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REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

“THE CURRENT STATE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS”

WINDHOEK
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Comrade Speaker,
Comrade Deputy Speaker,
Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,
Honourable Members of Parliament

I am grateful for this opportunity to address this august house and share with you Namibia's position on various international developments, which have a bearing on our foreign policy. Today, we live in a global village. Developments in one part of the village invariably affects people in another part of this village to some extent.

News is replete with information on various crises on the African Continent, the Middle East and indeed in the rest of the world.

Namibia has remained true to the constitutional mandate provided through Article 96 of its Constitution. This is evident from the Government's engagements within the regional, continental and international contexts. His Excellency the President has renewed this resolve, more so since his assumption of the SADC Chairmanship and the country's membership of the AU Peace and Security Council.

Comrade Speaker,
Honourable Members,

It is within this context that I wish to brief this august house on some of the pertinent developments.

ZIMBABWE

The political situation in Zimbabwe is encouraging given the ongoing implementation of the Global Peace Agreement (GPA). We believe the coalition Government is making progress, though perhaps not at the speed one would have liked, towards the implementation of the provisions of the GPA. Namibia will continue to support the Government and people of Zimbabwe in their efforts to bring back their country to international stardom.

The economic situation is equally encouraging with the reported recovery due to favourable economic reforms and improved investment climate. This recovery, if sustained, will undoubtedly go a long way in fostering economic growth and thereby improving the living standards of the Zimbabwean people.

I, therefore, reiterate Namibia's call for the lifting of sanctions, which are affecting not only the people of Zimbabwe but the whole SADC Region, as those directly affected try to find means of survival elsewhere in the region.

MADAGASCAR

Comrade Speaker,

We remain deeply concerned over the continuing political stalemate in Madagascar. The Government of Namibia is nevertheless hopeful that the first and second Maputo Agreements and the Additional Act of Addis Ababa will be fully implemented.

His Excellency Joachim Chissano is working tirelessly as the SADC Mediator on this matter and we wish to reiterate our support for his efforts. We equally wish to express appreciation for the United Nations and the AU Commission efforts to ensuring that the SADC Mediator has tools to effectively execute his mandate.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Comrade Speaker

You have followed the developments in Cote D'Ivoire following the conclusion of elections, which were held in November 2010. The Government of Namibia is deeply concerned about the political impasse and security situation in that sisterly country. We believe that this conflict must be solved through dialogue. We, therefore, support the efforts of the ECOWAS, the AU and the International Community at large, which are aimed at bringing about durable peace in Cote d'Ivoire. The Government of Namibia therefore, welcomes the UN Security Council Resolution 1962, which renewed the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Cote D'Ivoire.

We also welcome and support the establishment of the AU High Level Panel of Five African Heads of State and Government during the AU Summit in Addis Ababa in January 2011. We are confident that this Panel will evaluate the situation in Cote D'Ivoire and formulate an overall political solution based on the relevant decisions of the AU, ECOWAS and indeed the parties to the Ivorian conflict.

Namibia believes that a peaceful solution is the best option to the conflict in Cotè d'Ivoire. We therefore, do not support the use of force, for we believe that this will result in the loss of lives and thereby further exacerbate the situation.

NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Comrade Speaker,
Honourable Members

North Africa and large parts of the Middle East are experiencing mass political protests as citizens continue to call for leaders to step down. The protest actions, as we came to see them on the global media, started in Tunisia ultimately forcing the former President, H. E. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to flee the country. The President of Egypt, H. E. Hosni Mubarak has now become the second victim of this upsurge. He is now said to have found refuge in Saudi Arabia.

Developments in Tunisia had a contagion effect on more of the countries in North Africa and the Middle East spreading to Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Jordan and Libya. While in Tunisia and Egypt governments have been brought down other Governments seem to be holding up through interventions to address some of the concerns and grievances being raised throughout the protest actions.

Comrade Speaker,

I wish to pause at the developments in the sisterly country of Egypt. Namibia and Egypt have excellent longstanding bilateral relations that can be traced back to the days of our liberation struggle. SWAPO, as a Liberation Movement, has received material and moral support from the people of Egypt. The developments are, therefore, alarming but remain an internal affair of that country.

The Namibian Government is confident that the people of Egypt will restore their country to normalcy under the leadership and guidance of the Army Supreme Council. We will remain seized with the situation in this sisterly country and wish them success in the execution of planned programmes towards a new legitimate and widely acceptable government.

Comrade Speaker,

The Ministry acted in a way to ensure maximum safety and security of all Namibian nationals in Egypt and repatriated non-essential staff and their families from Cairo. We will continue to monitor the situation with a view to returning them on a date to be decided.

SOUTHERN SUDAN

Comrade Speaker,
Honourable Members

Southern Sudan is at the dawn of becoming a new nation. The AU Observer Mission, which was led by Dr. Victor Tonchi surmised that, and I quote: *“the Referendum was organized and conducted in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) guidelines. The Referendum was also consistent with the AU Guidelines on Standards for the Conduct of Democratic Elections in Africa”. The Referendum was free, fair and credible and that it was indeed a true reflection of democratically expressed will of the people of Southern Sudan”*.

The South Sudan Referendum Commission announced on 7 February 2011 that over 98% of the voters voted for the separation of South Sudan. We, therefore, congratulate the people of Sudan for the peaceful and orderly conduct of the referendum.

The Government also congratulates the leaders of Sudan for their leadership and commitment to implementation of the CPA and the actual conduct of the referendum. We trust that the other provisions of the CPA will continue to be implemented to bring to fruition the ultimate objective of this Pact. Namibia will patiently await the final pronouncements on the referendum and the eventual declaration of independence.

Comrade Speaker,

As I stated in my introductory remarks, we are guided by the provisions of Article 96 of the Namibian Constitution in our Foreign Policy engagements. We will continue to conduct our policy on this basis and as such seek peaceful, secure and mutually beneficial coexistence with our neighbours and beyond. We will work to make the global village a place where people of the world can live together in peace and harmony. We will continue to make our contributions towards these ends within SADC, NAM, the AU, the UN and indeed, in any bilateral or multilateral forum.

I thank you.