



*The Gateway to Endless Opportunities*

**SPEECH BY DR. JOB S AMUPANDA, MAYOR, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST  
COUNCIL MEETING OF 2021**

***“COMPANIONS TO THE PEOPLE - DEALERS IN HOPE AND ACTION”***

**DATE: THURSDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

**TIME: 17H30**

**VENUE: COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**YW, the Deputy Mayor**

**Chairperson of Management Committee**

**Honourable Councillors**

**Bishop Katenda**

**Acting CEO**

**The Executive Team**

**Officials of the Municipal City Windhoek**

**Members of the Media**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good evening,

When her home was demolished for the second time, by City Police, **Ms. Garcia Beukes** no longer saw the need to be alive, and decided to take an overdose of tablets, to end her life.

She sent this message to her neighbor:

*“It was nice meeting you...please stay close to my kids, and never allow for them to get hurt the way I did. See you in heaven or hell.”*

**Sylvester Lolo Goraseb** is a talented and celebrated footballer of our country’s Brave Warriors. As time passed in his adulthood, he became increasingly interested in his own history and ancestry. He intended to bequeath a coherent account of his roots, to his children. He spends time with generational farmworkers on the Khomas Highlands, assisting the /Khomanin Traditional Leaders who reside on one of the Commonage farms on the outskirts of our city.

**Selma Shatika Iikela** lives with her mother and siblings in a build-together house in Greenwell Matongo. At that plot was once a shack

in which they lived in. Her mother, who was a domestic worker, worked hard to have their home built.

In the early 2000's her mother couldn't pay the rates and taxes and her home was re-possessed and given to a rich individual through an auction. Selma, a mother of two, spent the past 10 years fighting to keep their home, and continues to do so today.

Similarly, **Joel Araeb**, an 80-year old pensioner, and his family were evicted from their home in Otjomuise by a rich man Desmond Henry Howard, who manipulated Mr. Araeb's grandchild and postured to assist the family.

**Edla Kaveterua** writes to me, as Mayor of Windhoek, to state her case of her home being under threat by RedForce. She says: *"The City of Windhoek has outsourced its Debt Recovery to an agency called 'RedForce'. These guys are from hell, it must be in the name 'REDFORCE'. They have no mercy on an ordinary Namibian when it comes to disconnecting Water & Lights amidst Covid-19. They threaten to repossess property whereas, some of us are fighting that all Namibians have a decent structure or a roof over their head. Water/ Shelter and Lights are essential commodities. It is a need, not a want" yet, this agency RedForce (hired by the City of Windhoek to recover debt on behalf of the City Council), has no sense of empathy, compassion for humanity at all...imagine a pay slip of N\$15K and the hired agency demands N\$17K as a down payment before they can re-connect services."*

**Inyemba Kamwi** is a young professional with a Master's degree from Coventry University London.

**Ruusa Nombanza** is a Data Scientist with a Master's degree from the University of Sterling, Scotland.

**Salomo Hei** studied at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. He also worked for that country's finance ministry after which he,

returned to Namibia and worked for the Bank of Namibia, before joining the private sector.

Inyemba, Ruusa and Salomo are passionate about changing our city and stand ready to contribute. The extent to which the City is responsive and understanding towards these young middle-class professionals, is a topic of another day.

Like other young professionals, Inyemba and Ruusa are confined to renting flats-waiting for a day when the leadership of the Municipal Council of Windhoek, position them into a realistic path, towards one day, owning their own homes.

Young **Justina Heita** is an Electrical Engineer employed by the City Electricity Department. She has been on contract for close to five years now. She dreams of a day when her supervisor delivers good news, to share with her family and friends, that her job is permanently secured.

**Christa Ithana**, a student at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), was repeatedly robbed by thugs in the Windhoek West. She is convinced that she is plagued with bad luck.

**Violetha Sindimba** operates a Kindergarten on municipal land in Okuryangava for more than 8 years, via a rental arrangement. She hopes that the City one day, allows her to build a permanent structure for the children of this community.

**Dr. Guillermo Delgado** (Programme Co-ordinator: Land, Livelihoods and Housing Integrated Land Management Institute-NUST) and **Dr. Lydia Horn** (Researcher-UNAM), are excited about the City's new leadership and seek to make their contribution.

Dr. Delgado writes; *"Hello Job, congrats again for your election as Mayor and all best for this year. It's Guillermo from NUST; I saw this competition on innovative strategies against COVID for cities and I*

*thought it would perhaps be an opportunity for Windhoek to showcase its new approaches. We have studied some good practices in informal settlements, let us know if you'd be interested to discuss applying."*

Dr. Horn wants to contribute and support the City's Urban Agriculture intervention and she writes: *"Good Afternoon Job, Your Worship the Mayor. I am Lydia Horn, based at UNAM main Campus as a Researcher. We have some activities running under a greenhouse just behind the W block. Sometimes when you come to teach, we usually say 'hi' in the corridors. I would like you to visit our project to see how UNAM-ZERI can contribute to your idea of greening the city with food. This has been one of my ideas and there is a proposal which we presented to the GrootAub in 2019. We could also help with the mushrooms training and project set up. Feel free to contact me whenever."*

Although he is now a Member of Parliament, **Josef Kauandenge**, a former Councillor of our City, reserves a special place in his heart for the City. He wants us to continue and complete what he started.

These are stories of our people and they reflect stories of failed leadership!

Failure to protect and solve.

Failure to sympathise and empathise.

The failure to save and uplift.

These are stories of betrayal and despondency.

However,

These are also stories of excellence, determination and show-casing the resilience of our people.

From us as the City's political leadership, we are called to action now. The people I have mentioned and many others in such situations, look to us, to reach out and lift the out of hardship and despondency. Others seek opportunity to show us what is possible. They want to be part of the journey, and history.

*Therefore,*

***We must be companions and not enemies of the people.***

One of our ancestors, Thomas Sankara, a brilliant African revolutionary and leader of the Burkinabé revolution in Burkina Faso has already assisted us in how we ought to conduct ourselves as leaders, of the masses of our people. He told us;

*“The enemies of the people are all those who have taken advantage of their social position, of their bureaucratic position, to enrich themselves illicitly. In this way, through maneuvers, through graft, and through forged documents, they find themselves corporate shareholders, they find themselves seeking approval for this or that company. They claim they are serving Upper Volta. These are the enemies of the people... The enemies of the people are also a section of the bourgeoisie that enriches itself dishonestly through fraud and bribery, through the corruption of state officials, so they can bring Upper Volta all kinds of products, whose prices have been multiplied tenfold. These are the enemies of the people...the enemies of the people are also the politicians who travel throughout the countryside only at election time. The politicians who are convinced that only they can make Upper Volta work... the enemies of the people are also the forces of obscurantism who, under spiritual cover, under cover of tradition, are exploiting the people instead of genuinely serving their moral interests, instead of genuinely serving their social interests...”*

To Thomas Sankara, who watches us from ancestry, we hereby commit: not to be enemies of the people but, to be companions of the people.

We inform **Garcia Beukes**, who wanted to end her life because of the housing hardship, that in **Councillor Clemencia Hanases, our Deputy Mayor**, she has a companion who understands the suffering of mothers in our city. No-one will harm her or her children again.

To **Lolo Goraseb**, in **Councillor Ivan Skrywer** you have a companion who understands your struggle for identity and connection to ancestry.

To **Selma Ikela**, who is fighting to keep her mother's home, in **Councillor Sade Gawanas** you have a companion and a peer who is also a young mother that understands the tenacity of young women born in 'Tura and who is determined to save their heritage under threat of the ruthless realities of capitalism.

To elder **Joel Araeb**, who was evicted by a ruthless capitalist, in **Councillor Fillemon Nangolo Hambuda**, you have a companion who understands the pain and continued dispossession that our people suffer. His own family history (referencing the forceful removal of homesteads and families from the Old Location), places a moral obligation on his consciousness, to never allow these things to continue.

To **Edla Kaveterua**, who is tormented by RedForce, in **Councillor Ndesihafela Larandja** you have a companion, determined to ensure that the processes and systems used by the Municipal Council of Windhoek are fair and imbued with human dignity. Indeed, we inform Edla Kaveterua that in **Councillor Joseph Uapingene**, you have a committed companion who is determined to fight for the weak, small and the oppressed – the common man.

To **Inyemba Kamwi, Ruusa Nombanza** and **Salomo Hei**, the young professionals who seek to assist the City to open its doors to innovation and take its rightful place amongst modern cities, we inform them that in **Councillors Sam Nujoma** and **Desiree Davids**, you have companions who understand the dynamics of ICT and entrepreneurship in the modern economy. Indeed, the challenges and role of the middle class is also understood by these companions.

To young **Justina Heita**, who dreams of permanent employment, we inform you that in **Councillor Queen Kamati**, you have a companion who dedicates her young life to serve the youth. She understands, empathises and sympathises with you. Having worked at the Labour Ministry, your situation is understood by her. To you again young Justina, in **Councillor Ilse Keister**, you have a companion who is an experienced Human Resources Specialist and Practitioner.

To **Josef Kauandenge**, who retains a soft spot for the City whilst at the National Assembly, we inform you that in **Councillor Fransina Ndateelela Kahungu**, you have a companion who understands what your intentions were and where you wanted to take the City, before proceeding to Parliament.

To **Christa Ithana**, who is a constant victim of robberies, in **Councillor Bernardus Araeb**, a former police officer, you have a companion who understands the urgency of keeping our City safe for students. Indeed, in **Councillor Austin Kwenani**, you have a companion that has worked with youth his entire adult life and shares a keen interest in safety and security. Councillor Kwenani also formed part of the leadership, of one of the successful neighborhood watches in Windhoek.

To **Violetha Sindimba**, who dreams of owning a successful kindergarten in Okuryangava, we inform you that in **Councillor Magdalena Lombardt**, you have a companion who understands your plight, having been a former kindergarten teacher.



To **Dr. Lydia Horn** and **Dr. Guillermo Delgado**, we are your companions and we understand and prioritise the importance of research and the role that higher education plays. Let us jointly expand our wings of collaboration and soar above uncharted horizons with scholarly vision and focus, in pursuit of excellence in research and development.

### **Windhoek as a Post-Colonial City**

In highlighting and analysing the real plight of people in Windhoek, it becomes clear that their experiences cannot be divorced from the character of the post-colonial state, which is the state after colonialism and/or independence. In his seminal text 'On The Post-colony' Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe, introduces a concept of 'divine libido' which he uses to argue that, beyond 'pleasure', 'desire', 'sensual delight' and 'happiness' the metaphor can be used and understood in the context of *"suffering, unhappiness, and extreme forms of physical degeneration. In other words, there is a transfiguration of pain, suffering and unhappiness that, by freeing the subject from various kinds of inhibition, allows him or her to achieve a capacity for ecstasy unachievable under ordinary conditions."*

Indeed, independence libido is partly responsible for what becomes of the post-colonial state. Instead of independence serving as an opportunity to demand excellence, the citizens, because of the independence libido, were possessed by a somewhat ecstasy to an extent that they were unable to realise that the post-colonial state was actually degenerating and becoming what Frantz Fanon predicted it will become – an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty.

Thirty years later, the people of Namibia have realised that ecstasy is fatal to their future and that of their children. It is for this reason that Windhoek, in 2021, is politically reconfigured and no longer in the

hands of those who ran it for 30 years. We are a leadership and a generation at a time where citizens chose rationality over ecstasy, the future over the past. Development over heroism.

As Oiva Angula, a Windhoek resident, states in his book *'SWAPO Captive'*, political obstinacy will not replace the need for justice in Namibia. In February 2015, former Prime Minister Theo Ben Gurirab declared that the government has failed the poor. He retorted; *"poverty eradication is a nice thing for politicians to talk about but, making a verifiable difference in people's lives is a challenge"*

For former Deputy Prime Minister, the post-colonial state has performed very well. In her book *'Making a Difference'*, Libertina Amadhila, makes these bold claims that Katutura *"is a beautiful place with a lot of businesses. In fact, you don't need to go to the city for shopping, everything is now available in Katutura."*

Beauty is evidently in the eyes of the beholder. For **Garcia Beukes**, who decided to take her own life because of her home being demolished, her reality of Windhoek is evidently different. We are a leadership and a generation that must provide leadership to both Garcia Beukes and Libertina Amadhila.

### **The Municipal Council of Windhoek's Approach and Policy Direction**

Focus must be towards addressing the needs of the masses of our people, at the point of need. On 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020, during the Annual Mayoral Address held in terms of and pursuant to Section 11 (5) (a), (c) and (e) of the Local Authorities Act, I indicated to the residents that I will be tabling the matters detailed in that address for consideration and approval by Council.

I hereby formally table these matters, as contained in the address attached hereto, to Council for further processing, followed by discussion and subsequent adoption.

From time to time, and indeed, when the need arises, Section 11 (5) will be invoked to shape the overall policy approach of the City. It is, however, not my wish that this becomes the norm.

To this effect, I am aware that the Management Committee (MC) discussed an item that deals with the consolidation of Council Advisory Committees from costly 15 committees to about half of that number. It is these committees that must work and become the engine room for policy formulation. As per the *Standing Rules of Order*, these committees will be playing a meaningful role particularly in terms of conducting deputation for members of the public who seek to make representations to Council on various matters. I also understand that the MC, in reworking the Council Committees, will also ensure that all mandates as contained in Section 30 of the Local Authorities Act, are accommodated. A Council meeting will be convened to approve the newly constituted committees and deliberate on the eventual population of the said committees.

## **Engagement with Stakeholders**

### *Engagement with the Line Minister*

As you are aware, we met with our Line Minister, Honourable Erastus Uutoni, in Otjiwarongo, on matters of concern. We informed the Minister of the City's readiness to work with the Ministry and assist the local authority sector given the City's capacity, resources, and positionality.

We informed the Minister about our objective to ensure that we achieve an unqualified audit – something that has not occurred over the past 30 years. With two Chartered Accountants employed by the City, probably the only one in a public sector, we are confident that we will achieve this objective.

We have proposed to the Minister, the matter of Debt Swap between the City and Government which will indeed help in improving our books and financial situation. This debt currently stands at more than N\$350 million. We have also raised other matters such as the City's Social Budget that stands at N\$500 million and the fact that the City does not receive a subsidy from the state. Our investigation is that this situation is unique to Namibia. Cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg and even London receive subsidies from the state. We also raised the government's financial obligations in terms of the *Fire Brigade Services Act (Act No 5 of 2006)*. The discussions were cordial, and we committed to a follow-up meeting with clear details particularly, when and after Council has met and taken particular decisions.

#### *Engagement with other local authorities*

At the induction in Otjiwarongo, we also held discussions with the Mayors and Deputy Mayors of other towns with whom we have co-operation agreements. We subsequently met the Maltahohë Village Council and reiterated the need to realise the deliverables in terms of the existing agreements.

#### *Engagement with the International Community*

We have been receiving congratulatory messages and goodwill support from Mayors in Europe, Asia and African Countries and embassies represented in Windhoek. Over the coming weeks, together with the Deputy Mayor and Chairperson of Management Committee, we will be receiving several Ambassadors and Diplomats who are interested in co-operation with Windhoek. We hereby inform our stakeholders that land and housing, in the greater context of economic development, remains the highest priority.

Finally,

I am cognizant of the many expectations and spectators. Some genuinely hope we are able to solve their problems and that of the Municipal Council of Windhoek. Others are yearning and cannot wait to sign-post mistakes and celebrate our failures. Fortunately, we as a political leadership do not have the luxury of choosing to prove or disprove to detractors.

We have a task at hand which is to provide hope through practical actions and in said spirit, a press briefing is slated for Monday, 15 February 2021, to inform Windhoek residents, and the wider public, on the key decisions taken at this first Council meeting. Let this meeting, and many others to come, respond to Kamwi, Beukes, Nombanza, Hei, Goraseb, Sindimba, Iikela, Horn, Delgado, Kauandenge, Ithana, Kaveterua, Heita and others in similar situations.

It is time to work and do so smartly and with due care to the needs of our people. This requires inter alia understanding, patience, innovation, mutual respect, and commitment.

Let's do this. We can do this. We got this!!

I thank you.