



SWAPO United, SWAPO Victorious, Now Hardwork...

4. SWAPO PARTY POLITICAL PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

Namibia is now a free, democratic, sovereign and an independent country. This came as a result of a long, protracted and bitter struggle for independence in which the majority of the people of Namibia vigorously participated over generations and in which many of them sacrificed their own lives for all of us who are still living today. They are no longer, but the Namibian people today are enjoying their full freedom from colonial occupation, exploitation and oppression.

The independence of Namibia came about after a heroic struggle of our fore fathers against colonialism and imperialism that provided this heroic nation an aspiration for SWAPO to carry out a struggle for national liberation through serious sacrifices. We therefore, pay tribute to our fore fathers, the freedom fighters and other heroes and heroines of the land of the brave.

Independence of Namibia and the current achievements should be cherished by all of us as a united and free nation. This was a long cherished dream of the founding leaders of SWAPO that is now realized. The struggle for independence and freedom was not an easy one, but it has ushered in the establishment of a secular and unitary state whose governmental institutions, political processes, procedures and programme were designed to create and establish a democratic society that guarantee individual rights and freedom. It provided for popular participation in public affairs, the right which many nations in the world are being denied to them. We in Namibia enjoys these rights because the Constitution made a provision for them on a permanent basis, and we are proud of ourselves for these rights that serve as an assurance provisions to the nation at large.

The 21 March 1990, the day of Namibia's independence marked a decisive turning point in the history of Namibia. That day the historic mission of SWAPO was fulfilled as the new nation was born as the founding President of SWAPO and that of the Republic of Namibia, Comrade Dr Sam Nujoma moved to proclaim that Namibia was no longer a colonised country, but an independent state and a free nation.

SWAPO emerged victorious as a result of organized political, diplomatic, military and mass action force, which stood in vanguard of the struggle for over three decades and whose followers and supporters risked their own lives in anti-colonial, underground, in prisons and concentration camps in exile and at the battle field in fighting against the apartheid instruments of oppression such as the army of occupation SWATF, Koevoet, Police and Secret services. Despite all the tactics and mechanisms of oppression today we are a free nation and the name of SWAPO has and continuously is a symbol of faith, confidence, reconciliation, peace, justice and progress. It is therefore, essential and demanding that Namibia's young and future generations should learn and understand how difficult it was to bring about independence and freedom. It was a protracted and difficult road indeed, which should not be compromised under no any circumstance.

IMPORTANT PHASES OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SWAPO

The **First Phase** was the birth of the movement which provided for an organizational expression and national platform to the then spontaneous, scattered and uncoordinated anti-colonial activities which characterized the Namibian society during the latter half of the 1950's. Those activities took the form of localized labour strikes, student protests and strikes and community protests against imposed, but specific injustices of colonial rule, which ranged from land expropriation, contract labour system and arbitrary township relocations, such as Katutura relocation. These activities prompted the patriotic Namibians to send petitions to the United Nations against the South African racist oppression in Namibia. The most significant of these anti-colonial activities was the Windhoek uprising of December 1959 during which many people were killed and many others wounded by the South African colonial police in Namibia.

The **Second Phase** was the formation of SWAPO on 19 April 1960, when it was realized by the nationalist leaders that there was a need to conduct an effective struggle against the ruthless apartheid colonialism through a political organization, which is capable of providing leadership and political direction in order to fight colonial forces. SWAPO was then formed submerging one of the then active anti-colonial groups, namely the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO) and 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 Dr Sam Nujoma and therefore, belonging to the region of pioneering leaders of Namibia's national liberation movement. They were among those who had courage and foresight to respond positively to the demand of the time and who rose to act and unite the people of Namibia to broke the life of political apathy and mistrust of its own ability and strength to shake off the yoke of colonial oppression and exploitation.

The aim of this phase was for SWAPO to try and achieve possible forms of cooperation in the common struggle against foreign domination. Despite serious efforts to achieve this only little concrete results as far as the mounting of joint action was realized. SWAPO had immediately focused its attention on the consolidation of its own organizational structure in the country through the establishment of regional branches and external offices. It also launched a programme of recruitment by which many Namibians were organized and sent abroad for academic education, military and technical training during the first half of the 1960's. This phase frightened the apartheid regime because of the deepening and broadening dimension of SWAPO liberation activities. The apartheid regime resorted to ever more intensified brutal methods of repression.

In December 1963, the apartheid regime proclaimed that all the public meetings were banned forthwith. 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. The regime also began to use more and cruel notorious colonial strategy of divide and rule in an effort to frustrate the activities of the SWAPO, as a liberation movement. In this regard, the apartheid regime decided to 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 on the ground, SWAPO realised that there was a dire need to advance the struggle to a new phase, which is the Armed Struggle. This phase

was characterized by the military training and the establishment of underground guerrilla cells and networking in the country. One such a cell of guerrilla networking was the establishment of Omugulugombashe base in the northern Namibia at which the first shots of the liberation war were fired on 26 August 1966. The last half of 1960's therefore, saw sustained and persistent efforts by SWAPO's guerrilla army, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) to reinforce its ranks and file with more and more recruits and to build up caches of arms and ammunition in various parts of the country. In order to counter this process or threat, the apartheid regime rounded up many of the leading SWAPO leaders, including Comrades Andimba Toivo ya Toivo, Eliaser Tuhadeleni and many others. To do this, the regime passed and introduced the draconian Terrorism Act in order to try them and condemn them to decades of incarceration on Robben Island.

It should be noted that, 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 strategy and programme of action in order to intensify the struggle on all fronts. The consultative congress adopted several resolutions, of which the most important amongst others was the creation of the new organizational structures, such as SWAPO Wings. Wings which were created at Tanga Consultative 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 to SWAPO. This historic and important development of SWAPO marked the **Third Phase** of SWAPO's historical evolution.

The streamlining of the movement's organizational structure was accompanied by the decisions and directives for the movement to step up its political work with a view to intensify and broaden the struggle for independence and freedom on all fronts. Decisions and directives, which eventually formed the Programme of Action of SWAPO, were therefore communicated to SWAPO activists in the country through the underground network.

The immediate impact and result of the implementation of that programme was the rise in mass of anti-colonial militant actions in the country, as demonstrated by the 1971/1972 general strike by the workers and the daring activities of the SWAPO Youth League during 1971/1974 period. These activities resulted in the arrest and imprisonment at Robben Island of many Youth League leaders, like Comrades Nashilongo Taapopi, Jerry Ekandjo, Martin Kapewasha and others. The apartheid regime also mobilized, in that period, its puppet chiefs in rural areas to conduct a programme of mass public loggings. The subjective conditions that were created through the 1970's through mass anti-colonial, political and labour activities, it became possible for PLAN to exert more and persistent military pressure on the Army of Apartheid, police and other security forces 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 the apartheid regime agreed to sit down at the negotiating table by accepting the proposal of the Five Western Powers for a peaceful settlement of the Namibian question. This from 1977 to 1989, SWAPO waged the struggle on the basis of a three pronged strategy, and these are, the waging of the Armed Struggle, Political Mass Mobilization and Negotiation for the adoption and implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978. To force South Africa to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 435, PLAN had to 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 Phase** 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 through the policy of **National Reconciliation**. That was the road upon which SWAPO has gone through and fought with courage, determination and self-sacrifice for a better life and future of the nation. This is a clear indication and testimony that SWAPO is a movement born and bred in the crucible of struggle and steeled to be ever self-confident, patriotic, achievement oriented and optimistic. This is the Organisation that is well vested and placed to lead the Namibian people towards the bright future and economic development.

CURRENT TASKS OF SWAPO PARTY

The four main current tasks before SWAPO Party are:

- a. Continued democratization of the Namibian Society
- b. Economic Development
- c. Provision of Social Justice, and
- d. The building of the nation

While all the important democratic principles, such as, the rights and freedoms of individuals, universal adult suffrage and the right to form political parties, associations and interest groups are enshrined in the Constitution and legal order of the Republic, there is still a lot to be done in order to institutionalize democratic political processes and procedures and the ongoing political education of the masses of our people. This is the most important of the major tasks, which the SWAPO Party is there to perform. SWAPO Party is the ruling and dominant political party in the country. It has to define more clearly the role of the state in the country's socio-economic development. This is to say that despite the fact that the private sector is playing an important role in the economy, the majority of the Namibian people expect that the SWAPO Government should play a key part in the country's economic development, particularly in the building of schools, hospitals, roads, employment creation and provision and empowering Namibia's entrepreneurs through the establishment of credit facilities and negotiating favourable market conditions for them abroad. The State should not at any given time entirely leave the issues of economic development to the business community. The SWAPO Party should also study and identify the people's socio-economic needs and economic trends in the country in order to be able to give sound advice and assistance about the open options and possibilities for economic development.

The **Second Main Task** is the SWAPO Party to brace itself to work out sound economic guidelines for the government to implement and realize. It should be noted that democracy and economic growth are not in themselves sufficient conditions for the elimination or deduction of the socio-economic inequality which still today characterize the Namibian society. They do not automatically touch on the equally important issue of Social justice. Social justice in Namibia requires the

adoption and implementation of progressive policies aimed at creating equality of opportunity in all the spheres of human life and dignity.

The **Third Important Task** of the SWAPO Party is to bring about a balanced and fair allocation of national resources, particularly, to the previously disadvantaged majority due to colonialism. Therefore, it is still essential that the SWAPO Party continue to guide its government to implement policies in this important area.

The **Fourth Major Task** of the SWAPO Party remains that of nation building, and the welding together the nation of the various linguistic, cultural and ethnic communities into a nation with a common vision of economic development. The cultivation of a sense of oneness among the Namibian people will only be fully achieved if the SWAPO Party, which is a leading political force in this country is able to unite the whole country around a common consensus of values, goals and objectives. The development of a consensus requires intense, adequate and effective communication among all the various sections of the Namibian society if only the SWAPO Party, which is a mass based political party with a nation-wide presence and characters that is the appropriate political force to fulfill this important task of nation building.

SWAPO PARTY GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

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

1.1 Political Empowerment

- a. To understand and popularize the ideas and ideals of solidarity, social justice and progress, as well as, the principle of democracy on which the SWAPO Party is founded;
- b. To establish the permanent, but effective communication links with the people at all levels of society, through both inter-personal and mass media channels, with a view to learning from them about their problems, aspirations, hopes and doubts in order to enable the Party's Government to address such concerns;
- c. To mobilize the people to participate 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 the country and the world at large;
- d. To organize the people to demand for accountability from their elected representatives and to defend their hard-won democratic rights and liberties against any threat from whatever quarters;
- e. To inculcate in the masses of the Namibian people patriotic sentiments around which their creative and productive energies could be galvanized and channeled towards development, and

- f. To promote peace, security and stability in the country, sub-region, continent and the world at large, as well as to foster cooperation among nations.

1.2 Economic Empowerment

- a. To promote full and active participation of all the Namibian people, especially the colonially disadvantaged black majority, in the process of economic reconstruction and development through the encouragement of initiative and creativity in economic activities and small scale industries, cooperatives and joint ventures, as well as job creation in the informal sector of the economy;
- b. To work for full social justice in the distribution of resources, wealth, promotion of efficiency and proper management of human and natural resources.
- c. To encourage communities and individuals to strive for a decent quality life through the acquisition of new skills and introduction of new techniques of productions;
- d. To work for the acceleration of economic growth;
- e. To fight to ensure that 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 land reform;
- g. To work towards the achievement of economic democracy, and greater prosperity for all;
- 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.

1.3 Social Empowerment

- a. To promote family life as the core of human society where the youth are taught to understand the world around them, patriotism, 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 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 national life such as, education, employment and culture by guaranteeing increase of women's share of responsible positions in the state and civil society;
- f. To encourage local authorities and enterprises to create facilities for the care of children of working mothers in order 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 hard work, labour discipline and conscientiousness as to the management and care of resources, tools and equipment; and
- h. To press for the immediate rationalization and equalization of the welfare schemes.

1.4 **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 sciences, 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 school 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 socially committed and artistically convincing manner the joys and sorrows, problems and hopes of the Namibian people.

1.5 **Health Empowerment**

- a. To press for the speeding up of the process of the integration of the health system, in order to make it more effective and efficient in catering to all 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 programme designed to increase community participation.

1.6 **Housing Empowerment**

- a. To work towards the provision of adequate decent and affordable housing for all;
- b. To demand for the formulation of systematic plans for the erection of low-income house units, 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 mechanism for 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.

1.7 **Environment Empowerment**

- a. To realize that our natural environment is the common heritage of all the Namibian people, the present and the future generations;
- b. To realize that the Namibian 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 environment as one of the priority concern for all.

1.8 **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

The SWAPO PARTY Political Programme was adopted by the first Congress of SWAPO in an Independent Namibia held on 6th-12th December 1991, in Windhoek.

The SWAPO PARTY Political Programme, which outlined the Historical Overview, the Current Tasks, Guidelines for Action spells out the line of march for the Party to follow in order to continue playing 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.