

**EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: STRATEGIES FOR
GREATER PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN**

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CASE STUDY ON NAMIBIA

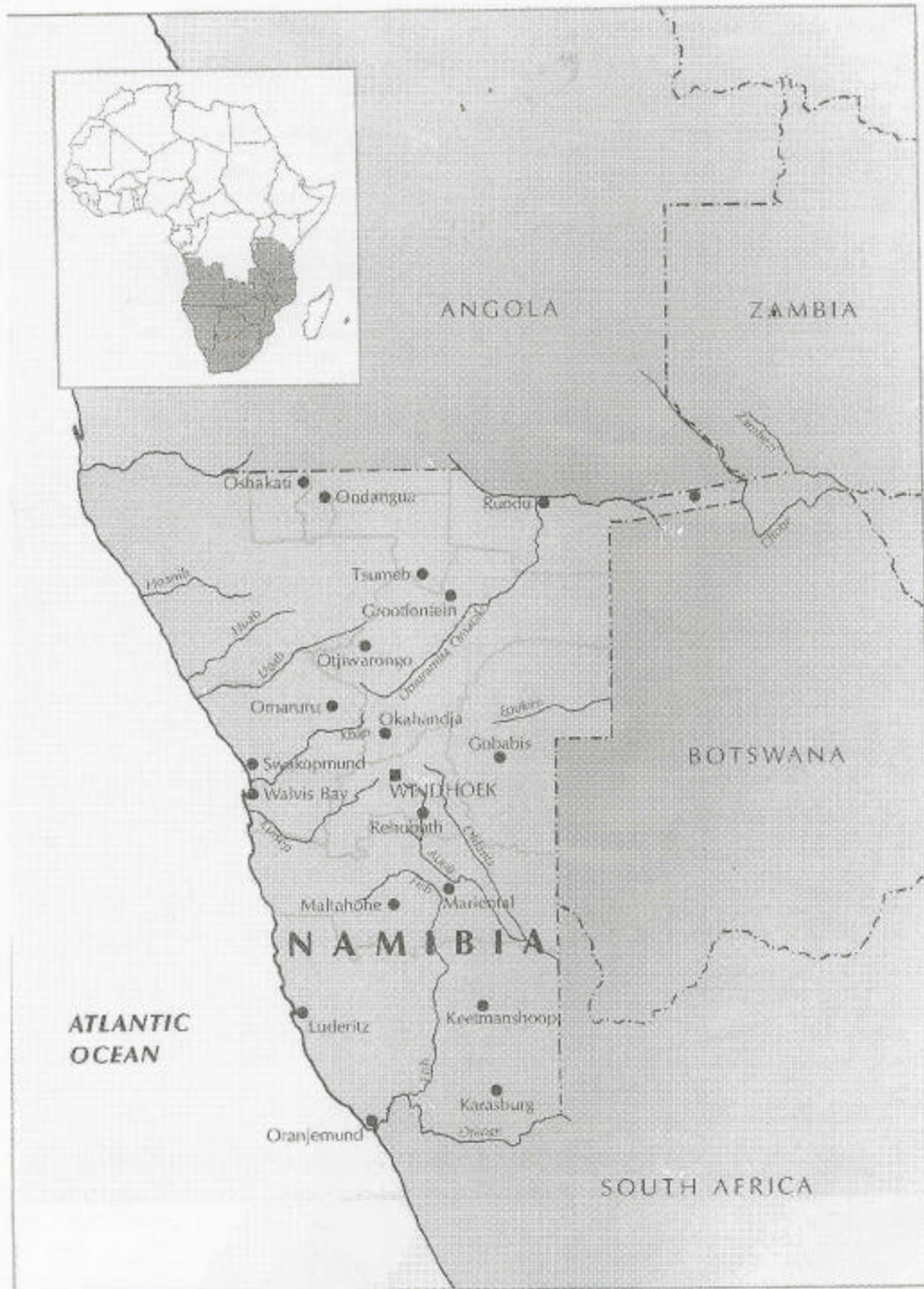
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MAP OF NAMIBIA



Source: SARDC 1997:12)

Abstract

Namibia, previously, known as South West Africa got her independence in 1990 from the South African colonial regime. This independence emerged as a victorious outcome of two different eras of war. These are, the war of resistance and the war of liberation. In both wars, women played a significant role. In addition, during the war of liberation they were involved as commanders and servicepersons of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia. However, they were not involved in the management structures of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) such as the Polit-Bureau of the Central Committee. Consequently, women became less involved in governance and management positions after independence. During the drafting of the national Constitution in 1989, only one woman participated and no woman was among the first group of governors. Since then, some progress has been made in terms of female representation in democratic governance. The Prime minister is a woman, 43% of local councillors are women, 29% women at National Assembly and 26% women at National Council. Nevertheless, it is clear that a wide range of obstacles continue to exist. Therefore, the major strategies to address the state of affairs are to increase gender awareness campaign at all levels of the society, and to mainstream gender in all political party programmes.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a comprehensive, African-led program of action to end Africa's marginalization. Through its Democracy and Governance Initiative, NEPAD aims to strengthen the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights, and the rule of law in participating countries (CIDA 2002:1). The promotion of democratic governance and empowerment of women are key priorities of the NEPAD, whose implementation of program activities is supported by United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa and even by the United Nations General Assembly. For example, Gambari (2003:1) postulates that in order to show the importance that the United Nations attaches to the NEPAD programme, the United Nations General Assembly, through its resolution 57/2 and 57/7, adopted in December 2002, welcomed NEPAD as a programme of the African Union that embodies the vision and commitment of all African Governments and the peoples for peace and development. Gambari (2003) further explains that in the Resolution 57/300, of 2002 the General Assembly, adopted the NEPAD programme as a framework for UN support to Africa and mandated the creation of an office at the UN Headquarters, led by an Under-Secretary-General, dedicated to support African development in general and NEPAD in particular. Premised on this background, this study will contribute, to the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders in promoting gender equality in democratic governance in post conflict African countries. A case study of Namibia will cover national experiences in advancing women's participation in the political process, both at national, regional and local levels. The paper will also propose strategies aimed at promoting women's participation in government.

A. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

2. The content and structure of this paper are premised on the conceptual framework of democracy, governance, participation and women and development after Namibia's long history of war of resistance and war of liberation. These concepts can be defined as follows:

- **Democracy** is defined to be about the fair representation of **all** interest groups in society. It is to do with people freely electing and choosing their representatives. However, governance discourse argues that democracy is not just representation; it is also about people's participation in affairs that affect their lives. Democratic elements include involvement of women and men in decisions and policies that affect them. It is also to do with accountability, transparency and responsiveness. The thread of democracy is people's relations.
- **Governance** is to do with responsibilities of the government, the management of judiciary, statutory bodies, the media and civil society, the checks and balances, the role of private sector, management of the economy to create wealth and employment. Governance is not just about structures it is also about system and processes. Klein asserted that, governance is the science of

directing states or the control of political authority over the actions and affairs of a people or a political unit (Colleen 2004) as quotes Klein (1984).

- **Democratic Governance:** This involves all aspects of power, the institution of power, how power is exercised in the institutions of power and how these operate. In addition, the selected representatives also formulate the policies and approve the laws that have the impact on individuals.
- **Participation:** This means that women and men are involved in the process that affect their lives, be it economic, social, cultural or political affairs. However, experience shows that men are the principal players of the governance and women form the majority of rank and file of governed. Women are minority of the leadership and decision making which is the core business of governance. The report of the United Nation to the fourth World conference of women in Beijing China 1995 said: "*Nowhere is the gap between de jure and de facto equality among men and women greater than in the area of decision making*" Colleen (2004) as quotes (UN 1995).

B. OBJECTIVES

3. The objectives of this study are to:

- Evaluate specific factors that facilitated the participation of women in new government.
- Identify measures to involve women in the political process with emphasis on peace building and reconstruction phases, for example Constitutional drafting, demobilization, reintegration of ex-combatants.
- Identify practical measures to be undertaken by government, and other stakeholders to support generate political will as well as the commitment to promote the advancement of women and goals of gender equality.

C. METHODOLOGY

4. The design is primarily descriptive while a qualitative methodology has been used. Although interviews were conducted with respondents, especially those women who participated in the war of liberation struggle, peace consolidation and in governance after independence, the paper adopted largely a desk research approach through literature review. History books, journals, magazines, newspapers and websites are the main sources of literature information used in this paper.

D. CONTEXT

5. Namibia is situated in the South West of Africa, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Angola and South Africa. The total area of the country is 825,418 sq km. It shares borders with the following countries: Angola, Botswana South Africa and Zambia (Moleah 1983:1) (see attached map). The first colonisers named the territory German South West Africa and after the South African conquest in 1915, the country was

renamed “South West Africa” or sometimes South West. The Namibians later named the country Namibia, which is derived from the Nama word “Namib”, means a “shield”. The Namas called the western desert the Namibi, because it protected them from colonial occupation.

6. Ipinge et al (2005:7) actuate that there were an estimated 1.8 million people living in Namibia, as of 2001. Ipinge et al (ibid) further put it that of the above total 51.5 percent were female and 48.5 percent were male. Approximately 50 percent of the population belong to the Owambo tribe and 9 percent to the Kavangos tribe; other ethnic groups are: Herero 7 percent, Damara 7 percent, Nama 5 percent, Caprivian 4 percent, San (Bushmen) 3 percent, Baster 2 percent and Tswana 0.5 percent. Eighty to ninety percent of the population are Christian (Lutheran 50 percent at least), with the remaining 10 percent to 20 percent indigenous beliefs. The department of Women Affairs (DWA) (1995:2) also adds that the largest language group spoken by 51 percent of the total population at home is Oshiwambo. Although, English is the official language, it is spoken at home by only 0.7 percent of the population. Hence, Afrikaans is the common language of most of the population and about 60 percent of the white population and German is spoken by 32 percent of the population. Other important indigenous languages apart from Oshiwambo are Herero, Damara-Nama, Kavango, Lozi, San and Tswana.

II. PRE-INDEPENDENCE

A. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN WAR OF RESISTANCE AND LIBERATION STRUGGLE

7. Tjingaete (1995) as quotes Cleaver & Wallance (1990:80) enlightens that the women’s participation in war against colonialism in Namibia dates back to 1904, (Refer Annex for detailed history) when Herero women voluntarily launched their historic sexual intercourse strike to pressurize men to fight and end German occupation. They dared not to bear children until the war against German colonialists was over. The Namibian women’s resistance against the new South African colonial regime was seen as direct confrontation. Angula (1998) accentuates that on December 10, 1959 women in Windhoek declared: enough was enough! On the morning of that day a procession of women marched to the residence of the Administrator of then South West Africa. They demanded that the Administrator drop plans to forcefully relocate the residents of the 'Old Location' to a new apartheid style black township of Katutura. This was the first remarkable encounter between the South African armed forces where many people were killed or wounded. It is important to note that amongst those people killed was Kakurukaze Mungunda, a woman militant who marched together with other nationalists that day. Kakurukaze Mungunda was shot dead and was said to be the first woman martyr killed by the brutal South African army. Tjingaete (1995) quotes SWAPO (1981:n.p):

“Mungunda was hit by a bullet in the chest, realizing that she had been fatally wounded, Mama Mungunda...stumbled, despite profuse bleeding, towards a parked car belonging to the (white) superintendent of the city and managed to set it ablaze with a box of matches. Shortly thereafter she

died...It is a tribute to the bravery and heroism of Kakurukaze Mungunda, that SWAPO has designated 10 December Namibia's Women's Day".

8. In 2004, the Namibian government declared 10 December a public holiday dedicated to women. Angula (ibid) further confirms that the death of Kakurukaze Mungunda symbolised the gendering of the anti-colonial struggle. While Tjigaete (ibid) also confirms that it is on the 10th December 1959 when the Namibian people resolved to adopt armed struggle as the only response.

B. WOMEN IN THE ARMED STRUGGLE

9. After SWAPO launched its armed struggle on 26 August 1966 at Onghulumbashe forest in northern Namibia, women also joined their male counterparts in the prolonged and bitter struggle. The formation of the SWAPO Women's Council facilitated women's involvement in many spheres of the liberation struggle including the leadership of the liberation movement, i.e. some women were members of the Central Committee of the South West African People's Organization of Namibia and the Military Council of People's Liberation Army of Namibia. Since the 1970s, the SWAPO Women's Council has made considerable headway in organising women in the country to join the liberation struggle, particularly the armed struggle. Namakalu (2004) emphasizes that Namibian women played a crucial role in SWAPO right from the early beginning of the armed liberation struggle, and the emancipation of women from sources of oppression both colonial and traditional was central to their aspirations. Women were trained as soldiers in all military fields in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). Namakalu (2004:175) further explains that as the struggle developed, PLAN female fighters became specialized in military disciplines such as nursing, artillery marksmanship, radio communication, Anti Air Defence guns, sabotage, reconnaissance, intelligence, and even as drivers of military vehicles. A large number of women in SWAPO underwent military training and fought side by side with men. SWAPO (1981:289) quotes Potuse Appollus a SWAPO women veteran who said:

"Many of the girls say we can have education later, we want to go and fight with others. But we only let women between the ages of 19 and 30 go. On the front all the work is shared without question. Every one takes their turn in the hunting, skinning and cooking of the animal. They all wear the same uniform and it is interesting to see that the girls do not treat themselves as girls...It is a matter of 'comrade,' a communal sort of life, without the sexist division. In fact, the women are so good at shooting that they often beat the men. The men tend to fear them for they are trained in judo and self-defence, of course. The men later won't want to marry them. They will think, if I beat her, she can just take a gun and shoot you".

10. This evidence was also confirmed through various data of the liberation struggle. Heywood (1994) recounts the Cassinga massacre where data indicates that hundreds of the torn mutilated bodies were women and children. Namakalu (2004:175) also indicated that there are many heroines who lost their lives alongside their male comrades while fighting enemy aircraft with anti-air guns at various PLAN bases and Commanding

Headquarters in the operational areas. Mwaange, (2004) as quotes Colletta (1995:59) asserts that women ex-combatant's experience of life in a liberation movement was a move towards emancipation, although women fought a double war in the field. Women were fighting for their rights and gender balanced society and on the other hand, they also fought for the total liberation of Namibia. It is estimated that PLAN female ex-combatants were as high as 30 percent. Some women even held high-ranking military positions as commanders. For example, Namakalu (2004) recorded that there were female PLAN members in the middle hierarchy of PLAN; for example, Ms. Aira Taapopi Shikwambi and Ndaiponhofi Shaduka Nehoya were members of the Military Council, the highest policy-making body of PLAN. Other women like Nekaya, Ndakundana Shiluwa, Rosalinde Nakale, and Maria Shikondailongo to mention but a few served in different crucial positions in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN).

11. Women's involvement was not confined to military participation only; they also played a major role in political, diplomatic and clandestine activities. Many civilian women in the communities inside Namibia rendered assistance in many ways to the PLAN fighters, including food, shelter and information about enemy activities and whereabouts. This involvement was also a high risk to their lives and the colonial South African Army subjected most of them to torture and intimidation. Tjigaete (1995) quotes the International Aid Defence Fund (1988) and gives a vivid experience of some women who suffered that fate in the hands of the South African Army. One of the brave women who had endured police brutality, and who was detained several times for being an active SWAPO leader, was Rauna Nambinga. When interviewed by the International Aid and Defence Fund (1988:64), she recounts her experience as follows quoted in (Tjigaete (1995:n.p) :

Electricity was attached to the little fingers of both my hands. It was switched on and off...A rope was tied around my neck and pulled. I fell down unconsciously. When I woke I was in a pool of blood and realized that I had broken my jaw and blood was running. I asked for a doctor but was told I was not going to be given one until I told the truth...then they started with their electrical instruments; this time it was administered on my breasts. It went on for almost three hours..."

12. Tjigaete (ibid) further states that, Rauna's experience of torture was not the only one recorded. Another activist, Ida Jimmy also experienced an awful agony when she gave birth to a baby boy in jail under all kind of complications due to torture during her five – year imprisonment. The boy was taken away from her and immediately died and she was not released from jail to attend the funeral.

13. Another life story of the similar nature, Gaomas (2005:n.p) is cited by the current First Lady of Namibia Mrs. Pohamba, whose experience is as follows:

"What was extremely painful to me is the fact that my late husband passed away whilst I was studying midwifery in Jamaica. I could not even pay my last respects to him since it was not easy during the vicious war that was waged between SWAPO and the South African regime at

that time. Until now, I do not even know where he is buried and that is painful," she is quoted as saying in a local magazine. Having been one of the thousands of Namibians traumatised by Namibia's pre-Independence situation, she was also active in politics at an early age in the 1970s."I was one of the students who refused to recognise and accept the South African regime and decided to fight for our rights and self-determination. As a result of continuous harassment of students by the South African soldiers, students decided to go into exile to join the liberation struggle and I was one of those who left the country in 1974 and joined the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (Plan)," she recalls.

14. These and other women's experiences in the war of liberation serve as important icons to highlight the important role that the Namibian women played in the war for liberation.

15. Although women participated equally in the liberation struggle, their participation in the decision-making structures of the liberation movement was minimal compared to their male counterpart. For example, no woman was a member of SWAPO Polite-Bureau, which was the executive body of SWAPO of Namibia.

C. THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

16. The role of women did not end with the war, but included also in the process to independence – i.e. in the interim period, demobilization, Constituent Assembly and formulation of new political dispensation.

17. During the implementation of United Nations Resolution 435, the process to independence commenced. The negotiating parties settled on a transitional plan to elections and independence jointly supervised by the United Nations Technical Assistance Group (UNTAG) and the South African administration. This process started with the demobilization of troops and repatriation of refugees to Namibia and eventually ended in the phase of integrating them into society. Many role players were involved for example, as Mwaange (2004) quotes Gleichmann (1994:101) indicates; in 1988 CCN member churches founded a Coordinating Committee for Repatriation, Resettlement and Reconstruction (RRR). This had played a facilitating role in receiving and taking refugees to their home places. Most of the RRR staff were women. Some 42 000 refugees were returned safely and voluntarily to Namibia from Angola and Zambia under the auspices of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As alluded to above, women played a very significant role in this process, as administrators, clerks, liaison officers and financiers in all institutions and private organizations involved in the transitional period.

18. The transitional period was concluded with drafting of the Constitution, which was unanimously adopted on 9 February 1990. The former Secretary of SWAPO Women's Council, who was also a PLAN combatant and a member of the Central Committee of SWAPO was the only woman who participated in the drafting of the Constitution (interview Pendukeni Ithana 2005).

D. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NAMIBIA

19. The International Inter-Parliamentary Union (1998) as quotes Shoombe (1998) expresses that “Namibian women have been key actors in the liberation struggle, ”She also adds that since Namibia's independence in 1990, Namibian women have been “contributing very actively to the country's political and economic development “. By political participation in 1998, Namibian women had attained the level of 40 percent of elected candidates in local elections and 18 percent in the Namibian Parliament (International Inter-Parliamentary Union *ibid*). However, not everyone has hailed this achievement. Tjigaete (1995) argues that with independence, women in Namibia hoped that their return out of exile would provide impetus to the women movement inside Namibia. The first weakness in terms of women’s participation in drafting of the national Constitution transpired in low representation of women in the Constituent Assembly, the transitional legislative body entitled to draft the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia and elect the first President.

20. In this light, UNRISD05 (n.d) gives a supportive analogy arguing that women commonly find their contributions to the war and peace efforts marginalized in both official and popular accounts of war immediately afterwards, as happened in Europe after the Second World War. Replicating this into the Namibian context, Mwaange (2004) acknowledges that female ex-combatants in Namibia were doubly discriminated as women and as ex-combatants. Many private employers did not employ women who had been trained in traditionally male fields as auto mechanics, electricians and radio mechanics. Employers also rejected testimonials issued by SWAPO, as they required more formal evidence. In the society women carry the stigma – they are called ugly names, there is no acceptance at family level, there are divorces or separation. This led to destitution and dependence on state increases. UNRISD05 (n.d) echoes the same sentiments that in Namibia, for instance, it was noted, “women accustomed to leadership in exile were soon observed to suppress their skills so as to achieve community acceptance.” The increase in divorce adds to the post-war heightening of gender tensions. In support of this sentiment, Cock (1992) states that the experience of Namibia is sometimes cited as a positive example of how previously warring armies can be integrated into a new national defence force. But the experience of Namibia is disturbing in relation to women. Cock (1992) as quotes Cleaver and Wallace (1991) argues that women and men had equal status in PLAN as part of SWAPO policy of equality for women. Women constituted a significant proportion of PLAN fighters and this should have been reflected in the formation of the newly integrated Namibian Defence Force.

21. However, it has been reported that although the projected force levels of this new army are low, numbering about 5,000, no women have been incorporated. Mwaange (2004) notes that many women were reintegrated in various government institutions, but female ex-combatants were not employed in strategic positions. Employed ex-PLAN combatants felt that the reintegration process was successful because it united former warring parties into one unified Defence Force. While that might be true, the reintegration process favoured ex-combatants who were living in cities and those in the rural areas were left to fend for themselves. A large number of the latter were female ex-

combatants. Meanwhile, those female-ex-combatants employed in the municipalities, especially in the City of Windhoek, are entitled to do jobs of the labourers but the salary they receive is equivalent to cleaners' salaries. These female ex-combatants feel that they are ill treated on the ground of gender and as ex-combatants.

III. NAMIBIA'S TRANSFORMATION TO A DEMOCRACY

22. Namibia gained independence as the last colony in Africa on 21 March 1990. The Republic of Namibia adopted a Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land. Article 1 of the Constitution characterises the Republic as sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary state founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all. Moreover the Namibian Constitution provides among others, the rights for speech and expression, religion, conscience and belief as well as association. The Constitution also provides for laws to be enacted by the Parliament that give women equal opportunities to equal pay, maternity leave and other benefits (Le Beau and Ipinge 2004:67). DWA (1995) outlines the structure of the government as follows: the bicameral legislature consists of the National Assembly with 72 members elected and six appointed by the President for a five-year term, and the National Council made up of two representatives drawn from each of the 13 regions of the Republic of Namibia. The judiciary comprises the Supreme Court, the High Court and the Lower Courts.

23. LeBeau and Ipinge, (2004) express that Namibia's quest for democratic governance in the past 14 years of independence has borne witness to significant strides in the sphere of gender equality through government policies and programmes, which include the domestication of international conventions and national policies, as well as gender-related law reform. Namibia has so far made an important effort in the social and legal gender equality movements. Women have been empowered by their placement in positions of power sharing especially in politics at the local government level. However, at the national level and regional levels only a few women have been empowered.

24. Namibia participated in the fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995 and adopted the Beijing Plan of Action. It was soon after the Beijing Conference that Namibia's national Gender Policy was promulgated with strategies premised on the following ten areas of concern:

- Gender poverty and rural development
- Gender balance in education and training
- Gender and reproductive health
- Violence against women and children
- Gender and economic empowerment
- Gender balance in power and decision making
- Information, education and communications
- Gender and the management of the environment
- Gender and legal affairs
- The girl child

25. The Namibian government realises that the gender policy is not binding; therefore, the government plans to convert this policy into Act of Parliament.

A. CURRENT LAW REFORMS

26. Apart from the National Gender Policy, which is implemented alongside the national Gender Plan of Action, the new government has initiated some laws to prevent women's discrimination and has amended some other laws. Among these laws are:

- The Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996)
- The Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003)
- Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000)
- Affirmative Action Act (AAA) (No. 28 of 1998)

B. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

27. At the political level the government of Namibia established several institutions to deal with gender issues and to ensure elimination of gender inequalities in the Namibian society. Government institutions, which the government has so far established with the objective of reforming the society towards gender equality, are among others:

- The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
- Gender Commission
- Gender Sectoral Committees
- Gender focal points in every ministry and parastatal

C. ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

28. Before Namibia's independence, the electoral system was apartheid based. Hence, only the whites could vote for their political parties. The Constitution of Namibia revoked that electoral system and guaranteed that all citizens aged 18 or older have the right to vote and all citizens aged 21 or older have the right to be elected to public office. The president must be 35 years of age to be elected to that office. The main electoral systems used in Namibia are:

a) Majority system – winner takes all

Single member constituency and single vote: This is referred to as “first-past-the-post”, meaning that the candidate with the most votes in the constituency wins the seat. This system, in Namibia is used at the regional level elections. This election system poses difficulty for women to make progress in taking political positions. The party list is used, but the identification process and selection of candidates are not gender sensitive. It seems that political parties are not eager to support women candidates for fear that communities may not vote for women.

b) Proportional Representation (PR)

The Political Party List system: The voter votes for a Party of choice.

Prior to the elections Parties taking part in the National Assembly and Local Authority elections are obliged to submit a Party list to the electoral Commission on a specified date. The list contains the names of candidates selected by the party as representatives of that party in the National Assembly or Local Authority. The way Political Parties select their candidates differs from party to party. Some organize what is called an electoral college; others pick as they so wish. Schedule 4 of the Namibian constitution outlines how PR works.

c) Presidential elections

In presidential elections the candidate that receives the most votes is elected, as long as the candidate has over 50 percent support (Hopwood 2004:28).

In all electoral systems above, women and men participate equally in the voting process. However, Le Beau and Ipinge (2004) explain that women tend to be influenced by husbands, boyfriends and relatives as to how they should vote.

D. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PARTIES

30. Currently there are only six political parties holding seats in the National Assembly. These are SWAPO Party, the Congress of Democrats (CoD), Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Republican Party. At Namibia's independence the number of political parties was relatively large compared to the current situation. However, none of the political parties has ever had a female leader, and none of the political parties has a voluntary quota system.

31. The political parties have been active in promoting women's rights and participation in political power sharing. For example, SWAPO, currently a ruling party, has its SWAPO Party Women Council (SPWC), which is one of the oldest women's political forums in the history of Namibia. This along with other wings of SWAPO such as the SWAPO Party Elders Council and SWAPO Party Youth League and reactivated People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) were established in 1969 during the Consultative Congress in Tanga Tanzania.

32. The SWAPO Party Women's Council played a major role in representation and mobilisation of women during the liberation struggle and after independence it continued to encourage them to participate in the struggle for economic, cultural and social empowerment. The DTA also has its Women's League and an Executive Secretary for the Women's League, but its gender activities are not vibrant. Currently, the CoD does not have a functioning women's wing. However, its constitution provides for a women's organisation and it has a gender mandate that encourages women's equal participation in the government. Quite interestingly, it is the CoD that has the first female vice president of the party in the history of Namibia's political system. SWAPO Party on the other

hand, made progress in ensuring women participation's in the political system by introducing the zebra list system at a local level and the three women regional governors are members of SWAPO.

Le Beau (2004:82) as quotes the Inter-Parliamentary Union indicates that in 2002, Namibia ranked 23rd in the world for women representatives in parliament. In Africa, only Mozambique ranked 10th, South Africa 11th and Rwanda 21st.

The following statistics show the representation of women at various levels.

Table 1: Local Authorities in 1999 and 2005.

	1999		2005	
Women	117	41.3%	123	43.4%
Men	166	58.7%	160	56.6%
Total	283	100%	283	100%

33. Statistics in Table 1 above, suggest that in both 1999 and 2005 tenure of offices in Local Authorities women are less than men. However, statistics indicate a slight improvement with only increase by 6 women. This improvement is attributed to the quota system provided in the Local Authorities Act.

Table 2: Mayors in 1999 and 2005

	1999		2005	
Women	0	17%	4	32%
Men	25	83%	21	68%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

34. Table 2, indicates a considerable gender imbalance that needs a drastic measure to improve it. It seems the same pace, as is the case with the Local authorities statistics above, in terms of improvements have also been experienced in Namibia's mayoral positions. In 1999 all 25 mayors countrywide were men and currently 21 of them are still holding their positions. In order words, only 4 women obtained mayoral seats. The factors that prevent women from occupying these positions include cultural background that accords men the role of decision-making and status in society. In addition, members of the local councils, the majority of whom are men, nominate the mayors. The strategies that can possibly address this situation are to increase gender awareness and sensitivity through training of potential candidates of the council and acquaint them with the strategies prescribed in the National Gender Policy. Furthermore, another strategy is mainstreaming gender in policies and programmes of the political parties.

Table 3: Regional Governors

	1994		1999		2005	
Men	13	100%	11	84%	10	77%
Women	0	0%	2	16%	3	23%
Total	13	100%	13	100%	13	100%

35. Table 3 shows that in the beginning of the Regional Council in Namibia, all appointed governors were men. In 1999 two female governors broke the ice to elevate the statistic of regional governor from 0% to 16% in 1999 and to 23% in 2005 respectively. All these statistics indicate only limited improvement in women's participation in decision-making positions, especially at the regional level. For example, the reasons why, in 1994 only men were appointed as governors is a legacy from the liberation struggle. Women were minimally participating in leadership of the movement. Soon after independence, women were regarded as having no leadership skills capacity to run the regional governments. The strategy to address this is to create gender awareness in the party structures, particularly branch and district levels where the candidates are identified and nominated. The constituent community elects the regional councillors, so it is important to increase gender awareness among the communities.

Table 4: Women in Parliament after 1999 and 2004 elections

	National Assembly		National Council	
	1999	2005	1999	2005
Men	53 (74%)	51 (71%)	24 (92%)	20 (77%)
Women	19 (26%)	21 (29%)	2 (8%)	6 (23%)
Total	72 (100%)	72 (100%)	26 (100%)	26 (100%)

36. Table 4 above shows that there has been an improvement in both houses of Parliament. This is attributed to existing pressure from the women's movements in Namibia, especially the SWAPO Party Women's Council for the government to meet 30% of women representation in politics and decision making by 2005 as declared by SADC Heads of State and Government.

Table 5: Women ministers, deputy ministers and Permanent Secretaries

	Ministers 1999 - 2005		Deputy Ministers 1999 - 2005		Permanent Secretary 1999 - 2005	
Women	3 (13.0%)	5 (22.7%)	3 (17.6%)	5(26.3%)	1 (5.0%)	5(22.7%)
Men	20(87.0%)	17(77.3%)	14(82.4%)	14(73.75)	19(95.0%)	17(77.3%)
Total	23(100%)	22(100%)	17(100%)	19(100%)	20(100%)	22(100%)

37. Table 5, outlines the progression of women in Cabinet and at the level of the Permanent Secretary from 1999 to 2005. By 1999 only three ministers and deputy ministers were women and only one was a permanent secretary. This is an important area of concern in improving women's participation in democratic governance.

Table 6: Women in Public Service Management (i.e. Under Secretaries and Directors)

	1998		2002		2004	
Women	89	21%	146	30%	155	29%
Men	339	79%	346	70%	375	71%
Total	428	100%	492	100%	530	100%

38. Table 6 statistics reflect a significant gender imbalance at the management level of the public service in Namibia. Although it superficially transpires as if there is a significant increase in a number of women at the management level, this is not the reality. For example, in 1998 the number of women in management was 89 which is 21% compared to 155, or 29% in 2005. Essentially the number of women in public sector management increased broadly in line with the expansion of the public sector itself.

E. RATIFICATION OF UN/AU, SADC INSTRUMENTS

39. The Namibian Constitution provides that once general international agreements are ratified by Namibia, they automatically become the law in Namibia. Namibia is a signatory of the most important international and regional agreements to promote gender equality in Namibia. Amongst them is the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The parliament ratified this document in 1992. The CEDAW Optional Protocol was also ratified in 2000. Namibia also endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action and the African Regional Platform for Action and the SADC declaration on Gender and Development. These international agreements contributed immensely to the Namibian national plan for gender equality and provided guidelines for all national gender strategies and programmes including the National Development Plans (NDP 1), (NDP 2) and Vision 2030. The Beijing Plan of Action has been a resource document upon which the National Gender Policy and Plan of Action are premised.

F. WOMEN'S NGO ORGANIZATIONS

40. Apart from the national machinery and the women's wings in political parties, there are several NGO women's organisations that are also moving to make Namibia a gender balanced society. To start with, the Namibian Women's Association (NAWA) is one of them with the mandate to implement affirmative action for the girl child through its sister organisation, the Namibia Girl Child Organisation. Another notable organisation is Namibia National Women's Organisation (NANAWO), which was formed in 1990, which is mandated to ensure respect and collaboration among women. The organisation also engaged in uplifting women by eliminating discriminatory laws, and promoting facilities that bring about women's full participation in all sectors of economic and social life. Another organisation that performs the same function is the Sister Namibia Collective. The main objectives of Sister Namibia Collective include the elimination of patriarchy and the encouragement of gender equality. The organisation

plays an important role in addressing gender through media and communication and in advocating for women’s sexual rights. Women’s Action for Development (WAD) is another women’s organisation mandated to support and encourage disadvantaged women in Namibia through their organisation into self-help groups. This organisation’s focus is training and promotion of income generating activities. Overall, the role of women’s organisations is significant, because they influence the decision-making process, articulate women’s needs and interests and make demands for fulfilment of decisions from the policy-makers. For example, NGOs women’s organisations organised the 50/50 campaign, which began in 1999, aimed at getting 50 per cent women representation on political party lists.

G. THE ROLE OF MEDIA

41. Currently Namibia has three dailies, three weeklies, five private radio channels, and two community channels, two private television channels and one national broadcaster, which are radio and television. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) has a network branch in Namibia, which facilitates activities in regards to gender and communication. MISA and Gender Links (2003:31) assess the racial and gender in media in Namibia indicating that of Namibia’s 1.8 million people, 87 per cent are black. In assessing this data based on race and gender consult Table 7 below.

Table 7: Sex and race of sources in the Namibian media

Media	Black		White		Coloureds	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Allegemeine Zeitung	25	3	46	20	3	1
NBC Radio	51	12	16	4	12	1
New Era	51	26	12	3	2	3
Republikein	31	8	33	16	2	1
The Namibian	45	13	20	5	1	3
Windhoek Observer	23	5	46	24	0	0

Source: MISA and Gender Links (2003:31)

42. Table 7, above shows that black women were sourced more than white women and other racial groups in the National Broadcaster, New Era and The Namibian, while white women of other racial groups in the Republikein and Allgemeine Zeitung. Le Beau and Ipinge (2004) argue that currently, Namibia does not have a film industry and the only broadcasting channel is the government owned NBC. The control over media is not gendered. Le beau and Ipinge (ibid) as quotes UN report implies that Namibia employs a high percentage of women in its various media. For example, in the print media 46.6 percent of the employees are women with 32 per cent holding senior management positions. In addition, 25 per cent of radio and television employees are women and 11 percent of them are holding senior management positions (Le Beau and Ipinge 2004). However, there is still no clarity that the positions that these women hold are influential, apart from the Namibian newspaper that is edited by a woman. Another,

magazine that is published by a small group of women is Sister Namibia which really covers women issues. Newspapers such as Windhoek Observer are always criticised due to their negative displays of women's images in their coverage. The NBC engaged in training journalists in gender sensitisation and awareness campaigns and have journalists specifically responsible for covering gender events. The broadcaster also has an institutional gender policy and a section deals with gender in its structure. The current minister of Information and Broadcasting is a woman who was also the first minister for Women's Affairs and Child Welfare.

43. It is for media to become supportive of democratic governance in Namibia. In so doing, the government should promote active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes of media in Namibia.

IV. GENDER ISSUES AND OBSTACLES

- If democratic governance is defined to be about the fair representation of all interest groups in society. It is to do with people freely electing their representatives. The outstanding questions are as follows (1) why women are not fairly represented in governance? In countries, for example, where women are not fairly represented in governance, can we still call this form of governance democratic? These questions are geared to explore the correct terminology, which tallies with practical type of governance.
- The paper found that the Namibian women participated equally in the liberation struggle; they were commanders and servicepersons in the war of liberation. However, after the war of liberation, the role of these women was ignored. This was evident by the fact that only one woman participated in the drafting of the Constitution, no one woman was appointed in the management structure of the new army, unlike the case of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia where there were even women members of the Military Council. The question arises: Why women are recognised as equal partners during the conflict situation, and ignored when the conflict is over? This appears both in the Namibian case study and even in the case of Europe after the Second World War. These questions are geared to explore reasons and factors that lead to gender imbalances during the aftermath.
- The study further reveals that the Namibian struggle was joined on a voluntary basis, and the participants were not working for wages because work in the struggle was done voluntarily. Hence, gender equality prevailed because no resources were involved. Where decision making is about resources, the study reveals that women's participation in decision making during the war was limited. The question arises: What enabled men to continue having access to decision making as opposed to women after independence? This question is geared to explore the reasons why women lost their limited access to governance which they had during the liberation struggle.

- The study indicates that Namibia has a combination of quota and proportional representation electoral systems, which increased women's representation at the Local Authority level. The question arises: Why this measure was only limited to Local Authority level, and not at Regional and National levels? This question is geared to explore whether this is to limit the participation of women to the lower level of government as opposed to regional and national level or whether it has to do with statuses and remunerations.
- The paper also concludes that, although women's participation at local authorities is high, only a few women are mayors. The question arises: What might be the obstacles that limit women's occupation of mayoral positions in Namibia? Is it because the majority (57%) of local councillors who select mayoral candidate are men or some other factors?
- The study finds out that Namibia has a host of women's organisations mandated with different roles including promotion and advancement of gender and women issues at the national, regional and community levels. Most of these organisations are dormant due to lack of necessary human and financial resources. Is it possible for the potential of democratic governance to be realized where women's organisations are relatively weak? This question is geared to explore whether governance can be democratic if the women's groups are not capable of articulating and influencing national policies and processes.

A. STRATEGIES

- Experiences of women ex-combatant need to be documented and practical measures have to be identified including measures to deal with the trauma.
- Women's movement is declining, there is a need to revitalize and reactivate the women's movement in the country by supporting women's organizations including women's wing in political parties.
- The electoral laws need to be gendered to include quotas as experience shows that patriarchal norms are still strong in Namibia and women will not reach a critical mass in governance. Quotas are short-term measures to ensure gender parity in democratic governance.
- Gender mainstreaming in political parties should be supported, as issues of governance are issues of power.
- Parties are gendered; government programmes will then be gendered. The representation of women in governance will increase. It is the political parties that give women access to various levels of governments.
- Research should be conducted amongst grassroots communities to discover those people who were affected by the war of liberation and to assess the extent to which the war has affected their living conditions (materially and psychologically), especially women living close to or in the war zone.

- Gender should be mainstreamed in media through capacity building of journalists and editors.
- Namibian experience reveals that gender awareness and sensitization campaigns are vital.

B. CONCLUSIONS

44. The holistic principle of NEPAD is for promoting democratic governance in Africa and participation of women in democratic governance. Hence, this paper presents a case study of Namibia, a country that emerged out of two different wars i.e. the war of resistance against German colonial occupation, and the war of liberation from South Africa Apartheid regime. An emphasis was placed on the role and involvement of women in both wars. It transpired that women participated in both wars and suffered equally with men. During the war of liberation they were trained as soldiers and also held senior management positions in the liberation movements, especially the People's Liberation army of Namibia (PLAN), the military wing of SWAPO. SWAPO has also had the Women's Council, which was very influential in mobilising women to play an active role in the liberation struggle. After the war most women who participated in the liberation struggle were not considered for employment purposes equally to their male counterparts. Also few women participated in the peace process leading to independence including drafting of the national Constitution. After independence they became members of Parliament and Cabinet. They also lead important departments in the government and parastatals, but their number are quite limited. In their small number they managed to influence decision-making at the political level, for example, they successfully initiated the quota system in the Local Authorities electoral system. In terms of representation in both houses of parliament, statistics show slight improvements due to campaigns against gender inequality. The country is currently on the verge of reaching 30%, which is the target for SADC by 2005. In addition, the national gender machinery consisting of the government structure, NGOs and women's wings in the political parties has grown and progressed well despite certain impediments that include lack of necessary human and financial resources.

ANNEXES: BRIEF HISTORY OF NAMIBIA INCLUDING GERMAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN RULE AND INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE

Brief history of Namibia

46. Apart from a stone cross at the Skeleton Coast there is little evidence of any intruder prior to 1484 AD in the territory currently known as Namibia (United Nations Institute for Namibia 1986:1). The anonymity of the hinterland was ensured by the Namib Desert after which the country is named, which stretched from the Orange River to the Kunene River along the Atlantic coast. Moleah (1983:13) affirms that South West Africa was colonised by the Germans in 1884 following the Berlin Conference of 1884-5, which engaged in a great endeavour of partitioning the African continent as a whole. Namibia has a dual colonialism history – that of Germany superseded by apartheid South Africa at the beginning of World War I. The literature on Namibia's early history of colonialism summarises that in 1878, the United Kingdom annexed Walvis Bay (the only the area was incorporated into the Cape of Good Hope in 1884. In 1883, a German trader, Adolf Luderitz, claimed the rest of the coastal region after negotiations with a local chief. Negotiations between the United Kingdom and Germany resulted in Germany's annexation of the coastal region, excluding Walvis Bay. The following year, the United Kingdom recognized the hinterland up to 20 degrees east longitude as a German sphere of influence. The Caprivi Strip became a part of South West Africa after an agreement on July 1, 1890, between the United Kingdom and Germany. The British recognized that the strip would fall under German administration to provide access to the Zambezi River and German colonies in East Africa. In exchange, the British received the islands of Zanzibar and Heligoland. The German colonial power was consolidated, and prime grazing land passed to white control after the Hereros and Namas were impaired by the Germans during the wars of 1904-08. As alluded to earlier, German administration ended during World War I and South African occupation commenced in 1915 after the defeat of the German forces in the territory. Namibia also has a history of two phased wars characterised as first, the war of resistance and second the liberation struggle.

South-West Africa under South Africa Apartheid Rule

47. The beginning of the First World War put an end to the young German colony in South West Africa. In 1915, the German Schutztruppe was forced to surrender near Tsumeb to the South African troops fighting on the side of the British. With the passing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, German South West Africa was declared a "C" Mandate of the League of Nations under South African administration. The Mandate was in accordance with the League of Nations Covenant's Article 22 (Moleah 1983:23):

1. To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the State which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by people not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that well-being and development of such peoples form

a sacred trust of civilization and the securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

2. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept, it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

48. South Africa ignored the standards set by the League, and continued the harsh German practices. South Africa encouraged white South African families to settle in the country, especially in the south. In 1951, the oppressive South African Apartheid policy was officially extended to South-West Africa. With the implementation of the Odendaal Plan, homelands were established between 1964 and 1966 and the black people were forcefully resettled.

49. UNIN (1986:39) adds that the Odendaal Report provided, among others, a comprehensive plan for the fragmentation of Namibia into a series of economically unviable, self-governing homelands for Africans. At the same time, blacks were banned from visiting the areas of the white particularly in urban areas and confined to homelands. The only open opportunity to go to white areas was through labour migration. The labour migration system was tantamount to slavery and reduced Africans to commodity.

50. These issues annoyed the indigenous people and ushered in the new era of creating the National Liberation Movements and the liberation struggle. One of the remarkable events that informed a milestone in the liberation movement was the 10 December 1959 massacre when many Africans were killed in forceful removal from the Old Location to the tribal segregated location lately known as “Katutura” meaning – we have no place of abode. Giving picture of the same scenario, Heita (2004) expresses that on 10 December 1959, the armed forces came with bulldozers to forcibly remove black people from their houses in the Old Location to a place where they refused to stay. The place was deliberately set far away from town because that was the place reserved for the whites and it was forbidden for the whites to live together with blacks. The people retaliated, and crushes had left 13 black people died. About 55 were wounded. Many of the dead and wounded were women. Amongst those women killed was Kakurukaze Mungunda who was wounded and after wounded managed to put the municipal official’s vehicle ablaze before she died. These scenarios created a vivid mental image of the event and understanding of the injustices of the past that divided the people, especially in Windhoek and forced them to live in the Damara, Herero or Owambo locations. Some houses still have the metal plates that identify the tribe of the occupants. This event constituted a landmark in the beginning of the liberation struggle.

51. This event led to the consolidation of the organising for the formation of the liberation movement in Namibia. Hence, the following year the South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO) was formed. The political consciousness was high,

political leaders were constantly harassed and arrested and most leaders fled the country including Sam Nujoma, the President of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the founding president of the Republic of Namibia. Women were part of the formation process of the liberation movements in Namibia.

African (indigenous) resistances

52. Colonialism had never been welcomed in the territory of Namibia. Hence, fierce resistance against colonial occupation culminates in the historical reality of the Land of the Brave.¹ The initial period resistance as Moleah (1983) explains culminates in the heroic resistance uprising of 1904 -1907 when the Herero and Nama African groups revolted against the initial German colonial incursions. The history of conflict can always be written on the same page with resistance that seemed to have started in 1889 when a small German force arrived in South West Africa under the command of Captain von Francois, which was later reinforced to confront the resistance of the indigenous warriors.

53. Dreschsler (1966:43) states that von Francois requested reinforcements indicating, "in order to straighten matters here, it is necessary to crush the Herero and their friends, the English, out of the country. To achieve this would require no more than 140 infantrymen and 10 gunners in full combat gear plus two pieces of light artillery." This was the initial impression that Von Francois declared war with indigenous and fierce resistance was an obvious consequence. Although von Francois was formidable, his stand in the face of African resistance was short lasted. Reinforcement was consequently sent from German to South West Africa to crush fierce resistances of the indigenous kings and chiefs such as Hedrick Witbooi of the Nama and others.

Germany's attempt to terminate the Hereros

54. Amongst the notorious German oppressors and vanguards of German conquest in Namibia were Governor Theodor Leutwein and Lieutenant General von Trotha. Dreschsler (1966:43) also postulates that during the first stage, lasting approximately from January to June 1904, Governor Leutwein commanded the German troops. Due to heavy losses that the Germans suffered, the second stage commenced in June 1904 and Lieutenant General von Trotha led the German troops. Von Trotha was the most notorious exterminator in the history of Namibia. He mercilessly massacred the Namibians during the period 1904 – 1907. Moleah (1983) quotes von Trotha's termination order against the Herero as follows:

"On October 2, 1904 he issued his notorious extermination order to Herero tribe: The Herero nation must leave the country. If it will not do so, I shall compel it by force. Inside German territory every Herero tribes man armed or unarmed with or without cattle will be shot. No women and children will be allowed in territory; they will be driven back

¹ The Namibian people praise themselves after independence by calling Namibia the Land of the Brave as in the National Anthem.

to their people or forced on. These are the last words to the Herero nation from the great General of the Mighty Germany Emperor.”

55. Von Wietersheim (n.d) asserts that about 60,000 - or 80 percent - of the Herero died as they fled or were put to hard labour in concentration camps. Thousands of the Hereros were detained at the concentration camps. Life in these camps was unbearable, mortality rate was high, sexual abuse of women reached a catastrophic proportion, syphilis was widely spread and the birth rate came to a stand still (Moleah (1983). As part of resistance, Herero women decided to stop giving birth. Also massacred were an estimated 10,000 Nama and 17,000 Damara people. Survivors were chased from their land and their cattle were confiscated. Von Wietersheim (n.d) further explains that for 100 years the name Lothar von Trotha has been a symbol of terror and destruction for the Herero people. Up to now, Namibians have continued to commemorate the event of a century ago with unbroken sadness and bitterness.

56. Apart from that, the Germans introduced a land expropriation law in May 1905. Consequently, the African land was expropriated and the destruction of the African economy took place. The social cohesion was also destroyed and the African people were not allowed to regroup and were forced to move from one place to another with a pass. The migrant labour system also started at that time.

57. The war of resistance was not only confined to the south and central part of Namibia but kings and chiefs at the north were also resisting colonialism forced onto them by both the Germans and the Portuguese. However, it transpired in the historical accounts that when the Germans realised that they had conquered the southern and central part of the country and terminated a large number of people they decided to leave the northern part of the country as their reservoir for labour. Hence, it was the South African army that had bitterly fought with indigenous kings of the north such as Nehale lya Mpingana, Mandume yaNdemufayo and Iipumbu yaTshilongo. In the war Mandume was killed by the allied forces of Portuguese from Angola and South Africans from South West Africa. In the same vein, Iipumbu yaTshilongo was taken captive at Kavango northeast of Namibia, his homestead was destroyed and later he died in exile.

War of liberation

58. Encyclopaedia Britannica (2005) discusses Namibian history under the theme, from resistance to liberation struggle recounting that from 1947; Namibians (initially via intermediaries) had begun to petition the United Nations (UN) against South Africa's apartheid rule and occupation.

59. Adding to petitions a series of cases on the same issues, were also brought before the International Court of Justice the last of which was in 1971 declaring the mandate forfeiture by the United Nations in 1966 to be valid—led to a de jure UN assumption of sovereignty and de facto support via publicity, negotiation, and training for Namibian liberation (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2005). The Human Right & Documentation Centre - UNAM (n.d) also clarifies that after 1945 modern opposition to South African colonial rule began to form. In the beginning its focus was on achieving a revocation of the

mandate and on peaceful organization and petitioning domestically. The traditional Herero Chief Hosea Kutako led the first petitioning exercise.

60. The liberation movements became more active between late 1950s and early 1960s. The major ones were notably, the South West African National Union (SWANU) and the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and some women's organisations were established, for example, the SWAPO Women's Association which was formed in Tsumeb in 1962. Both SWAPO and SWANU kept on pursuing the two-track strategy of domestic mobilization and external quest for international intervention. As this call was not heard by South Africa and little progress was made among the international community with regard to Namibia's decolonisation, SWAPO branched out its pragmatic strategy of armed struggle. Confirming this, the Human Rights & Documentation Centre - UNAM (n.d). In the mid-sixties, however, as South African suppression continued and international action remained sloth and ineffective, SWAPO, which had become the more powerful movement by then, finally decided to add armed struggle to its peaceful strategies. The rationale was to strengthen its political and diplomatic fronts geared to end the apartheid system imposed by the South African colonial masters on the people of Namibia. SWAPO goals and means were also cherished by the churches in Namibia and further a field by the United Nations. For example, in 1966 the United Nations revoked the mandate because of South Africa's continued refusal to cooperate, and secured an opinion from the International Court of Justice that it had a right to do so in 1971.

61. It was generally accepted that SWAPO's broad domestic and international support impaired South Africa's military, economic and political strategies to destroy SWAPO internally and externally. For example, internally SWAPO support was evident in many events such as the black trade union activity, which was illegal until the mid-1980s, began to revive as well and focused rather more on political than on economic mobilization. For instance, the major strike of 1971-72 was against contract labour, the implementation of apartheid and the 1966 failure of the initial International Court of Justice case as much as it was for wage increases per se.

62. SWAPO military strategy and victory was attributed to the independence of Angola under the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola or (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola - MPLA) government in 1975.

63. SWAPO military wing the (People's Liberation Army of Namibia - PLAN), gained a lot of momentum as the Angolan government was more than ready to help SWAPO and PLAN to face South African aggression. Morally, and even materially the independence of Zimbabwe had also a major impact on the liberation struggle of Namibia, as it showed that extended and painful struggles could be won after all, and as it made Namibia the last colony in southern Africa.

64. All in all, the war in Namibia was a long and escalating one, involving something like 20.000 PLAN troops and 100.000 South African and South West African military personnel. As the aim of the war was rather to undermine the opponent's will than final

military victory, the war was paralleled by negotiations. SWAPO had always wanted a negotiated independence, and had actually gone to war to force serious negotiations, however, until 1988 South Africa was unwilling to accept the possibility of a genuinely independent Namibia. With Namibia being an international case because of the mandate revocation and the International Court of Justice opinion, the international community felt obliged to play the role of a broker in independence negotiations. In 1977 the USA, the UK, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Canada created a Contact Group to promote an UN-supervised independence process, which, however, did not achieve any significant practical results at the time. In 1988 South Africa finally abandoned its aim of holding Namibia, taking into consideration the high costs of a continued war and the mounting international pressure. The UN Plan that came to be known as the UN Security Council Resolution 435 was implemented in 1989. The paper now focuses on the specific role women played in both conflicts that eventually resulted in the independence of Namibia.

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