

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION
Letter by the Namibian Ambassador to Germany

German Parliament
Chair of CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group
Volker Kauder, Member of the German Parliament
Platz der Republik
11011 Berlin

Berlin, 14 March 2016

*Consultation on final recommendations and on the report by the Germany foreign ministry regarding the motion of the parliamentary group Die Linke, **reconciliation with Namibia – remembrance of and apology for the genocide in the former German colony German South-West Africa**, print matter 18/5407, 18/6376, and regarding the motion of the parliamentary group Buendis 90/The Greens, **strengthening relations between Germany and Namibia, and standing up towards our historical responsibility**, print matter 18/5385, 18/6378, [to be debated] on 17 March 2016, TOP 10 on the day's agenda.*

Dear Mr. Kauder,

On 17 March 2016, the German parliament will conclude consultations on the aforementioned motions by the parties of Die Linke and Buendins 90/Die Gruenen.

This important debate will occur [four] days before the 26th anniversary of Namibian independence on 21 March 2016. That's why Namibians but also Africans in general will follow the debate in the German parliament on Thursday with great interest.

It was meant to be that the debate in the German parliament coincides with the introduction of the fifth Namibian (Harambee) development plan, which our Minister of Finance, Mr Calle Schlettwein, will present to the Namibian parliament on 17 March 2016.

The "Harambee" plan envisions a long-term extinction of poverty as a cause for social and political instability, and should materialize by the year of 2025. The term "Harambee" stems from a Namibian-African language and interprets as "let us all together pull on the same string".

"Harambee" does not silence or cover up different points of departures. To the contrary the idea of Harambee entrusts people to work together and not against each other on the same cause.

After queries with multiple members of parliament of all groups, we believe that there is a consensus under those members, that the Namibian question is too serious to become an instrument of politics, and that there is a genuine wish to submit a multi-party motion on the subject of genocide and colonialism. I want to recall that the current President of the Namibian parliament, Mr. Prof. Dr. Peter Katjavivi, already appealed in 2007 to members of the German parliament, to achieve such a unity on the subject.

The elected representatives of the Namibian national assembly, which drafted the constitution, decided to pursue such an approach when they addressed in 1990 similarly difficult subjects of the shared colonial past. They conceived of the constitutional rules, which guaranteed the protection of property for all, including of a majority of those who during the colonial era acquired property through duress or unilateral decree and without compensation for the rightful owners. This result was collectively achieved after a long period of fighting with conscience. For that, representative of all parties were guided by the belief that Namibia's future should be built on a basis of reconciliation and forgiveness and not in the spirit of retaliation against the descendants of the colonizers. The constitutional committee from 1990 was chaired by no other than our third president today Dr. Hage Geingob.

With such background and in harmony with the special relationship between Namibia and Germany that is because of "moral and historical reasons", stated in the parliamentary decision from 1989 and strengthened in 2004, the Namibian government wishes that the debate in the German parliament on Thursday, 17 March 2016, will be conducted in the spirit of "Harambee".

In other words, we wish that all members of the parties convey to the German, Namibian and African public their commitment to work together for the resolution of this difficult chapter in the best interest of the people in both countries.

The Namibian and the German governments feel that they are committed to the spirit of "Harambee" when they appointed the Special Envoys and entrusted the task to work on a resolution acceptable for both parties, which results out of the commitment to bring about restitution for the recognized injustice of the past.

These are the reasons why we asked the members of the parliament of The Left and Buendniss 90/Die Gruene, to withdraw their motions on 17 Maerch 2016 for the spirit of a multi-party motion that would be inspired by Harambee.

Such a motion could be submitted shortly and could be guided by the agreed proposals of the Namibian and German governments. The motion would construct the basis for a factual and dignified debate, which would give the victims and their descendants the necessary respect.

I am very honored that the members of parliament of the two groups of Die Linke and Buendniss 90/Die Gruenen in various committees gave their agreement in talks, to withdraw their motions on 17 March 2016 for the preferred purpose of a multi-party motion. The Namibian government and the Namibian people are indebted for their understanding and smart decision to contribute, together with ruling coalition, to the strengthening of the special partnership between Namibia and Germany.

The Namibian and the German governments as well as the Special Envoys are aware of the historical responsibility, and the need to capture the moment to close this horrible chapter of our shared history, so that we can envision a hopeful relationship with a shared benefit for both countries and also that we will like each other from person-to-person.

With best wishes,

HE Andreas Guibeb
Ambassador

Cc: [various members of parliament]