



Deputy Prime Minister Marco Hausiku paid a visit to the office the Prime Minister exhibition stands at Ongwediva Annual Trade fair, after delivering the official opening message on behalf of President Hifikepunye Pohamba on Monday.

## Deputy PM

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Regional Councillors, members of the Diplomatic Corps, community leaders and people from all works of life.

Since its inception, Ongwediva Annual Trade Fair (OATF) has presented a welcome and popular platform for businesses, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to sell and exhibit their products.

“The challenge of unemployment is a major concern to our Government”, says President Pohamba.

He highlighted some of the measures initiated by the Government to fight unemployment and boost the performance of Namibia's economy, especially the SME sub-sector, stating that “our Government has adopted strategies to support local SMEs so that they can establish viable and self-sustaining businesses in order to create employment and improve livelihood”.

“The aim is to transform the structure, content and character of the domestic economy away from high dependency on the primary sector and exports of commodities, towards more value addition, as well as securing of new export market”.

President Pohamba underscored that during the 2009/2010 Financial Year, more than 60 qualifying SME building contractors received training on tender procedures and project management. A system was

designed to issue SMEs with certificates that enable them to receive preferential tender rating by public Tender Boards.

Many SME certificates have already been issued. Another initiative is the Equipment Aid Scheme, which, the President said, assists SMEs to acquire operational equipment for their businesses.

“We want to ensure that our SMEs can operate in a competitive environment. In this regard, Cabinet has approved restrictions on the involvement of foreign nationals in the sub-sectors of retailing, hair dressing and intra-Namibia transport in order to open up more opportunities for our people”, President Pohamba reveals.

Said the Head of State: “The efforts by our local authorities to host trade fairs as a means of promoting economic development are commendable indeed”. He urged all stakeholders to establish strategic partnerships that can lead to further successes of event such as the trade fair.

He has taken cognizance that several local companies have provided sponsorships to different aspects of this trade fair. “We expect to see more involvement of the private sector in these initiatives as our country addresses the challenges of unemployment, poverty and provision of better services to our people, especially those in rural and urban areas”.

He also publicly announced that plans are at an advance stage for the establishment of the Namibia Board of Trade

(NBT) in keeping with a standing Southern African Customs Union (SACU) obligation.

“The Board will be responsible for tariff setting and investigating cases of dumping of goods into the Namibian market”, he said.

One of the reasons of OATF's popularity is because it offers exhibitors an opportunity to network as well as access to a wide market of consumers.

He commended the organizers of the OATF for striving to improve its image and make it one of the most prominent and sought after trade exhibitions in the country.

The concept of the OATF was born in May 1994 with the sole purpose of creating awareness within the local business community about new ideas and to change the attitudes of people about the northern region.

This year marks a decade of the existence of OATF. It was an occasion to celebrate and commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “exhibition excellence”. It was a significant event, a memorable experience, a milestone and most importantly, the result of “freedom and hard work”.

The unrealizable hope and fantasy of former Mayor of Ongwediva and current Deputy Minister of Safety and Security, Erastus Amutenya Utoni became a leaving reality by October in the new millennium (2000).

Today, two decades then, it (OATF) is a flourishing trade business that has gain accolades from around the world, more especially Africa and Asia. Serious local, regional and international business is at play. The venue is none other than Ongwediva Trade Centre, where business communities converge.

It is encouraging that the OATF's international profile has continued to grow, with exhibitors coming from other countries. This demonstrates the confidence that the exhibitors have developed in the fair, as a good opportunity to mar-

ket their products and services as well as to generate revenues.

Speaking at the same occasion, Her Worship Patricia KASHUUPULWA, Mayor of Ongwediva town, welcomed all the dignitaries present, exhibitors and visitors to her town.

She minced no words as she heaped accolades on the development of OATF and the Government.

She said: “From humble beginnings, OATF has, over the years, consistently grown and now ranks as the prime multi-sectored business exposition in Namibia”, adding that “We are indeed indebted to the Government of the Republic of

Namibia for initiating and maintaining a conducive environment for business development”.

“We are currently prominently featuring at the Shanghai World Expo 2010 at the Namibian Pavilion exhibiting under the sub-theme: “Remodelling of Urban Communities”. We are indeed pioneers of in that field”, says the Mayor.

She thanked the exhibitors, visitors and sponsors for their unwavering support and encouragement over the years.

In his vote of thanks message, the Governor of Oshana Region Clemens KASHUUPULWA thanked the

Deputy Prime Minister Hausiku, Attorney General and Minister of Justice Pendukeni Iivula-thana and other high profiled invited guests for having graced the occasion.

He has acknowledged the positive contribution the Government of Namibia has made over the years through the Ministry of Trade and Industry towards the development, growth and stability of OATF.

“We are determined to take the OATF to greater heights and transform the region into a vibrant business incubation centre in the years ahead”, say the Governor.

## Afghan

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and undermining efforts to wean Afghans' dependence on secret sources of income and graft”.

Mohammed Zia Salehi, who is the chief of administration of the Afghan National Security Council, is at the centre of a controversy between Washington and Karzai. In July, he was arrested by a US-created anti-corruption investigation unit. Wire-taps allegedly documented him requesting a \$US10,000 car for his son, as his price for stopping an investigation into a money transfer company, New Ansari.

President Karzai intervened, and within seven hours had the arrest overturned and Salehi released. Karzai has also blocked attempts to arrest senior executives of New Ansari.

Any investigation of the company is clearly opposed by a significant section of the Afghan establishment linked to Karzai's administration. New Ansari is accused of transferring hundreds of millions of dollars in cash out of Afghanistan each year on behalf of warlords, government officials and drug traffickers. A United Arab Emirates custom official said \$1 billion in cash had arrived in that state last year alone.

The *Times* noted that “many Afghan officials maintain second homes” in Abu Dhabi “and live in splendid wealth”. Since 2001, the amount of money that has been plundered from the “international aid” sent to Afghanistan must run into the tens of billions. Large amounts also appear to have been simply handed over by the CIA in pay-offs and bribes.

On August 29, Karzai's office denounced the allegations that the CIA has much of his government on its payroll, as “groundless allegations” that could “negatively impact the alliance against terrorism” and which “cast [a] slur on the reputation of the Afghan responsible executives”.

There are, however, no reasons to doubt that the claims are true. The CIA's operations in Afghanistan date back to the late 1970s and 1980s, when it financed and armed Islamist groups that were fighting the



President Hamid Karzai and former US President George W. Bush

Soviet military occupation of the country. Several years before the events of 9/11, CIA agents were back in Afghanistan, bribing various warlords to support a US invasion.

In 2001, Mohammed Zia Salehi was a spokesman for one of the most powerful and murderous of the anti-Taliban warlords, Abdul Rashid Dostum, who was openly taking money from the US government. CIA operatives worked with his militia during the invasion to crush Taliban forces in northern Afghanistan and took part in the cold-blooded murder of thousands of Taliban prisoners.

Karzai was selected as president on the basis of his decades-long ties with US intelligence agencies. The US official with whom Karzai maintains the closest relations is the current CIA station chief, known only as “Spider”. The pair has been working together since before the 2001 invasion. One obvious question is the role that the CIA and the many Afghans on its payroll played in the blatant rigging of the 2009 presidential election, which returned Karzai to power.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the CIA station chief's prominence and close relations with Karzai provoked opposition from the US embassy and the State Department, but they were overruled earlier in the year by Obama.

A possible motive for the latest leaks is to prompt a refashioning of the Afghan government, perhaps involving some high-profile trials of corrupt officials. Popular hatred and contempt for Karzai's administration is increasingly blamed by the White House and the US military for the growing support for the Taliban-led resistance movement and soaring US and NATO casualties.

Seven more American troops were killed over the weekend, pushing the 2010 American death toll to 308, just nine less than all of 2009.

Indicating the concerns in US political and military circles, the Institute for the Study of War stated in a recent report on the situation in the major southern city of Kandahar “that the population views government institutions as predatory and illegitimate, representing the interests of key power-brokers rather than the populace”.

Kandahar is essentially ruled by Karzai's half-brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, who has been publicly accused of both presiding over a massive drug cartel and being on the CIA payroll. Karzai's older brother, Mahmoud, who holds American citizenship, has become one of the richest men in the country, with Toyota dealerships and government-allocated contracts in the cement industry.

Any changes in the personnel of the Afghan government on the grounds of combating corruption, however, will not alter the puppet character of the regime. The rampant payoffs, bribery and outright theft flow inexorably from a colonialist foreign occupation that is hated and opposed by the majority of the Afghan people.

The CIA revelations underscore the cynical nature of the American propaganda used to justify the war since 2001. Vernal individuals who take payments from a foreign occupying power and plunder the country have been portrayed as the representatives of a democratic future for Afghanistan. The Afghans who have resisted the occupation and fought for the liberation of the country have been labelled terrorists, killed in their tens of thousands and hunted down by 150,000 foreign troops. **WSWS**

Namibia Today is published by SWAPO Party,  
Department of Information and Mobilization.

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