



## *National Assembly*

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### **MOTION OF APPRECIATION TO THE OUT-GOING SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, HON. DR. THEO-BEN GURIRAB, MP**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

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**Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Members,**

I rise on this special occasion to move a Motion. This is not one of the usual Motions we are accustomed to in this House. I am presenting this Collective Motion, to thank none other than one of our own. It is hereby referred to as a Collective Motion because it is representing the entire membership of the National Assembly. This is the man from Mount Oetgab, of the valleys of #Khan River and the rocks of /Uikrens. This man is none other than Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, MP, and outgoing Speaker of the National Assembly.

Comrade Speaker, looking back at your proud history, you left Namibia at a very tender age of 24 years, and remained in political exile for over

27 years or so. During your stay in the United States, you, along with Comrades Hage Gottfried Geingob, Hidipo Hamutenya and the Late Dr. Mosé Penaani Tjitendero amongst others campaigned around the corridors of United Nations to express to the international community, the plight and aspirations of the oppressed people of Namibia as championed by the SWAPO Party. I am saying this because I was with you throughout the departure from home and, whereas you were managing the USA leg of events, I was similarly managing the UK and Western Europe pillar of the campaign. This was despite the fact that we interacted and worked together in so many other parts of the world during the struggle, along with many of our colleagues, present and those who have left this world.

As a seasoned freedom fighter, diplomat and negotiator, you served 14 years as SWAPO's Chief Representative to the United Nations and, later, as its Permanent Observer. Throughout these years, you played a major part in negotiations leading to Namibia's independence. Over the 14 years of the stewardship of yourself and your colleagues as SWAPO's top diplomats at the United Nations, from 1972 to 1986, the organisation's political and diplomatic status grew from that of a petitioner on the sidelines of diplomacy to a mainstream negotiator and participant in the international arena. The protracted negotiations that produced UN Security Council resolution 435 (1978), containing an internationally accepted plan to bring independence to Namibia,

represented a high point of your political and diplomatic career. In over 35 years in the field of international affairs and diplomacy, you worked with three generations of world leaders and five Secretaries-General of the United Nations.

After the UN supervised elections in November 1989, our people gave SWAPO an overwhelming majority to form the first government of the independent Namibia; you became a Member of the Constituent Assembly, as well as the Constitution Drafting Committee. On 21 March 1990 with the attainment of our hard won freedom and independence you joined this August Chamber as the Member of the First Democratically elected National Assembly and served in this House for 25 years. During your tenure in this August House you became the first and longest serving Foreign Affairs Minister of our Republic. Among your major achievements as Foreign Minister, together with Hon. Nangolo Mbumba, you led three years of negotiations over Walvis Bay, which resulted, in its reintegration, and that of the Offshore Islands, into Namibia, in fulfilment of Security Council Resolution 432 (1978) in 1994.

You also presided over the United National General Assembly that produced the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). You have been a Prime Minister and today, concluding your tour of duty as the second Speaker of the National Assembly. During your tenure as Speaker of the National Assembly you were also elected to serve as the

President of the Inter Parliamentary Union. It was during your tenure as IPU President that this organisation adopted its first ever Strategic Plan from 2012 – 2017, under your able leadership.

Hon. Speaker, it is here in this Legislature that you championed the instruments to create a better life for all. Under your stewardship, efficient oversight of our Government has been exercised. It is here that our society in all its formations has had an opportunity to influence policy and its implementation. You have diligently driven the agenda for change that you inherited from your predecessor.

Comrade Speaker, you took a resolve to selflessly serve this country, and its people and did so with honour and distinction. Under your stewardship, the National Assembly has successfully delivered the mandate our people placed on our shoulders. With the firm support and assistance from the former Deputy Speaker Hon. Doreen Sioka and current Deputy Speaker Hon. Loide Kassingo, you directed this House to rise up to its challenges and to work as a team to steer this ship to the rightful destination, as we continue to address the needs and aspirations of our people.

You have walked along the road of the heroes and heroines of our country. You have borne the pain of those who have known fear and learnt to conquer it. During those difficult and testing days you have marched in front when comfort was in the midst of the ranks. And now

Comrade Speaker, you leave this distinguished arena to continue to march in front of a different detachment of the same army under the sun. We count ourselves fortunate that history permitted us to have been able to work with you as a renowned, seasoned diplomat of our time.

Comrade Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the parties represented in this Parliament for their contribution to the progress we have made. On a very special note, we take this opportunity to thank the Honourable members whose tenure as Parliamentarians is ending. This House is very grateful for your honourable service. You have served to the best of your abilities, the interests of the people of Namibia.

Finally, Comrade Speaker, as you are bidding farewell to this August House as its active Member, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you a long life, good health and success in your future endeavors. We trust that the Nation shall have the privilege to access your wisdom and experience as we continue our journey towards a better quality of life for all Namibians. Dignity will always follow you!

This House extends thanks to you and wish you, your dear wife Joan and your family all the best for the future!