

'Do not divert development projects'

By Chief Boniface Shufu, Mayeyi Community

I feel honored to welcome you to the Batsara 17th Annual Cultural Festival here at the Mayeyi Head Quarters at Sangwali. As always I would like to remind you that the Mayeyi Community is a peaceful and honest community, so feel at home to enjoy this memorable occasion with us.

The purpose of this occasion is to celebrate and remind ourselves about the importance of our culture, traditional

norms and cultural values as Mayeyi in particular and as people living in the Caprivi Region known by observing its culture, and as Namibians in general.

However, it is important to remind ourselves of what we have achieved as a community and as a nation in an independent Namibia.

1. Achievements

The Mayeyi Community in Namibia appreciates all efforts made and still being pursued by government to bring development in the different parts of our country. We want to appreciate the peace and stability that has prevailed in this country for the past more than twenty years of our independence.

As Chief of the Mayeyi and my community I am delighted to say we happily participated in the National and Presidential Elections towards the end of last year, where my subjects dem-

onstrated their unwavering support to the Ruling Swapo Party, and we hope to continue doing so in years to come.

Your Excellency, Founding President and icon of the Namibian Liberation Struggle, Dr. Sam Shafishuna Nujoma, I would like to applaud the President of this country, Comrade

Hifikepunye Pohamba, for giving an instruction for the Sangwali Hostel to be constructed after years of applications by this community to the regional leadership but to no avail.

This has clearly demonstrated how good leadership and governance and the political will can change the circumstances even when resources are scarce. I am happy to note that after the start of the construction of the Hostel, the Sangwali Senior Secondary School became the best performer in Grade 12 results for 2009 examinations.

I still want to applaud government through the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, for constructing the two Bridges leading into the Rupara/Nkasa Game Park. These Bridges will not only benefit the Mayeyi Community but will also benefit our Tourists, and all those who want to visit the park to view wildlife and the beautiful sceneries that



His Royal Highness, Chief Biniface Shufu

we have in this part of the country.

2. Challenges

Despite all these developments, the Mayeyi Community is still faced with different developmental challenges that I and my community feel the regional leadership has contributed to or just turned a blind eye on purpose. Among those it is sad to know that the Katima Linyanti, Sangwali and Kongola water pipeline stopped at Kapani in 2007, and has been diverted to other places that were not in the original plan. This is indeed a sad

story for us the Mayeyi Community, and this is despite that we, among others, have given our votes to the Regional Councilor of Linyanti Constituency.

We still recall that when telephone lines were connected they only ended at Linyanti Village, the same goes with Rural Electrification, it also ended at the same village living us limbo and in isolation as if the Mayeyi people did not exist in this region. We are happy that the tarring of Katima Linyanti, Sangwali, Kongola and Singalamwe road commenced last year and is progressing well.

It is disappointing for us to learn that the tarring of this road will end at Linyanti Village and start at Kongola. This is despite the fact that the Mayeyi's area of jurisdiction is contributing immensely to government coffers in environmental and tourism levies. It is not exaggerating to say the Nkasa-Rupara, and Mudumu National Parks are located here. We have a Health Center, a senior secondary school, an Agricultural station, but when it comes to de-

velopment this place is put at the receiving end. There is no Regional development in this part of the Linyanti Constituency apart from the construction of the Linyanti Constituency Office which our regional council can say this is what we did for the Mayeyi community, if there is one our regional governor is here and the regional councilor and they are yet to inform us of such developments.

The other worrying factor is the Kongola Electricity which is underway now, it is sad to observe that instead of Electricity to be supplied from Kongola down south to Choi, Ngonga, Lizauli and Sangwali it is being taken back to Kasheshe and other area in the Sibbinda Constituency that already benefited from Rural Electrification. There are close to 10 Lodges and Campsites and Conservancies from Mashi to Sangwali that are contributing to our national economy but electricity will only come last to such infrastructures.

All these things are happening in broad day light and in the eyes of the Linyanti Constituency Councilor, Honorable Doroth Kabula who was elected by us. One of the Good Days the Mayeyi Community will stop participating in Regional Elections but only in National and Presidential Elections if things and development continue to go to others only.

I have observed in recent months of the land dispute between the Masubia and Chichimani Traditional Authority at Sikanjabuka and Muyako as well as other areas. I know for sure that there are Mayeyi people living at Muyako and Sikanjabuka but, it is worrisome to learn that some people who find themselves in the other Chief's area of jurisdiction

decided to disrespect his authority. History has it that apart from the Mayeyi and Masubia

community there is no other tribe in this region that can claim Muyako, Sikanjabuka and others in the eastern part of Caprivi.

However, this is not important at the moment we need to concentrate on issues that develop us all for the sake of our children. I am appealing to the Mayeyi people where ever they find themselves in the Caprivi Region, to respect the Traditional Authorities under which they find themselves.

It will not serve any purpose for the Mayeyi in Muyako, Masokotwani or Choi to decide to travel long distances to Sangwali to pay their levies or for their cases to be heard. We are all aware of the History of Mayeyi, Masubia and Hambukushu and their Chiefs in this region and there is no reason why we should be at each other's throats. This country is independent and it will never be colonized again.

We know the originality of our Chieftainship. We were ruled by the Colonial South African Boers but after independence they left, we know that the Lozi's colonized the Mayeyi and other tribal groupings in this region, but that time will never come back again, the same goes to the Makololo who ruled us with an iron fist.

We should all bear in mind that Namibia is a unitary state and Caprivi is not an exception, boundaries put by colonial powers to divide us will not work and should be discouraged. This does not mean that we do not know where our ancestral land

is and no one should be allowed to settle there without permission from our Traditional leaders and their community. I would in the same vein appeal to other communities in this region, to respect the rule of law, and work closely with other Traditional Authorities for the common goal of benefiting our people. As Traditional Authorities we should refrain from instigating violence among the community because this will not benefit any one.



Guests were treated to various cultural groups during the Mayeyi Annual Cultural Festival. Photo by Asser Ntinda



Invited guests and Indunas during the Mayeyi Cultural Festival. Photo by Asser Ntinda



One of the cultural groups which entertained people during the Mayeyi Annual Cultural Festival. Photo by Asser Ntinda.