

Happy 21st Birthday Namibia

Dr. Elijah Ngurare, Secretary of SWAPO Party Youth League

21 as a number can represent the maturity and the responsibility for an individual's personal growth. That is to say that individual has attained the age of 21 years and has officially become an adult. In our society so too worldwide, those who turn 21 years often receive KEYS as part of their birthday gifts. That is to say at 21 years old, one is considered old enough to be a keyholder to your family home, and thus hold a symbolically 'senior' position in the family.

In other words, our free and independent Namibia has reached 21 years old and thus has become "old enough to be a keyholder" amongst the family of free Nations of the world. This year (2011) therefore we celebrating the coming of age as a free nation and reflect on the journey travelled and strengthen the foundation of our nationhood beyond Vision 2030. That morning of 21st March 1990, all the people and all that makes Namibia stood and paused as the cloud of history was hovering the landscape of new Nation.

All Namibians hungered for leadership and yearned for a direction which was being announced at the independence stadium by H.E. Dr. Sam Shafiqshuna Nujoma as 1st President of the free and independent Namibia. In his own words he proclaimed as follows: "To the



Camarada Dr. Elijah Ngurare Namibian people, I would like to state, on this solemn and historic occasion, that our nation has blazed the trail to freedom. It has risen to its feet. As from today, we are the masters of this vast land of our ancestors. The destiny of this country is now fully in our own hands. We should, therefore, look forward to the future with confidence and hope.... Our achievement of independence imposes upon us a heavy responsibility, not only to defend our hard-won liberty, but also to set for ourselves higher standards of equality, justice and opportunity for all, without regard to race, creed or colour. These are the standards from which all who seek to emulate us shall draw inspiration."

In other words, for the past 21 years, Namibia and Namibians have been their own masters pur-

suing, with confidence and hope, the heavy responsibility of nation building in the interest of all Namibians. For example, it can be recalled that in 2009 Presidential and National Assembly Elections, a new generation of Namibians became first time voters and voted overwhelmingly for the SWAPO Party Presidential Candidate and SWAPO Party members of the National Assembly. These first time voters belong to the unique generation popularly known as "bornfrees":

These are amongst the collective offsprings of a free Namibia who must take forward the celebration and preservation of our new Star (Namibia) which had arisen 21 years ago on the African continent and vowed to never again become a colony. We have a heavy responsibility to preserve the gains of a free and independent Namibia on all fronts: social, economic, cultural and political in the interest of all Namibians. It part of this heavy responsibility that must propel us to break the shackles of entitlements and arrogance of being more human than others.

We must demonstrate with humility and dignity to our fellow citizens especially the bornfrees that today belongs to them too provided they do not compromise the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Namibia. We must further humble ourselves to the virtues of hard work, honesty, patriotism and

practical national unity and equality. The gains of political independence must be juxtaposed with the political will to attain economic independence for the present and future generations. We must resolve that equality in a free and independent Namibia must not be superficial and should not be artificial but rather genuine and meaningful.

This is what is expected from a Namibia that is 21 years old. As we celebrated that golden day, we must take a moment to reflect on the road that brought us here. We may not know it, but we are standing on the shoulders of those that sacrificed their lives in order to liberate our country. Others are still very much alive and we show them the respect that we owe them. Where we were 21 years ago is as important as to where we will be 21 years from today. All of us should ask ourselves a question: what good have I done for my country? What can I do to better the life of my next door neighbor? If we can answer those questions smartly, you should be proud then that we have made a contribution to our country.

But independence is more than lighting candles and sing happy birthday for our country. Let ours be a Nation that has reached its maturity in the distribution of economic wealth of the country. The rural poor and majority electorate must not feel excluded from the decisions of economic empowerment. The urban and rural poor youth must not feel the indignation or hopelessness that there exist two societies: one rich and one poor under the political administration of metropolitan black elite.

We must strive for the materialization of One Namibia One Nation, under God, indivisible and with prosperity for all Namibians regardless of tribe, race, economic or ethnic origin. At 21 years, let us continue to be a Namibia matured enough to engage in national debates on bread and butter issues without favour or fear. Above all, all Namibians, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, rural and urban may differ on many things but must not differ on the protection, preservation and promotion of Namibians interests and the defence of its territorial integrity.

Finally, as we march forward towards Vision 2030, and with the maturity of 21 years of political stability and economic prosperity,

let every Namibian exclaim with joy that indeed we have become an oasis of peace, stability and economic development. We have encountered challenges along the way of reaching this far but thank God the path of opportunities for the future has been paved. It has become a tarred road of hope and a railway of dreams.

At 21, Namibia has produced medical doctors, scientists, engineers, lawyers, journalists, amongst others. It has expanded access to education, health, transport and telecommunication as well as social grants to the elderly and vulnerable members of our society. In the great vaults of opportunities of our nation the remains the resolve and determination to improve the living standard of all Namibians in rural and urban areas.

It is therefore the duty and patriotic responsibilities for all Namibians as we commemorate our year of maturity (2011) and having attained the adulthood of 21 years, the birthday gift is in our hands, individually and collectively: let each one reach one and hold hands to build and develop our motherland Namibia, this land of savannahs and contrasting beauty which must forever hold high the banner of solidarity, freedom and justice.

NAMIBIA'S RITE OF PASSAGE AT 21 ON THE 21ST MARCH 2011

Founding President, H.E. Dr Sam Nujoma, recalls in his book at page 141 that he was "driven past the then South West Africa administrator's house as a prisoner been deported from his own country on the 21st March 1966 but 24 years later in 1990, we achieved our genuine freedom and independence on that specific day" and now 21 years later, we are celebrating not only our country's independence day but also its rite of passage from adolescence into adulthood.

The rite of passage is a ritual event that marks a person's progress from one status to another. It is a universal phenomenon which can show anthropologists what social hierarchies, values and beliefs are important in specific cultures. The concept as a general theory of socialization was first formally enunciated by Arnold van Gennep in his book of that name, to denote rituals marking the transitional phase between childhood and full inclusion into a tribe or social group. Rites of passage have three phases: separation, transition, and reincorporation, as van Gennep described. In the first phase, people withdraw from their current status and prepare to move from one place or status to another. I believe in the case of our country that happened on March the 21 1990 to 21 March 1997, that of the first seven years after independence. The transition (liminal) phase is the period between states, during which one has left one place or state but hasn't yet entered or joined the next. This stage happened for Namibia between March 21, 1997 and March 21, 2004 after the first seven years of Independence. In the third phase (re-aggregation or reincorporation), having completed the rite and assumed their



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"new" identity, one re-enters society with one's new status. Re-incorporation is characterized by elaborate rituals and ceremonies, like college graduation. This, to me, took place between the 21st March 2004 and this 21st March 2011 when Namibia is completing its rite of passage and transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.

As I said before, human growth is measured in cycles of seven years and this 21 anniversary is a third cycle of a perfect triple seven according to the science of numerology by the likes of Pythagoras and other philosophers of the time who believed that because mathematical concepts were more easier to regulate and classify than physical ones, they had greater actuality. St. Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430) wrote "Numbers are the Universal language offered by the deity to humans as confirmation of the truth." Similar to Pythagoras, he too believed that everything had numerical relationships and it was up to the mind to seek and investigate the secrets of these relationships or have them revealed by divine grace. Who can deny that 3 is a number of divine perfection with three qualities of the universe of time, space and matter, each consisting of three elements of past, present and future, height, width and depth, as well as solid, liquid and gas or thought, words and

deeds for human abilities? Who can also deny the seven days in a week or the seven colours in the spectrum?

Nevertheless, the pertinent question we must ask ourselves is; did we succeed with the transformation project of the nation? Did we empower the previously oppressed and exploited so that we create circumstances in which affirmative action will no longer be needed? As the South African Sunday Times' Mondli Makhanya wanted to know; were the efforts of government simply exploited by forces within and without to their own advantages, with mischievous intent to produce handsome returns for themselves inducing a new consciousness of a new-found sense of insecurity and ethnic consciousness creating a certain perception with new coined fire catching phrases becoming the mantra of perceived marginalisation? The narrative portrayed of the so called 'minorities' as victims of a new dispensation fits squarely into a paradigm of victims and perpetrators we don't seem to shake off. Put simply, we still want to define ourselves in terms of the legacy of apartheid's policies of divide and rule with everyone scrambling for victim status while apportioning the perpetrator status to the other.

As Monareng Pitso of the South African City press rightly reminds us that it was Frantz Fanon who explained the psychosis colonised people practice against each other. According to Fanon, powerless against the structural and psychological violence of the oppressor, the colonised vent their fury on their equally powerless brothers and sisters. Their anger invariably turns inward and instead of debating who owns 80 % of the land and the upper echelons of every

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Celebrating with a smile.

We wish the young and funky at heart a joyous 21st Independence celebration

swapo Party Youth League!

swapo ya rocka!