RE-BUTTAL – Open Letter to the President...Racism at NBC

Must be stopped immediately

Comrade Editor

The letter with the above title which chooses to wash the NBC family linen in public and published on Friday 4 – 10th March 2011 edition of your publication bears reference.

When we announced the organisational changes to the NBC staff on 25 February 2011, I informed them that there will be letters to the media, vilification and name-calling. That was prophetic of me even though I was praying to be proven wrong. I must also state from the very onset that the authors enjoy my deepest sympathies because the last kicks of a dying horse are lethal and we are feeling them daily at NBC.

The contents of my letter would obviously serve as part of future legal records given that private lawyers or such will be engaged in this matter judging from what we know already. To that end, we shall deal with the lies and truths as follows:

Appointment of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

THE LIE: The racist chairwoman brought Ms. Janrie Duun in to CFO and that it was unprecedented.

THE TRUTH: At my appointment in August of 2010 to the position of Director General it was obvious that matters of financial governance and management needed urgent attention if we were to stop the rot. With board permission we agreed to provide a 12 months contract to a suitable candidate whilst we were developing future plans. The Chairman provided cv’s of Ms. Duun and also requested other directors to do so should they have other potential candidates for the short-term assignment. I additionally gathered other cv’s and recommended Ms. Duun to the board as the best candidate with over 20 years post-qualification experience as a Chartered Accountant. The candidate is a Namibian woman with international experience of note and at a price tag of less than N$1 million, we still believe that it is a steal. Her remuneration is further in line with the provisions of the State-owned Enterprises Governance Act.

The incumbent in the post of General Manager Finance and Administration, a position which title was changed to “CFO” is leaving on voluntary early retirement soon but is busy with an orderly hand-over of his functions to the contract CFO. So, two people are not performing the same functions. The position of the Finance Manager is advertised which is presently occupied by a Zimbabwean national, the one that is cruelly referred to as a “foreigner” by your authors.

Strategic Triangle 2011 - 2015

THE LIE: We were not consulted

THE TRUTH: NBC’s strategic plan was crafted from the 18th to the 21st of January 2011 by NBC Directors, present EXCO, select middle managers and representatives of the NBC Shop stewards’ Council. This was a watershed gathering in the history of the corporation since it was attended by all key stakeholders of the institution for the first time to craft a roadmap for the future. It was a commendable effort and we are all very eager about the future prospects for our institution. Those that are averse to change will unfortunately not own up to that fact and will only do so publicly but in private continue to connive and lie. But again, who said that building a credible organisation was going to be a walk in the park? I, for one, am prepared to work hard with progressive staff members to save NBC from further ridicule and demise.

The racist chairwoman, Albertine Aochamb

Mr. Sven Thiene

NBC Director General,

THE LIE: NBC’s strategic plan was not attended by the board. And, it is a pure lie for the board members to sit as if they were unaware.

WHY NOT? Board members must have attended the meeting, have an understanding of the content and have a say on it.

The NBC Board was consulted on the ideal structure to work the place to the ground whilst we were developing future plans. That is why we are in such a fine financial mess under the current CEO. And, ‘soothsayers’ know how many more (5) layers around the NBC structure? Where are they extracting the costs from? How can NBC be competitive in a world where buying is a fine art? How can NBC continue to deny Non-black Namibians their constitutionally guaranteed space at NBC? The freedom fight was not to replace one form of racism with another but for it to be equality at NBC. The board members continue to deny NBC Directors, present EXCO, select middle managers and representatives of the NBC Shop stewards’ Council.

JANUARY 2011 – Amunyela/Sorenson matter is on the table. Who are they extracting the costs from? How can NBC be competitive in a world where buying is a fine art? How can NBC continue to deny Non-black Namibians their constitutionally guaranteed space at NBC? The freedom fight was not to replace one form of racism with another but for it to be equality at NBC. The board members continue to deny NBC Directors, present EXCO, select middle managers and representatives of the NBC Shop stewards’ Council.

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With board permission we requested other directors to do so should they have other potential candidates for the short-term assignment. I additionally gathered other cv’s and recommended Ms. Duun to the board as the best candidate with over 20 years post-qualification experience as a Chartered Accountant. The candidate is a Namibian woman with international experience of note and at a price tag of less than N$1 million, we still believe that it is a steal. Her remuneration is further in line with the provisions of the State-owned Enterprises Governance Act.

NBC Chairman

THE LIE: NBC Chairman is a racist

THE TRUTH: This is a very convenient label to use in Namibia at present since the Amunyela/Soerenson matter is on the table. Media, public and legal limelight. The “Con- cerned members of the NBC Family” are therefore desperately trying to latch onto a very tired battle cry for help. It is my estimation that it is the tac- tic the “old guard” at NBC have used to exact previous DG’s as they shamelessly bant and to ensure that NBC does not live up to its own slogan “It’s Ours”. What a sad state of affairs when we continue to deny Non-black Namibians their constitutionally guaranteed space at NBC. The freedom fight was not to replace one form of racism with another but for it to be equality at NBC. Who are they extracting the costs from? How can NBC be competitive in a world where buying is a fine art? How can NBC continue to deny Non-black Namibians their constitutionally guaranteed space at NBC? The freedom fight was not to replace one form of racism with another but for it to be equality at NBC. The board members continue to deny NBC Directors, present EXCO, select middle managers and representatives of the NBC Shop stewards’ Council.

First March 2011 to 28 February 2012: Any subscription after March will be accepted and the fee payable will be calculated on a pro rata basis.

What is the subscription period?

THE LIE: Five new layers of management, costly, pre-deter- mined structure and we were not consulted

THE TRUTH: I find it extremely difficult to work with soothsayers and mind-readers in our midst. When the board has only approved the Senior leadership structure of the organisation, how do these soothsayers know how many other layers there will be at NBC if the discussion has not even commenced? Where did they see the five (5) layers? Where are they extracting the costs from for this supposedly top heavy structure? Maybe that explains why we are in such a fine financial mess under the present “Concerned Members of the NBC Family” who some boast of 20 years and more of working the place to the ground since they cannot even count. Wie Schade!

Everyone who was at the strategic workshop of January 2011 (except the middle man- agers) was interviewed and con- sulted on the ideal structure to support the new strategy. Inter- national best practices were also reviewed and shared with all by looking at the corporate struc- tures of BBC, Chinese Broad- casting System, SABC and Malawi TV. Nothing was pre- supposed or pre-ordained. We unfortunately cannot be held responsible if people were sleep-walking through the en- tire process or simply chose not to ask for assistance when they did not know what was happening in their midst. At some point all of us have to take full responsibility for our lives.

4. Racism at NBC

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