



Parliament *Journal*

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Parliament Journal is a peer-reviewed distinctly informative journal published quarterly by the Parliament of Namibia. The journal publishes stories/articles of newsworthy meetings, conferences, and workshops, well researched in-depth feature articles on the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, Chamber proceedings, and oversight visits. Stories/articles about courtesy calls on presiding officers and international meetings/engagements and events such as Pan-African Parliament (PAP), Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), Southern African Development Community Forum (SADC-PF), and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) are also considered for publication.

Stories/articles on other important events normally fixed on the calendar of Parliament such as the Official Opening of Parliament, State of the Nation Address (SONA), and the tabling of the national budget are also published.

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Katjavivi's distinguished career honored at last SADC-PF Assembly

• George Sanzila

Livingstone, Zambia - Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, Hon. Adv. Jacob Mudenda, has hailed his Namibian counterpart, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi describing him as a towering figure in efforts to transform the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) into a regional parliament. A valedictory ceremony was organised by the SADC-PF in his honour on the margins of the 56th Plenary Assembly hosted by the Parliament of Zambia in Livingstone, Zambia.

Hon. Mudenda, who is part of the Executive Committee of the Forum and who also serves as the head of the SADC-PF Strategic lobbying team that has spearheaded the transformation agenda, commended Hon. Katjavivi for his commitment to the transformation and regional integration.

"I would like to acknowledge Honourable Peter Katjavivi as the host of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and a dedicated member of the Strategic Lobbying Team for the transformation of the SADC PF into a Regional Parliament in the past 10 years. His visionary leadership and commitment towards SADC regional integration have established a strong foundation for regional interface and democratic governance within the SADC region. His contributions to this noble cause are both hallowing and inspirational", stated Hon. Mudenda.

According to Hon. Mudenda, the Forum traces its origins in Namibia with the 1992 Windhoek Declaration having laid the foundation for its creation.

"The formation of the SADC-PF has its genesis in Namibia, which has played a pioneering role in the evolution of the regional SADC parliamentarism. The historic 1992 Windhoek Declaration laid the foundation. Namibia's contribution to the creation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum is historic. The country's leaders, especially the late founding Speaker of the National Assembly (1990-2014), Hon. Dr. Moses

Tjendero, were instrumental in fervently advocating for the establishment of this parliamentary institution. Consequently, it is no wonder that Namibia became the privileged country to be the SADC PF host up to today", said Hon. Mudenda.

Echoing similar sentiments, President of the SADC-PF, Hon. Roger Mancienne, described Katjavivi as a dedicated proponent of regional integration and the transformation of the SADC-PF into a regional parliament.

In his valedictory remarks, Hon. Katjavivi who recounted his life journey dating back to the time of Namibia's struggle for independence, thanked the SADC-PF, urging members of parliament to continue contributing to the forum to impact the lives of ordinary citizens. Hon. Katjavivi noted that unity and cooperation in the region were imperative after the attainment of independence hence the creation of institutions such as the SADC-PF. He further noted that Namibia has been actively involved in the work of the regional parliamentary body from the time of his predecessors adding that he was delighted that transformation has been achieved including the recently launched SADC-PF Trust Fund.

"My dear friend, Advocate Mudenda referred to the role played by our founding Speaker and Dr. Theo Ben Gurirab when he took over. I have inherited that responsibility to be actively involved in the work of the SADC-PF. We are proud that today, we are talking about transformation as well as the Trust Fund which we just launched as a vehicle to drive an extra budget and fund raising. The honour that you have bestowed on me through this get together is overwhelming", said an emotional Katjavivi to loud applause.

The current Plenary Assembly will be Hon. Katjavivi's last in his capacity as Speaker. A revered politician, educationist and diplomat, he has been the Speaker of the National Assembly since March 2015 after several roles as founding Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia, Ambassador and Director General of the National Planning Commission among others. He is a long serving member of the SADC-PF's Executive Committee and the Vice President of the IPU task force on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He will be retiring as Speaker in March 2025.



Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi receiving a gift as a token of appreciation for his dedicated service to the SADC-PF.

Muha Criticises UN Security Council *Veto Power*

• Sakeus likela

Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Lukas Sinimbo Muha, has called on the international community to reform the United Nations Security Council to ensure that it responds meaningfully to all threats to global peace and security.

He particularly criticised the veto power held by the five permanent members of the Security Council calling it the veto power the “weakest link” to achieving global peace and security, emphasising that it is often wielded to protect national interests, rather than addressing the collective needs of the international community.

He made these remarks at the inaugural International Seminar on Parliamentary Diplomacy which took place in Havana, Cuba.

Speaking at the event, Hon. Muha He stressed that the growing trend of violent armed conflicts and the disregard for UN resolutions are signs that the world is sliding back into dangerous instability.

Hon. Muha urged the international community to strengthen the UN system, particularly the Security Council, to ensure that it responds

meaningfully to all threats to global peace and security.

Hon. Muha also highlighted the impact of the economic blockade on Cuba, warning that it threatens not only the stability of the Cuban people but also the global economy.

He called on participants to reflect on how such actions affect international relations and global peace.

The seminar, which has gathered representatives from over 20 countries, focuses on the role of parliamentary diplomacy in promoting international law, peace, and sustainable development. Discussions include topics such as democratising international relations, addressing climate change, ensuring food security, and protecting human rights.

The event also explores the growing presence of women in parliamentary diplomacy and the critical role parliamentarians play in fostering global cooperation.

This platform provides an opportunity for leaders to engage in constructive debates on global issues and work towards a more just and peaceful world.

Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Lukas Muha during the inaugural International Seminar on Parliamentary Diplomacy in Havana, Cuba.



Deputy Speaker Advocates for Pan-Africanism Revival ... *calls for PAP self-reliance*

• Sakeus likela

Johannesburg, South Africa — Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Loide Kasingo has called on all African countries to introduce national programmes aimed at educating young people on the ideals of Pan-Africanism to strengthen unity and promote development on the continent.

Kasingo said this is especially important to ensure that young people “who are the leaders of tomorrow” understand the importance of Pan-Africanism for development.

She made these remarks, at the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), currently held in Johannesburg.

She was speaking while contributing to a discussion on the state of the African Union, led by AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat.

Kasingo alongside National Council member Hon. Gerard Shiimi, were representing Namibia. Kasingo said “the revival of Pan-Africanism is essential for us to develop”, because at the moment, citizens of the continent, including leaders, seem to have lost the values and ideals of Pan-Africanism.

“In Namibia, Pan-Africanism is lacking, especially among the youth. They do not understand what Pan-Africanism is all about and therefore do not live up to its spirit. Many young people today focus on getting rich quickly, disregarding the

spirit of sharing to ensure everyone has bread on their table,” she added.

Kasingo, who credited former Namibian President Sam Nujoma as a key advocate for the establishment of AU’s legislative body, also proposed that future members of PAP undergo assessments to ensure they truly understand Pan-Africanism.

“Young people need to be educated about the AU and its associated institutions. This would ensure that future leaders understand and embody the spirit of Pan-Africanism,” she said.

She also emphasised the need for African countries to reduce their dependence on foreign aid and focus on self-funding to spur genuine development across the continent.

“If we don’t fund ourselves, we will keep on begging from others, although our continent is very rich,” she stated, calling for a revival of the spirit of Pan-Africanism among Africans, especially the youth.

She urged African leaders to support the ratification of the Malabo Protocol, which would strengthen the African Union’s (AU) institutions, including PAP.

“It is our duty to lobby our Heads of State to support the ratification of the protocol,” Kasingo said, highlighting the need for member states to bolster AU structures, including its courts, to reinforce accountability and governance.

Addressing the AU’s funding challenges, Kasingo proposed the idea of an AU levy on resources like diamonds and oil, suggesting these funds support AU operations, including PAP.

“Maybe we should collect the levy from those harvesting our resources. Such a levy could then fund AU’s budget and support PAP’s work,” she proposed.

Kasingo expressed concern that while Africa is rich in resources, its people remain poor due to mismanagement and external exploitation.

“Africa as a continent is rich, but its people are poor. We often choose to

study abroad rather than investing in our own institutions at home. This shows that we have yet to decolonize our minds,” she said.

PAP STRATEGIC PLAN

In his opening remarks, H.E. President Chief Fortune Charumbira said PAP’s Strategic Plan is designed to deepen Africa’s economic integration, democratic governance, and stability.

“This Strategic Plan is our collective vision, crafted through extensive consultations with our stakeholders,” he remarked, noting that the Parliament consulted with representatives from African Union (AU) institutions, civil society, and regional bodies to shape the vision of a united and empowered Africa.

The Strategic Plan aims to adapt PAP’s activities to Africa’s evolving social, political, and economic landscape.

“The Pan-African Parliament is not just another institution; it is the legislative voice of Africa, committed to fully involving our people in building the Africa we aspire to,” President Charumbira stated, emphasising PAP’s mission to be the guardian of African citizens’ aspirations.

Charumbira emphasised the goal of enabling PAP to effectively fulfil its legislative and oversight roles, while championing human rights, economic integration, and good governance.

He urged the Parliament to commit to transparency and inclusivity, ensuring the strategy reflects Africa’s achievements and challenges alike.

In his welcome remarks, the 4th Vice President of PAP, Hon. Djiddar Mamar, called the workshop “a crucial endeavour for the Pan-African Parliament and for Africa.”

He encouraged participants to collaborate towards actionable resolutions that would embody the needs and aspirations of African citizens.



Katjavivi seeks to strengthen cooperation *between Namibia and German parliaments*

• **George Sanzila**

Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi in the company of fellow Namibian MPs, met the Germany delegation of MPs on the sidelines of the 149th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. During the meeting Katjavivi thanked the German Bundestag for having availed experts to offer a research training to Namibian parliamentary researchers in 2020 following the signing of cooperation

agreements between the two legislatures.

The Speaker further noted that both the Namibian and German Parliaments have a critical role to play in the finalization of the protracted genocide negotiations in order to find closure and for the two countries to continue to strengthen their bilateral relations.

The leader of the German delegation, Hon. Ottmar von Holtz, on its part,

shared similar sentiments about the finalisation of the negotiations adding that given the historical ties between the two countries there was potential for more cooperation. He cited the recently held Summit of the Future co-hosted by Namibia and Germany as a good example of how the two countries can collaborate on the global stage.



Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi with fellow MPs meeting their German counterparts for bilateral talks.

The Namibian and German delegation pose for a group picture after the meeting.

Namiseb represents *parliament at ASGP meetings*

• **Rafael Hangula**

Secretary of the National Council, Adv. Tousy Namiseb represented the Namibian parliament during the meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) at the 149th IPU Assembly. This important gathering brings together Secretaries General and senior officials responsible for parliamentary services to examine laws, procedures, and best practices across various parliaments. The ASGP aims to propose improvements and enhance cooperation among parliamentary services.



Home Affairs Committee Visits Zimbabwe to Benchmark on War Veterans' Affairs Practices

• **Rafael Hangula**

Harare, Zimbabwe – The National Council Standing Committee on Home Affairs, Security, Constitutional, and Legal Affairs undertook an exchange visit to the Parliament of Zimbabwe to benchmark best practices and strategies concerning war veterans.

The visit, which aimed to strengthen ties between the two nations and improve strategies for supporting war veterans, took place in September 2024.

The visit included consultations with Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence, Security, Home Affairs, and War Veterans; the Portfolio Committee on Justice; the War Veterans Association; the Magistrate Commission of Zimbabwe; the Law Reform Commission of Zimbabwe; the Association of War Veterans; and the War Veterans League, among others.

Led by its Chairperson, Hon. John Likando, the Namibian delegation was hosted by their counterparts in charge of Defence, Home Affairs, Security Services, and War Veterans' Affairs, under the chairmanship of hon. Albert Nguluvhe.

Hon. Nguluvhe's committee is one of the largest in the Zimbabwean Parliament, overseeing critical security ministries and departments, including the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage, and

the Ministry of War Veterans Affairs, among others.

A central theme of the discussions was the Veterans Liberation Struggle, with both parties recognising the immense sacrifices made by war veterans during the liberation struggles that led to the two nations' freedoms.

In his opening remarks, hon. Nguluvhe emphasised the significance of the visit by his counterparts.

"We are delighted to host you for this valuable exchange visit focused on war veterans' affairs. Your presence strengthens the already robust bilateral relationship between Zimbabwe and Namibia and underscores our shared commitment to regional security and cooperation," he noted.

He further acknowledged the sensitivity and emotional nature of war veterans' issues, urging his counterparts from Namibia to ensure that all categories of war veterans are recognised and respected.

"If this is not done, it could cause mayhem," he warned.

Hon. Nguluvhe informed the Namibian delegation that the Zimbabwean government has made significant strides in addressing the needs of veterans through various pieces of legislation, such as the War

Victims Compensation Act and the Veterans of the Liberation Struggle Act.

"Notable achievements include the enactment of the Veterans of the Liberation Struggle Act in 2020, which consolidated and streamlined veterans' benefits. The Act established a board and corporation to manage veterans' affairs, focusing on rights, benefits, and welfare," said Hon. Nguluvhe.

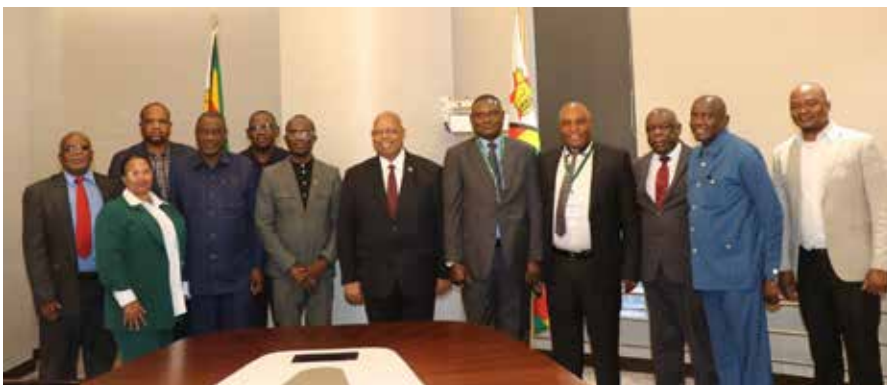
He added that the new act also expands the definition of a veteran to include war collaborators and other contributors to the struggle who were previously unrecognised.

Hon. Nguluvhe emphasised that this legislative update aims to ensure that all individuals who supported the liberation efforts are acknowledged and provided for.

Despite these advancements, he acknowledged ongoing challenges, particularly in ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and addressing the needs of vulnerable veterans.

"It is crucial that we treat our war veterans with the respect they deserve," Hon. Nguluvhe urged. "If we fail to do so, we risk not only their discontent but also the stability of our nations. We must ensure that their sacrifices are honored and their needs met," he added.

Members of the National Council Parliamentary Standing on Home Affairs Security, Constitutional, and Legal Affairs with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, Hon. Advocate Jacob Mudenda during their benchmarking visit to Zimbabwe.



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On their part, Namibia's head of delegation, Hon. Likando, highlighted Namibia's progress in addressing veterans' issues, including lump-sum payments, monthly allowances, and support for education.

Hon. Likando expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to learn from Zimbabwe's experiences. The leader of the Namibian delegation further said the discussions and insights gained through this exchange visit are expected to contribute to improved policies and practices in both countries, ensuring that the contributions of war veterans are duly recognised and supported.

He noted that while Namibia has made significant strides, challenges remain, such as ensuring equitable

distribution of benefits and addressing the needs of vulnerable veterans.

The delegation also paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, Hon. Advocate Jacob Mudenda. Additionally, the delegation engaged with the Judiciary Service Commission of Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, and the Children of War Veterans.

All parties discussed the importance of maintaining transparency and efficiency in the vetting process for veterans to ensure that benefits are appropriately distributed. They also addressed the need for continued support and recognition of veterans' contributions, emphasising that their sacrifices should not be forgotten.

As the visit concludes, all parties have expressed their commitment to strengthening their collaboration and addressing the ongoing challenges faced by veterans.

Namibia's Parliamentary committee on Home Affairs is mandated to deal with questions falling within the ambit of Offices, Ministries, Agencies, and Public Enterprises dealing with justice, international relations and cooperation, safety and security, veteran affairs, defense, constitutional and legal affairs, among others.

Other members of the committee include Hon. Ndjambula, Phillemon, Anseline Beukes, Elkan Hainghumbi, Tjimutambo Kuuoko, Andreas Amundjindi, and Phillipus Mavara.

APRM country report *presented to Speaker*

• **George Sanzila**

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) National Secretariat led by its Chief Executive Officer, Ambassador Lineekela Mboti visited the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi today, to present the APRM Namibia Country Review Report.

Ambassador Mboti informed the Speaker that the APRM Namibia Country Review Report was Namibia's first peer review report launched in 2022 and that the handover of the report to the Parliament of Namibia was intended for the implementation of the National Plan of Action through the various Parliamentary Standing Committees.

Speaker Katjavivi, who promised to table the report in the National Assembly early next year, hailed APRM noting that efforts are being made to mobilise extra budgetary resources for parliamentary standing committees

to perform their oversight duties and confront challenges such as youth unemployment.

The report emanates from the country self assessment report submitted by APRM Namibia to the APRM Continental secretariat in 2021 that led to a team of experts in governance from 11 peer countries in Africa visiting Namibia from 25 October to 10 November 2021 to look at governance challenges and good practices.

The African Peer Review Mechanism is a voluntary and self-monitoring mechanism initiative between African Union member states, Civil society and the private sector intended to address pertinent socio economic challenges and improve governance and best practices through self-monitoring of all aspects of governance. The review is centered on four thematic



areas of democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio economic development.

Namibia joined the APRM in 2017.

IPU Assembly in Pictures



The 149th IPU Plenary Assembly in session at its headquarters of Geneva, Switzerland.



Hon. Prisha Mokotjomela (left) and Hon. Gerson Neumbo represented the Children's Parliament at the 149th IPU Assembly



The Namibian delegation of MPs during one of the sessions of the IPU Assembly.



Hon. Vincent Mareka and Hon. Maria Kamutali formed part of the Namibian delegation.



President of the IPU, Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson chairing one of the sessions of the 149th IPU Assembly.



Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi (middle) led the Namibian delegation. On the left is Deputy Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Victoria Kauma.



Members of Parliament, Hon. Loide Ipinge (left) with Hon. Vincent Mareka attending one of the committees' meetings during the IPU Assembly.



The Namibian delegation led by Speaker, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi.



Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi receiving a gift from his Indian counterpart, Hon. Om Birla, after the two held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 149th IPU Assembly.



Deputy Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Victoria Kauma expressing her views during the bilateral meeting with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Hon. Om Birla.

Kauma urges Parliaments *to legislate for women's representation*

• **Rafael Hangula**

Geneva, Switzerland – The Vice-Chairperson of the National Council, hon Victoria Kauma, has called on national parliaments and member states of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to enact laws that will enhance women's representation.

Kauma made this appeal during a debate on gender parity titled "Pushing Back on the Pushback: Men and Women MPs Preserving and Advancing Gender Equality" at the 149th IPU in Geneva, Switzerland, on Wednesday.

"As Members of Parliament, we must continue to raise awareness and offer support that will promote training and other capacity-building initiatives with an aim to better position and equip more women to competitively contest positions at all levels," Kauma emphasised.

She underscored the responsibility of parliamentarians to create a supportive environment through their respective caucuses and to advocate for legislation that fosters women's representation.

Currently, 58 out of 146 Members in both Houses of the Namibian Parliament are female, representing 40%. Kauma expressed hope that this figure will continue to grow.

Despite Namibia's successes, which includes increased representation of women in leadership positions, Kauma said, the country has challenges related to women representation at the lower tier of regional and constituency levels.

"As we continue to debate at this Assembly, I urge us all to put on our gender lens and prioritise gender mainstreaming in the resolutions we make. It is through this collective commitment that we will advance not only the rights of women and girls but also build strong, resilient, and just nations," she stated.

Kauma reminded her fellow MPs that achieving a more inclusive society requires concerted efforts to integrate



Vice-Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Victoria Kauma contributing on parity debate.

gender perspectives into all aspects of policy-making.

"Thus, there is a need for women with political capabilities and aspirations to be capacitated and supported in their quest for public office, both socially and more formally through targeted policies and interventions," she stated.

She further told the IPU gathering that Namibians will be exercising their democratic right on 27 November 2024, in the Presidential and National Assembly elections where a number of female presidential candidates will be running for the higher office, including the incumbent Vice-President of the Republic of Namibia Her Excellency Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwa.

"This progress is a testimony to the effectiveness of these strategies, and I encourage other nations to adopt similar approaches that will enhance

gender parity. As a country, this gives us renewed hope for the future," she added.

The IPU, established in 1889, serves as the global organisation of national parliaments, dedicated to promoting peace through parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue.

With 180 Members and 15 Associate Members, it empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to advocate for peace, democracy, and sustainable development worldwide. Namibia is a member state of the IPU.

The Namibian Parliament delegation, led by Speaker of the National Assembly Professor Peter Katjavivi, includes MPs Vincent Mareka, Maria Kamutali, and Loide Ipinge from the National Assembly, as well as Victoria Kauma, Emma Muteka, Paul Isaak, and Alfeus Abraham from the National Council.



Parliamentary committee on gender equality *concludes regional visits on malnutrition*

• **Andreas Sheya, Sakeus Kadhikwa**

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Social Development, and Family Affairs recently concluded its visits to the Erongo and Omaheke regions, where it held consultative meetings to assess the status of malnutrition in both regions.

Other regions visited were the Hardap and //Karas region. The visits to the regions are part of efforts by the government to address malnutrition in the country, especially in the regions with high malnutrition cases.

These efforts are also part of a broader initiative to gather data and insights that will help the committee craft a comprehensive report with actionable recommendations for the National Assembly.

Once reviewed and approved, these recommendations will be forwarded to relevant offices, ministries, and agencies (OMAs) for implementation.

The committee to the Erongo and Omaheke regions led by Hon. Hilaria Mukapuli visited the two regional governors offices, regional councils, Swakopmund State Hospital, Marariska Clinic, Gobabis State Hospital, Epuriko Clinic and Otjinene health center.

A visit was also made to the Omaheke region engaging with the regional governor and stakeholders from various ministries and agencies to address the pressing issue of malnutrition.

Omaheke region is one of the hard hit regions by malnutrition in the country.

During the visit, several critical observations came to light. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, a comprehensive nutrition assessment was conducted at 14 health facilities in the region, where nearly 3 000 children

aged between six to 59 months were evaluated for nutritional health.

Of those assessed, 131 cases of moderate acute malnutrition were recorded. Alarming, 82 deaths were noted, with 41 children readmitted to the hospital and 541 new admissions occurring during this period. Currently, 330 children have been discharged, while 139 remain hospitalized.

In response to these challenges, the region has implemented several initiatives. The governor has launched a soup kitchen program in each of the seven constituencies, and Gobabis Toyota has generously donated a vehicle to aid in food distribution to children in need.

Discharged children are assigned to local soup kitchens to help prevent relapse and readmission. Local businesses and individuals have also rallied to support the governor's efforts to combat malnutrition in the region.

A task force team has been established to specifically tackle malnutrition issues, with the governor actively seeking corporate sponsorship to provide monthly food parcels to supplement the soup kitchens.

Despite these efforts, challenges remained. The current school feeding program only provides one meal a day, primarily maize meal provided by the government and school gardens are often neglected during holidays.

Budget constraints further complicate matters with the Ministry of Gender, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare having allocated N\$10 000 per year for feeding schemes, which is insufficient for essentials like nappies and milk.

Furthermore, there are no foster care facilities available in the region. According to the Ministry of Health and Social Services, access to diverse food options remains a challenge, with a focus primarily on carbohydrate-rich foods.

The region's only Paediatric Ward in Gobabis struggles with high demand, and the lack of educational resources for mothers exacerbates the issue.

The challenges facing the Omaheke Region in combating malnutrition are significant, but with collaborative efforts from the government, local businesses, and community members, there is hope for improvement. ■

During the visit, several critical observations came to light. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, a comprehensive nutrition assessment was conducted at 14 health facilities in the region, where nearly 3 000 children aged between six to 59 months were evaluated for nutritional health.

Muha seeks collaboration with Indonesia *to boost food security*

• Sakeus likela

Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Lukas Sinimbo Muha, has emphasised the need for Namibia to deepen its relations with Indonesia to achieve tangible cooperation and collaboration in agriculture, aiming to boost food security.

He made these remarks during a meeting with members of the Indonesian Parliament, who are visiting Namibia on a reciprocal mission to strengthen ties between the two countries.

The Indonesian delegation was led by Hon. Putu Supadma Rudana, Vice Chairperson of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in Indonesia.

During the meeting, Hon. Muha highlighted the impact of the prevailing drought on Namibia's agricultural sector, which poses a significant challenge to food security, especially for rural communities.

Hon. Muha also spoke on the importance of leveraging Indonesia's expertise in agricultural mechanisation and technology to address Namibia's food security challenges, especially in the face of severe drought conditions affecting the country.

The Chairperson expressed optimism that enhanced collaboration could lead to significant improvements in Namibia's agricultural productivity and resilience.

Through collective efforts, Muha said Indonesia can assist Namibia in improving agricultural productivity, food security, and managing drought emergencies.

"Indonesia being one of the world's major agricultural nations, makes me believe that through collective efforts, our two countries can collaborate in assisting Namibia to improve our agricultural productivity, food security, and drought emergency cases," he said.

Apart from that, the Chairperson also underscored the significance of education and cultural exchange as pivotal for fostering a long-lasting partnership between the two nations.

"Indonesia, being one of the industrialised economies, presents an opportunity for Namibian students to study in your country," Muha stated.

He emphasised that such initiatives would not only enhance educational opportunities but also deepen cultural understanding and friendship between the citizens of Namibia and Indonesia.

Muha also expressed his admiration for Indonesia's textile industry and markets during his visit to Jakarta. He highlighted the potential for Indonesian textiles and clothing to find a market in Namibia and the broader region.

"Despite the geographical distance between our two countries, I am hopeful that trade experts from both nations can explore and capitalise on what our countries have to offer," he stated.

He reiterated the importance of the ongoing discussions as a continuation of the strong and enduring relationship between the legislative houses of Namibia and Indonesia. He extended his deepest gratitude to Hon. Putu Supadma Rudana and the esteemed delegation for their visit.

"Today's discussion is a testament to the robust and lasting relationship between our two legislative houses. I once again extend my deepest gratitude to you, Hon. Putu Supadma Rudana, and your esteemed delegation for this wonderful visit," Muha concluded.

On his part, head of the Indonesian delegation, Hon. Putu Supadma Rudana, says his country is ready to assist Namibia to improve its food sufficiency through agricultural mechanisation.

According to Hon. Muha, the two countries should elevate their relations and start working on concrete frameworks to address issues of water scarcity, food insecurity and education to benefit Namibians.

"We want to support you so that Namibia achieves a sufficiency in agriculture to boost food security and reduce the impact of drought on its people. It is important for our parliaments to make sure that our governments work closely together and enhance bilateral cooperations in the area of trade, agriculture and education ... and hopefully through this, Indonesia can offer more scholarships to Namibian students to study in Indonesia," he said.

Rudana also urged Namibia and Indonesia to work together and support the international calls for an end to the Israeli-Palestine conflict and secure the independence and freedom of the people of Palestine.

"We know that many countries are now supporting the independence of Palestine. I want to state here that Indonesia supports a two state solution between Israel and Palestine," he said.



Speaker witness success of Namibia wildlife gift at Havana National Park

• Sakeus Kadhikwa

A donation of wild animals to the Republic of Cuba by Namibia to the Havana National Zoological Park is thriving after recording about 356 new births in recent years.

This came to light after the speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi and his delegation visited the park during his long week visit from 20-26 October 2024 to Cuba.

The animals are part of Namibia and Cuba collaborative wildlife conservation efforts to introduce Africa's wild animals to Cuba.

The sanctuary has become home to nearly 150 African animals across 22 distinct species, including elephants, rhinos, leopards, and vultures, as part of a generous gift from Namibia.

The park's vibrant biodiversity serves as a testament to both nations' commitment to preserving wildlife and fostering a connection between African and Caribbean ecosystems.

Since the arrival of the animals, the park experienced a true renaissance, as indicated by the 356 new births recorded in recent years.

The species are a symbol of hope and a testament to the park's success in maintaining a nurturing environment. The growth in the animal population has also strengthened the park's conservation and education programs, allowing visitors and researchers alike to deepen their understanding of African wildlife.

Despite the successes, the park recorded two deaths of an elephant and hartebeest.

Through the donation, Havana National Zoological Park has turned into a haven where conservation is a reality. The initiative has undoubtedly set a new standard for international collaboration in wildlife conservation and stands as a powerful reminder of the global responsibility we share to protect and celebrate our planet's natural wonders.



Katjavivi holds talks with Indian counterpart *on sidelines of 149th IPU Assembly*

• George Sanzila



The Namibian and Indian delegation during the bilateral meeting

Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi held a bilateral meeting with the Indian Parliament delegation led by Speaker, Hon. Om Birla on the margins of the 149th IPU General Assembly that took place in Geneva, Switzerland. Hon. Katjavivi was in the company of fellow MPs, Hons. Maria Kamutali, Paul Isaak and Vice Chairperson of the National Council, Hon. Victoria Kauma.

Both Hon. Katjavivi and Hon. Birla highlighted the two countries' long-standing friendship dating back to the time of the struggle for independence and the need to continue to strengthen bilateral relations.

Issues of mutual concern were discussed including parliament to parliament cooperation and capacity building. The Indian Speaker pledged support for the Parliament of Namibia's envisaged plan to construct a Parliament Museum and Information Hub. The planned museum that was briefly affected by the outbreak of Covid-19 will house artifacts and an interactive digital information system for the purposes of posterity. The Indian Speaker further revealed that the Indian government has approved a plan to set up a Namibia/ India Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Windhoek.

On his part Hon. Katjavivi noted that the idea of a museum and information hub emanated from his study visit to the Indian parliament in 2021. He reiterated the need for the two countries to collaborate more, singling out information technology and innovation as an area with potential for future cooperation. The Speaker further welcomed the envisaged Namibia India Entrepreneurship Development Centre, noting that it is an important instrument that will help facilitate matters pertaining to business and trade between the two countries. ■



SADC-PF Trust formally constituted

Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi has been elected as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) trust fund. Hon. Nacilia Gomes da Silva Troso from the Angolan Parliament will deputise the Speaker with other Members of Parliament in the SADC region, Angolan MP, Hon. Pedro Sebastiao and Hon. Leon Tumba Mukendi from the DRC as well as local

bank experts forming part of the Board of Trustees. They were elected today during the meeting of the trustees of the SADC-PF's successors trust.

Initiated in 2021, the trust fund is meant to spearhead fund raising activities to support the work of the SADC-PF in line with its strategic goals. Hon. Katjavivi expressed his happiness with the latest development stating that, it came at an opportune time when the regional body is making final preparations to transform into

a regional parliament. He further stated that with the trust formally constituted, it was ready to begin with its operations. Also speaking during the meeting, another trustee, Angolan member of parliament, Hon. Sebastiao commended the forum noting that there was a need to have a formal structure that would transparently manage the finances of the forum. ■



Speaker of the National Assembly, Prof Peter Katjavivi pictured (middle) after his election as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the SADC-PF Trust Fund

Namibia's commitment to Gender Equality *highlighted at 149th IPU General Assembly*

• **Rafael Hangula**

Geneva, Switzerland – National Council Vice-Chairperson hon Victoria Kauma highlighted Namibia's progressive efforts toward gender equality, underscoring the nation's commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

She was participating in the debate titled "Pushing Back on the Pushback: Men and Women MPs Preserving and Advancing Gender Equality" at the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly held in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2024.

In her address, Kauma said that Namibia has made significant strides in advancing gender equality, particularly through the implementation of legal frameworks such as the National Gender Policy.

These frameworks hon Kauma said, have played a crucial role in empowering women and promoting gender equity in various sectors, including education, health, and the economy.

However, she acknowledged that despite the progress made, there is still much to be done to ensure that gender-sensitive approaches extend across all

sectors, particularly at the regional and constituency levels.

"We must continue to work towards empowering women with political capabilities, ensuring they receive the necessary support, training, and resources to aspire to public office," hon Kauma stated.

She highlighted the Rural Women's Parliament with Men as Partners, a pioneering initiative in Namibia, as a prime example of a platform that empowers rural women and fosters gender equality.

The Rural Women's Parliament, which originated from a 2018 IPU meeting in cooperation with UN Women, has played a key role in addressing systemic barriers that rural women face in realising their rights. The resolutions from this shadow parliament are regularly debated within the National Council, making the voices of rural women heard in national policy discussions.

The Vice-Chairperson further stressed the importance of continued political will and support for women's representation across the broader of political landscape.

The introduction of the 50/50 gender representation policy, also known as the zebra style, has resulted in a significant increase in women's political representation hon Kauma said.

Today, 40% of the Namibian Parliament's 146 members are women, a milestone hon Kauma hopes will continue to grow in the coming years.

As Namibia prepares for the Presidential and National Assembly Elections on 27 November 2024, hon Kauma expressed her optimism for the future, citing the candidacy of Her Excellency Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the Vice-President of Namibia, who will run for president in the upcoming polls. This milestone, she noted, represents a renewed hope for the advancement of women and girls in Namibia.

she urged all nations to adopt gender-sensitive policies and prioritise gender mainstreaming in their legislative efforts.

"It is through collective commitment and the active promotion of gender equality that we will build stronger, more resilient, and just societies," she affirmed.



Vice-Chairperson of the National Council Hon Victoria Kauma (middle) with hons Maria Kamutali and Loide Ipinge at the 149th IPU Assembly in Geneva.

Namibian lawmakers partake in 45th Annual Forum of *Parliamentarians for Global Action in Pakistan*

• Eino Vatileni

Namibian parliamentarians alongside other lawmakers from around the world, participated in the 45th Annual Forum of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), held in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The forum, held from October 28-29, 2024, also hosted the 13th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the International Criminal Court (CAP-ICC).

The PGA is a membership organization of parliamentarians committed to promoting democracy, constitutional order, and human rights. Its members include legislators from established democracies and those in transition.

The PGA Namibia National Group delegation was led by the chairperson Hon. Juliet Kavetuna who was accompanied on the mission by fellow MPs, Hons. Sebastian Karupu, Maximalliant Katjimune, and Dudu Murorua.

Speaking during a panel discussion, Hon. Kavetuna said Namibia ratified the Rome Statute in 2002 and stressed the importance of respecting human rights and the safeguarding of justice.

"When we are talking about human rights, they are universal and many countries have enshrined them in their constitutions and other laws that speak to the protection of citizens of those countries. But still as we speak, many human rights are being violated and we should make sure that justice is availed to everybody whose rights have been violated," Kavetuna said.

She added that human rights violations in many countries range from social, psychological, economic and environmental factors that leave many in uncertainty, displacements and war.

Another Namibian MP, Hon. Murorua questioned the assembly on the lack of a taskforce to deal with countries lacking strong anti-money laundering laws.

Murorua suggested that a task force be established, similar to the existing Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Meanwhile, Member of Parliament Hon. Katjimune stated that Namibia "fundamentally" agrees that the International Criminal Court (ICC) is a crucial instrument for the protection of human rights.

Katjimune added that human rights are inherent, inalienable and indivisible.

Despite that, Katjimune said there are still concerns regarding the trust on the ICC adding that countries which form part of the United Nations are not part of the PGA.

"The first deficit in the judicial institution (ICC) stems primarily from a belief that they are superpowers that have not ratified the Roman Statute. We are of the thinking that as the PGA we form part of the UN to which the ICC falls under, then what is the concern about ratifying the Roman Statute?" Katjimune questioned.



ENGAGING... Members of Parliament Hon. Dudu Murorua and Hon. Maximalliant Katjimune participating in discussions with other lawmakers during the 45th Parliamentarian For Global Action (PGA) Annual Forum and 13th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the International Criminal Court (CAP-ICC) held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in October.

Deputy chairperson Karupu acknowledged the importance of the PGA to advocate for justice across the globe.

ADOPTIONS

The assembly adopted nine items which among others include the promotion of the ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC and its amendments and ensure the adoption of domestic legislation that fully aligns with the Rome Statute. Other matters are to promote stronger international cooperation and the promotion of public awareness of the ICC and international rule of law.

ABOUT THE PGA

Currently, the PGA comprises approximately 1 200 members from 141 multi-party parliaments across the globe.

ABOUT THE CAP-ICC FORUM

The CAP-ICC is the only global gathering of legislators focused solely on the Rome Statute system of the ICC. It is the largest project of PGA's Campaign for the Rome Statute of the ICC. Its meetings represent a unique opportunity for several hundred legislators of all continents to discuss and define strategies to advance its universality and effectiveness.

NC, Regional Councils collaborate for better *public participation and regional development*

• **Rafael Hangula**

The National Council (NC) and 14 Regional Councils (RCs) held a joint conference in August 2024 themed “Harnessing the Roles and Mandates of the National Council and the Regional Councils for Greater Public Participation and Regional Development.”

The conference, which took place from 27 to 31 August, aimed to foster collaboration and strengthen the relationship between these two governance bodies.

The gathering provided a platform for discussing key issues, sharing best practices, and developing actionable strategies for improved public engagement and regional development.

Among the main objectives discussed were the need to clarify the distinct yet complementary roles of the NC and RCs and their contribution towards public participation and regional development..

The conference also discussed the development and status of the Regional Constituency Development Fund (RCDF) and membership or tenure to the NC and to the RC and the implications thereof.

The NC is mandated to recommend legislation on matters of regional



Chairperson of the National Council Hon Lukas Muha (4th from L) with members of the National Council, Regional Councils, Chief Regional Officers, and representatives from various stakeholder organisations.

concern per Article 74(1)(c)) of the constitution, in addition to its members drawn from RCs.

In addition, Rule 182 of the National Council requires Regional Councils to submit reports regarding the

implementation of their activities to the National Council.

Chairperson of the National Council hon Lukas Muha, opened the conference, where he emphasised the significance of collective effort.

“This conference underscores the critical importance of collaboration, inclusivity, and shared responsibility in our collective efforts to serve our people more effectively,” said the Chairperson.

“The National Council ought to champion public participation at the legislative level, while the Regional Councils focus on public participation at the regional development level,” hon Muha explained.

The conference made several resolutions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of both parties.



Members of Parliament from the National Council in the joint conference with Regional Councils.



Representatives from various stakeholder organisations in attendance during the conference between the National Council and Regional Councils.

see NC on page 21...

...NC from page 20

Amongst them is the need for accurate legal interpretations regarding the election processes for the management committees of Regional Councils. The gathering called for a consultative engagement to develop guidelines for these elections.

In addition, the conference also addressed the urgent need for decentralisation and the devolution of powers to Regional Councils, particularly concerning the management of natural resources and meaningful participation

in activities relating to the harnessing of natural resources in the respective regions.

The gathering also called for synchronising the session calendars of the two houses of parliament and RCs to minimise disruptions.

The conference also tackled the representation of women in political offices, with a commitment to advocate for improved gender equality within both councils.

“The underrepresentation of women in political offices is a cause for concern and needs to be addressed,” hon Muha emphasised.

The conference brought together a diverse group of participants, including members of the NC, RCs, Chief Regional Officers, and representatives from various stakeholder organisations. ■

Katjavivi trip to Cuba *boosts Namibia-Cuba relations*

• **Sakeus Kadhikwa**

HAVANA, CUBA- National Assembly Speaker Peter Katjavivi concluded his week-long visit to Cuba to strengthen ties between Namibia and Cuba.

The visit strengthened the solidarity between the two countries and opened avenues to increase cooperation in education and health.

“Cuba has been a key ally for Namibia during our fight for freedom and has greatly helped us in important areas like education and healthcare,” Katjavivi said.

The speaker was accompanied by a multi-party parliamentary delegation for an official visit from 20 to 26 October 2024. This visit was undertaken at the invitation of His Excellency Juan Esteban Lazo Hernández, President of the Cuban National Assembly.

The delegation, which included members of the Cuba-Namibia Parliamentary Friendship Group, focused on deepening collaboration in legislative practices and strengthening ties in key sectors, including education, healthcare, and parliamentary diplomacy.

During the weeklong visit, the speaker engaged in formal discussions with President Hernández and other influential Cuban parliamentary leaders, underscoring the mutual



commitment to advancing cooperation in critical areas.

The speaker also undertook a tour of the University of Havana, which serve as an opportunity to reinforce the countries' shared dedication to educational exchange. During the tour, the speaker met with Namibian students studying in Cuba, underscoring Namibia's support for its citizens abroad and reaffirming the enduring connection between the two nations.

The speaker was accompanied by Hon. Gotthard Kasuto, Hon. Jennifer Van den Heever and Hon. Joseph Kauandenge.

The week-long visit stood as a powerful testament to the resilient partnership and shared values that continue to unite Namibia and Cuba, with a focus on fostering progress in areas vital to both nations' development agendas. ■

School meals toolkit launched at 149th IPU Assembly

• George Sanzila



Members of the Children's Parliament, Prisha Mokotjomela (left) and Gerson Neumbo during the discussions.

Members of the Children's parliament, Hon. Prisha Mokotjomela and Gerson Neumbo participated in discussions on supporting Parliamentary action for school meals at the 149th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. Both Mokotjomela and Neumbo called for stronger parliamentary support for school meal programmes.

A school meals toolkit for parliamentarians produced by the International Parliamentary Network for Education (IPNED) was launched after the discussions. It is intended

to provide evidence to Members of Parliament to be able to advocate for school meals along with actionable advice and guidance.

According to the IPNED, well developed school meal programmes are one of the most impactful and efficient interventions to benefit entire communities and can contribute directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, particularly reducing poverty, hunger, malnutrition and improving health and education among many others. ■

Namibia highlights achievements at IPU Assembly

• George Sanzila



Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi presenting the country's sustainability report during the 149th IPU Assembly.

Namibia is listed among the 38% of countries that have passed legislation, adopted decisions and/or taken specific action in follow up to IPU outcomes. This was revealed during the special accountability segment of the General Debate at the 149th IPU Assembly that assesses how parliaments have followed up on IPU resolutions, decisions and other initiatives.

The survey was carried out this year in 37 selected Member countries by the IPU. According to the survey, Namibia has implemented affirmative action policies to increase women's representation in decision making positions.

During the same session, Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi revealed that Namibia values inclusivity and participatory democracy and as a result has introduced the Children's parliament.

"I am honoured to share with you one of Namibia's most transformative initiatives, *'the Children's Parliament'*". For the past seventeen (17) years, this has been an exemplary model of youth engagement and has had a remarkable impact on policy formulation in Namibia, stated Katjavivi.

According to Katjavivi, the Children's Parliament has become more than just a space for dialogue, but an institution where young people hold legislators and government accountable.

The Speaker told delegates that the previous session of the Children's Parliament was a resounding success that culminated into progressive legislation. "The Motions passed during these sessions find their way into real policy implementation. In previous sessions, the Children's Parliament successfully advocated for the Child Care and Protection Act, Act No. 3 of 2015, a vital piece of legislation that protects the welfare and rights of



Member of the Children's parliament, Prisha Mokotjomela giving insight on the work of the Children's parliament during the assembly

children across Namibia" noted Katjavivi to loud applause.

Both Prisha Mokotjomela and Gerson Neumbo of the Children's parliament accompanying Speaker on the mission, expressed appreciation for inclusion of young people in decision making urging other member countries to emulate the initiative. During the same event Katjavivi also presented the report of the IPU Task force addressing the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Attending the event for the last time as Speaker, Hon. Katjavivi was also honoured by the IPU Secretary General, Martin Chungong who described him as courteous. ■

Katjavivi honoured for dedicated service

• **George Sanzila**

Speaker of the National Assembly, Professor Peter Katjavivi was honoured recently by the SADC Group of parliaments ahead of the start of the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and Related meetings in Geneva, Switzerland.

President of the Southern African Development-Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), Roger Mancienne, presented Katjavivi with a Certificate of Distinction to honour him for his outstanding service to both the SADC-PF and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). He described Katjavivi as a dedicated proponent of regional integration and the transformation of the SADC-PF into a regional parliament.

In his valedictory remarks, Katjavivi thanked the SADC-PF, urging members of parliament to continue contributing

to the forum to impact the lives of ordinary citizens. "It has been an interesting and very educative journey of close to 10 years as part of this dynamic organization, the SADC-PF. We will meet in Livingstone, Zambia, where I will formally bid farewell to you all. It has been a privilege to learn from each other and to contribute to our collective efforts. Let's always remember the impact of our efforts on the lives of the people we serve", noted the Speaker.

The current IPU Assembly will be his last in his capacity as Speaker. He is a long serving Speaker of the National Assembly and SADC-PF's Executive Committee. He has played a pivotal role in the SADC-PF, being the host Speaker, and has continued to make contributions aimed at transforming the SADC-PF into a regional parliament.

Professor Katjavivi is also the Vice President of the IPU task force on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He will be retiring in March 2025. ■



Professor Peter Katjavivi (left) presented with a Certificate of Distinction from SADC-PF President, Roger Mancienne.

Young MPs participate at 149th IPU

• **Rafael Hangula**

Namibia's Young Member of Parliament, Hon. Emma Muteka participated in the Forum of Young Parliamentarians at the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva, Switzerland. As the youngest member of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians, she represented Namibia alongside two Members of the Children's Parliament, Prisha Mokotjomela and Gerson Neumbo. The Forum focuses on assessing recent developments in youth participation in parliament. Young parliamentarians are reflecting on successes, addressing current challenges, and recommending youth engagement in legislative processes. ■



Namibian Parliament has *embraced technology-Speaker*

• George Sanzila

Livingstone, Zambia - The Parliament of Namibia has made progress in moving towards ICT compliance. Due to the demands of the modern world, the Namibian legislature has had to rapidly transform, despite the heavy cost burden that comes with such complex yet necessary technologies.

This was said by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Professor Peter Katjavivi, when he addressed delegates at the 56th SADC-PF Plenary Assembly in Livingstone, Zambia. The Plenary Assembly is held under the theme “Leveraging Technology and Innovation for Smart, Inclusive and Responsive Parliaments in the SADC region”.

According to Katjavivi, who has been an ardent proponent of moving towards an e-parliament, progress was achieved with the support of development partners. He further noted that the pandemic acted as a catalyst for re-inventing the future and has helped fast-track the long-held dream of transforming the Namibian Parliament into a paperless institution.

“The Parliament of Namibia with the help of the World Bank implemented an e-Parliament strategy, this significant step is aimed at embracing digital transformation and risk management, particularly in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for continuity in legislative activities”, said Katjavivi.

Katjavivi further commended the creation of the Southern Africa Regional ICT Hub and implored parliaments in the region to make use of its services.

“The regional hubs promote the effective use of technology in parliaments by sharing and consolidating information on past, ongoing and future ICT initiatives at regional level, and through the CIP secretariat at global level. The Southern Africa Regional ICT Hub (SAHUB), housed by the Parliament of Zambia, is meant to support Southern African parliaments in digital transformation. It would be informative to get a brief



Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Professor Peter Katjavivi during the Plenary.

on how Parliaments within the SADC Region are interacting with this hub”, noted Speaker.

He further called SADC Member states to take the lead in adopting technological advancements while promoting inclusive governance.

“Through collective action and unified legislative approaches, we can harness the transformative potential of technology to create Parliaments that are genuinely inclusive, responsive and that they ensure democratic rights for the greater benefit of our people. The time is ripe for us to shape the future of our region with innovation, unity, and resilience for greater benefit”, noted Katjavivi.

Contributing to the same discussions, young Namibian lawmaker, Utaara Mootu noted that there was a need to form partnerships to bridge the digital divide. “Issues of the failure of the undersea cable sparked debates on whether the continent is ready to use and get the full potential of ICT and to use it as an economic catalyst. It is imperative that we enhance partnerships to ensure we bridge the digital divide and improve the capacity we have”, stated Mootu.

The National Assembly recently installed a digital multimedia conference system to ease the work of the legislature. The new digital technology system, replete with a touchscreen functionality, can give lawmakers access to a plethora of digital parliamentary documents such as the agenda (order paper), bills, the constitution and standing rules and orders among many others. The system further enables the Speaker, as the presiding officer, the chance to properly control debate in the house by deciding who should speak through a control unit. Members can also vote electronically and may request other miscellaneous services.

Other Members of Parliament at the Plenary include, Phillipus Katamelo, Agnes Kafula, Paula Kooper, Longinus Iipumbu and Paulus Mbangu.



Some of the Members of Parliament representing Namibia at the 56th SADC-PF Plenary Assembly include FLTR, Hons. Longinus Iipumbu, Paula Kooper, Phillipus Katamelo, Agnes Kafula and Utaara Mootu.

Speaker calls for STI legislations *in final remarks to IPU Assembly*

• George Sanzila

Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi implored parliaments to enact legislations that establish ethical standards for science, technology and innovation development including ensuring the implementation of such laws. Speaker made this call during his final speech to hundreds of delegates that were recently gathered for the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. He was contributing to a debate on the overall theme of the assembly, entitled "Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future".

According to Katjavivi, legal and ethical standards in science and technology are important to ensure that science, technology and innovation are used in ways that are beneficial to society.

"Ethical considerations are integral to the development and implementation of ethical frameworks for science, technology and innovation. Science, technology and innovation play a central role in human development and must be seen as a primary mechanism for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. As the supreme law-making

institution and agents of people's well-being, parliaments main responsibility is to ensure that the benefits of science, technology and innovation reaches all segments of our society", noted Katjavivi.

The Speaker further bemoaned the widening digital divide, urging parliaments to be at the forefront of narrowing the gap by collaborating more and harmonizing digital legislations.

"As we all know, the digital gap is now a worldwide concern, and this is an opportune time to unpack it. Therefore, as parliaments it must be our primary objective to work together to build cooperative projects, unify digital regulations and standards, and establish frameworks for cross-border digital trade and cooperation through international collaboration, global partnerships and funding", appealed Katjavivi.

He also called for the establishment of dedicated science and technology committees at parliaments and strengthening the capacities of parliamentary research services, he believes are integral to the realization of scientific evidence use in law making

and oversight. The Speaker further used the platform to bid farewell to the IPU Assembly. This assembly, marks Katjavivi's final appearance as Speaker of the National Assembly as he is set to retire in March 2025. He highlighted the role played by Namibia in the organization.

"It has been a privileged for the past ten (10) years to lead the Namibian delegation to the IPU Assemblies and Related Meetings. As a close IPU family, Namibia has played an active part in promoting IPU's global vision. I remember, when my predecessor the late Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab took IPU Presidency in October 2008, the first question he asked the former Secretary General Anders Johnson was the IPU Strategic Plan. We did not have one at that time, and as we move on we produced the first ever IPU Strategy 2012 – 2017 titled *"Better parliaments, stronger democracies"*, said Katjavivi to loud applause.

Katjavivi is currently the Vice President of the IPU task force addressing the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The IPU Assembly is a global organization of Parliaments around the world that brings together lawmakers to identify international challenges and make recommendations for action.



Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi during his last address at the 149th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

Ithete meets representatives from Andritz Hydro on Baynes Hydroelectricity Dam at Namibia, Angola border

• Eino Vatileni

WINDHOEK-The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economics and Public Administration Hon. Natangwe Ithete, received a courtesy visit on 16 October 2024 from Andritz Hydro, an Austrian based company that is ear-marked to construct the Baynes Hydroelectricity Dam, which is a bi-national project between Namibia and Angola.

The visit focused on the project's significance for energy security and its long-term benefits for the Namibian people, highlighting the strong diplomatic ties between the two countries.

The company, through the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation in conjunction with the Austrian Embassy in Pretoria, held meetings with various stakeholders including officials from the Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises and Nampower.

During the meeting, Hon. Ithete said Namibia welcomes all direct investments that would come and leave a good mark for current and future generations.

Ithete further expressed his support for the project highlighting the bilateral relations Namibia and Angola have.

"I fully support your project because we need electricity in our country. Our country mostly depends on other countries for electricity supply from Zambia and South Africa. Zambia currently has load shedding and South Africa are also now struggling a little bit. But overall this is a good project and we will give you our full support," Ithete said.

He however said currently Angola has built dams for their citizens and water hardly reaches Namibia.

"We have a good relationship with the current Angolan leadership and it will be good that this project can commence because we do not know what can happen tomorrow. Any project that has to do with the two countries, we better do it now," Ithete added.

Currently, Namibia imports over 60% of its energy from neighboring countries, mainly South Africa. Peak demand for electricity is over 600 MW per annum. Despite the success, only over 50% of Namibian citizens have access to power.



As of September this year, the Ministry of Mines and Energy said it has electrified 50 500 rural houses since independence by the end of 2023. This was done under the ministry's rural electrification programme.

Speaking during the meeting, company Regional Director for Africa, Joe Lumetzberger said the Baynes Hydroelectricity Dam construction project will be crucial and beneficial to Namibia and its people.

"It is a bi-national project and Angola ofcourse will be involved. In Angola is where we do have huge turbines. A few years ago we also established a training center where we do the work together with the local communities there," Lumetzberger said.

Lumetzberger added that their projects have been successful in the region and it requires a multicultural understanding.

"We have been in Africa for approximately 100 years. But with this project we will also be manufacturing some components here in Namibia and adding local value. It is doable, we have done it in many countries in Africa," he said.

The delegation informed Hon. Ithete on its plans to host a Namibian and Angolan delegation in Austria later this year. ■



COURTESY VISIT... The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economics and Public Administration Hon. Natangwe Ithete, received a courtesy visit on Wednesday from Andritz Hydro, an Austrian based company that is ear-marked to construct the Baynes Hydroelectricity Dam, which is a bi-national project between Namibia and Angola.

MPs assess youth projects *funded under youth Credit Scheme*

• Rafael Hangula



Hon. Kosmas Katura receives a haircut at a barbershop run by one of the youth beneficiaries.



Meeting between the committee members and the beneficiaries of Oshikuku Youth Development.

A delegation of Members of Parliament (MPs) from the National Council's Standing Committee on Education, Science, ICT and Youth Development undertook regional oversight mission to evaluate the progress of youth-funded enterprises under the Youth Credit Scheme.

The visits, conducted in September 2024, targeted youth enterprises across Erongo, Kunene, Oshana, Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, and Otjozondjupa regions, with the aim of assessing the impact of government funding disbursed under the scheme since its launch in 2017.

The committee, chaired by Hon. Olivia Hanghuwo, included members Bethuel Tjaveondja, Kosmas Katura, Jeremias Goeieman, Deriou Benson, and Sakeus Nangula.

The visited youth enterprises ranged from carpentry and brickmaking to manufacturing, babershops and hair salons initiatives.

The Youth Credit Scheme was established by the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service to empower youth and reduce unemployment in rural areas. Each funded enterprise is generally run by 5–10 young people, and forms part of the government's Harambee Prosperity Plan.

While many youth expressed gratitude for the opportunity, several challenges emerged across the regions, ranging from lack of mentorship to poor financial accountability, delayed disbursements, and a breakdown in monitoring systems.

In the Omusati Region, Omusati Governor Hon. Erginus Endjala voiced concerns during a courtesy meeting with the committee.

"I think the intentions of these projects were good, but during implementation, things did not go as planned. Some youth diverted funds for unintended purposes, and oversight was absent," said Endjala.

Echoing the sentiment, Hon. Ndeitunga said, "We have nobody to blame but ourselves as Namibians. A lack of supervision, monitoring, and accountability is crippling what should be successful initiatives."

The committee is now expected to compile its findings and will table a report with recommendations to the National Council. The committee holds the mandate to monitor and evaluate the performance of public programs within its ambit, including education, ICT, youth development, sport, and national service.

Chairperson Hon. Olivia Hanghuwo stated that the committee is committed to ensuring that youth development initiatives remain accountable, impactful, and sustainable.

"What we've seen on the ground reflects both hope and hardship. There's potential, but it needs support structures, mentoring, and follow-through," she said.

During the same visit, MPs also visited several projects under the National Youth Service (NYS), such as Hentisbay National Youth Service training, Eunda Production Garden, Omauni Production Garden and Rietfontein Production Garden.

At NYS projects, majority of the projects face aging infrastructure, broken sanitation facilities, and a shortage of seeds, fertilizers, and manpower. Despite repeated reports to superiors, little action has been taken.



MPs visited Ondobe Youth Enterprise in Ohangwena region.



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