



The Gateway to Endless Opportunities

**ADDRESS BY DR. JOB S AMUPANDA, MAYOR, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 2021**

“Behold, Embrace and Safeguard The Friends of Windhoek”

DATE: THURSDAY, 29TH APRIL 2021

TIME: 17H30

VENUE: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Your Worship Cllr Hanases Deputy Mayor,

Hon Fillemon Hambuda, MC Chair,

Fellow Councillors,

Chief Executive Officer & Officials of the Municipal Council of Windhoek,

Windhoek Residents,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To the minds of students and scholars of African political philosophy, it is clear that Africans do not participate and engage in international collaboration and co-operation with their neighbours and global counterparts solely because of international protocols and covenants.

Indeed, the answer is found in African philosophy: to human relations, Africans always brought a collectivist, as opposed to individualistic outlook.

There is a great Oshiwambo, also common in other African languages, saying that goes: “Omuntu keshi omuntu ngele kapuna aantu” which directly translated, means, “one’s humanity is only meaningful in the presence of other humans”.

Owing to this accommodative character of the other, some intellectually penetrating scholars submit, that it was easier for colonisers to find a foothold on the African continent. This view becomes credible particularly when one considers the fact that the brutal colonial episode was preceded by an era of smooth penetration and settlement by European traders, missionaries, and explorers.

Professor Simphiwe Sesanti, in his 2011 text titled *On Africa Culture and Politics*, submits about the Africans that: *“from a very early age, Africans taught their offspring to regard their peers as brothers and sisters until death did them apart. This meant that they had to be one another’s keeper by helping one another in times of hardship and protecting one another when their lives were threatened.”*

He further adds that: *“the great powers may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.”*

This outlook does not exist in the remote imagination and interpretation of African philosophers, without practical manifestation. For illustrative purposes, take African architecture when compared to that of others. For example, in the African context of constructing a private home, it is almost automatic that a room is built to accommodate guests, despite one’s economic status. It is irrelevant, to the Africans, if one has no children; a house will be built with rooms to accommodate both genders.

This is unique to and representative of African culture and is generally not found in other cultures and cannot be stated of other cultures. Africans, current and of yesteryear, were always concerned about the collective, synergies and ensuring that the fellow man was catered for.

It is this state of mind that has guided our approach to external relations strategies, both in the context of both international and local stakeholders. Indeed, our approach to the *Friends of Windhoek* is underpinned by collectivism, as opposed to individualism. Our approach has been to behold, embrace and safeguard our friends. In the words of Professor Sesanti – *“to be one another’s keeper by helping one another out in times of hardship and protect one another when their lives were threatened”*.

When **Honourable Councillor Hanna Swartbooi**, the Chairperson of the **Maltahohe Village Council**, and her delegation visited Windhoek to discuss their challenges in various areas including waste management, policy formulation and land surveying - we understood our role as a “bigger sister” and that in accordance with the African culture and ethos referenced earlier, we have an obligation to assist them and to this end, we have committed to help them.

It is the same commitment we made to **Honourable Councillor Elias Kasemba**, the **Mayor of Oranjemund**, and his delegation when they visited us recently. Oranjemund deserves our attention. It is surely the only Town Council, in an urban environment, that faces relevance and legitimacy problems in Namibia. It is the only town Council that rents office space in its own town and does not have a Deputy Mayor. As such, we will assist them to address the governance challenges they face.

Earlier this year, we held discussions with the **Mayor of Okakarara, Honourable Councillor Olga Tjiurutue** and her team, reaffirming our commitment and willingness to work with and assist Okakarara with their challenges.

We also affirmed the same commitment to the **Deputy Mayor of Ondangwa, Honourable Councillor Esther Mweneni Auala** and her team. In the month of May 2021, will receive, in Windhoek, Mayors and Councillors from **Keetmanshoop, Gibeon** and **Khorixas** to explore areas of mutual interests and assistance.

Given the above, it is evident that Windhoek, the nation's capital, carries a sisterly and moral obligation to the said towns – it is both in our strategic and national interest to assist them and we shall. In doing so, we will also be proactive in providing strategic interventions which will minimise Windhoek's challenges of rapid urban migration.

It is for this reason that we have decided to re-join the Association of Local Authority of Namibia (ALAN). The Board of ALAN has readmitted us into ALAN fold and a letter to this effect has been received. The outstanding administrative matters relating to payment shall be addressed by officials in accordance the relevant Council Resolution. Where we are unable to solve the challenges of other local authorities through bilateral engagements, we should be poised to steer and tilt ALAN in a direction to solve specific and general challenges facing local authorities in Namibia.

Council has also made significant strides in terms of inter-governmental relations beyond local authorities. With the **University of Namibia (UNAM)** and the **Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)**, we have made significant progress in our co-operation and Technical Joint Working Group meetings. We are presently looking at industry-focussed knowledge creation and Skills development, strategic planning and policy development, and research-based service delivery. We have shared with the two institutions our draft Shebeen Policy and the draft International Relations and Co-operation Policy. We are also working towards the formulation of a Windhoek Urban Agriculture Forum in line with our Windhoek Food Security System Framework. NUST, through **Dr. Guillermo Delgado**, has been instrumental in our funding application which we submitted towards the **2021 Bloomberg Global Mayors Challenge**.

In addition, several meetings were held with representatives of the *Friends of Windhoek*. In our recent engagement with H.E **Mr. Antonio Javier Romera Pintor, Ambassador of Spain to Namibia**, we discussed several matters of mutual concern and interest. These include co-operation in the areas of Sports and Culture. I asked Ambassador Pintor to facilitate an engagement with **Real Madrid FC**, the Spanish

football giant, aimed at discussing football infrastructure between the club and the Municipal Council of Windhoek.

With **H.E Amr Abdelwareth, Egyptian Ambassador to Namibia**, we discussed the finalisation of the twinning agreement with the City of Cairo. **Professor Earle Tylor, Jamican Consular to Namibia**, delivered an invitation from the Mayor of Kingston, Councillor Delroy Williams, for the Mayor of Windhoek to visit Kingston.

The two cities are in discussion to concretise and operationalise a Windhoek Reggae Festival where Jamaican and Namibian reggae artists will unite in artistic and social harmony in our city.

In our engagement with **H.E Wisnu Edi Pratignyo, Indonesian Ambassador to Namibia**, we discussed the visit to Jakarta and Indonesia's willingness to assist Windhoek with expertise in agriculture.

Through the wonderful work of **H.E Margaret Mensah-Williams, Namibia's Ambassador to the United States**, we are renewing our friendship with the City of Richmond. **Mayor Levar M. Stoney** has also extended her well-meaning wishes to us.

With **Professor Wim de Villiers, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch** who visited us last month, we discussed tripartite relations between Windhoek, Stellenbosch University and Stellenbosch Municipality.

Our friends from the **City of Bremen** in Germany have been the most generous! They have approved more than **N\$38 million** in grants towards a water relief programme, Covid-19 response and solid waste management related projects.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has approved our Urban Agriculture proposal for our Okukuna Farm. We will receive **N\$2.8 million** towards Okukuna projects aimed at promoting urban agriculture, food, and nutrition security. We also started discussions with the United Nations World Food Programme on how best to collaborate with them on urban agriculture.

Similarly, **Road Authority** and **Road Fund Administration**, the *Friends of Windhoek*, have responded positively to our cry for traffic lights at one of the most congested road intersections in our City's poor communities. Over the past four years, there has been zero capital budget for traffic related projects. This has left the City with a huge backlog of traffic lights – the results are accidents and unhappiness from traffic congestions. As such, the three Intersections (1) **Monte Christo/Matshitshi (known as Havana-Four-Way)**, (2) **Otjomuise/Claudius Kandovazu/Eveline** and (3)

Otjomuise/Monte Christo will receive traffic lights, kerbs, sidewalks for poles and ducts. The total value of this generosity from these *Friends of Windhoek* is valued at **N\$ 1.6 million**.

We also participated in several international local government platforms such as the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, African Capital Cities Sustainability Forum, and the Sustainable Urbanization across the Commonwealth. Due to Covid-19, these platforms took place virtually. However, we managed to concisely communicate the perspective of to our Friends from several cities of the world. Thus far, have received positive feedback on our participation and leadership at these platforms.

I detail our external and international engagements over the past few months not to detail our achievements, but to primarily, demonstrate the importance of the *Friends of Windhoek* and the fact that *Friends of Windhoek* and the associated relationship and synergies are mutually beneficial and serve as an asset and catalyst towards the achievement of Councils objectives and ambitions.

Through these strategic partnerships the Windhoek Municipal Council not only benefits by way of financial and material support as I have stipulated above, translate into millions of Namibian Dollars. With the support of the *Friends of Windhoek*, Council can assist sister Councils and stakeholders via knowledge, technical capabilities, and resource transfers.

This collectivist culture is entrenched in us as Africans and it is this same culture which Council shall entrench in our decision-making processes to guide our priorities and strategic objectives. We should therefore ensure that we behold, embrace and safeguard the *Friends of Windhoek*, both those we have found here as a new Council, but also those that we create and secure through conscious efforts to build networks and relationships of mutual benefits.

As with our assets, the *Friends of Windhoek*, we must resist the temptation of losing public assets in making way for individual thirst for profit. We must not follow the horrible example of the losing of our national assets, such as SME Bank and Air Namibia, by central government. There is nothing inspiring about the closing down of Road Contractors Company, another national asset, to make way for profit-thirsty individual tenderpreneurs. As Council, we should take note of the recent events surrounding the beloved Sam Nujoma Stadium, a stadium which not only carries many memories, but which represents hope for many previously disadvantage youth who through sports, are exposed to a positive life prospects. The negative sentiments

surrounding the Stadium is something we take seriously and with a commitment that we will not allow our assets to spiral down a path of depreciation and devaluation. I visited the said stadium this morning and intend to develop a strategy to ensure that the stadium reclaims its former glory and not follow the unfortunate path of the Independence Stadium. We simply cannot follow the same path.

It is for this same line of thought that we must protect and resist the attempt by some to take away the communication license that the City lawfully obtained from the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRAN) in terms of the Communication Act (Act No 8 of 2009). Those opposed to this license, for flimsy reasons motivated by thirst for profit and individualism, argue that it is not in the mandate of the City to possess this license. Although our lawyers will advance the legal arguments in Court where our asset is being challenged, it is important to reiterate that the license is an important asset for the City and finds sanctuary and fortification in section 30 (1) (u) (z) (ab) and (ae) of the local authority act. These wide provisions and that of other laws, permits the City to possess, commercialize, establish, and do anything necessary or conducive to the exercise of its powers and performance of its duties. We must not lose our assets; if anything, we must acquire more assets to serve the masses of our people.

We cannot follow the paths of 'de-asseting' government. Namibia is now a Country without a national airline, without an accredited national stadium and with a national broadcaster on life-support. We call on all those in a position to change the current trajectory of our Nation, to place themselves second and begin to place the Nations interest first and foremost for future generations.

To the *Friends of Windhoek*, our assets, we treasure and value you. We will not let you suffer and do not let us suffer. We drink from a wisdom cup of Professor Sesanti to be one another's keeper by helping one another out in times of hardship and protect one another when our lives are threatened. We are with you, we thank you, embrace you and promise to safeguard you. In our journey and resolve towards development and improving the livelihoods of our residents, we cannot do without you. We thank you.

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

I thank you.