

Today, I stand before you to discuss a topic so profound and close to the heart of Namibia's governance system.

The motion is **hinged** on whether democracy has played a ~~(pivotal) or crucial~~ role in strengthening Namibian politics and governance, while also critically assessing whether democracy is indeed the most ideal form of governance compared to other systems.

Additionally, I will **delve** into whether the current democratic system in Namibia bears any ~~characteristics/features~~ borrowed from our traditional forms of ruling and whether an absence of these traditional elements has served to weaken or strengthen the Namibian house altogether.

Furthermore, I will analyse significant developments in the Sahel region, where democratic systems have ~~(inadvertently)~~ **(unintentionally)** hold up dictators who have manipulated laws to perpetuate their stay in power.

I will also examine the rise of coups in West Africa and its implications on the perceived weakness of democracy.

Lastly, I will explore the complex issue of external influences, particularly countries like the United States, and their imposition of democracy on nations like Namibia, despite their own questionable actions in this regard.

And as we proceed with this debate, we must consider the alternative path of governance taken by China and why Namibia has not followed suit.

## **The Role of Democracy in Strengthening Namibian Politics and Governance**

Democracy has ~~(undoubtedly)~~ **certainly** played a crucial role in strengthening politics and governance in Namibia especially seeing that we are born from the ashes of a White Minority dictatorship that failed to espouse principles of liberty and equality.

Since gaining independence in 1990, Namibia has embraced democratic principles and established a multi-party system, and this is because we thought by adopting this system of governance, we would do away with dictatorships, repression and oppression of our people.

~~(Undoubtedly)~~ **Certainly**, Honourable Members, this has allowed for greater political participation and representation, fostering a sense of inclusivity and accountability.

democratic institutions such as Parliament, the judiciary, and a free press  
provided checks and balances, ensuring that power is not concentrated  
in the hands of a few. But have these institutions been absolutely free from  
interference and manipulation?

Have our laws been created to cement the rights of every Namibian as well  
as to ensure equal participation in the economic progress of this great  
nation?

I ask these questions, Honourable Members, at a time when we from the  
Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters, have seen the use of our laws and  
courts to silence voices of dissent.

And I am speaking with Economic Commissar Michael Amushelelo,  
activist Dimbulukeni Nauyoma and Honourable Inna Hengari in mind.

While we have a constitution that safeguards the right to differ when it  
comes to opinion and political persuasion, yet we have seen over the years,  
the haunting and complete isolation of some that have opposed a certain  
political party.

The very common statement that “ it is cold” outside the Swapo party is  
suggestive of certain political figureheads’ lack of tolerance of the  
difference of opinion and their use of state institutions and resources to  
revenge and inflict economic harm.

Is this what a democratic house should look like?

We are forced to thus ask, do these constitutional principles serve to be  
instrumental in promoting social justice and equitable development across  
the nation?

**Honourable Members, Mr. Speaker sir...**

There is no such thing as Namibian democracy.

If there were to be such a thing, it would only mean that this country’s  
founding fathers adopted a system which they changed to suit our historical,  
cultural and traditional political set up.

Our democracy is an alien system that has been rigorously applied to speak  
to us, often, in a language we do not fully understand.

It is thus <sup>a</sup> a system that has completely divorced itself from Namibia's traditional roots and how our forefathers governed this land.

Democracy espouses the idea that multi-partisan political contestation must be at the centre of nationhood.

By and large, the implication is that too many political parties should checkmate the idea of a one-party state and thus foster a multiplicity of voices in nation-building.

Ironically, today, the same super-powers which have given us this system of ruling do not have these many political formations as is the case here.

The United States of America has seen its politics been driven by two main political formations and nothing more significant from here.

Yet here in Namibia, political pluralism has served to divide us, to create to many voices that have fought against each other, and thus ensuring the domination of one political party against the disunited force of many other formations.

Is it time that we Namibians united and for once find each other in order to forge a much reinforced sense of unity...

### **Honourable Members, Honourable Speaker...**

Our indigenous governance systems often emphasized consensus-building, community participation, and the role of elders in decision-making.

These principles should have continued to influence our political culture, fostering a sense of communal responsibility and consultation.

Yet today, we see political elites turning tribal chiefs against each other by rewarding some and refusing to recognise others.

We continue to see the polarization of traditional chiefs between those that support the ruling party and those that do not, and by default we continue to see the weakening of the traditional leadership and values.

While modern democracy operates within a different framework, these traditional characteristics have contributed to a unique Namibian approach to governance and that uniqueness is not there.

**It is thus** essential to acknowledge the challenges that democracy has faced in Africa, particularly in regions like the Sahel.

Could democracy be a smokescreen that protects bad leaders as they find protection from unsound laws democratically enacted?

How come countries that have the term “democratic” in their names, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somali Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, have not been that democratic at all?

In some instances, democratic systems have inadvertently provided opportunities for leaders to manipulate laws and extend their tenures, ultimately undermining the democratic process.

The rise of coups in West Africa has highlighted the fragility of democracy in the region, prompting questions about whether the democratic system itself is inherently weak or if the issues lie elsewhere.

These developments in Africa should indeed be of concern to Namibia.

While our democratic system has been relatively stable, we must remain vigilant and continuously assess and reassess the strength of this borrowed system, and where possible adopt elements that strengthen our institutions according to our standards and not those borrowed from the west.

### **External Influences and the Imposition of Democracy**

The issue of external influences in promoting democracy is a complex one.

While countries like the United States have championed democracy on the global stage, it cannot be doubted that their own actions have sometimes contradicted these principles.

It raises the question of whether they should continue to impose democracy on other nations.

Namibia, as a sovereign nation, must carefully navigate these external pressures.

We should be open to learn from different systems while preserving the essence of our democratic principles. The choice is ours whether to follow

the path taken by China where political governance **systems** from its unique historical, cultural, and social context.

And while we consider that, it is imperative that we make informed decisions that align with our national interests.

### **Honourable Members, Honourable Speaker...**

China's economic success is indeed noteworthy, and its model has ensured social safety nets and rapid economic growth.

However, it is important to recognize that China's governance system lacks the core principles of democracy, such as political pluralism and individual freedoms, but why have they emerged to be so powerful?

Namibia's choice to maintain or not to maintain its democratic system in its current format must be all about reflecting our commitment to our national dream of becoming a robust economic and political powerhouse.

I do not disagree, Honourable Members, with the notion that democracy has played a pivotal role in strengthening Namibian politics and governance, but my submission is that the current format has not been the most ideal.

While it is not without its challenges, but Namibia must be about a unique blend of democratic principles and traditional ~~characteristics~~ **features** which must be fused together in order to contribute to our stability and development.

We must remain vigilant in preserving and enhancing our democracy while learning from global experiences.

The question of external influences and alternative governance models should be considered carefully, with the understanding that Namibia's path must ultimately align with our values and aspirations as a nation.

Thank you.