

Ithana

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Court to be heard on merit.

The ECN, as first respondent, and SWAPO Party as second respondent, were made to pay the cost. The Supreme Court ruling sent a pocket of RDP supporters here and there in frenzy of celebrations, claiming that they had "won" the case.

It appeared that some of the people who were present in the Supreme Court did not understand the ruling and simply went on a celebration spree without understanding what ruling really meant.

The celebrations were short-lived though, probably after they were told that they had not won the case, but that it was referred back to the High Court for hearing and a ruling to be made there on.

"The Supreme Court just said let the High Court hear

you," said Cde Iivula-Ithana. "It did not decide on the merit of the case. Even when they went around celebrating, claiming that they had won, won what? What have they won?"

"The matter has still to be decided on merit in the High Court. To me, that is the testing time. If those parties were serious, this is the time for them to say we are not going to Parliament because our issue is now getting the serious attention it deserves."

She said this was the time for them to say that now they were going to fight for their seats which were lost, and would never go to Parliament to join other parties which they claimed had rigged the elections.

"I think they should now obtain those seats by convincing the High Court that they elections were rigged. What are they going to do in Parliament when they have lost so many seats?" asked Cde Iivula-

thought Kaaronda had gone "too far" and wanted him out to conceal the scandal from the eyes of the workers, the very owners of the money that is missing. Heavy campaigns were waged against him within and outside the NUNW circles, all designed to make sure that he was not reelected at all cost."

The MUN leader said that they too launched counter attacks designed to save Kaaronda because they thought and believed that what he had said was the truth, and the NUNW would have emerged weaker, not stronger, out of this congress, if it had compromised Kaaronda for boldly saying the truth.

In the end, Kaaronda managed to snatch the NUNW's top permanent job as Secretary General, beating Alfred Angula with 480 votes. Angula, who was allegedly tipped to take over from "wayward" Kaaronda got 104 votes.

Before the elections of the NUNW's national leaders, delegates exhaustively discussed touchy and thorny issues on the agenda. The GIPF scandal came under heavy discussion, with many delegates echoing what Kaaronda had been saying in public before the congress.

The 38-page Central Executive Committee, CEC, and Treasury Reports, signed by both the NUNW President and

Ithana, who is also Minister of Justice.

"We remain convinced that there has never been a case. This was just an exercise in futility, wasting taxpayers money. For a reasonable person, that is the conclusion one could come to, because why they refused to go to Parliament was because they claimed they could not go there because the elections were rigged.

"They should have waited to prove in the High Court how the elections were rigged before they could go to Parliament. The time for keeping themselves occupied in the drama has long run out," she said.

"The seats they claimed to have lost were part of that drama. If anything, this is the time they ought to refuse to go back to Parliament as they would be required to provide evidence of how the alleged rigging of election had taken place."

the Secretary General, touched on many issues and they were so harsh that some of the paragraphs in the reporters had to be rephrased.

They appeared a little milder in the final resolutions, with some degree of diplomacy so that, as one delegate put it, "at the end of this congress, we are all comrades, although we had said in no uncertain terms that we will never allow the workers' money to be squandered recklessly like that. The money must come back. That message came out very forcefully."

But it was the GIPF scandal which received most of the shots, all fired at point-blank range. It was the only item that took nearly two pages in the CEC reports. None of those at the helm of GIPF was spared, with delegates crossing swords on the floor and calling for the heads of those responsible to roll with immediate effect.

The GIPF scandal was wheeled on for debate under a heading "Theft, Corruption, Fraud and Mismanagement of Funds at the Government Institution Pension Fund, GIPF.

GIPF Board of Trustees is made up of representatives from government as the employer, and representatives from the Namibian National Teachers Union, NANTU, and from the Namibia Public Workers Union, NAPWU, who represented the interests of the workers

The congress had no kind words for those representatives, saying that they had "blatantly abused and betrayed the trust bestowed on them by the government and the workers. NUNW, delegates argued, had specific aims and objectives which must be adhered to by all its affiliates, NANTU and NAPWU included.

"It is not our responsibility to hide things and sweep them under the carpet pretending to want to protect the union while in reality we are out to protect

NUNW

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ports that with the world economic recession, Namibia was hit and was likely to be hit more harshly again by job losses in industries such as mines, tourism, hospitality industries and so on.

"Unemployment now stands at about 51 per cent generally defined and this figure is quite clearly alarming with poverty also on the increase in the country," read one of the reports.

Delegates were also concerned about labour hire practices, through which Namibian workers continued to be exploited. Labour hire practices were banned in the country by the High Court, but that ruling was turned down by the Supreme Court after it was appealed.

The Supreme Court's ruling left many trade union leaders disturbed and government quickly moved fast to ensure that it would enact tighter laws to protect workers from such practices.

The congress passed a resolution totally rejecting labour hire in whatever form it manifested itself, and supported government efforts to ultimately obliterate labour hire through a tighter definition of the employment relationship.

"While congress respects the independence of the judiciary, it however rejected the Supreme Court ruling on the matter and called on our parliamentarians to enact a law as required under Article 81 of the Namibian Constitution to nullify the Supreme Court ruling," read a resolution on labour hire.

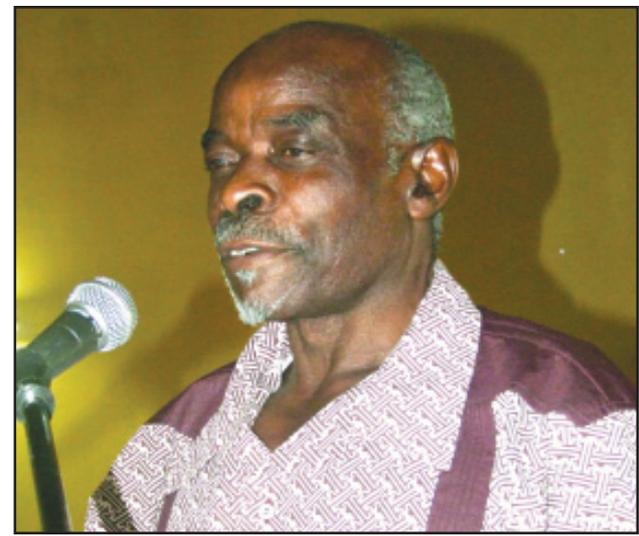
On job creation, the congress passed a resolution calling on the government to take the recognition of prior learning seriously as most of its members

of interest were presented to the congress.

Then came in Kuleni, which was supposedly set up as a private company owned by GIPF, to "administer funds under GIPF," with one GIPF trustee as its "single director." It emerged later that the idea was to essentially finalize and administratively legitimize looting and reckless trading.

Kuleni was strongly opposed by both government and the NUNW. The congress last weekend resolved that no GIPF employee should be taken to Kuleni and that the idea of Kuleni should just not be pursued at all.

The NUNW passed a resolution calling on all those responsible for such acts to be brought to book. The resolution also called for the suspension of the entire management and the Board of trustees of GIPF, calling on President Pohamba to appoint a special presidential commission of inquiry into the findings of NAMFISA, into the Development Capital Portfolio.



Prime Minister Nahas Angula

had proven to possess the necessary practical skills and know-how but did not have the required academic papers and were as a result not equally remunerated or promoted like their counterparts with qualifications.

Prime Minister Nahas Angula also touched on the issue of unemployment in his opening remarks, inviting trade unions to join government in its efforts to embark on extensive programmes of employment creation. He said that an employment creation summit was being organized.

"The goal is to mobilize all stakeholders, including labour, to form a united front for employment creation," he said. "...Government shall take leadership in bringing together all stakeholders, be it the workers unions, employers' associations, private sector and civil society to map out strategies to fast-track employment creation.

"In this regard, we are all expected to subscribe to a social contract for employment creation. This should be a win-win situation, new workers will swell the ranks of the NUNW, decent jobs shall lead to poverty reduction, new business shall contribute to the National

Gross Domestic Product, GDP, new technologies shall be introduced, skills training programmes shall improve productivity and many more benefits to individuals and to the public good."

Another issue the Prime Minister wanted the union leaders to consider was workers empowerment, saying that the union should not just aim on the "take-home" salary.

"You should aim that as workers invest their labour into a company, they should also invest a small portion of their salary in acquiring equity in a company as individuals," said the Prime Minister. Both the Langer Heinrich Uranium Company and the Pukewitz Holdings were developing products to that effect. They are in the process of developing a Share Option Issue or Employee Share Option Plan, depending on the condition of their ownership structure. If this proved successful, workers would enter in a new relationship with their employers.

"Once again, this will, be a win-win situation," said the PM. "Workers shall bequeath equity to their benefactors. Employers shall have enhanced social justice in their employment relations."

"The surplus from the workers pension monies must be used to benefit the workers in acquiring houses or other fixed properties, establish their own businesses, finance the education of their children and so on. At least 50 per cent of this surplus must be directly used to benefit the workers," read the resolution.

Prime Minister Nahas Angula who opened the congress also emphasized leadership values, saying that leadership was a trust bestowed in those who were in leadership positions.

Leaders, he added, were entrusted by their followers to ensure that their basic interests were protected.

"It is a betrayal of trust if we use our leadership positions to enhance our own private gain," he said. "We should at all times guard against this... Similarly, we should not allow ourselves to be used as megaphones when other people have to settle scores between themselves. That is an abuse of the trust of those who elected us."

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