially when it comes to things like the building of schools, hospitals, roads, provision of employment and propping up Namibia's entrepreneurs through the establishment of credit lines and negotiating favourable market conditions for them abroad. That is to say, the state cannot, entirely leave the issue of development to the market forces. Accordingly, the Party must study the people's socio-economic needs

and economic trends in the country in order to be able to give sound advice about the options and possibilities that are open to its government. Therefore, the second main task that the party must brace itself to work out is sound economic guidelines for its government to implement.

However, important as they are for our newly liberated country, democracy and economic growth are not, in themselves, sufficient conditions for the elimination or reduction of the socio-economic inequality which today characterizes our society. They do not , automatically touch on the equally important issue of social justice. Bringing about social justice in our society requires the adoption and implementation of progressive policies and aimed at creating equality of opportunity in all spheres of human life. Therefore the third important task which our young nation-state must perform is to bring about balance and fair allocation of the nation's resources, especially as this relates to the colonially disadvantages majority. In this regard, the guidance of the party to its government is of vital importance.

The task of nation building and the welding together of the various linguistic, cultural and ethnic communities of our country into a nation calls for a capacity, on the part of SWAPO, to communicate with every section of the population. This cultivation of a sense of oneness among the Namibian people will only be fully achieved if SWAPO, as the leading political force in the country, is able to unite the whole country around a common consensus of values, goals and objectives. Developing such a consensus requires, on the one hand, intense, adequate and effective communication among all the sections of the society and as a mass-based political party with a nation-wide presence, on the other hand, SWAPO is the most appropriate agency to fulfill this important task of nation building.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACTION**

1. To achieve the aims and objectives of SWAPO, as stipulated in the Party's Constitution, all organs, wings and affiliated bodies of the Party are charged with the following responsibilities:

### **A. POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT**

- (a) To understand and popularize the ideas of solidarity, social justice and progress, as well as, the principle of democracy on which SWAPO is founded.
- (b) To establish permanent effective communication links with the people at all levels of society, through both inter-personal and mass media channels, which a view to learning from them about their problems, their aspirations, their hopes and their doubts so as to enable the party's government to address such concerns;
- (c) To mobilize the people for participation in the affairs of the Government and society and thereby help to develop in the Namibian citizenry a capacity for interpretation of political events in our country and the world as a whole;

- (d) To organize the people to demand for accountability from elected representatives and to defend their hard-won democratic rights and liberties against any threat from whatever quarters;
- (e) To uncalculated in the masses of the Namibian people patriotic sentiment around which their creative and productive energies could be galvanized and channeled towards development; and
- (f) To promote peace and security in our country' our sub-continent and the world at large as well as to foster cooperation among nations.

## **B. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

- (a) To promote full and active participation of all the Namibian people, especially the colonial disadvantages back majority, in the process of economic reconstruction and development through the encouragement of initiative and creativity in economic activities such as small scale industries, cooperatives and jointventures, as well as, job creation in the informal sector of the economy;
- (b) To work full social justice in the distribution of the resources, wealth, promotion of efficiency and proper management of the human natural resources;
- (c) To encourage communities and individuals to strive for a decent quality of life through the acquisition of new skis and the introduction of new techniques of production;
- (d) To work for the acceleration of economic growth;
- (e) To fight to ensure that the policy directive on affirmative action is effectively implemented to uplift the victims of apartheid colonialism;
- (f) To urge the government to work out the best mechanism of effecting and reform;
- (g) To work towards the achievement of economic democracy, and greater prosperity for al;
- (h) To promote a monetary and financial policy geared towards the promotion of full employment, a high rate of economic growth and stable currency; and
- (i) To promote the integration of the informal with the formal sector of the economy.

## **C. SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT**

- (a) To promote family life as the core of human society where the youth are taught to understand the word around them, the norms and moral values of the community in which they live;
- (b) To help combat the anti-social practices of crime, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, etc.
- (c) To work for progressive labour relations and improvement of the living and working conditions of the workers;

- (d) To defend the democratic rights of the workers to organize themselves for the articulation of their own interests and to collectively withdraw their labour when confronted with unjust practices by employers;
- (e) To advance the struggle for equal rights for women, not only in terms of legal status but also in all other fields of social and natural life such as, education, employment and culture by guaranteeing increase of women's share of responsible position in the state and civil society;
- (f) To encourage local authorities and enterprises to create facilities for the care of children of working mothers and, thus, to ensure that women take full part in the production process as well as in the acquisition of knowledge and skills;
- (g) To help inculcating in the Namibian people the ethics of hardwork, labour discipline and consciousness as to the management and care of resources, tools and equipment; and
- (h) To press for the immediate rationalization and equalisation of the welfare schemes.

#### **D. EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT**

- (a) To fight for the right of the Namibian Youth to education, recreation, work and to promote their benefit in the development of a modern education system based on science and technology and arts;
- (b) To join the government and other agencies in combating the colonial heritage of illiteracy;
- (c) To call for the redirection of educational resources in accordance with affirmative action to historically disadvantaged schools, resources in terms of the creation of continuous in service-training programmes for teachers, workshops on production and acquisition of educational materials;
- (d) To identify all underutilized schools facilities throughout the country with a view to putting them to full use; and
- (e) To encourage initiative and creativity among Namibian artists and other persons active in the cultural field so that they can strive hard to depict in a social committed and artistically convincing manner the joys and sorrows, problems and hopes of the Namibian people

#### **E. HEALTH EMPOWERMENT**

- (a) To press for the speeding up of the process of the integration of the health system, so as to make it more efficient in catering to a Namibians;
- (b) To strive for the establishment of clinics and health centres in rural and urban areas where these essential services do not exist;
- (c) To press for the training of more health workers; and
- (d) To work for community-based programmes designed to increase community participation.

#### **F. HOUSING EMPOWERMENT**



- (a) To work towards the provision of adequate decent and affordable housing for all;
- (b) To demand for the formation of systematic plans for the erection of low-income houses which will eventually do away with squatting;
- (c) To encourage the production of local building materials as a way of making housing more affordable;
- (d) To campaign for the establishment of a mechanism for the creation of housing financial schemes open to the low-income sections of the Namibian society; and
- (e) To strive for the provision of clean drinking water and electricity in rural areas.

**G. ENVIRONMENT EMPOWERMENT**

- (a) To realize that our natural environment is the common heritage of all Namibian people, the present and the future generations;
- (b) To realize that our ecology is fragile, yet it is the basis for our sustenance;
- (c) To realize that our beautiful fauna and flora are a source of sustenance and attraction to mankind; and
- (d) To promote the protection, conservation and respect for our environment as a priority concern for all.

**H. GENDER AWARENESS**

- (a) To promote the understanding that throughout the historical times gender roles and status have been stratified to the disadvantage of the women folk;
- (b) To cultivate a conscious effort for gender awareness in development planning, social services and all spheres of national life; and
- (c) To design a specific strategy to facilitate the speedy elimination of traditional practices which deny women matrimonial inheritance and other constitutional rights.

**CONCLUSION**

As a guide to action, for the next five (5) years the SWAPO Political programme spells out the line of march for the Party to follow in order to play its leading role towards the building of a society that is materially and spiritually strong and productive and whose people are secured from the anxiety of basic socio-economic needs.

The implementation of this Programme will ensure that SWAPO will be able to fulfill its present and future tasks as a vital agent of development and a guarantor of democracy in our country.

As in the past, the mission of the Party remains the same; the defense of the interest of and service to the people. The guiding principles remain the same that is solidarity with the down-trodden, freedom for the oppressed and social justice for the disadvantaged.

