

# What people say

From SWAPO website: [www.swapoparty.org](http://www.swapoparty.org)

## ◆ Posted by Magano Abisai

I concur with Cde. Shikongo, this blog platform will help us build our country, because its the only platform we have, i dont know if there is any other. It would be a great idea if all Councillors especially those in rural areas visit this platform, and here our voices.

## ◆ Posted by Daniel Shikongo

Lets all work together to maintain peace, stability and continue with our economy development. Here in Ohangwena Region we salute the Might SWAPO Party for all its efforts. Can we start blogging regarding rural de-

velopment, im sure our dear leaders also visit this site, they can pick up one or two issues affecting us, especially here in rural areas. Thanks Comrades

## ◆ Posted by Cde Kanamutenya

Having attended a graduation at UNAM were nurses and some people from Neudam where given their awards, it was so amazing to see such wonderful achievements. There were some people who did extraordinary well scooping trophy some to even N\$5000.00, wow! Congratulations, and now the question come to my mind is where this people will go? With such good

performance, are they going to look for employment in the government if they are not employed or what's next? I think it's time that the RESETTLEMENT should look to this people either they have applied or not let us give this qualified people in Agriculture land for them to produce, if a person had done so well academically, then let them prove how they can develop their skills by producing so that by 2030 Namibia can be a self sufficient food producer, let us not just get high qualifications then to come and sit in the offices, rather to produce!!!!!! THEIR BLOOD WATRS OUR FREEDOM!!!!!!

## 'I am not RDP,' says Nghixulifwa

This statement is meant to clarify and condemn the misleading reporting and character assassination that was caused by the article and its composers.

I would like to state that as far as I know, my departure from RCC is neither tribal nor political and as far as I am concerned, it is a closed chapter. I have been running my own business ever since I left RCC and I am currently also working as an Executive Director in one of the Companies in the Private Sector; I am happy and satisfied with what I am doing. I have no quarrel or any issue with the SWAPO Government and would not like people to use this to advance their political agendas.

The SWAPO Government has created opportunities for

people to exercise their skills and become self-employed; this is what I am currently doing now.

The story in the paper is further insinuating and creating an impression that I am a member, supporter or sympathizer of the RDP. I want to make it clear that I am a card carrying SWAPO Party member and will stay a loyal member of SWAPO. I have never joined the RDP and have no intentions and/or reasons of doing so. I would like to urge those people who are walking around with my name to stop doing so; I did not ask or need anybody to speak on my behalf. In fact I have already consulted my lawyers for advice on the issue.

I would like to further urge all SWAPO Party members, supporters and sympathizers to

be vigilant against such tactics which are meant to confuse the Namibian nation. We must not allow ourselves to be misled and be divided by such cheap campaigns.

I would like to show my appreciation to the people who have been supporting me during this time, especially my family, my wife and children, my friends and colleagues who believe in me and been supporting and advising me during this time.

In particular I would like to thank the top leadership of the SWAPO Party for their support and advice they have accorded me.

We must stay united and must not waver.

VIVA SWAPO VIVA

By Kelly I S Nghixulifwa

## 'Solar system is the way to go,' says President

Affordable electricity for poor people in settlements and rural areas remains one of the biggest challenges facing Namibia, but President Hifikepunye Pohamba has given the assurance that government will continue to fund solar system as the way to go.

In his State of the Nation Address in Parliament on Tuesday, the President committed his government to supporting the acquisition of solar systems for domestic use.

That support would continue to be channeled through Namibia's Solar Revolving Fund as part of rural electrification and the promotion of renewable energy.

"So far," he said, "892 solar systems were financed at a value of N\$21 million (during the year under review). Under the Off-Grid Energization Master Plan, the government will also electrify public institutions with solar energy in off-grid areas."

Accessibility and availability of reliable infrastructure for information and communication

technology also featured in the President's State of the Nation Address, saying that such technology was the way of the future.

"It will not only improve current economic performance, learning in our schools and efficiency in the public service, it will also take us towards the attainment of Vision 2030."

Telecom Namibia, wholly owned by the government, and Mobile Telecommunications, MTC, a private company, have invested more than N\$115 million in the West Africa Cable System, WACS, which will have a landing point at Swakopmund.

WACS will provide Namibia with direct international connectivity to the rest of the world.

MTC is currently busy at work to switch over from 3G to 4G cellular technology, making Namibia the first country to introduce 4G technology in Africa.

Once 4G technology comes into operation, Namibia is set to experience faster mobile broadband Internet access speeds. The President called on Namibians to maintain unity, peace and stability to ensure economic growth and sustainable development.

"I wish to make a clarion call to our nation to choose the ethic of hard work, honesty, transparency and patriotic zeal to contribute to the ongoing nation building efforts. Our country will not be developed and built by anyone else but ourselves," said President Pohamba.

"I call upon you, fellow Namibians, to join us in taking our country forward on the road towards prosperity and greater peace, social justice and greater freedom and liberty, towards the achievement of Vision 2030."



## Zoom In

By Asser Ntinda



I fully agree with Ombudsman, John Walter, when he called on Namibians this week to reopen the debate about legalizing abortion in the country, following increased cases of girls and young women dumping newborn babies in plastic bags, leaving them to die gruesome deaths in valleys, dustbins and toilets.

Only a few lucky ones survive when unsuspecting passersby are awakened by crying voices in the bush and alerting the Police that something is fishy in this bush or that valley. And sure enough, upon searching, you see police officers emerging with fetus or crying babies with bruised faces wrapped in clothes and left to die and rot in bushes. Walter was at pain to point out that abortion, baby dumping and infanticide were grave but common cases and Namibians should come up with measures to address these cases before they get out of hand. Abortion, whether we like it or not is a social problem we must learn to live with, despite our religious and social sensitivities we may hold dear to our faiths.

"Is legalizing abortion such a holy cow that we should not debate it and engage all stakeholders in constructive dialogue?" he asked. "All I am suggesting is a way to find a solution to the problem." I strongly believe that this question should be the starting point for Namibians to engage and interrogate themselves on this crucial issue and frame the solutions in such a manner that real issues are not blurred by sentimental sensitivities and religious overtones, which in many cases are religiously unrealistic.

People in South Africa have access to legal abortion across the country and it is very rare to read stories about babies being dumped in plastic bags in valleys and riverbeds there because there are specialized clinics that by law can perform abortion in safer conditions. In fact, by not legalizing abortion, we are forcing poor girls and women to conduct unsafe and risky abortions in their backyards and in toilets. The result is baby dumping, an ugly issue which has littered Police crime reports for many years.

I take off my hat for Dr Libertine Amathila, then Minister of Health and Social Services, who in the late 1990s, pursued Namibia's first Draft Abortion and Sterilization Bill, which was to legalize abortion "on demand" up to 12 weeks in the country. Two main reasons were behind her pushing for the Bill to go through. One was to curb baby dumping, which was a common phenomenon then. The second was to sway people away from carrying out dangerous backyard abortions using the most unorthodox methods ever imagined by humanity.

The overriding objective, Dr Amathila said then, was for us to arrive at an understanding that when a girl said she was not ready for a baby, she meant no. No amount of religious activism would change her "no." She would do anything to ensure that the baby did not see the light of the day, even if it meant that she, too, would lose her life in the process. Most of them do so ready to die anyway.

The Draft Bill was first released for public input in June 1996. It was later followed by a full-scale research programme on abortion, which was commissioned by the government. The research was sanctioned by Dr Amathila. As a doctor by profession, her concern was about women conducting backyard illegal abortions when society could actually help them do it safely and legally. The research gathered data and statistics on the occurrence of back street abortions and the availability of contraceptives to both rural and urban women. Sister Namibia welcomed the Bill, saying that it was long overdue.

Dianne Hubbard wrote a piece on abortion on October 30, 1997, arguing that laws restricting access to abortion do not discourage women from having abortion. They simply drive it underground and into backstreet, with tragic consequences for women's health and wellbeing

No sooner had the Bill been made public, the Churches were on it, calling on the government to stop tabling the Bill altogether because "fetus" too "have a right to life." Various marches were organized around the country, inciting people against the Bill. The Council of Churches in Namibia on numerous occasions called on the Government to drop the Abortion Bill. This prompted one woman in Windhoek in 1998 to tell the Churches: "Do not replace my rights with religion, nor with that of a fetus." The anti abortion bill calls came at a time when South Africa was successfully legalizing abortion.

So hot was the debate that Dr Nickey Iyambo, Namibia's first Minister of Health and Social Services told church leaders bluntly on June 27, 1996: If anti-abolitionists continue to refer to the Bill as unconstitutional and call those who support the Bill 'motherless,' I will stop listening to your views."

But Dr Amathila, who replaced Dr Iyambo later, push-full and determined to see the bill sail through as she was, realized later that the Bill was heavily and unfortunately religionalized. With persistent revolt against the Bill led by the Churches, government was unfortunately forced to "abort the abortion bill." Within two weeks of the Abortion Bill having been dropped in April 1999, South African newspapers started writing stories about abortion being available in South Africa for Namibians for as little as N\$600.00.

The Windhoek Advertiser picked up the story and published the story headlined "SA abortions open to Namibia for N\$600," and went on to say "four Marie Stopes clinics situated in Soweto, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban were handling 20 abortion cases every day at each clinic. Two weeks later, Sister Namibia published contact numbers of all Marie Stopes clinics. Many Namibians chose that path. The research programme that Dr Amathila had sanctioned revealed some startling statistics, which could have compelled Namibians to think twice before dropping the Bill altogether. Among them were the following:

\*\*October-November 1993: Police launched investigation after a 32 year-old nurse from Tsumeb died from a backstreet abortion in which a local shopkeeper injected an unknown substance into her womb.

\*\*June 3, 1996: A mother gave birth to a live baby girl in a field in Keetmanshoop and abandoned the baby there. The baby was later mutilated by dogs.

\*\*March 1994: Two women were charged with culpable homicide after giving the daughter of one of them a mixture to drink intended to cause abortion but killed the pregnant woman instead.

\*\*June 1995: A 17 year-old girl was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment (seven of which were suspended) for stabbing her newborn baby to death.

\*\*August 1995: A 23 year-old woman was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for placing her three-day old baby in a plastic bag and abandoning her in a riverbed.

The list was long, but it made tragic reading. What is the solution? That is Ombudsman Walter's main question. Shall we abort or shall we not? Whether we like it or not, the question is not whether women should abort or not. They do abort for various reasons. The question is whether to abort legally or illegally. That is where Ombudsman Walter is driving us at. We have to weigh the options.

We should look at the reality with open eyes and hearts and frame the solutions accordingly. Other countries have legalized abortions. Are we more religious and God-fearing than them? What if God hates us for not doing anything about babies being dumped in riverbeds when we could take corrective measures like so many countries have done? In 1991, more than 35 000 abortions were performed in Sweden alone. Swedes remain religious and God-fearing. They feel no guilty. And they should not. Thousands of abortions are carried out in South Africa every year.

Those, too, who claim that legalizing abortion will cause women not to use contraceptives have no point either. Researches have revealed that most pregnancies are caused by failed contraceptives. Legalizing abortion means that women will still use contraceptives, but will have a second chance when contraceptives fail them. As they do, most of the time. The religious overdrive that people should avoid sex until they are married has dismally failed with disastrous consequences. In this world of missed opportunities and unfulfilled promises, who said that everybody was going to be married? Abstaining from sex until married is no guarantee that one will get married anyway. Should that person avoid sex for the rest of his or her life when there is no guarantee that marriage would come his or her way one day? No one will fault us for legalizing abortion. The best option now is to legalize it now. On that score, I agree with Ombudsman John Walter.