

Founding President vows to uplift Otavi

By Asser Ntinda

When Otavi was degraded to a village status by the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Rural Development, its residents, including Founding President Sam Nujoma, were not amused, but there was virtually nothing that could be done to reverse the trend.

According to the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Erastus Negonga, who also attended the Otavi Cultural Festival, standards at Otavi have dropped so drastically that it has no more capacity to sustain itself financially.

Its capacity to collect debts and administer its affairs efficiently has also gone off the rails, hence the decision to demote it to a level of a village. That is the last classification which has made Otavi residents uncomfortable with the degrading. But Founding President Sam Nujoma has vowed to work hard and reverse that trend and ensure that Otavi regains its former glory by being declared a town again. He called on all residents to

work extra hard and join him in his efforts to achieve that goal.

"How can we be degraded to a village?" he asked when he addressed the Otavi Cultural Festival which was held at his Farm at Etunda last weekend. "We have the best meat here which we can export and get more money. We have the best farms here.

"All that is needed is for all of us to put shoulder together and pull in one direction. If we do that, we will surprise the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing and Rural Development next time around, and they will have no choice but declare Otavi not just a town but a city."

The Founding President said that



Founding President Sam Nujoma and business tycoon Frans Aupa Indongo arriving at Otavi Cultural Festival. Photo by Asser Ntinda.

one of the biggest challenges facing Otavi and its surrounding areas were the prohibitive bushes, which are so many that enough grass for live stocks and animals could

hardly grow. Many of the trees that grow in those areas sap so much water that the areas' water table has become poor. The solution, he said, lied in de-bushing to allow for

more grass to grow and the water table to improve.

"That in my view is the solution," he said. "De-bushing will result in many firewood, which can also be

turned into charcoal. We can export some of these products and make more money so that we can improve our sewerage system and improve Otavi's capacity to collect debts on time and administer its affairs efficiently."

The Founding President promised to rally all the farmers in the area behind his efforts to improve the living standards of Otavi and improve the quality of life of its residents.

Business tycoon Frans Aupa Indongo, who was one of the prominent guests of honour, also addressed the gathering, saying that all what the people of Otavi needed to do was to work hard.

"We are the only people who can make Namibia move forward," he said in his short speech. "We should not wait for anybody from outside to come and do that for us. Our prosperity lies in our hands.

"Namibia's greatest treasure is not diamonds, gold, copper or other natural resources you can think of. Namibia's greatest treasure is the peace that we enjoy today. Without peace, there can be no development.

"The first thing that we should do is to maintain peace as we have done since independence. We can only maintain that peace and stability by voting for SWAPO Party. Therefore, my appeal to you is that we go and vote, we should vote for SWAPO Party to maintain peace and stability and ensure that Namibia prospers like any other country in the world."

The Otavi Cultural Festival was held under the theme "One Namibia, One Nation." More than seven cultural groups from different communities such as Tswana, Kavango, Herero, Caprivi and Oshiwambo performed various traditional dances. The festival will now be held every year as part of the awareness campaign to draw attention to Otavi.

The Otavi Cultural Festival was capped with a Beauty Pageant, which saw the queens of Otavi coming out in their different outfits. The contestants were so impeccably dressed and walked in different style that it must have been tough for the five judges to pick a winner.

In the end, Miss Otavi had to be found, followed by Miss Personality and the first and second princesses. Cherlly Tjihikika was crowned Miss Otavi. She almost broke into tears when she was announced as the winner. Fransina Muatjitjeja was declared Miss Personality, while Naemi Abed and Letha Mutumbulwa were declared the first and second princesses respectively.



Three of the contestants in the Otavi Beauty Pageant dressed in traditional costumes. Photo by Asser Ntinda



Otiherero Cultural Group entertaining guests at Otavi Cultural Festival. Photo by Asser Ntinda.



Setswana Cultural Group did not want to be outshone. Photo by Asser Ntinda.



Miss Otavi, Cherlly Tjihikika, being congratulated by her friends upon being crowned. Photo by Asser Ntinda.

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