

# IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS; DISSECTING THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AND DIRECTION

## INTRODUCTION

Indeed, SWAPO girded its loins as it kick-started its electoral campaign targeting the born frees. The rumours mills were working overtime to find out who is in, who went through and who was knocked out or as they say 'who came out, who stayed in for a heating and who overcooked' in the cooking pot. Analyst and curious alike wanted to find out if there is any infusion of the new blood in the Pohamba's team, especially after "...the behind arm-twisting by the alliance of the youth and the union which made the mother body to cave in to their demands to increase their number of delegates with extra five with voting rights which gave the young Turks advantage over the 'old guards'..." some of whom have retreated to the rear for fear of being overcooked in the pot and opted not to stand in the contest.

How attractive will the Pohamba's team be to the youngsters or will it heavily rely on the old guard who will be clocking a quarter of a century in government? What is the President's message to the party and the electorate, especially with his list? These were some of the questions raised by analysts and curious alike, which goes to show the popularity and the interest in the affairs of the SWAPO party.

Meanwhile, Minister Ekandjo, who also topped the list after the automatic inclusion of the top three leaders, minced no words again to caution the "delegates to 'sift' through the lists and elect tested capable leaders-not people aligned to individuals or certain cliques in the party".

Allow me to borrow and paraphrase from Olley Maruma again from his article entitled "media needs to shake off legacy of racism" in the Southern Times of May 24-2009, before I comment on the matter at hand.

Reading a wide swathe of newspapers headlines, one is struck by how many 'analysts' have got it wrong again. It takes a doughty critical analyst to touch the right cords. Some analysts resorted to the duplicitous meth-



Cde Nahas Angula

ods where the militant critics are treated as enemies, while the bootlickers and columnists are sold to the nation as doyens of truth. The courageous youth and anyone who defends them are vilified as dunces and enemies of freedom becoming soft targets for jibes disguised as analysis.

As experts sat to dissect the matter, most if not all of them regurgitated the tired and fallacious old broken record of the 'stalwart and heavyweight' being sidelined by youngsters and narrowing the electoral college to purges by block voting as alluded with the falsely touted 'analysis' by the media houses used as convenient tools to advance certain agendas under the guise that they would sound more credible.

Once you denounce them, in no time, they snap up on their media with scurrilous and vituperative stories demonising you and portraying you as an illiterate buffoon, while they are e-mailed and faxed copies cleansed of any syntactical errors and spelling mistakes by 'sub-editors and proofreaders' from the comfort of their nice mansions in the rich suburban localities of our beautiful Capital city.

It is high time we shake off that 'worldly intellectual' mentality and its shibboleths of 'implementers' concocted stories and orchestrated plans and start serving our people with insight and 'a Prophetic vision' instead of missing the point with talks of

'fears of political suicide...abuse of the old guard by emerging forces...vicious intra party fights...power vacuum...tribal cards' etc with the same gloves of 'democracy and human rights' discourse peddled with neo-colonial agendas of 'regime change' up the sleeves of those masquerading as guardian angels of democracy and their handlers.

## I-DISSECTING THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

In dissecting the outcome of the Electoral College, my first take is to applaud the fairness and the entrenched democratic system in the SWAPO-party of choosing and presenting capable candidates to the electorate. There were lobbying, strategic alliances and smart moves to canvass for support and votes but 'there were no skipping red traffic lights, driving towards oncoming traffic or in the emergency lanes, or dangerous overtaking' in the Electoral College.

As it was expected that the top three together with the first twenty elected, followed by the next ten blended with the President's list, totalling 43, one may add more for a total of 54, are sure to make it to parliament, the stakes were high as capable leaders ready to debate about issues and not personalities were required. Those at the bottom 70s of the list starting at 55 will have to work hard to ensure that they are in and prove their loyalty to be included in the non-elected member's list.

Indeed, all eyes were on the President to see which way he would want to lead the nation and the party and what is his message. I had no doubt that the President would appoint people on merit and as guided by his own conscious and in consultation with the party in line with the 'collective leadership' principle.

Judging from the president's list of ten, which in fact was gender balanced and well calibrated to cater for many interests on a sort of a give and take basis, what immediately came to my mind is the message of competence, continuity, consistency, inclusion, tol-



Cde Nangolo Mbumba

erance and healing. But most importantly, to me, it was the passing of a test of leadership.

Indeed, the President did listen to the ranks and file of the party and included the minorities in his list. By the same token, he also did 'sacrifice' some of those termed 'close' to him and thus dismissing talks of 'a Pohamba faction' as concocted by the private media. Thus, the President sent a clear message that he has no faction just as he did on the 26 of August at Omugulwombashe this year saying that our leader has been, is and will always be the Founding Father and that he is just following in his footsteps. The President also strategically appointed unionist and hardworking regional coordinators, as a pat on the back, which might bring in votes and show loyalty to his leadership.

## II-TEST OF LEADERSHIP AND WISDOM

Perhaps the biggest move of the President was the nomination of Minister Saara Kuugongelwa Amadhila as top on his list. The President showed wisdom and a clear message of inclusion and competency, and passed his test of leadership in a classical Salomon's wisdom case. I may even agree with the analysis of Kaapama that Minister Saara's inclusion on top of the Presidential list was also meant to send a message of peace, in other

words, 'to pacify the opponents'. Indeed, President Pohamba emphasized how he deems Minister Saara as one of the competent and performing key ministers in his next cabinet. In Minister Saara's word, 'the President has shown confidence and trust in her abilities'. Indeed, it is always difficult to make the right choice between two equal alternatives and I just couldn't figure out who the right choice is between two equally competent leaders.

What is clear is that Minister Saara was not in a popularity contest and was expected to garner enough support from the SPYL and SWC as one of the young hardworking and competent Ministers who even had a surplus for two consecutive financial years as Minister of finance. All I can say at this juncture is that once again, I am proved right that the 'right mother is the one that says "please,



President Hifikepunye Pohamba

don't kill my first born son, just give him to her in one piece" (1st King 3:23-28). Indeed, the President showed that he is not only 'a rain maker' but has insight and wisdom by putting Minister Saara as first on his list. She is a young articulated 'beauty with brain' and competent woman to top his list. Successful leaders listen to words of wisdom as written in Ecclesiastes 9:13-18 and Proverbs 21:1 & 21-22.

## The New Face of the youth and women

Just as childhood is a socially and historically specific phenomenon, so too is youth and adolescence. This phase is portrayed as a stage in which people have to make difficult psychological adjustments to the physical changes in their bodies and in legal terms the status of adolescence is ambiguous. Young people are seen as responsible for their criminal activities from the age of ten; however, young women cannot give consent to sexual intercourse until the age of 16 or 18, although a doctor may give them advice on contraception and condoms before that age. Young ones may marry at 16 or 18 but need their parents' consent. Young men could be liable to conscription at 16, but the



Cde Elijah Ngurare

voting age is 18 and can only become presidents at 40 and members of parliament at 21. Yet, if they demand, at the age of 30 (which is a retiring age for a footballer) to be elected to parliament even with their PhD, they are told, "Youth is not everything"... wait for your chance since we too had to wait until we were in our fifties.

Eish man! Youth is getting longer and longer and the protracted period of growing up is extending. The years in education or unemployment increase. But adulthood is associated with taking up full status in society, getting married, having children, holding a full-time job and living in an independent household with full citizenship status - having the right to vote and to be voted for as President. Of course, this life transitions

are marked by 'rites de passage' and ritual markers such as confirmations, first sex, graduation, right to vote etc. What rebellious youth are we talking about here? You mean the one that has to wait for another five years to become ministers? Give them a break and appoint the youth and women in leadership positions.

The fact that Minister Saara is 42, herald a completion and the beginning of a new era if one considers the life cycle of 7 years from 1 to 7 for childhood, 7 to 14 for identification, 14 to 21 for adolescence, 21 to 28 pre youth, 28 to 35 youth, 35 to 42 post youth and entrance into adulthood. Indeed, someone suggested that the life cycle is comparable to a woman life cycle. The placement of Minister Saara as top on the presidential list should also be viewed as a gesture to accommodate the women, the youth's and 'born frees' demands and views as she now



Founding President Dr Sam Nujoma

becomes the new model face of the youth and young vibrant, eloquent, articulated, competent women of Namibia. Indeed, who else than Minister Saara has a clue of what she is talking about in terms of cost and can tackle unemployment, HIV, underperforming Parastatals and has expertise where one can go and say "show me the Money"?

## Signs of inclusion and healing

The president also saved retired general Namoloh as one of his ministers and brought back former Governor Billy Mwanyengange from the wilderness just as the firebrand youth leader Kapia returned to Parliament.

Talking of Kapia, his return to active politics was imminent since the lifting of the ban and his subsequent nomination by the SPYL. It is indeed a welcomed strategically move to have brought my name sake back to parliament just as I fully support the possible return of uncle Ben to Parliament as he could perfectly fill the gap left by Tjiriange since he is a living library and an avid historian the Party ever had. Uncle Ben, Kapia, Governor Billy and retired general Namoloh's return to parliament herald an era of healing, tolerance and inclusion by the Presi-



Cde Tobby Aupindi

dent and passing a leadership test with flying colours by not side lining members of the central committee of the Party who are not marred in controversies that may have risked rifting the party apart. The smart and strategic move came from the youth when their candidates such as Kapia and Piet Van der Walt came out of the 'cooking pot' and made it on the list including those on the list forwarded to the Head of State such as Monica and Lucia. The appearance of Dr Namwandi is also a welcomed move, especially in view of his expertise and experience just as Utoni, Kazenambo and Tweya meteoric rise to prominence deserving ministerial posts to groom them as it was done with Saara and Dr. Abraham as the next crop of politicians to take cabinet and ensure continuity. I still

maintain that Dr. Ngurare, Dr. Aupindi, Katrina and Kaaronda also deserve to be groomed and not cast aside as 'rebellious' youth firebrands.

Those who had a spat with the youth and found themselves in the wrong books of the Unionists, especially with the not yet confirmed or denied remarks of "Omusati clique" by Uncle Ben's investigative committee, were the biggest casualties and not as some analysts alluded to "vicious intra party fights, political purge, victimisation and the abuse of the old guard by emerging forces... (of) few corrupt political cronies...looting public coffers...particularly at local council levels".

I also didn't think that all the experienced cadres will 'be pushed out of politics...in (a) humiliation of Tanga' and that there is 'a culture of fear with an intolerance of divergent views' as alleged by 'analysts'. The whole affair was, is and will always be about issues not personalities. There were no any intra-party fights, the purging and victimisation with daggers drawn out and abuse of the old guard by emerging forces as alleged. The list of 72 shows competency, continuity, consistency, inclusion and healing and I am glad the President did not endorse the alleged tribal card.

## The tribal card

One perturbing issue, however, was the re-emergence of the tribal card again, which is a bad seed sown by those who want 'the downfall' of the party. The tribal agenda, whether it was brought in as a tactical move to secure positions or it was deliberately brought in again through the backdoor to cause confusion and the alleged 'downfall of the party', is a dangerous recipe for disaster.

Indeed, talks of 'the Ndonga element' with the alleged rationale that 'although they (The Ndongas) played a key role in the formation of SWAPO, they have never been given the opportunity to occupy prominent positions or control the party' as it was reported by the Windhoek Observer September, 2009-09-05, should be shunned and condemned by all patriotic citizens and Pan-Africanists.

I repeat that whatever the motives of that move, whether meant for securing posts or strategic positioning for future elections or even meant to put a time ticking bomb by those considered as implementers of the 'notes', it was a deadly explosive cocktail Molotov that could have opened the Pandora box with catastrophic consequences. I am already on record of asking that "if my grandfather is Omgandjera, my father is Omdonga and my mother is Omkwanyama, to which Ovawambo Ethnic group do I belong and which group should I support?" I kept on pondering on that issue for almost 12 years, in a classical example of becoming 'a living epistle' like the prophets who had to 'experience the pain' to be able to convey the correct message.



Cde Elivalistus Kaaronda

The message is 'no to division and destruction' from agents provocateur and saboteur and 'yes to nation building on the strong foundation laid down by the founding father, the good shepherd who leads from the front and not from the rear'. It is indeed naive as it is hogwash to narrow the party to a tri-partite pact of the Northerners. The truth is, SWAPO is the liberator of this country and will never have survived on artificial cheap cosmetic arrangements like that. It was the founding father, following in the footsteps of our fore fathers that united the Nation under one banner to fight for the liberation of the country and consistently advocated for unity. So it will be ludicrous if it were not pathetic to suggest that 'Namibia is a revolting feast that only the northern groups are al-

lowed to eat from on a rotating basis, as though other people in the country do not exist' by fielding and forwarding arguments that 'the western Owambos have already tasted the fruits at the pinnacle of power, the Kwanyamas (eastern Owambos) are stuffing their bellies and it is time for the Ndongas (central Owambos) to eat from the pot...' and whispering in the dark corners that 'we will never allow a Kwangara to become President...'. It is funny how they now pose as champions of national unity asking the same 'kwangaras' they shunned to join them. Thanks God, the party's list is well calibrated in a zebra fashion to cater for all groups irrespective of their ethnic, colour, gender and regional origin right from the top to the bottom, unlike some lists with cosmetic inclusion of other groups to make them sound credible.

## III-CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the contest was a clean one and the race was 'a fairly straight-forward issue of contest for leadership without rife and rivalry vis-à-vis leadership issues unlike the daggers-drawn out contest with dissension and division out of the normal inner-party bickering'. There were only rude awakenings for some 'heavyweights' who "faced embarrassing defeat and couldn't get executive protection from the President to pull them back into the system".

It was under the watchful eye of Pohamba that debates flourished and didn't stifle them nor muzzle any one into submission. He didn't listen to those who were calling the youth to order nor did he support factions, corruption and tribalism but instead allowed a free flow of ideas and the normal democratic process to take place. The next stop is on the President's nomination list of the 6 non-elected members. I just hope he will include the youth and women experts such as Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, Monica Kalondo, Marlene Mungunda and Martha Tilahun-Namundjebo in his non-elected 6 members' list.

All in all, the messages of competency, continuity, consistency, inclusion, healing and reconciliation is what came out of the list of President Pohamba, a bullet proof leader, as the founding father baptised him and as we were reminded by the veepy, Dr. Geingob that a Party worth its salt, needs a leader rather than a manager. Because, according to the veepy, a leader, unlike a manager, does the right thing and not just seen to be doing what is right. He volunteered twice to come back home under the instructions of the founding father and as Joshua and Caleb, he together with another one showed courage. He didn't develop sudden stomach pains as symptoms of cowardice, as the veepy quoted Kwame Nkrumah, nor did he rebel fighting for the throne. No wonder he is a worthy successor to the founding father like Joshua was to Moses (Exodus 24:12-18). Indeed Joshua had no equal nor rival not even comparable to Aaron the Prophet or Miriam both of who once rebelled against Moses (Numbers 12 to 17).

In these times of economic crisis and financial recession, one would definitely not want to be led by a team of untested captains. Why would one join what Lazarus Jacobs joked about as CONGRESS OF DESETERS and REALLY DISSAPOINTED PEOPLE who don't talk about issues but personalities and campaign through press releases and media conferences and briefs? People should join the Party with a consistent track record of maintaining peace and stability and promoting nation building and reconciliation as well as a prudent management of the economy and programmes to alleviate poverty by grants to pensioners, the OVC and veterans.

As a member of 'the youth elders council' born in the year the 'first bullet was shot' and went into exile at age 11 in 77, moulded in the hardship of the struggle and 'baptised with fire' as 'The Cassinga generation', in a typical Joseph, Jeremiah and Daniel style, I just hope I did my part as someone born for such a time as this and no scaring tactic diverted me from my mission. All praises be unto The Almighty.

BY P.T. SHIPALE