

Where

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determination and independence.

The white minority colonial apartheid regime of South Africa perpetuated colonial oppression against our people. It imposed apartheid policies such as, Bantustans, Bantu education and the so-called South west Africa Labour Association (SWALA) under which the indigenous Namibian workers were recruited as cheap contract labourers.

It was in response to the systematic and barbaric colonization of our country, that as the youth of yesterday, we stood up in defense of our rights and decided to form the Ovamboland Peoples' Organization (OPO) in 1959 with a clear purpose of fighting against colonial exploitation. OPO was instrumental, together with Chief Hosea Kutako's Herero Council, in organizing the national protest against the forceful removal of our people from the Old Location to the present day Katutura.

On that fateful day, 10 December 1959, the minority white colonial troops of South Africa brutally killed more than 12 innocent Namibians, including Kakurukaze Mungunda in cold blood and wounded 50 others. The Old Location Massacre signaled the turning point in the history of our National Liberation Struggle. In the following year, on 19 April 1960, we formed SWAPO as a Liberation Movement in order to fight for our genuine freedom and independence. SWAPO mobilized under its banner and drew together various progressive forces in Namibia such as the workers, youth, churches under the Council of Churches in Namibia and peasants and became the embodiment of their aspirations for genuine freedom.

SWAPO decided that political mobilization, as well as diplomatic and military efforts should be pursued concurrently.

Therefore, a three pronged strategy was adopted, namely; mass political mobilization inside Namibia, diplomatic offensive to isolate the minority white apartheid regime at the international level and armed liberation struggle.

Inside the country, mass political mobilization was intensified. Following the Tanga Consultative Conference in 1970, the National Union of Namibian Workers was established to mobilize the workers in order to paralyze the colonial economy. The SWAPO Party Youth League was also established to mobilize the youth of Namibia in order to participate actively in the national liberation struggle. Vibrant and fearless SWAPO Party Youth leaders such as Comrades

Jerry Ekandjo, Joseph Kashea, Martin Kapewasha, Nashilongo Taapopi, Charles Namholo and others demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the illegal apartheid regime from Namibia.

In adhering to SWAPO's clarion call, the workers turned their work places into battle grounds leading to the successful 1971 General Strike. Other anti-colonial forces such as progressive churches and students joined the struggle. In the same year, Bishop Leonard Auala of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Owambo Kavango and Rev. Paulus Gowaseb of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southwest Africa wrote a letter of protest to John Vorster, the then Prime Minister of the minority white apartheid colonial regime of South Africa, condemning the evil system of apartheid colonialism.

On the diplomatic front, SWAPO successfully mobilized the international community through the UN, Organization of African Unity (OAU) the forerunner of AU, the Frontline States and Nigeria as well as the Non-Aligned Movement to isolate the apartheid regime. In 1971, UN General Assembly recognized SWAPO as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people and declared the presence of South Africa in Namibia illegal.

SWAPO gained friends and allies from all over the world who rendered political, diplomatic and material support to SWAPO.

As Namibians, we will remain forever indebted to the selfless support and solidarity from friendly organizations such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Polisario Front and progressive nations such as Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Congo Brazaville, the then Soviet Union, Cuba, China, India and the rest of the international community that supported SWAPO during the difficult years of our national liberation struggle. We, thus, have a duty to extend the same support to various nations battling to establish peace and stability in their countries. We should therefore continue to work together with all peace loving nations of the world through the UN and other multilateral agencies to promote the maintenance of world peace and security and ensure that human kind will live in peace without the threat of war.

On the military front, brave and heroic combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) carried out successful military operations against the enemy forces inside Namibia, inflicting heavy casualties to the South African colonial troops. The racist troops of South Africa were finally and decisively defeated at the historic Battle of Cuito Cuanavale by



the combined forces of Angolan national army-FAPLA, Cuban Internationalist Forces and SWAPO PLAN Combatants, leading to the South African apartheid regime signing the ceasefire agreement with SWAPO and accepting the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 435 that paved the way for the genuine independence of Namibia.

As the youth of Namibia, you should always continue to pay tribute and respect the tested and outstanding PLAN commanders, po-

litical commissars and combatants who fought for the freedom and independence that you enjoy today in Namibia. Some died during the Old Location Massacre in 1959, while others died in the Battle of Omugulu-Gwombashe and at other battles with the enemy forces or in foreign lands.

Among them are Commanders Tobias Hainyeko, Peter Eneas Nanyemba, Jason Hamutenya Ndadi Wanehepo, Greenwell Matongo, Hanganee Katjipuka Kavezeri, Helao Nafidi, Wilbard

Tashiya Nakada, David Mbango, Isack Shikongo Pondo, John Hamukoto, Augustus Nghaamwa McNamara, Jonas Haiduwa, Penny Hashoongo, Peter Manyuka Mbereshu, Brendan Simbwaye and others. Their exemplary deeds will continue to serve, as a permanent source of inspiration in our second phase of the struggle for economic independence. Their blood waters our freedom.

Equally, you must continue to pay homage to our national lead-

ers and Comrades who contributed immensely to our country's freedom, independence and nation building. They are: Anton Libowski, Immanuel Shifidi, Moses Garoeb, Peter Mweshihange, Patric Iyambo Lungada, Axel Johannes, Johny ya Otto, Eliaser Tuhadeleni Kaxumba ka Ndola, Dimo Hamaambo, David Meroro, Getrude Kandanga Hilukilua, Maxton Joseph Mutongolome, Mose Tjitendero, David Uushona, Richard Kapelwa Kabajani, John Pandeni, Rev. Hendrik Witbooi to mention but a few.

As you are all aware, the achievement of freedom and independence of our country was only a critical point of departure but not the destination. Political freedom will remain meaningless unless it is accompanied by genuine economic independence. Therefore, the youth should become active participants in the socio-economic development of our country in order to take our country to the advanced level of development.

The first task among the youth is to unite into a cohesive force that complements our Government's efforts to eradicate poverty, diseases, ignorance and under-development.

Indeed, the SWAPO Party Government has made notable successes over the past twenty years by implementing various projects such as the development of physical and communication infrastructures, building of roads, hospitals and clinics, schools, provision of potable water, rural electrification and many others in all the thirteen regions of our country who have been long denied these basic services by the colonial white South African apartheid regime.

We have made good progress with the road construction projects forming part of the Trans-Caprivi and Trans-Kalahari Highways which are important routes between the Walvis Bay Harbour and Namibia's neighbouring landlocked countries such as Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Eastern DRC through the Ndola-Lumbumbashe-Walvis Bay Corridor.

We have embarked upon the construction of the Northern Railway Extension Project from Tsumeb via Ondangwa to Oshikango to join the Angolan the railway system in order to increase commercial trade between Namibia and Angola and the wider SADC region. I would like to express my profound thanks and gratitude to all Namibians from all corners of the country and all walks of life for volunteering to work on the railway and wish to urge all our people to continue to volunteer ourselves to work on projects that are being implemented in all the regions of our country and in so doing, complement our Government's development efforts.

The development and growth of Small and Medium Enterprises has the potential to enhance economic growth and development. We must continue to promote programmes which are aimed at building capacities and create conducive environment for the development of our Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as a means to create employment opportunities for our people. Efforts must be made to expand the existing opportunities created by the local financial institutions, including the Development Bank of Namibia to fund produc-

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