

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**TALKING POINTS FOR H.E. DR. HAGE GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE OCCASION OF THE 89TH
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF H.E. DR SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**“Comrade Sam S. Nujoma: A life of Determination and
Commitment to the Namibian People”**

MAY 12, 2018

ETUNDA VILLAGE

OKAHAO, ONGANDJERA

OMUSATI REGION

1. INTRODUCTION

In each and every civilization and culture, a birthday is a celebration, and a special occasion of showing affection and giving.

You will agree with me when I say that today, eighty nine years ago, is momentous in the history of our nation - an iconic and revolutionary leader was born here in the plains of Etunda, in the Omusati region, home of the Mopani tree.

Our Dear Comrade and Leader, whose birthday brought us here, from all corners of our country, is a revolutionary. At times, we use the term revolutionary lightly, without measuring the gravity and consequences of what that may mean. We have to ask here in the home of the Mopani tree, a tree that can survive the dry condition of this area. What is a revolutionary? What are revolutionary acts? A revolutionary is someone who fearlessly challenges the status quo and advocates for radical change. More important, as a revolutionary, you have to walk the journey with many people, who believe in your ability to drive that required radical change.

That in itself, the notion of a revolutionary -inevitably implies leadership. What is a leader? The simple definition of a leader

from the Oxford dictionary - is someone who motivates a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

It is why we are gathered here today, to celebrate the birthday of an extraordinary Namibian, who epitomizes what it means to be a revolutionary leader.

Our dear comrade and leader of our revolution, who is of great use, just like the Mopani trees of this region fearlessly challenged the status quo, and advocated radical change at a time when many did not believe that it could be done.

Comrade Nujoma motivated Namibians, from all corners of our vast land, and beyond to act towards achieving our common goal – an irreversible process of absolute and total independence of our beautiful country.

2. EARLY LIFE – MAKING OF A LEADER

The Family and Comrade Nahas Angula already narrated the story of Our Founding Father's childhood and youth. I would fail in my duties if I don't speak about the difficult path Comrade Sam Nujoma travelled towards what we have experienced over the past twenty eight years, OUR INDEPENDENCE. We are here today because this revolutionary leader always espoused the principles

of unity and solidarity. He mobilized these principles to unite Namibians to fight for their independence.

It looks easy today because on March 21, 1990 we achieved our right to determine our own DESTINY. But, let me assure you that there were moments, dark days when morale was low, our physical strengths tested, and when comrades did not believe that the aim and final goal of an independent Namibia would be achieved IN OUR LIFETIME.

BUT his believe and ultimate conviction in the just cause of a united people, charting their own destiny as free, is what convinced Comrade Nujoma to encourage us through thick and thin during the tough days of struggle. His never-say die spirit is what uplifted us even when morale was low and when we felt that we had reached the end of our resources.

Trust me, we had dark days because the enemy was strong. But his persistent character was our torch, illuminating our spirits during those dark days. As the title of his Autobiography suggests 'Where others wavered: My Life and Participation in the Liberation Struggle of Namibia', he stood firm, like the Mopani trees of this village from where he comes from. Like the Mopani trees of this

village, known for their use as firewood even when wet, Comrade torched our struggle and provided comfort on cold and rainy days.

3. The METAMORPHOSIS OF SWAPO UNDER COMRADE NUJOMA

Under him, and in the initial years, SWAPO was a collection of unrecognized freedom fighters who believed in their country and their right to be free. Our Founding father's tenacity transformed SWAPO into one of the most recognizable brands in the history of liberation movements in Africa and the world.

Our Dear Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, whose birthday we are celebrating, walked the streets of world capitals alone, without security, and at great risk to his person because the shadow of the enemy always followed him. He did so without proper office staff, locked out of meetings at the United Nations in New York. That did not deter him from the ultimate aim of independence.

In 1964 Comrade Nujoma appointed me SWAPO representative in the Americas, deputized by Comrades Theo-Ben Gurirab and Hidipo Hamutenya. Under the leadership of Comrade Nujoma, our movement SWAPO, evolved from petitioners, to a mainstream liberation movement of negotiators and participants in the international arena.

I recall that on July 18, 1966, the International Court of Justice failed due to a technicality, to rule on the legality of Apartheid South Africa's occupation of Namibia. To my dismay, the case was thrown out by the President of the Court, Sir Percy Spender from Australia.

At that point, the SWAPO leadership resolved that we had to be our own liberators and no longer rely on petitions to the UN. There was no turning back.

- One of our gallant sons declared "*we will cross many rivers of blood before we can achieve our freedom*".**

Without too much hesitation, the armed struggle was subsequently launched on August 26, 1966 with Comrade Nujoma as Commander of SWALA and later PLAN. We owe gratitude to our heroes and veterans of the Liberation Struggle who are here today, and those who have left us.

Our movement SWAPO gained international recognition with friendly countries accepting our offices.

Comrade Dr. Nickey Iyambo led the front in Finland, Comrade Dr. Ngarikutuke Tjiriange in Kiev, Ukraine; Comrade Prof. Peter Katjavivi in London to cover Western Europe. I was in New York to cover the United Nations and the Americas.

SWAPO was able to create a diplomatic fortress, galvanizing support across the globe with a three-pronged approach - Political Mobilization, Diplomatic Engagement and the Armed Struggle. The support of Cuba, the Soviet Union, the Frontline States of our region, sympathetic organizations from Western Countries and Scandinavia proved extremely valuable as we charted our path towards a sovereign Namibia.

4. NEGOTIATING FOR NAMIBIA'S INDEPENDENCE

The enemy, notwithstanding its strength, was forced to talk to us and Resolution 435 became the focal point for the process. The Western Contact Group of 5 took great interest in Namibia because they wanted to avoid a repeat of what had transpired during the independence of Mozambique and Angola. The Western powers shifted their attention to the settler colonies in Southern Africa, namely South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Their immediate goal was to protect the interests of the white minority by arresting the spread of communism through the protection of property rights and economic means of production.

Comrade Nujoma met with Comandante Fidel Castro to talk about the decision to go to elections.

After Fidel had listened, he said: "Namibia is your country and the struggle is yours." He went on to say that Cuba would support SWAPO no matter what decision it took moving forward.

There was a process of "give and take" during negotiations but Comrade Nujoma never compromised on principles. It is that resolve that led to an agreement on a transition arrangement. The United Nations mandated to administer Namibia and arrange elections.

5. POST INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA

The war was won, our independence irreversible, an era of peace began under Comrade Nujoma's leadership as the First President of a Free and Sovereign Republic of Namibia. Comrade Nujoma pulled everyone together by promoting reconciliation.

This part of history in Southern Africa is not told. But Comrade Robert Mugabe was the first reconciler, who tried hard to ensure that the colonizer and the liberator co-exist peacefully. Comrade Nujoma became the second reconciler of a deeply divided society in this region. Our experience here in the constitution-making process, which I chaired inspired others in our region.

As a true revolutionary, as a maximum leader, the language of regionalism, tribalism and racism is alien to him. A true revolutionary cannot promote tribalism and racism. It is anathema, an abomination to the act of revolution. Through Comrade Nujoma's leadership, Namibia is now a beacon of peace, democracy and stability. Namibia is today a far better country. This is the story of our birthday "boy". A revolutionary, freedom fighter, liberator, reconciler, statesman and Father of the Nation.

6.CONCLUSION

From humble beginnings come great things. Comrade Nujoma, you were born here, in these humble surroundings of Etunda in Ongandjera, on May 12, 1929. No one could have predicted that you, an infant from this part of our land, would one day grow to become a revolutionary and liberator of our people against unjust and ruthless enemy. No one could have predicted that the revolutionary movement, you founded 58 years ago would celebrate its anniversary as the Party of Government in the Hardap Region of a Free Namibia under the Theme: 'Unity of Our Movement as We March Towards Shared Prosperity for All'. A theme that eloquently speak to your 89th Birthday theme, "Building the Future Through Unity and Solidarity." You have always reminded us: "A united people shall never be defeated".

Dear Comrade Nujoma, you elevated the name and people of this village to a high canon of achievement. You don't belong to them only. You were given to the revolution. You demonstrated profound affection to the Namibian people by fighting for their freedom, and setting up a new government that would create the conditions for a future of happiness for the majority. The pursuit of happiness and the task of development is not complete. But I can assure you, the Namibian people will conquer together, poverty and complete the difficult task of shared prosperity.

We are here to celebrate your birthday, Founding President of SWAPO, Founding President of the Republic of Namibia, Father of the Nation, and Leader of the Namibian Revolution. The Namibian people are forever grateful for what you have done for this beautiful country.

Long live the SWAPO Party.

Long live the Republic of Namibia.

Long live, Our Dear Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma.

Happy 89th Birthday Founding Father!