We have come a long way. We must have ourselves to applaud. In short, we owe ourselves a huge pat on our back. For, Namibia turns 20 on Sunday, 21st March 2010. It has been a long road, tortuous and bumpy, but here we are, celebrating our 20th Independence Anniversary.

After more than 100 years of colonial and apartheid domination, Namibians emerged victorious and became independent on 21st March 1990. Our Founding President, Dr. Sam Nujoma, was sworn in on that day as our President and shortly declared that Namibia was forever free. The world witnessed a new nation being born.

Looking back over the past 20 years of our independence, we can proudly say that we have not messed up. We have shamed those pesadillas who predicted “failure and doom” for a Namibian independent state. Stories like “Namibia will not be like any other African country” have been proven wrong – by us Namibians. We have successfully steered Namibia into the world. Today, we face and confront overwhelming challenges. But, out of apartheid, the Namibian people, we have nurtured a beautiful country we proudly call Namibia.

Before independence, our very existence was defined by the colour of our skins and our ethnic origins. We were whites and blacks, Damaraos and Kavangos, Caprivians and Wambos, Hereros and Namibians, Coloureds and San, you name it. In fact, we had 11 governments, 11 education systems, 11 heath systems and 11 of everything. It was a stratified mess, the least.

At independence, we inherited a highly skewed economy. We inherited enormous social deficits, poorly staffed and equipped schools, chaotic health services, unskilled young people and landless people crammed in mainly barren communal areas like sardines. The colonial damage was real and our nation’s future was bleak. Out of apartheid, we have nurtured a beautiful country we proudly call Namibia.

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