



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

NAMIBIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMACY MANAGEMENT

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FOREWORD

As the world turns and the seasons change, so do the intentions of nations and the behaviour of world leaders that, in many cases, defy prediction. World politics is about peace, security, ideas, collective actions, alliances, co-operation, development and power. These are the essential elements of international co-operation and international conventions and protocols.

Ideally, the objectives of inter-state relations are to promote good order, civilized discourse and mutual support for a better world. The tools for achieving these objectives are international law, conferences, bilateral and multilateral negotiations. This is the preferred paradigm. But it only works most of the time, and not all of the time. Turbulences and disputes are also part of the global reality. Wars, terrorism, regional conflicts, poverty and under-development, environmental concerns, movements of refugees and displaced persons also form a significant part of the world's politics and economic manifestations.

War, it has aptly been said, is a pursuit of politics by other means. That is to say, when all diplomatic efforts have failed, war ensues. The list of types of war across the globe is long, each having its own duration and costs. Their causes also differ widely. However, the guns do fall silent for long interludes and reconstruction and development pick up and move the world forward.

During the moments of peace and co-operation, human ingenuity helps to shape common sense, giving civilization a chance to flourish once again. In the process, startling discoveries are made. Research and inventions make education, healthcare, habitat, environmental protection and provision of clean drinking water available for the benefit of millions of human beings in the world.

Foreign affairs are thus the business of a strange world, of faraway places and of complex rules. That is one way of thinking about world affairs, usually for a novice

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in this arena of human activity. Humans know most of the time only what is nearby and familiar. The problem comes when extrapolations are made about all and sundry in the rest of the world, and spurious conclusions are drawn on the basis of our minute experience. Plato's famous allegory of the cave tells of this human defect quite well.

Foreign affairs occupy that ever-shifting terrain in which nations severally and collectively promote peace, friendship, development, business partnership, solidarity and resolution of conflicts. Additionally, nations also try to mitigate the challenges of peace-keeping, economic growth, fair world trade and sustainable development with equity.

World leaders attempt to make this a better world for all by jointly committing themselves to international peace and security, by fighting against terrorism, by striving for stability and by seeking to ensure good faith in multilateral negotiations and collective action. But they do not always succeed. So, the job is never completely done. Hence, the efforts to make this a fair and just place to live in must go on.

For developing countries, such as Namibia, poverty eradication, human resource development, empowerment of the poor, the needy and the weak are the top priorities. Hence, a nation's foreign policy draws its authority, legitimacy and mandate from many internal priorities; and its general orientation is shaped by the history, culture, and social values of its people. Naturally, the security interest of a nation forms the bedrock of its foreign policy objectives. Namibia's pursuit of its foreign policy objectives is no different, in this connection, from those of other nations. Indeed, our foreign policy is the flipside of the domestic order and its national priorities. In other words, it is the interpretation of internal policies to the outside world.

The primordial source of the legitimacy of Namibia's foreign policy is the Constitution and its relevant supplements and policy derivatives. The Constitution lives because the citizens have invested it with the powers of longevity to sustain a

just and peaceful social order.

The three branches of our government, namely, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, make varying degrees of inputs into the foreign policy process, consistent with the guidelines on international relations, stipulated under Article 96 of the Constitution. Then, there is a wide body of stakeholders, which also makes a contribution to the process of shaping the foreign policy for Namibia. This process takes place in the context of our multi-party democracy. In other words, the political and legislative intercourse among parliamentarians and political parties generates ideas, questions and answers, as well as debate on pertinent issues about world affairs, thus enriching the process of foreign policy formulation. Such discourses and exchanges of opinions enhance the quality of Namibia's foreign policy, particularly when it comes to the building of inter-state institutions, the accession to and ratification of treaties, agreements, conventions and protocols.

Such international treaties, agreements, conventions and protocols are integral parts of our foreign policy and, naturally, domestic governance. They are the rules of engagement. The government also issues public policy directives that give further impetus and focus to our foreign policy.

For a country's foreign policy to remain current and coherent, it must be kept in tune with the aspirations of the nation. A foreign policy initiative that is de-linked from the domestic priorities is like a "broken-winged bird" which cannot fly. Therefore, it is the demands, expectations, anxieties and resourcefulness of the people, on one hand, and the government's commitment to fulfil its election promises, on the other, which give a focus to Namibia's external engagement.

All of our national concerns and our people's chores inform and inspire the actions taken by the operatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry, therefore, deals with various activities that cover a broad spectrum of national interests: political, economic, social, military, diplomatic, religious and humanitarian.

At the centre of it all, are the bread and butter issues, which represent the national

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economy. That is where the concept of economic diplomacy comes in. Economic diplomacy has to do with issues of investment, market access (trade), credit, transfer of technology, human resource development, etc. Our diplomats are, therefore, tasked to deal with these issues in pursuit of the country's socio-economic welfare and security interests.

Concerning the security interests of Namibia, the ministry does its level best abroad by monitoring flash points in the world, especially those that are violent in nature, that have negative consequences for world order and the stability of global economy. Our preoccupation is not unlike the preoccupation of a medical doctor who intensely monitors the vital signs of a patient in the intensive care unit in a hospital. Both the doctor and the foreign minister are at the mercy of chance. The worst sometimes happens regardless of the best efforts. For the medical doctor, a patient can die; and for the foreign minister, military confrontations can erupt and co-operations be disrupted because of some unanticipated misunderstanding between nations. Terrorism and abrupt change of leaders and governments are some of the causes of confrontation and misunderstanding. Ethnic conflicts that often cause disintegration of nations, debt crises that lead to mass demonstrations in the streets, and the threat of weapons of mass destruction are among the major factors that lead to tensions among nations. They are recurring challenges in the world of foreign affairs and diplomacy.

All these negative factors and forces notwithstanding, we are often elated when good things happen. For example, we rejoice immensely when the United Nations itself or its illustrious Secretary-General is awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for a job well done in the tireless efforts to serve humanity from hunger, diseases and destructive wars. The member states thus renew regularly their faith in the indispensability of the world organisation and in multilateralism.

Our missions and diplomats abroad are the cutting-edge of our foreign policy apparatus. Our embassies and high commissions are, indeed, the field outposts that serve as the nation's eyes and ears. They monitor developments in other countries and cultivate bilateral as well as multilateral interaction and co-operation in diverse

sectors of human activity. They are also active participants in policy conception and formulation. In short, they are the critical watchdogs of our country's vital interests abroad, coping with both the preventive and pro-active demands of diplomacy.

The arrival of the 21st century appeared initially to offer humanity a chance for a new beginning, especially in Africa. For instance, in the historic United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000), drafted and adopted under the Namibian Presidency of the United Nations General Assembly, world leaders resolved to meet Africa's special needs by declaring that:

- We all support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy.

They further resolved to:

- Give full support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa;
- Encourage and sustain regional and sub-regional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peace-keeping operations on the continent;
- Take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced official development assistance and increased flows of foreign direct investment, as well as transfers of technology, and
- Help Africa build up its capacity to tackle the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases.

Three years down the road, we are yet to see tangible results regarding these laudable promises. And the UN Secretary-General is currently trying to assess progress and urge all nations to take prompt measures to meet these commitments.

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Another unfulfilled promise made at the opening of the 21st century is the pronouncement by world leaders to adorn globalisation with a human face by mitigating the negative impact of this phenomenon on the developing countries. This pronouncement, too, has not translated into practical results.

Moreover, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which is entrusted with the task of setting and enforcing rules by which nations are to share a common trading system, is yet to deliver on its development agenda, proclaimed at the 2001 Doha Ministerial Conference. The industrialised countries have not followed through on the promised improvements on their offer of market access to the developing countries.

Also, rather than seeing the world becoming more secure and a better place to live in, we have been witnessing reversals and revulsion during these first years of the 21st century: terrible things and horrendous acts of human beings that breed horror, hatred, divisions, hostilities in the world, such as, the gruesome horror of 11 September, the endless violence in the Middle East, the Bali carnage, the war in Iraq, etc.

These turbulences have seemed to give rise to a disturbing drift towards unilateralism in the conduct of foreign policy by some of the powerful nations of the world. This appeared to have ruffled feathers that the initial promises of the 21st century were about to turn to dust. Indeed, a sense of uncertainty and insecurity had begun to set in, especially among small and weak nations with fresh memories of past humiliations.

However, in the face of negative world public opinion against the resurgence of a unilateralist streak in international relations, there are signs that the pendulum is swinging back to diplomacy or a multilateral approach to resolving interstate conflicts. Even the most powerful nations seem to have come to appreciate the view that a collective approach to international problems is not only an important measure of international good governance, but also a more dependable guarantee of peace and security in the world.

In the chapters that follow, I submit the White Paper on Namibia's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy Management for discussion by the honourable members of this august House. Let the debate ensue without any fear or favour.

Many have made sterling contribution to this document, especially my predecessor, The Right Honourable Theo-Ben Gurirab. To all of them, we at the ministry owe a great debt of gratitude.

Hidipo Hamutenya, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

Vision

To achieve a peaceful, safe, stable and prosperity-enhancing world order that is predicated on the principles of diplomatic persuasion and a multilateral approach to inter-state relations, a world order in which Namibia is able to become a developed country by the year 2030, i.e., having joined the ranks of high-income (with a GNP per capita of US\$7,911) economies.

Mission

- To promote security domestically, within our own neighbourhood and in the global arena.
- To enhance the international standing of our country and advance its socio-economic, cultural, technological and scientific interests, with particular emphasis on economic growth and development.
- To work for the realisation of the objectives set out in Article 96 of the Namibian Constitution, which stipulates that Namibia will:
 - adopt and maintain a policy on non-alignment;
 - promote international co-operation, peace and security;
 - create and maintain just and mutually beneficial relations among nations;
 - foster respect for international law, treaties and obligations; and
 - encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.

Human beings are constantly placing bets on what the future might hold. They do so because, even though no one knows exactly what it holds, the future matters. Therefore, people try to envision or stretch their imagination beyond normal limits in the hope to have a better insight into tomorrow's reality. Visions are thus sorts of clairvoyance. They attempt to lay out good sketches of what the future holds, the assumption being that once you have such a sketch in hand, it ought to be possible

to plan better for the future or to set correct priorities regarding the desired future situation.

Namibia has adopted Vision 2030 as its guiding beacon into the future. This vision casts forwards the future possibilities and describes the actions to be taken to accomplish the mission within that specified time frame of three decades.

All economic and political sectors of the Namibian society, including the country's foreign service, are called upon to make a tangible contribution to the realisation of this vitally important commitment to live and work hard today for a better tomorrow.

Chapter 1

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF DIPLOMACY

The Principles

Diplomacy is the established method by which states articulate their foreign policy objectives and co-ordinate their efforts to influence the decisions and behaviour of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiations and other such measures, short of war and violence. It is, in other words, the centuries-long means by which states seek to secure particular or wider interests, including the reduction of frictions between or among themselves. Diplomacy is often confused with foreign policy, but it is instead the chief instrument through which the goals, strategies and broad tactics of foreign policy are implemented. It aims at developing goodwill towards foreign states and peoples with a view to ensuring their co-operation or, failing that, their neutrality. Diplomacy is thus one of the most enduring and important statecrafts of both the ancient and the present systems of international relations.

Normally, but not invariably, diplomacy strives to preserve peace. It is strongly inclined towards negotiation to achieve compromise, mutual advantage and lasting interests, through peaceful resolution of issues between states. By its very nature, diplomacy operates on the basis of the principle of polite discourse or quiet persuasion. As a rule, diplomacy is not conducted in a blaze of publicity. And whereas foreign policy is usually publicly stated, diplomacy is, on the other hand, generally conducted in secret, although its results are often made public. This is to say, public diplomacy is not the norm. It is rather the exception. And when the true objective is to maximise a state's advantages without the risk and expense of using force, diplomacy eschews noisy and bellicose stances as well as self-righteous

bulling. Diplomacy is thus the art of continuing to talk quietly so as to reduce the chance of inter-state frictions from developing; and where frictions already exist, diplomacy is called into play to see to it that such frictions cease to boil.

However, in some unusual cases, diplomacy may involve coercive threats of either economic or other punitive measures. It can take on the form of displays of the capacity to impose unilateral solutions to disputes by the application of military power. Indeed, the history of diplomacy shows that when diplomacy fails, war may ensue. But even during war, diplomacy may still be useful. It can, for instance, facilitate the passage from protest to menace, from dialogue to negotiation, from ultimatum to reprisal, and from war to peace and reconciliation with other states.

As we shall see, such was the scenario that characterised the diplomatic marathon that culminated in the settlement of Namibia's colonial question. But reaching that final stage called for a high degree of persuasiveness, flexibility, tenacity and creativeness in devising or reframing issues from a new angle so as to convince the other party that the agreement being proposed or entered into was not entirely to the exclusion of its interest.

Historically, therefore, the purpose of diplomacy in the conduct of official, usually bilateral, relations between sovereign states is either to resolve disputes or to enhance co-operation in different fields of human endeavour. It seeks to advance the foreign policy interests of the state that employs it vis-à-vis other states. Naturally, the effectiveness of a country's diplomacy is dependent on the reliability, that is, the predictability and, therefore, the credibility of its policies.

The Practice

The purpose and practice of diplomacy has essentially been the same from the ancient to the Middle Ages (about 1000-1400) and from the Renaissance (1400-1600) to modern times. Empires and early states developed, over these periods, an elaborate set of protocols, rules and protections to facilitate the exchanges of envoys or ambassadors and plenipotentiaries as representatives of sovereigns. The

ambassadors and their entourages, are, as a norm, granted immunity. Such immunity is also extended to their official correspondence and personal property. The ambassadors are received by the sovereigns, to whom they are accredited, with spectacular ceremonies. In modern days, the ambassadors of big and small states are treated equally. This flows from the notion of the sovereign equality of all states.

In operational terms, diplomacy emphasises constant interaction with the receiving government and reporting to the sending state of conditions and developments in the host country. And the advances in transportation and communications technology have come to make referral to the home capital easy and fast. They have ensured that capitals do hear from their ambassadors more frequently and timeously than was the case in the past.

With more innovations in the theory and practice of international relations, there emerged the concept of national interest, which asserts that the state has interests of its own that transcend the sentimental concerns or wishes of rulers. This has come to mean that, in as much as the kings and monarchical rulers continued for centuries to somewhat personify state sovereignty, by the 17th century, the focus of diplomacy began to shift from representing the sovereign to representing the national interest. This trend accelerated in the 19th century as power shifted from royal courts to Cabinets. This led to the establishment (first in France in 1626) of Ministries of Foreign Affairs to centralise, co-ordinate and direct foreign policy as well as to manage or control ambassadors and other foreign service officials. In other words, national interest, and not the whims of emperors and kings, was now the pursuit of international relations.

By the 20th century, diplomacy had expanded beyond bilateral bargaining between sovereigns. It now covers summit meetings and other international conferences, the activities of super-national and sub-national entities. Its coverage includes also activities, such as, economic diplomacy, unofficial diplomacy by non-governmental elements, and the work of international civil servants. This expansion of diplomatic activity has come to mean that the results of diplomatic negotiations are made more and more public than was the case before the 20th century.

The expansion of the tasks of diplomacy beyond social and ceremonial representation of the sending state and the protection of nationals of the sending state within the borders of the host state signalled the increased responsibility of ambassadors and their staff. And, with the notion of discretionary mandate inherent in the concept of plenipotentiary representatives, the ambassador is often authorised to negotiate and sign certain agreements with the host state.

Nonetheless, the gathering of information and reporting, by lawful means, on conditions and developments within the host country for the sending government as well as the promotion of friendly relations between the two states have remained the salience of diplomatic tasks. Information may be gathered from an array of sources and the use of experience and expert knowledge is essential in identifying, analysing and interpreting emerging key issues and their implications for peace and progress as well as for the security and other benefits for the sending state.

When necessary, representation also entails the lodging of official or informal protests with the host country or explaining and defending national policy. To this must be added the furthering of economic, commercial, cultural and scientific relations. Diplomatic missions also perform public service functions for their nationals, including electoral registration or conducting of elections for overseas voters, when this is authorised. Issuing of visas as well as referring sick nationals to local physicians and the imprisoned or those charged with crimes to lawyers are some of the public services rendered by diplomatic missions.

As a result of the expansion of the sphere and tasks of diplomacy in the last century, representatives of non-state entities, such as, the Namibian independence movement, had semi-diplomatic missions in foreign capitals to conduct diplomatic lobbying for support; and it was in this context that some of the present Namibian leaders received their initiation in the art of diplomacy.

Indeed, Namibia attained independence and has been busy trying to develop a clear vision of its preferred place in the world at the time when diplomacy has many

branches far beyond the traditional functions of representation, discussed earlier.

Today, specialists in the field talk of **conference diplomacy**, **personal diplomacy**, **parliamentary diplomacy**, **public diplomacy**, **economic diplomacy**, etc. These are different angles of the same activity we have defined as diplomacy.

Conference diplomacy refers to the trend towards numerous conferences on social, economic and technical issues over the last two decades. The spectacular type of this branch of diplomacy are summits, where heads of state or government or foreign ministers meet bilaterally or multilaterally to produce agreements that create international law, often in new areas of human endeavour. Of course, conference diplomacy has only become more common during the last two decades of the 20th century, but it was in use as far back as the 19th century. For instance, historians of diplomacy will tell us that the Congress of Paris of 1856, which ended the Crimean War, was one of the early examples of conference diplomacy. Similar examples were the Berlin Conferences of 1878 and 1884-85, which were held to prevent wars over the so-called “Eastern” and “African” questions – euphemisms, respectively, for intervention on behalf of Christian interests in the decaying Ottoman Empire and the carving up of Africa into European colonies.

Personal diplomacy, as discussed elsewhere in this paper, has to do with the role of heads of state as the principal individual formulators of their countries’ foreign policy and diplomacy. Not only do such personalities frequently represent their countries in international forums, but they also shape foreign policy by meeting visitors who come to their countries to discuss trade, finance, defence, agriculture, information and communications technology (ICT), transport, law and order and other fields. They also receive ambassadors as well as entertain such diplomats. Information and ideas gathered in the process of such interactions are used in the formulation of policy and adoption of diplomatic strategies. Therefore, the roles of heads of state in the shaping of foreign policy and diplomacy are nowadays substantive.

As regarding **parliamentary diplomacy**, many legislative organs of the state have

foreign affairs committees or caucuses whereby they seek to be informed in order to be able to make inputs to or influence foreign policy meaningfully. In countries like the United States where the doctrine of separation of powers finds its most articulate expression in the constitutional provision that a President may not enter into treaties with foreign countries without the advice and consent of the Senate, the role of parliament in the conduct of foreign policy is well established. Indeed, these days, parliamentarians are extensively involved in international affairs and are thus duty-bound to make their contribution to the projection of good images for their countries. Moreover, the UN and the EU provide forums for parliamentary diplomacy. In other words, parliamentarians use diplomacy in such forums to pursue their countries' interests, to engage in international discourse and to alleviate frictions among sovereign states.

Public diplomacy represents the ugly side of international relations. This happens when polite discourse or quiet negotiation gives way to the tactic of offensive behaviour as a tool of foreign policy. It uses mass media to try and discredit other governments by accusing them of bad motives. Sometimes, it trumpets maximum demands in calculatedly offensive language as conditions for negotiation.

Because it is so crucial to the prosperity of nations, **economic diplomacy** is the subject of an entire chapter of this paper.

Given these new dimensions to diplomacy, the country's small team of diplomatic personnel, already over-burdened by a bewildering variety of tasks, has found itself faced with new transnational issues, such as, terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, international smuggling of immigrants and refugees, environmental abuse, human rights, etc. Environmental abuse then gave rise to measures, such as, the law of the sea, prevention of global warming and attempts to abate pollution.

Our diplomats thus have to cope with a dramatic increase in tasks of multilateral diplomacy, as the various international organisations and conferences try to formulate, negotiate and conclude agreements, protocols, conventions and treaties that are necessary to regulate these many transnational affairs. Moreover, the

complexity of these functions requires specialised knowledge beyond the ability of generalist diplomats to handle.

Chapter 2

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

Commerce has always been an important element of politics among nations. But with the intensification of globalisation, trade, transfer of technology and foreign direct investment have come to be crucial to the prosperity of nations, especially the developing ones. This phenomenon, globalisation, is a fact of life. It seems quite hard to reverse; and those countries which fail to take part in it or shut themselves out of it behind closed borders, will find it extremely difficult to overcome economic stagnation and the majority of their citizens will thus continue to remain in poverty.

As a country that has set itself the goal of becoming an upper-middle-income or at best a high-income economy¹ by the year 2030, Namibia sees the possibility of achieving this by working to confront the challenges of the globalising world economy and to benefit from the advantages that globalisation creates, as we speak out against its more pernicious effects on developing countries. In other words, since Namibia's domestic market is small, to form the basis of the development of a self-sustaining and expanding economy, it has decided to seize the bull by the horns by resolving to take part in the much-loathed process of globalisation.

Our country has thus opted to pursue an outward-looking strategy for economic growth and development. Export-push is a central element of that strategy of economic development. Exports, and especially manufactured, non-traditional products, are key to expansion of the country's economy.

Economic expansion, based on rapid export growth, is what will boost job creation

¹ Upper-middle-income economies are those of a GNP per capita of US\$3,555 or more, while high-income economies are those with per capita income of US\$8,911 or more.

and foreign exchange earnings.

Naturally, in charting the course of rapid economic growth and development and thereby achieving poverty² reduction or improving the welfare of the broad majority of the Namibian people, the government and the business community would have to generate and inject substantial investment into the economy, which investment will enable the country to achieve an average annual GDP growth of six to eight per cent. But, experience over the past 14 years of our sovereign existence has shown that notwithstanding Namibia's fairly high rates of domestic savings, internally generated investment capital has not played a critical role in the financing of the country's productive growth or industrial development. Foreign investment, which means not only capital but also technology, managerial and technical skills, as well as established access to foreign markets, is crucial. The targeting and mobilisation of these vital, externally-sourced inputs are the economic priorities of our foreign policy.

Therefore, to meet this challenge, many developing countries have turned their attention to their foreign missions abroad. They now charge their ambassadors and subordinates to engage considerably in economic promotional activity. Indeed, the need to attract and use foreign investment to spur economic growth and development is now widely recognised as being very central to the drive to eradicate poverty. Hence, the global competition to attract foreign investment is so stiff today that some countries are spending large sums of money to beat their competitors at the game, as they seek to woo foreign investment to their shores. In most cases, this money is wasted on advertisements, promotional missions, consultancies and the formulation of not entirely bankable project proposals. But, while these approaches remain somewhat relevant, investment promotion, as marketing efforts to attract foreign investment to a particular country, has become a professional activity, requiring specialised marketing skills. This means that diplomatic generalists are now challenged to sharpen their understanding of economics. They must be able to respond meaningfully and effectively to the many questions which are put to them

² Poverty is generally defined by the incidences of those people in a society living on US\$1 a day.

by would-be foreign investors and traders.

Yet, investors have a wide range of locations from which to choose. As such, they tend to be fickle in making decisions. They ask a lot of questions which must be informatively answered. They are, first and foremost, interested in a country's political stability. They want to know, among others, about the predictability of policy and about things like the rule of law, the enforceability of contracts, the convertibility of a country's currency, the level of personal and corporate taxes, the type of incentives available, if any, the availability and productivity of labour, the literacy and skill levels, trainability and adaptability of the labour force.

Investors are equally influenced by the existence of infrastructure. For example, they want to know whether they can move their goods conveniently and swiftly by road, rail, sea and air. As regarding arid countries, like Namibia, they want to know whether there will be a sufficient supply of water for their operations, and at what cost will the water be available? Equally, they would like to know the availability of power, in terms of kilowatts, the reliability and the cost thereof. In deciding to invest in the country, a multinational corporation would like to know about the soundness of that country's telecommunications infrastructure, in terms of telephone and Internet connectivity and service provision. They would want to know about the system of government, the GDP growth and GDP per capita rates; rate of inflation; key economic resources and sectors; main exports and export destinations; main imports; the budget deficit; balance of payments; the availability of land, and so on.

The ability to answer all these questions in a comprehensive and persuasive manner is the essence of economic diplomacy. However, the marketing skill does not just end there, where you respond to the questions posed. The acid test is whether the answers given have been adequate or not. The diplomatic salesman or woman must thus have the capacity to seduce potential investors with tantalising, but non-propagandistic, information about the country so that foreign investors or traders would, in the first instance, want to visit and explore for themselves the investment and trade opportunities in the country.

Economic diplomacy thus entails carefully targeted investment promotion. This includes efforts, such as, tracking down corporate executives, whom the embassy's research has led the ambassador and staff to believe may be amenable to wanting to take a look at the opportunities which the country offers. In order to identify such company executives, foreign service personnel are enjoined to break out of their gilded and leisurely diplomatic cocoon where too much time is spent chatting with one's fellow diplomats. They must now spend more time in corporate boardrooms and chambers of commerce. Here, emphasis would be on establishing contacts on a personal basis on which to engage such people in business discussions. As a method of promoting the interests of one's country, economic diplomacy places emphasis on skilfully approaching likely investors. Of course, the approach must be realistic, and aimed at firms with a real reason to consider locating in the country. An example of this would be a growing company, seeking to expand or to horizontally or vertically diversify its production and, therefore, looking for new investment locations. Or, it could be one that may want to take advantage of a country's natural resource endowment or to escape from some quota restrictions in order to take advantage of available market access in a different investment location.

There will also be relatively small companies, small by European, North American and Asian standards, which would want to venture into the global market. These are companies with specialised knowledge in, for example, fashion design, and production and marketing of such niche products. They could be targeted and wooed to look at possible joint ventures with local entrepreneurs. There is thus plenty to do to put that important plank of our foreign policy, namely, economic diplomacy, into practice.

Investor targeting must be predicated not only on good marketing skills, but also on sufficient information to be able to, once again, respond convincingly to the many questions which the targeted investors will throw at you. Therefore, research is key to effective investment and trade promotion because information is knowledge and knowledge is power. In this case, it is the power of detailed information to effectively market the Namibian economic environment that would win over potential investors.

In this connection, our foreign service personnel need to actively engage in the gathering of economic intelligence. This does not, of course, mean spying or breaking into other people's corporate databases. Rather, it means cultivating a reading habit whereby one regularly checks on economic publications, such as, company reports, the business press, etc. It means also taking full advantage of access to the unlimited and instantaneous flow of information on the Internet.

Being able to constantly improve one's grasp of not only the politico-security issues but also the basic details regarding national and international economics is a prerequisite for the effective conduct of economic diplomacy.

Similarly, trade promotion goes far beyond the staging of trade fairs, trade missions and publicity. Just like investment promotion, it is a professional activity. Both of them are knowledge-intensive fields. People specialise in these fields up to and beyond PhD level. Trade promotion, too, requires the development of marketing skills, especially in the industrial economies. For example, in a market that distributes hundreds of speciality beers, one needs to know how to position the Namibian beer brand. He or she must be able to explain the particular quality that places the Namibian above many other beer brands, regionally and internationally. Therefore, investment of time in building up such knowledge is a necessity. But just as in the case of investment promotion, one can go a long way by cultivating the habit of reading and research. Our foreign service officials must start reading up in order to hone the skills that are so vital in their conduct of trade promotion.

As alluded to earlier, for Namibia, the central importance of trade promotion lies in the fact that in order for investment to spur economic growth, it must be linked to large export markets. A small domestic market, such as ours, has no capacity to absorb a sizeable quantity of mass production. Nor can Namibia create sufficient employment without a significant industrial base that is eager to export. That has been the rationale behind the various schemes of incentives for manufacturing activities, given to value-adding companies, including those setting up operations in the export processing zone (EPZ) regime.

When promoting investment, it is important to always bear in mind that industrialisation, whether launched on the basis of domestic or foreign investment, will require access to global markets. This means that we broaden our economic space and, thus, make it clear in our interactions with potential investors that they should not be worried about the smallness of our market because we have taken measures to gain access to a broad range of foreign markets and thereby compensate for the small size of that domestic market.

Today, Namibia is a member of the Cotonou Agreement that, for now, offers preferential, i.e. non-reciprocal, access for nearly all Namibian products to the EU market. Similarly, the country is a beneficiary under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which affords duty and quota free access for some 7,000 products to the US market, especially textiles. The AGOA initiative is aimed at encouraging US trade with and investment in Africa by removing certain quotas that were previously used as barriers to textile and garment imports from African countries. Currently, Namibia, together with its SACU partners, is engaged in negotiations with the USA to establish a US-SACU Free Trade Area. This holds forth the potential to effectively make the access afforded under AGOA a permanent arrangement. We have also just concluded the re-negotiations of the SACU Agreement, which were aimed at the democratisation of the institutions and administrative procedures for revenue collection and sharing.

Furthermore, in an effort to prime the country's growth of international exports, Namibia is playing an active role as a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). In this regard, the fast-tracking of the implementation of the SADC Free Trade Area is an important agenda item for our economic diplomacy. Also the ironing out of some of the existing problems regarding customs regulation between Angola and Namibia, which are currently affecting the flow of trade between our two fraternal countries, is receiving our urgent attention. Therefore, our diplomatic representatives in Angola and in other SADC as well as SACU member countries have been enjoined to actively press for progress, in this regard.

Moreover, in reviewing our diplomatic activities, both in this region and elsewhere,

we cannot help but come to the conclusion that some of our diplomats do not see themselves as being duty-bound to be active participants in bilateral and multilateral economic diplomacy. They tend to see themselves as mere spectators when it comes to such external economic proceedings. They see such activities as merely the responsibility of line ministries, as they focus only on the bilateral politico-security issues.

Economic diplomacy requires that, from now on, Namibian diplomats must look at the bigger picture of globalisation and world economic integration. Indeed, they must get actively involved. We expect all our heads of diplomatic missions to regularly provide us with analytical and informative reports on all events, especially trade and development finance conferences, taking place in their areas of operation. The headquarters and line ministries need to receive such reports timeously and with the necessary comments. We need reports that spell out the angles that are of special interest to Namibia, SADC and Africa.

Closely related to investment and trade promotion is the issue of technology transfer. Today, economies require ever-large injections of knowledge and brainpower to be productive and, therefore, competitive. This is what the economists mean when they talk about the “knowledge-based economy”. Namibia recognises this fact. Its level of investment in mass primary and secondary education is second to none on the African continent. The country’s school enrolment at the primary level of education is now 89 per cent. But our country is yet to address the tertiary level of learning where the type of knowledge required for economic growth and development is produced. Improvement in the quality side of education needs to be fast-tracked, if Namibia is to take part meaningfully in the process of globalisation. However, the country cannot wait to reach the stage when it could rely on home-grown scientific discovery and technological innovation before it can vigorously and extensively apply such knowledge to its economic production process. Therefore, identifying appropriate sources of technology is one of the important tasks of our foreign service.

While it is true that good ideas and techniques are hard to come up with, they are,

today, relatively easy to copy. So, although the first big benefit of discovery and innovation should go to those who first came up with the ideas, cross-border licensing and copying of such ideas should be pursued aggressively in order for our country to leapfrog some of the stages of development.

To realize its important national targets, foreseen in Vision 2030 and the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, Namibia needs capital from abroad to supplement domestic savings. This is to say that although the country has sound financial institutions, that is, banks, pension funds, insurance firms, etc., its private and public sectors still need credit to stimulate growth. Indeed, while local banks and other financial institutions do provide funds to multinationals and large domestic firms, small and medium-sized enterprises, so vital for economic growth, complain of lack of access to capital. Our diplomatic missions abroad are in a strategic position to help these businesses to come into contact with relevant sources of finance.

Our country has hitherto succeeded in limiting its exposure to external lenders. It has sought to eschew the temptation to borrow recklessly from foreign sources of capital other than those which lend on concessional terms. Because of this aversion to non-concessional credit, Namibia has hitherto not borrowed from the Bretton Woods institutions; and although the country did borrow from abroad to finance some of its major public projects, our preference is for foreign direct investment as a more cost-effective way to raise capital to finance growth.

By and large, foreign companies have access to sources of finance, which sources, unlike bank loans, bonds and other forms of credit, do not necessarily require sovereign guarantees. Namibia's foreign service personnel must have the courage and sense of duty to deepen their understanding of finance issues and to be able to help attract the right kind of foreign capital to the country. Such capital is essential to fill the country's development capital gap. Particularly, they need to develop capabilities to analyse and interpret information about the advantages and disadvantages of the different sources of credit before putting such sources in touch with our private firms or state-owned development agencies which may be looking for foreign capital for their projects.

As pointed out above, foreign direct investment in bricks and mortar is preferable to “hot” money or short-term capital because factories, offices and buildings in general do stay put. But stock market speculators or bond investors are less reliable. They can abruptly flow out of a country just as quickly as they flowed in. They can do so upon hearing rumours of things like a suspected, impending political crisis. Often, such money is welcome when it floods in. But it causes great financial instability when it floods out again, as the 1997-98 East Asian financial crisis demonstrated. Therefore, emphasis is to be on the promotion of FDI. But our ambassadors and their foreign service officials must strive to be conversant with the broad range of economic issues, which constitute the intricacies of economic diplomacy.

A further task of economic diplomacy is the facilitation of the acquisition of technology and scientific knowledge, as well as the import of knowledge in the effort to raise productivity throughout the economy. There are several routes to achieve this objective of importing of technological equipment and knowledge. One of these routes is to import such equipment through licensing, copying and foreign direct investment. The other and more effective route is through the education system. But the present imbalance in our education system suggests quite clearly that this is only a long-term, not an immediate, prospect. This is to say that although Namibia is at the top of the list of African countries with a very high level of investment in mass primary and secondary education, the quality of education at these levels is not up to scratch. It can also be said that the tertiary level of our education is not yet able to prepare well a critical mass of young people for a wide range of vocations. Yet, the country cannot wait for the reform of the education system to be effected before it can vigorously apply modern techniques to economic production. This means we must simultaneously improve the quality of our education system as we copy and import technology through licensing and foreign direct investment. This is an important task of our diplomatic agenda. Our diplomats have an unfailing duty to track down suppliers of technological equipment, needed by our firms, especially the SME producers of export goods.

For the industrialised countries, economic diplomacy has a different thrust. They

view and pursue economic diplomacy from the vantage point of economies of massive scale. Daily, industries churn out huge quantities of goods and services, requiring ever-more open global markets. Therefore, for them, the long and winding word for this economic diplomacy is globalisation.

As observed earlier, globalisation is, first and foremost, about the removal of barriers to trade and the fostering of closer integration of national economies so that the suppliers of goods and services can freely and painlessly move their products across borders. To them, globalisation is nothing else but great progress. And, as such, developing countries must accept it, if they are to grow their way out of poverty. Of course, globalisation is not only defended by the governments of the developed countries, it is also powerfully driven by international corporations, which have the greater interest in moving capital, goods and services as well as technology and knowledge across borders. As such, there are many people who maintain that industrialised nations have driven the process of globalisation in a way that ensures that they garner a disproportionate share of the benefits, at the expense of developing countries. More specifically, developing countries, supported by a growing movement of anti-globalisation protestors, argue that they are being pushed to eliminate trade barriers by the advanced industrialised countries while the latter are keeping their own trade barriers in place, particularly when it comes to agricultural products.³ It is in this context that the acrimonious North-South ranklings or controversies, which so often crop up at the WTO conferences, as was the case in Seattle in 1999 and Cancun in 2003, should be understood.

Another important feature of economic diplomacy is the increase in the direct involvement of heads of state or government in international economic issues. This is often referred to as personal diplomacy. At bilateral level, such involvement takes the form of frequent state and working visits, diplomatic correspondence and signing of agreements on trade, credit and other innovative arrangements, such as, complex barter arrangements entailing payment in different goods, offsets, etc.

³ We will return to this subject in chapter six of the paper.

Namibia's head of state's active engagement in the shaping of the country's foreign policy best epitomises the phenomenon called personal diplomacy. Indeed, economic interests are at the centre of regional groupings, as evidenced by the annual SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS, ASEAN, MERCOSUR and G-8 economic summits. The summits are generally held to improve the member states' co-ordination of their global economic interests with other elements of foreign policy. To a lesser degree, the nations of the South have also been seeking to develop their own multilateral institutions, such as the G-77, for co-ordinating their foreign policies and promoting their economic development agenda.

This shift in the focus of foreign policy, that is, making foreign policy more and more economically-oriented, has added new and technical aspects to the conduct of international relations. As such, old-style diplomats are finding themselves obliged to learn new arts. In other words, they have to upgrade, on a continuous basis, their knowledge of economics and recast their negotiating skills, as they try to remain relevant to this new focus of international relations. Against this background, the choice of ambassadors to the countries that are regarded as key economic partners is increasingly being made on the grounds of competence to handle not just the traditional politico-strategic aspects of international relations, but also to deal with commercial and economic issues of today's diplomacy. And the serious problems of terrorism notwithstanding, economic issues, not the questions of security and disarmament, are dominating inter-state relations in the first decade of the 21st century.

Finally, as governments get externally more involved in the promotion and defence of domestic economic interests, the need is now greater than ever before for co-ordinated diplomatic action among all the nation's stakeholders, namely, the country's head of state, the foreign minister, line ministers, diplomatic representatives, private entrepreneurs and various non-governmental agencies. For our country, the challenge is, therefore, one that calls for a Team Namibia response.

Chapter 3

NAMIBIA'S DIPLOMACY: AN HISTORICAL SETTING

As has been observed earlier, by the 20th century, diplomacy had ceased to be just a means of reducing frictions among sovereigns and nurturing good state-to-state relations. A variety of non-state entities, like independence movements, had come to use it to achieve their goals. Namibia's struggle for liberation was a prime exhibit of the use of diplomacy by non-state actors to realise the goal of self-determination and freedom. This chapter is a narrative of one such long experience, an experience that served as an invaluable training ground for present day Namibian foreign policy makers and executors.

As would be recalled, Southern Africa was the most racially tormented region of the world during the second half of the 20th century. And racial oppression there gave birth to the formation of liberation movements, including the Namibian liberation movement, that sought to restore the sovereignty of countries and the dignity of their peoples. These movements used a combination of methods to achieve their objectives, which methods included political agitation, armed struggle at home and extensive diplomacy abroad.

Founded in 1960, SWAPO grew during the subsequent two decades to become the driving force of the Namibian people's fight for freedom. Initially, it pursued militant political activity inside the country. It then set up an underground exile network from which it prepared for and launched the armed struggle, as it embarked on a sustained diplomatic campaign to internationally isolate apartheid South Africa for its occupation of Namibia. It was thus in the crucible of that struggle that Namibia's first generation of diplomats were initiated.

That the struggle was a great school of diplomacy is testified to by the vast international exposure availed to Namibia's would-be future foreign policy formulators and executors. For example, the President of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, as the foremost champion of the then evolving Namibian national interest, was able to raise the movement's international profile, thereby placing the country's name on the world map. He trotted the globe, meeting and winning the support of a wide range of the world's historic figures, such as, Chou En-Lai of the People's Republic of China, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Josip Tito of Yugoslavia, Fidel Castro of Cuba, Leonid Brezhnev and Andrei Gromyko of the then Soviet Union, Olaf Palme of Sweden, Indira Ghandi of India, François Mitterrand of France, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Agostinho Neto of Angola, etc. Meetings with these eminent statesmen, at the level of both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, were an invaluable apprenticeship for the future conduct of foreign policy.

By the time the exiled leadership of the movement was preparing for a triumphant return home in 1989, SWAPO had quite an extensive grasp of the international political scene. It had representation in 20 capitals around the world. Indeed, for three decades, these representations had worked assiduously to mobilise world public opinion in support of Namibia's struggle for liberation.

Besides ensuring that SWAPO gained wide international recognition as the sole and authentic representative of the oppressed Namibian people, this worldwide presence also helped to enhance the prestige of the movement to such an extent that when the time came for the apartheid regime to relinquish its colonial grip on Namibia, SWAPO was the indispensable factor to negotiate with. Its concurrency was required for any agreement to be reached on Namibia. It was, moreover, instrumental in securing the passage of countless UN and OAU resolutions concerning Namibia throughout the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s. In the process, its skills for diplomatic persuasion were significantly honed.

By the latter half of the 1970s, the Namibian dispute was the hottest diplomatic issue in Southern Africa. It became the focal point around which a great variety of

issues, pressures and often conflicting interests evolved. And, the President of the Republic, his first and second foreign ministers as well as a number of senior government officials were at the centre of that extraordinary diplomatic process.

Following the independence of Angola in 1975, SWAPO's armed forces acquired a broad rear base, as Angola, under the leadership of President Agostinho Neto, declared itself a firm trench of the African revolution and proceeded to act accordingly. Thus, SWAPO's armed actions against South African positions in Namibia increased in tempo, as the Angolan army and the presence of Cuban forces in Angola served as a bedrock for the acceleration of the liberation process in Namibia. The defeat of the Angolan factions – the FNLA and UNITA – together with their South African backers, in the first military confrontation with the Angolan army and its Cuban allies in 1975, served to ruffle feathers in the West. Hence, there saw a sudden spasm of European and North American interest in the region.

Up until that time, the major Western powers maintained cosy relations with the apartheid regime. They watched the struggle against minority oppression from the sidelines. But now, Canada, France, Germany, the UK and the USA, all of which were members of the UN Security Council in 1977, constituted themselves in what came to be known as the “Contact Group” on Namibia. They then communicated their intention to both SWAPO and South Africa in 1977. By April 1978, they were ready with a proposal that would set in motion what was to become a protracted negotiation process, leading to a UN-supervised transition to Namibia's independence in 1989.

In that intervention, these Western Five engaged both SWAPO and South Africa as the two parties to the conflict. To give that initiative a fitting international standing they pitched the negotiations at a fairly high level by bringing their foreign ministers to launch the process. These were great figures, such as, Cyrus Vance of the USA, Hans-Dietrich Genscher of Germany, David Owen of the UK, Louis de Guiringaud of France and Donald Jamieson of Canada. The fact that one of the two parties to the conflict was a non-state entity was not a constraining condition as far as these personalities were concerned.

Of course, that Western initiative was a belated attempt to blunt what appeared to them to be the growing influence of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Southern Africa. The West realised that it was time to get involved in the shaping of the outcome of the racial conflict in the region. And, having taken that bold move to intervene, the Five had put their credibility on the line. They knew that if they failed to deliver an honourable outcome, their initiative would be discredited as having been nothing more than an imperialist propaganda charade. They were thus anxious to see to it that, to the extent possible, their plan was sound, balanced and, therefore, acceptable to both SWAPO and South Africa. That plan provided, as its key element, for a UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG).

It stipulated that UNTAG would:

- create acceptable conditions for UN-supervised elections;
- ensure the repeal of discriminatory laws as well as the release of political prisoners;
- arrange for the return of exiles;
- monitor the conduct of the local police;
- confine to base both South African and PLAN forces;
- schedule and supervise the departure of South African troops from Namibia;
- demobilise the South African-created and controlled territory forces (SWATF); and
- monitor the cessation of hostilities among the various forces.

Although the proposal appeared to be a fairly reasonable piece of diplomatic work, it did not allay all fears because mistrust and suspicion ran deep on both sides of the adversity. South Africa was, for instance, quick to raise opposition to it by accusing the UN of being “partial” or biased in favour of SWAPO. Pretoria sought to turn this issue into a major stumbling block to the negotiations. It also refused to have face-to-face negotiations with SWAPO, arguing that the movement had no claim to sovereign power to sit at the negotiating table with states. In response to this, the

Five told South Africa that SWAPO were “the guys with the guns” who could not be ignored if the Namibian problem was to be solved. However, the Contact Group came up with a procedural innovation, called “proximity talks”, whereby South African and SWAPO negotiators were kept in separate hotels and the representatives of the Contact Group would then carry messages back and forth between the two sides. This hide-and-seek game proved to be time consuming in that rather than talking directly to one another, the parties spent hours receiving, digesting, analysing, as well as drafting proposals and counter-proposals. But the formula was the only workable game in town that could enable the negotiating process to go forward.

Although South Africa was the first to quibble about shortcomings in the Western proposal, SWAPO, too, had some misgivings about the initiative, as President Nujoma pointed out during the first encounter with the representatives of the Five. He stated that:

“You have invited us to come and discuss with you what you say is the initiative to bring about Namibia’s long overdue independence. We have accepted your invitation with mixed feelings. You have all along aligned yourselves with the apartheid regime and maintained cosy dealings with it, as it oppressed and brutalised our people. As such, our level of trust and confidence in your present initiative is low. But we have, nonetheless, accepted your invitation. We have come with an open mind. We will listen and negotiate.”⁴

Regarding the plan, SWAPO argued that since Namibia was a large and highly militarised country, the South African forces there had to be effectively demobilised and sent home in order for free and fair elections to take place. It insisted that it was imperative that UNTAG had a credible military and police component as well as a sizeable civilian personnel. Also, the movement refused to countenance the idea of

⁴ Speech at the Open Session of the Negotiations With the Western Five, New York University School of Graduate Studies, N.Y., 15 April, 1978.

leaving the question of Walvis Bay out of the plan.

After several months of diplomatic trial balloons and tough bargaining, the Five agreed to the argument for a significant UN presence in Namibia during the transition period. An adjustment was thus made to the original proposal to include up to ten thousand UNTAG civilian and military personnel.

The Five also agreed to a SWAPO demand that if the issue of Walvis Bay could not be a part of the plan, then there must be a separate resolution by the UN Security Council, committing the world body to the reintegration of Walvis Bay into the rest of the country. Accordingly, the Security Council had first to pass Resolution 432 on Walvis Bay before it could adopt Resolution 435 in September 1978.

As noted above, Pretoria had accepted the Western Plan, and to remain in the negotiations grudgingly. As such, the regime went on projecting a truculent and unco-operative public stance. Indeed, many people wondered why it had at all accepted the Western initiative. The reason for this acceptance is not hard to find. There were a number of international, regional and domestic pressures that obliged the regime to play ball.

First, the negotiating process offered the regime a window of opportunity to overcome its global ostracism. Secondly, the armed struggle in Namibia was imposing considerable cost: South Africa had tens of thousands of its troops tied up in that vast country; and that meant building and maintaining an extensive network of military bases, roads, airports, airstrips, etc. This complex network of infrastructure was quite obviously eating up billions of Rand every year. Thirdly, there was the fresh loss of a vital strategic buffer zone, namely, the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire in the region in 1974. Fourthly, Pretoria was just reeling under the aftershocks of the 1976 Soweto crisis and the death in detention of Steve Biko, the black consciousness movement leader, in South Africa. Therefore, Pretoria chose to rather plod along instead of rejecting the intervention of the West.

But, as it plodded along in the period between 1978 and 1980, the regime made sure

that Resolution 435 could not be implemented immediately. It did so by creating a number of obstacles. One such obstacle was the massacre of Namibians refugees at Cassinga in Angola, in May 1978. This was a calculated move carried out to disrupt a Security Council meeting, called to finalise the plan's implementation schedule. Naturally, the massacre provoked a SWAPO walk-out of the meeting. Pretoria wanted to see the implementation put on hold, as it sensed the election of Ronald Reagan. It thought that a right-wing conservative Reagan administration in Washington would be sympathetic to its "concerns".

As it were, Ronald Reagan won the 1980 US presidential election. His administration took office in January 1981; and Pretoria, which had pinned its hope on the in-coming administration scrapping the UN plan or at least indefinitely delaying its implementation, wasted no time to ingratiate itself with the Reagan conservatives. Within days of President Reagan's inauguration, South African leaders began to raise doubts about Resolution 435.

By March that year, a group of South African generals, led by Lieutenant General Pieter W. van der Westhuizen, head of the military intelligence, arrived in Washington to establish early contacts with President Reagan's military, intelligence and foreign policy teams. They were said to have carried with them a secret report on Soviet military designs on Southern Africa.⁵

By May, barely five months after Reagan's inauguration, the South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, also travelled to Washington to present Pretoria's ideas for the envisaged US-South African strategic alliance. He sought to obtain a common understanding on a set of what it thought to be shared strategic goals. First and foremost, South Africa wanted Washington's support for the exclusion of "all external communist forces" from the region. To embellish this enticement, Botha presented a number of strategic *quid pro quos* to the US for it to agree to steer away from the Namibian independence plan, that was inherited from the Carter administration. These were:

⁵ Deon Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making* (Johannesburg: Macmillan South Africa, 1984), p.146.

- the availability of South African military and naval bases to the US;
- the capacity of the South African navy to play a role in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans;
- the removal of Soviet and Soviet-surrogate forces from Southern Africa;
- the availability of South African port facilities for US warships;
- increased support for Jonas Savimbi's campaign against the Angolan government; and
- a settlement of the Namibian problem in a manner that will produce a "moderate government, well disposed towards the USA".⁶

But knowing that it was being lured into bed with a pariah state, Washington was not entirely excited by these. In fact, there were some in that administration who counselled caution about too close a relationship with South Africa. Nonetheless, the Reagan team reciprocated Pretoria's gestures with an offer of revisions of certain export controls, related to government end-users; licensing; training in the field of search and rescue to be extended to South Africa; permission for Pretoria to have its defence attaché back in the USA; the relaxation of US visa restrictions on official visitors; expanded co-operation in certain areas of military technology, etc.

By June 1981, the administration had translated the idea of a strategic partnership with South Africa into a policy formulation, called, "constructive engagement". That policy aimed at a tilt towards Pretoria. With the launch of that policy, the collective *démarche* of the Contact Group on Namibia was relegated to the periphery of the process to achieve Namibia's independence, as the Reaganite ideologues seized the centre stage of that process. They quickly moved to inject into the negotiating process new issues, thus throwing back that diplomatic process to the drawing board. The most contentious of these issues was the linkage precondition by which Reagan's Africa policy team argued that the resolution of the Namibian problem must go in parallel with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola., thereby causing Namibia's independence to become hostage to a US Cold

⁶ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern African: Making Peace In A Rough Neighbourhood* (N.Y: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), pp. 94-96

War agenda in the region.

In 1982, that team, led by Chester Crocker, took another South African “concern” on board and agreed to “fill a key gap in the UN plan”. They introduced a set of constitutional principles, designed to entrench property rights, minority rights and checks and balances regarding Namibia’s future Constitution. These ideological prescriptions were meant to build strictures around SWAPO’s freedom to write a constitution of its own choosing. This is to say that even though in deference to South Africa, Crocker and his team eschewed treating SWAPO as, in actual fact, one of the two parties to the conflict, they knew that SWAPO was going to play the lead in the writing of Namibia’s Constitution. So, they had to help Pretoria to “fill that key gap in the plan”. Naturally, the movement was resentful of these US-South African dictations of what the future Namibian Constitution should contain, in as much as it did not wish to be seen fighting against such democratic ideals. As such, it allowed the prescriptions to pass.

In the face of Washington’s insistence on linkage, the Contact Group virtually folded up, as the other members pulled out of the linkage-dominated negotiations. The Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, was the first to publicly distance his government from the linkage issue. In June 1981, he called it unhelpful “stonewalling”. The following month, Canada’s spokesperson in the Contact Group, Mark MacGuigan, announced that Ottawa was quitting the Group. At that same time, Hans Dietrich Genscher, Germany’s Foreign Minister, stated that the injection of Cuban withdrawal into the negotiations was a major change in the US position; and that even though the allies in the Contact Group had always supported Cuban departure from Angola, he feared that a linkage condition would ensure a failure of the negotiations. In October 1982, Claude Cheysson, the French Foreign Minister, announced during a visit to Tanzania that “the Contact Group’s work was finished and that Cuban withdrawal was not its concern.”

While the South Africans were happy to see American diplomatic pressure being shifted away from them to Angola through the linkage thereby diluting international attention from the implementation of the UN Plan, they were not entirely satisfied

with what was going on. Their craved-for strategic alliance with Washington was not as rosy as they thought it would be. They were also worried that Washington's protracted manoeuvring about the Cuban withdrawal had open-ended political and financial costs to Pretoria. In other words, as the fighting parties (Angola, Cuba, SWAPO, South Africa and UNITA) mobilised ever-greater resources on their climb up the ladder of military escalation, the sponsors of the linkage were sitting pretty with no practical cost to bear. Chester Crocker admitted this fact when he remarked that:

“Since none of the parties [to the conflict] depended on Washington for anything essential (except the chance of reducing ostracism and isolation), we did not have means to enforce deadlines. Our most potent threat, one we found difficult to use effectively, was the threat to wash our hands and go home.”⁷

Pretoria was thus made to appreciate the fact that in as much as the Reagan administration was using that regime to pursue its own super-power goals in the region, it was not prepared to practically share the burden of cost with South Africa. Indeed, the South Africans were made to witness the number of Cuban troops in Angola substantially increasing and that the fighting escalating between their troops, on one hand, and the Cuban/FAPLA/SWAPO forces, on the other hand, during the linkage deadlock. The so-called strategic alliance was not helping Pretoria either to break out of their international isolation.

The apartheid regime had thus become somewhat disillusioned with the continued linkage diplomacy; and, on several occasions, it made its irritation about this known. As Pauline Baker had observed: “Indeed, South Africa seemed to have become an adversary of the USA rather than the regional ally initially envisioned by the Reagan administration.”⁸

⁷ High Noon in Southern Africa, p.451.

⁸ Hari Sharan Chhabra, *South African Foreign Policy: Principles-Options-Dilemmas* (New Delhi: African Publications, 1994), p.17.

By early in 1984, South Africa began hinting that Cuban troop withdrawal was an American (not a South African) pre-occupation. In April that year, P.W. Botha stated that “if there was no progress on Resolution 435 and Cuban withdrawal, South Africa would not block Namibians from planning their own future.” He went further to say that “the people of Namibia cannot wait indefinitely for a breakthrough on the Cubans from Angola.” The obvious implication of this pronouncement was that South Africa had come to feel that linkage may be negotiable.

Following that statement by P.W. Botha in the South African Parliament, Pretoria started to move on a second track. They sought President Kaunda’s assistance for a new initiative on Namibia, based on the so-called internal arrangement. This resulted in the holding of the “Multi-Party Conference” in Lusaka, in May 1984, whereby Pretoria cobbled together various groups in Namibia and took them to Zambia to meet with SWAPO in order to reach an agreement on an “internal solution”. For President Kaunda, the diplomatic goal in holding that conference was an all-party Namibian consensus on a settlement formula that would lead straight to the implementation of Resolution 435 without the geo-political complications of linkage. On the other hand, South Africa had its own agenda, which was to achieve the following aims:

- to test the extent of SWAPO’s attachment to the UN plan and the movement’s openness to invitations to return home to discuss possible alternative road to “independence,” without UN involvement and under South African control;
- to give the isolated “Multi-Party” groups some external exposure and by so doing to confer on them an international stature equivalent to that of SWAPO;
- to afford South Africa an opportunity to assert itself as an African regional power that was capable of pursuing proactive rather than reactive foreign policy; and
- to signal to the Angolans that they might escape the pressure of linkage if they could persuade SWAPO to return home “peacefully” to Namibia.

Of course, SWAPO was unmoved and uninterested in these double games. It only

agreed to participate in that conference in deference to President Kaunda. Naturally, the conference collapsed in confusion as soon as SWAPO asked direct questions about how Resolution 435 fitted in the picture.

The South Africans did not, however, give up trying. They, again, asked President Kaunda to facilitate a secret meeting between the SWAPO leadership and South African generals, namely, Lieutenant General Pieter van der Westhuizen, head of military intelligence, Major General Cornelius van Tonder, chief director of military intelligence and General Lucas Daniel (Neil) Barnard, chief of the national intelligence service. The South African intention was still to convince SWAPO to consider returning home in order to discuss with the “internal parties, other ways” of achieving Namibia’s independence. That meeting with the Generals took place at the State House in Lusaka, still in May 1984. But it, too, came to nought, as the SWAPO team, led by President Nujoma accompanied by Theo-Ben Gurirab, Hidipo Hamutenya, Kapuka Nauyala and Ngarikutuke Tjiriange, stuck to its guns and reminded Pretoria’s emissaries that for SWAPO, there was only one way to resolve the Namibian problem and that was through the implementation of Resolution 435.

Continuing with their crude attempts at a unilateral approach to the Namibian issue, the South Africans organised yet another meeting at Mindelo, Cape Verde, in July 1984. That meeting, arranged through President Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde, was meant to get SWAPO to agree to a draft cease-fire accord. That meeting, too, was an attempt to persuade SWAPO to give up the armed struggle. But, like the previous ones, it ended up in failure. SWAPO, represented by Nauyala and Aron Shihepo, both members of the movement’s negotiating team, accompanied by two commanders from the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), pointed out to the South Africans that the cessation of hostilities was a good idea. But it would only make sense if it were a part of a broader scenario that included a definitive date for the implementation of Resolution 435 as it then existed.

The period between 1982 and 1987 was a time of stalemate. There was little or no movement at all on the diplomatic front. The Contact Group had, by then, been virtually eclipsed. Meanwhile, Chester Crocker and his team were locked in a losing

battle with the US Congress over anti-apartheid sanctions. On its part, SWAPO fell back on its most reliable support constituency in the West – the grassroots activists. Discreet diplomacy was now relegated to the back burner and public diplomacy moved to the front, as journalists, church leaders, trade unionists and progressive politicians were mobilised in support of the sanctions campaign. By June 1984, Reagan and his team lost the sanctions battle in Congress.

The activists in the West were, once again, at it, bashing the policy of constructive engagement as being “all carrot, no stick rapprochement with Pretoria.”

Back in the field of battle, the pendulum again swung to military build-up, as Cuba and its allies raised the ante during the second half of 1987 and the opening months of 1988. Havana decided, in concert with its Angolan and SWAPO allies, to tip the balance of military power in the region by deploying major elements of its elite 50th Division. It introduced into the Angolan theatre the late model MiG23s and helicopter gunships as well as top-rated pilots that were located at newly-built air bases at Cahama and Xangongo, just 40 miles from the Namibian border. Also, the Cubans threw into the field of battle hundreds of tanks and artillery pieces. Their force bristled with air defence radar and surface-to-air missile systems. Indeed, at that point, the Cubans had the technological edge over Pretoria.

Throughout the twists and turns of this complex diplomatic process, SWAPO was flexible in matters of tactics but remained single-minded and stuck to its demand for the implementation of Resolution 435. By May 1988, face-to-face talks began in London among Cuba, Angola and the Soviets, South Africa and the Americans. The Americans and the South Africans held to their position of not negotiating face-to-face with a non-state entity, i.e. they did not want SWAPO at the negotiating table. And since SWAPO was flexible, it did not insist on being at the talks. It knew that it would be fully consulted and briefed on all points of the discussions that were taking place. Indeed, as the meetings were taking place in London, President Nujoma, accompanied by Hidipo Hamutenya and Kapuka Nauyala, was in Havana, where they were being given a blow-by-blow account on what was happening, by Fidel Castro, at the same time, discussing the strategy and tactics on the battlefield

designed to oblige Pretoria to be serious.

By the first half of 1988, Cuban planes had begun to penetrate Namibian airspace; and on 27 June 1988, Cuban air force MiGs bombed South African occupied positions at Caluegue, destroying the dam and bridge, killing a number of South African men and forcing South African armoured and artillery units there to retreat across the border. At the same time, a PLAN detachment engaged and routed a South African unit at Tscipa. This bombing and this engagement came right on the heels of the historic battle of Cuito Cuanevale. At that point, it was crystal clear that the forces were delicately poised against each other such that imminent danger existed; and it was this military reality that created the necessary conditions for the parties to return to the negotiating table after a long period of diplomatic hibernation and to get serious with the implementation of Resolution 435.

Conscious of the need to remind Pretoria and Washington that the central issue of the negotiation was the independence of Namibia, our allies, the Cubans and Angolans, demanded that the negotiating process revert back to the earlier-used Contact Group formula of proximity talks. They wanted SWAPO to be “in the proximity” of the talks for consultation and briefing.

The remaining months of that year were taken up with 12 fast-tracked and exhaustive rounds of finalisation of the implementation details around which SWAPO had to be present. Ironically, the South Africans, who in the first instance did not want SWAPO present at the talks, began to warm up to the SWAPO delegates. It was in the course of those mingling lunches and dinners that South African diplomats, like Pik Botha, Sean Cleary, Rian Eksteen and Neil van Heerden, came to be on first-name terms with the Namibian delegates, as they came to realise that implementation was not only inevitable but was about to happen.

That diplomatic process was, indeed, a marathon, as testified to by the non-stop rounds of meetings which, subsequent to London, took place in Cairo, New York, Cape Verde, Geneva, and three times in Brazzaville between May and December that year.

In summary, the struggle for liberation was a difficult but unique school of learning. It provided vast exposure to the leadership of the movement to interaction with some of the world's most outstanding leaders. It also gave the would-be founding fathers and mothers of the Republic of Namibia a sound grasp of the international political scene and its complexity of issues. In particular, the eleven years (from 1978-1989) of diplomatic negotiation was an apprenticeship for those who were destined to formulate and execute independent Namibia's foreign policy. The strategy of being faithful to national interest – the promotion of security and prosperity – while remaining flexible in matters of tactics, which guided SWAPO during the liberation struggle, was replicated in the peacetime negotiations, from 1991-94, for the re-integration of Walvis Bay.

That strategy was also used, with less success initially, in the case of the boundary dispute between Namibia and Botswana over Kasikili Island, from 1992-99. However, in subsequent grand diplomacy, the two countries agreed to delimit and demarcate the boundary between Namibia and Botswana along the entire stretch of the Kwando/Linyanti/Chobe rivers, a decision finalised in 2003.

Namibia's diplomacy, therefore, has its historical setting in the struggle for liberation, and has evolved through the early years of independence and remained relevant to the complexities of international relations in the present-day world.

Chapter 4

THE CONFLUENT STREAMS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY

As stated in the preceding chapter, Namibia's foreign policy is, to a very large extent, shaped by a number of historical events that are partly discussed in the preceding chapter and also briefly outlined in this chapter.

The principles of Pan-Africanism, freedom and political independence, economic development, the politics of non-alignment, and African unity, have had compelling influence on the evolution of the policy.

It is Pan-Africanism that gave birth, in the heyday of imperialism, to the concepts of “Africa for Africans” and “one Africa, one destiny”. These concepts reject the occupation of Africa by Europeans, and demand that African countries, now free from colonialism, must unite. Commitment to the unity of Africa is one of the key planks of Namibia's foreign policy.

The brutality and genocide of colonialism and, later, apartheid forced the Namibian people to engage in heroic resistance against colonial occupation. This patriotic struggle was, as mentioned earlier, supported by the international community. The attempt to make Namibia part of South Africa, during the first half of the 20th century, was rejected by the Namibian people and then blocked, thanks to the efforts of India, the USA and a small group of other UN member states. Hence the central importance which Namibia attaches to the UN.

The Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, ignited the liberating spirit of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist collective action. It gave birth to the doctrine of positive non-alignment, which continues to serve as a source of

inspiration in the formulation and conduct of our foreign policy. The conference put forward the principles of peaceful co-existence, mutual respect among nations, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and co-operation among the countries and peoples of the developing world. Out of that internationalist solidarity came the tri-continental vision, linking together Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, in a common struggle for liberation, independence and socio-economic development.

The success of the de-colonisation process of the 1960s was a clear attestation to the historical importance of the role which intercontinental solidarity played the fight against foreign domination, which the Non-Aligned Movement engendered. It is no wonder, therefore, that international solidarity has such an influence in the conduct of Namibia's foreign policy. This, the country's involvement in the DRC and Angola clearly demonstrated.

In 1960, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was launched as the Namibian people's organised response to colonial servitude. In the course of that decade, it rapidly transformed the popular resistance of the people against oppression into mass action and an armed struggle, which soon gained international recognition, legitimacy and active support. This support could not but leave a strong imprint on the foreign policy orientation of a SWAPO-led government of Namibia.

Recognition of SWAPO by the UN General Assembly, during the 1970s, under Resolution 31/146, was one of the foundation stones for future independent Namibia's foreign policy. That recognition went hand-in-hand with the granting of observer status thus affording the movement with a valuable platform from which to articulate the plight and aspirations of the Namibian people. It also provided Namibia's future leaders a dress rehearsal regarding the workings of the UN.

Support for SWAPO came from a multitude of governments and organisations in many countries – the Group of 77 (G-77), the European Union, Scandinavia, the Caribbean and Latin America, Asia and the Eastern bloc, civil organisations, NGOs and individuals. Indeed, a collectivity of commitment to international peace, co-

operation, equality of nations, global political stability and economic development for the good of humanity rallied behind the Namibian people's struggle for independence and forms the bedrock of Namibia's future foreign policy after independence.

The armed clash at Omugulu gOombashe on 26 August 1966, by the South African security forces and a contingent of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) marked the beginning of the end of apartheid colonialism in Namibia.

Diplomacy has been one of the methods used by Namibia's liberation movement to advance the struggle for freedom, which spanned a period of three decades. Therefore, Namibia has a core of cadres with considerable diplomatic experience and skills to deal with the present challenges regarding international relations. There is, of course, always a need for retraining and reorientation.

The Cost of the 23-year struggle was measured in tens of thousands of Namibians who lost their lives, and many Angolans, Cubans, Tswanas, Zambians and Zimbabweans whose countries provided shelter and logistic support to PLAN, making these countries (with the exception of Cuba) targets of South Africa's campaign of destabilisation. On 21 March 1990, the day Namibia achieved its hard-won independence, President Nujoma expressed his undying gratitude to the international community for its invaluable assistance, thus:

“With regard to the international community, the achievement of Namibia's independence today is, we believe, a welcome and laudable culmination of many years of consistent support for our cause. The world's demand for our country to be allowed to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination and independence has been achieved. We express our most sincere gratitude to the international community for its steadfast support.”

Political reconciliation became a necessary element of internal confidence-building

diplomacy. A decade before the achievement of independence, SWAPO initiated a programme of clandestine contacts with a host of Namibian white professionals and business persons. These meetings took place on different occasions in countries, such as, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Germany, Sweden, France and Switzerland. This programme, initiated and led by President Nujoma, laid the foundation of the policy of national reconciliation as we have come to know it today.

Opening of Diplomatic Missions abroad was preceded by the creation of a foreign service establishment, to work on regulations and training.

The first of Namibia's diplomatic outposts abroad was the Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, opened in August 1990. This was followed by the setting up, in the same year, of embassies and high Commissions in Addis Ababa, London, Lusaka, Moscow, and Washington. Five more were established in 1991 (Bonn, Brussels, Lagos, Paris and Stockholm), three in 1992 (Havana, Luanda and Pretoria), four in 1993 (Beijing, Gaborone, Kuala Lumpur and Vienna), another in 1994 (New Delhi) and one in 2003 (Brazilia). The number has now risen to 22 diplomatic missions.

The organisational pattern in the ministry has also undergone modification over the past decade in the light of our accumulated practical experience. Work methods and the issues of institution building have been addressed in several ways over the years, including the three major conferences of heads of mission in 1994, 1997 and 2003. And, in order to serve the country better, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs task forces have also carried out surveys among line ministries and other agencies on the kind and quality of linkages that should be forged and maintained with them.

The continued exercise by the task forces aims to evaluate and improve operational regulations, and to enhance the efficiency and professionalism of the ministry, using the lessons learnt during the past decade.

The Namibian Constitution lays down five key principles, under Article 96, which serve as the guiding beacon in our conduct of foreign policy.

In line with these principles, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for developing specific policies for implementation. Firstly, the ministry is responsible for the articulation of specific foreign policy objectives on the basis of identified goals and interests of the nation. In pursuance thereto, Namibia strives to be sufficiently informed of the international situation(s) by country, region and continent, especially those situations that have direct bearing on our security and economic interests.

Secondly, the overall management of the diplomatic apparatus internally and externally is the duty of the ministry. It must ensure the efficient functioning of its administrative and management systems at home and in the diplomatic missions abroad. That involves the execution of policy, as Namibia seeks to reach out to foreign partners, and to build relationships through reciprocal state, official and working visits, the signing of agreements and protocols, as well as other forms of global networking.

Policy Objectives

President Nujoma set out Namibia's foreign policy objectives when he stated that:

“It is commonly said that every country, irrespective of the particular world to which it belongs, has two primary foreign policy objectives: To preserve its national security interest in and around the national territory, and to promote economic and social progress through interaction with other nations. I could hardly quarrel with this viewpoint. Putting it another way, the main idea when pursuing a country’s foreign policy, amounts to, and this is precisely where diplomacy comes in, neither more nor less than trying to influence the decision-making process in those other nations to the advantage of one’s own country. Let me say to you that it will be through you and your efforts that Namibia will gain advantages internationally in the fields of trade and investment, on the basis of friendship and co-operation with many, if not all, countries of

the world... As diplomacy is to foreign policy what tactics are to strategy, you will, as our diplomats, be expected to digest, understand, interpret, defend and implement these broad principles of the Namibian foreign policy.

In upholding and implementing these principles, you should be aware that your words and actions abroad must be inspired and guided by the ideals we cherish as a nation and the policies which our government pursues here at home.”⁹

Namibia’s former Foreign Minister, Theo-Ben Gurirab, echoed the same thoughts when he declared that:

“Foreign policy, at its best, is an externalisation of domestic order and public policies. We cannot hope to be effective as foreign service operators, if we do not know or care very much about national priorities and aspirations of the people. In other words, how can we hope to promote and defend Namibia’s national and security interest if we don’t know or care to know its focus and ingredients? Therefore, our task, collectively or severally is to know our people as the first estate in the country whose interest supersedes all other interests, whether of the government, state leaders, political parties, trade unions, media, ecclesiastics or the rest. Without the public, neither our lofty vocations nor seemingly indispensable service would be required.”¹⁰

In summary, therefore, the key objectives of Namibian foreign policy are to:

- Safeguard Namibia’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity. This is the first principle and the central objective of the policy and, indeed, of our diplomacy.

⁹ President Sam Nujoma speaking to Namibian diplomats at the first diplomatic training programme, Windhoek, 13 May 1990.

¹⁰ Address by Hon. Theo-Ben Gurirab to the 2nd Conference of Namibian Heads of Missions, Windhoek, August 1997.

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- Promote Namibia’s economic growth and development. While this is primarily a domestic task, the external challenge lies in the creation of conditions that facilitate the fulfilment of these goals. The ministry augments domestic efforts by projecting the country as a peaceful and stable place, indeed, a conducive business environment and by mobilising regional and international co-operation with a view to expanding the nation’s economic space.
- Foster international peace and security, and regional harmony, through active support for collective initiatives and effective multilateralism. This includes Namibia’s participation in United Nations peace-keeping missions, involving Namibian defence units abroad.
- Build a positive image of Namibia abroad, through concerted actions with other agencies of the government so as to reaffirm the good reputation of the country, and to attract to it economic partners as well as tourists and other visitors.
- Protect and assist Namibian citizens abroad, including students and other nationals living or visiting other countries for business, leisure or for any other purpose. This is, of course, a classic consular function; and
- Optimise a modern and flexible diplomatic apparatus that has the capacity to implement Namibia’s foreign policy.

While the objectives are constant, they lead to flexible but concrete actions that are pragmatic, and suited to situations as they evolve. We honour our principles and hold them firmly. At the tactical or diplomatic level, actions have to be alert, agile and astute, following the compass of enlightened self-interest, and assiduously aimed at the enhancement of benefit to the people and the nation we serve. This mix of strategic firmness and tactical flexibility constitutes the long-term operational base of the nation’s foreign policy and diplomacy.

To that end, the aspirations of the people of Namibia are at the core of our policy

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and the foreign service *imprimatur*. This does not imply a narrow pursuit of own gain, but rather an enlightened and principle-based articulation of benefit for one's own nation and people, within the community of nations where own gain is harmonised with that of other states, in a co-operative and mutually beneficial manner. High value is thus attached to joint and mutually beneficial activities at the sub-regional, regional and continental levels, which for us means, in particular, SACU, SADC, and the AU, without forgetting global issues of peace, security and socio-economic co-operation.

Chapter 5

CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL FACTORS

The end of the Cold War

The end of the Cold War, barely more than a decade ago, has seen the emergence of a global power system that has contradictory characteristics, and offers many paradoxes for developing countries. Today, some people talk of a “new world order” that has replaced the erstwhile balance of power system, which emerged after World War II, and spanned some 40 years of confrontation and contestation between the NATO military bloc, led by the United States, and the Warsaw Pact system, led by the former Soviet Union.

The expectations of many in the developing countries were that the end of the confrontation between the two military blocs would somehow free up the vast resources then being directed to the production of weapons of mass destruction. It was hoped that the freed-up resources would then be used, in some form of Marshall Plan, towards the reduction of poverty, disease and ignorance in the developing world, especially in Africa.

Yet, this so-called “new world order” has changed little for us. We have not been participants in its definition or elaboration of its global pursuits. The anticipated “peace dividend” has turned out to be an illusion of hope. The system of power-based politics remains the order of the day. And disturbingly, there seems to be a trend towards retreat from multilateral diplomacy: hegemons remain prone to use their power to unilaterally determine the outcomes of inter-state disputes

Hon. Theo-Ben Gurirab summed up the situation by saying:

“Hegemony is not dead; nuclear weapons have not been destroyed; unfair trade rules are still operative; technology is still monopolised by a few industrialised countries; the world remains divided between the haves and the have-nots. At best, the world order is in transition from the era of nuclear standoff between the military blocs to the present stage”¹¹

The US is today a superpower with a global military and economic reach. But it, too, confronts limits in imposing its will on the world, as the recent fissures in the NATO alliance have just demonstrated regarding the war in Iraq. Concurrently, there are other significant centres of power, at least in economic terms. Individual European countries like Germany, France, UK, plus their collective entity, the European Union, and other nations like Russia, Japan and China are some such centres. In varying degrees, they act in autonomous fashion, in pursuit of their own national interests. There are indications that the emerging world order will have strong elements of multi-polarity, juxtaposed with a single superpower. This is a tentative conclusion because the world seems still to be in an era of transition, fourteen years after the demise of the Warsaw Pact bloc.

New challenges

For Namibia, the international situation reinforces the logic of seeking friends around the world and building as many smart partnerships as feasible. This is necessary in order for us to diversify our options and create a web of political support linkages that give access to trade, investment, transfer of technology, and many other valuable inputs, like tourism inflow, that generate direct benefit for the people of Namibia. The fluidity of global politics also creates a serious challenge for contemporary diplomacy. It calls for alert and astute ground-level understanding of foreign policy trends.

From the perspective of a small developing country, located in Africa, there is a

¹¹ Speech at the Superior Institute of International Relations and Diplomacy, Maputo, Mozambique, 7 May 1998.

noticeable tendency among major powers to reach settlement directly, within closed groups, such as, the G-8, OECD and the like, often paying only lip service to the interests of other countries. This tendency had always existed but has now become even stronger than before.

Namibia is also facing up to the fact that the flow of official aid is dwindling in volume; and that now aid comes with more stringent strings of conditions and caveats than before. Many of these conditions intrude deep into the internal affairs of recipient countries. For the former colonies, confronted with the challenges of socio-economic development, this has sometimes meant the hard option of attempting to marshal their own numerical advantage to press home their concerns in multilateral negotiations, such as, the World Trade Organisation. But here, too, they rarely succeed in gaining concessions.

Within the past decade, globalisation has, as earlier stated, assumed prominence in the international economic system. It has come to mean that no nation is an island unto itself; and that each nation is influenced by decisions taken in distant capitals and markets. Such decisions can be on important matters of global finance, trade, investment and technology flows. The same is true of the satellite-based information and communications systems, whereby technology is producing a new convergence of applications that impact on the life of people, irrespective of where they live and work. This is visible in the growth of the Internet, cable and satellite TV, as well as the emergence of new software products and services.

The question that is often being asked, as we look into this much-debated phenomenon, is: How did globalisation emerge into such a powerful force? There is no one simple answer. In a significant way, globalisation is a collection of trends and developments that have emerged and accelerated largely in the course of the past decade. But its roots go back much further. It symbolises increased interdependence among countries and peoples, as a result of the combined actions of economic development, technological transformation as well as the social and political factors of our time. It is thus the result of the intertwined operation of many factors. It has no single driving force; and rich countries, that are the primary

beneficiaries, also confront loss of some markets when global trends favour sourcing of imports from cheaper suppliers abroad. By the same token, they also face loss of manufacturing jobs when some of their industries migrate to countries where labour is relatively cheaper and readily available. However, it is generally the economically weaker nations and companies that have to scramble harder to remain competitive and avoid further marginalisation.

We can describe globalisation through its impact in different fields. In external relations between countries, it means increased dependence on other countries, particularly those located far away – usually in an asymmetrical fashion; and as alluded to above, the more powerful are less dependent than the weaker states. As regarding internal political affairs, it leads to a demonstration effect, with the spread not only of concepts of democracy and civil rights, but also of demands from the weaker countries for good governance and public accountability.

Globalisation operates with special force in the economic arena, leading to higher trade flows and greater dependence on foreign trade. This creates opportunities for export, but also problems over unequal market access. For instance, the WTO, as the body entrusted with the task of setting and enforcing rules by which nations are to share a common trading system, has to succeed in removing the trade-distorting subsidies given to EU and American farmers by their governments. Therefore, as a process bringing about a “borderless” world that allows the free flow of goods and services, global finance and technology, as well as free movement of people, globalisation places the developing countries at a considerable disadvantage.

Governments in these countries may, for instance, find their managerial and regulatory capabilities overstretched in the face of far more robust and experienced finance and trade players from developed countries. In other words, many of the developing countries have limited ability to enforce, in a fair and effective manner, the rules of the competitive market economy. Moreover, the supply side of their economies is not sufficiently up to scratch to be able to compete successfully with the producers of the industrialised nations. Hence, the unequal benefit of globalisation. One can opt out of this. But attempting to do so is sure to lead to

greater risk of isolation and complete global marginalisation.

Similarly, as noted earlier on, the global flows of finance have multiplied in volume and kind and all countries compete fiercely to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), which creates jobs in the investment destination country. But it cannot be over-emphasised that the flows move best when investment conditions are considered conducive from the perspective of the foreign investor, which means he/she is able to influence the domestic economic policy of the countries that want FDI. At the same time, unwise financial policy and structural defects at home, combined with the intrinsic volatility of such flows, can play havoc with the economy of weaker nations, as the Asian economic crisis of 1997-8, had shown.

In terms of social activities, globalisation means the involvement of external NGOs and other agencies of civil society in the affairs of foreign countries. It also entails the application of universal standards of human rights and public accountability, to the point where it questions the concept of national sovereignty. It further challenges the argument that certain issues relate to the internal affairs of a country and, therefore, should not be the business of external interests.

Globalisation in information flow results in 24-hour news channels bringing into homes news on any event taking place around the world, be it natural or man-made. Yet the digital divide between the developing, especially Africa, and the developed world continues to widen. This is to say that technological globalisation has come to manifest itself best through the Internet, which links peoples around the world in low-cost and instantaneous information exchange of a kind the world has never known before. Nevertheless, it is unequal, whereby developing countries are participants only to the extent that they build the essential communication and information technology infrastructure and provide education and other facilities to their peoples. And this is something which a majority of the developing countries cannot achieve overnight.

Globalisation demands vigilant governance. Just as the option of a deliberate policy of isolation is not viable, so, too, is total resignation to global forces a recipe for

disaster. The role for governments is thus to find a mix of policies that enables their countries to take advantage of opportunities, while protecting themselves from the uncontrolled currents of domination from outside. For instance, if an artisan in the interior of the country can use the Internet to find direct access to consumers in faraway countries, cutting out many layers of middlemen, that artisan is able to maximize earnings and expand business. But if scientific interchanges in plant genetics result in theft of a country's resources, it hurts national interests. Therefore, it is up to each country to formulate policies that are conducive to the flourishing of domestic entrepreneurship and foreign investment flows while, at the same time, safeguarding national resources and retaining primary domestic ownership. The challenge for the Namibian government is, therefore, to concentrate on providing the right policy and system of regulation, while eliminating regulations that constrict growth and investments.

The brilliant Brazilian sociologist and Professor of Law at Harvard, Roberto Unger, once pointed out that while the model of deregulation and open markets is the strong message that comes to developing countries from the World Bank, IMF and the western nations, if we look to the actual development experience of the Asian tigers and even the US in the 19th century, it has been a combination of governments and private capital, operating in tightly regulated markets, that provided the impetus for strong economic growth. This has been the case in the experience of countries like Japan, Korea, Taiwan and even Singapore.

Therefore, it remains the responsibility of the Namibian government to create an enabling, regulatory environment for economic growth, as it gives to private entrepreneurs maximum room for autonomous action in order to generate competition.

Hence, it is the challenge for Namibian diplomacy to articulate and forcefully sell the country's economic policy, good democratic governance and political stability as a conducive environment in which to do business. In other words, establishing wide economic ties that are mutually beneficial with different countries and regions has been declared a core component for our diplomacy.

This is to say that marketing Namibia's business environment defines the economic plank of our diplomacy.

President Sam Nujoma described Namibia's response to the world trends thus:

"Globalisation has clearly demonstrated the interdependence of nations. No one country today can stand alone, be it big or small, powerful or weak. We are left with no alternative other than to seek closer co-operation with each other. The world will be a better place to live in if all countries could work in a concerted effort to bring about the necessary improvements in the quality of life of the human family. As we all know, too many people across the globe continue to suffer from even ailments and maladies that can easily be prevented through concerted international action."¹²

Given the difficult path we had trodden to our independence, Namibia has deep faith in the value of dialogue among nations, and in international co-operation. Our country is thus committed to raising its voice against the pernicious consequences of globalisation, a theme that is, at last, receiving increasing attention from an expanding number of popular forces. At the same time, we acknowledge the benefits of global inter-dependence, which also creates opportunities for accessing external inputs, vital for accelerating the development of our economy and the progress of our people.

If globalisation is to have real value for all humanity around our shared earth, it must be adorned with a human face, that is, infused with a sense of equity or fair play. It should embrace the lessons that we have learnt from history and experience. This calls for the necessary political action to be taken to mitigate the negative effects of globalisation on the lives of the people in the developing parts of the world. In other words, in order to achieve a just distribution of the benefits, the

12 Speech at the commissioning of Namibia's Heads of Missions, Windhoek, 3 March 1999.

negative side effects of globalisation must be offset by reforms of governance at international and regional as well as local levels. All, not just a privileged few, must have input into the relevant processes of international politics and economics.

Africa today faces a real danger of missing out on the benefits of globalisation, and on most of the opportunities that technology and the knowledge-based global economy have created. It is thus Namibia's concern to avoid further marginalisation; and this concern is what animates our policy in respect of the globalisation process.

The African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

During an OAU Summit in July 2001, in Lusaka, African Heads of State undertook a critical review of the political, economic and social situation on the continent. They came up with the historic decision to transform the OAU into the African Union (AU) and to set forth the AU's programme of action, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This programme was adopted at the inaugural summit of the AU in Durban, July 2002. The main reason for the transformation of the OAU into the AU has been to replace the continent's completed liberation agenda with one of development.

Being fully aware of the fundamental global changes that have occurred since the 1990s, most notably the establishment of powerful economic and trade groupings as well as the rapid progress in information technology, African Heads of State felt that there was a need to take effective steps to counter the marginalisation of countries on the continent and to ensure that Africa becomes an active partner in world affairs. To accomplish that, it was resolved to adopt a new vision for the continent's economic recovery and development, and to translate that vision into an appropriate, coherent plan of action, that came to be known as NEPAD. Moreover, an economic, political and social environment had to be created which would be conducive to the attainment of the required economic transformation in African countries, with the objective of achieving a human-centred and sustainable development. Therefore,

NEPAD calls for a new partnership between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialised countries, to overcome the development chasm that has widened over centuries of unequal relations.

Namibia proclaimed its firm commitment to the African Union and its programme of action and it is playing its part in this connection. Our political and economic system is wide open. Global rating agencies, such as, Moody's, the World Economic Forum, the Economist Intelligence Unit, etc., have come to our country and conducted investigations as they see it because Namibia has nothing to hide.

Chapter 6

ISSUES OF NATIONAL PRIORITY

Namibia's national priority issues are spelled out, in greater specificity, in the first and second National Development Plans. They are restated here in summary form so that the readers who have not studied the NDP1 and NDP2 documents can understand, at least in general, the contents of these important volumes of policy decisions and be able to discuss and explain them to those with whom they interact.

The Promotion of Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) is an integral part of the country's overall strategic policy framework. IT is seen as a unique opportunity to enhance national capacity for development and as a means to obtain, disseminate, use and store information needed in the process of development. Information being the basis of knowledge, IT is a vital tool for progress in all areas of national priority.

We need up-to-date information to be able to address issues of the fight against HIV/AIDS; land reform; poverty reduction; unemployment; human resources development; peace, security and democracy; gender equality and equity; the economic empowerment of formerly disadvantaged Namibians; promotion and development of private enterprise; and the fostering of rapid industrialisation.

Economic and political decision makers must now process an unprecedented amount of information on the background and field of application of their decisions and actions. Also, Namibia needs, rather urgently, a labour force that is highly computer literate and adaptable to enable the country to leapfrog stages of development. Hence, our foreign service personnel are at the forefront of mobilising the acquisition and transfer of IT.

Sustainable Economic Growth and Development

The promotion of sustainable economic growth through prudent macroeconomic policy; development of human resources; application of science and technology; maintenance of peace and security; restructuring of the national economy through rapid industrialisation; agricultural development, and small business development as well as the exploitation of the country's tourism potentials, are critical foreign policy concerns. They constitute a central item of the country's agenda regarding our external relations. Thus, Namibia's foreign policy executors have an unfailing duty to market these key national policy priorities.

Employment Creation

Employment creation calls, above all, for an aggressive expansion and a deep-going diversification of the economy, that is, broadening the country's productive base and increasing the variety of its operations and products.. Putting the broad majority of Namibia's able-bodied citizens to work through job creation and economic empowerment will result in the reduction of poverty and economic inequalities, which presently pose serious challenges to Namibia's efforts to maintain peace as well as to consolidate national unity and democratic governance.

Investment promotion, especially private sector investment (domestic and foreign), will continue to receive high priority and maximum support both in the medium and long-term perspective. With the evolving reduction in foreign aid resources, promotion and support of private investment will remain critical. The creation of an enabling environment for private sector growth, redoubling of domestic investment through increased domestic savings and development of entrepreneurship would have to be pursued vigorously. Current efforts in developing medium and small-scale enterprises, including the informal sector, agricultural development, skills development and training, all aim at creating more employment opportunities. Youth unemployment is of serious concern to the government. Hence, all activities that facilitate employment creation will be promoted and actively executed.

And, as stated, in all these, external resource inputs, in the form of credit, technology, strategic partners, etc., are essential. Our diplomats must be at the forefront of the effort to try to convince that, contrary to the general assumption that Namibia is a middle-income country and, as such, the country does not qualify for the concessional loans and market access that are available to other less developed countries, this is unfair treatment that flies in the face of the burning need to address poverty, unemployment and inequity.

HIV/AIDS

There is a wide national consensus to combat HIV/AIDS. The government, the private sector, NGOs, civil society and the donor community all agree that the pandemic, which has become the biggest single killer disease in the country, overtaking malaria and TB, is a national emergency issue that should be at the centre of our diplomats' attention. They must be frontline champions in mobilising global support for the battle.

The huge social and economic impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is beginning to be felt. The effects of the pandemic on Namibia's population structure and dynamics are expected to be devastating. The pandemic has already cracked the country's system of livelihood at all levels: national, regional, communal and household. The impact is most felt at household level because of the continued loss of breadwinners resulting in rapid decline in income, and accentuation of income inequalities and poverty. The loss of income causes significant decline in food security positions in households, especially for children. AIDS also affects savings and investment, and the loss of persons with skills thus contributes to the fall in productivity. As such, the fight against the pandemic has become a cross-cutting battle, which our foreign service personnel are called upon to join. They are tasked to campaign for access to affordable drugs that are available in the industrialised countries and that have helped to slow down the rate of HIV/AIDS-related deaths.

Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction is a top priority among government policy concerns. As a cross-sectoral policy issue, it is closely linked to economic growth and development, creation of employment opportunities, reduction of inequalities in income distribution, etc. It is also closely associated with environmental degradation caused by over-utilisation of natural resources. Poor households, for example, have limited options for their survival and, therefore, rely heavily on the available natural environment for their livelihood. For example, they depend on firewood for energy.

Consequently, poverty reduction is a burning policy issue in Namibia, prompting the government, with the participation of various Namibian stakeholders and in conjunction with the donor community, to formulate a national poverty reduction strategy and a programme of action to counter the devastating effects of poverty. The programme is being implemented. It gives priority to education, health, housing, clean water and sanitation and provision of electricity. And, the nation's external representatives have been directed to make a difference in this somewhat titanic struggle. For example, the realisation that there is an urgent need for a regional approach to the generation and distribution of power in the SADC area means active diplomatic work by our missions in the region.

Land Reform and Resettlement

Land reform and resettlement is also among the policy priorities of the government and of the majority of Namibians. Since independence, the government has pursued a policy of willing-seller, willing-buyer, with limited success. The policy has encouraged some landowners to significantly inflate land prices, resulting in the government's failure to purchase adequate land for resettlement. Additionally, landowners tend to offer poor quality farms to the government. These offers have resulted in limited utilisation of the N\$20 million appropriated by the National Assembly annually for farm acquisition. Thus, land reform has become a highly emotional issue, with those who have too much of the land becoming jittery and those who do not have it insistent in their demand for its fair redistribution.

Consequently, clear policy objectives and programme implementation strategies are being put in place to facilitate meaningful and balanced land distribution. Our foreign service officials are tasked to explain the policy objectives of this programme and the resources needed to make it a success story.

Human Resource Development

Human resource development (HRD) is one of the important factors of development. Therefore, it is a component of the country's overall socio-economic development strategy. HRD has to do with the designing of training programmes to improve and increase the country's stock of knowledge and skills and to upgrade the quality/levels of experience of the national workforce. To that end, Namibia's HRD programme seeks to invest in Namibians so as to accelerate the socio-economic development of the country. The programme focuses on:

- Ensuring that demand for skilled personnel is both qualitatively and quantitatively fulfilled through training and upgrading of skills;
- Expanding capacities and student enrolment in tertiary education and other training institutions;
- Maximizing the use of the country's available vocational institutions for skills upgrading; and
- Revisiting the syllabus in schools to emphasize and intensify the teaching of mathematics, general science and English.

Many of our foreign service personnel are deployed in parts of the world where the accumulation of knowledge and skills has reached a very high level of advancement and sophistication. They are, therefore, well placed to facilitate Namibia's acquisition of such resources.

Gender Equality and Equity

Gender equality and equity is another cross-sectoral policy issue which has been

prioritised by the government. Although efforts by the government to promote gender equality and equity are producing commendable results, more is still needed to enable women to develop their full potential.

The government's concern lies in the fact that women, though being in the majority, are not adequately participating in the socio-economic development of the country. For this reason, the programmes and projects that are in place, are aimed at:

- Promoting the greater participation of women in political and economic activities and in the labour market in general;
- Improving the entrepreneurial skills of women in order to afford them more access to managerial opportunities and activities of self-reliant nature;
- Improving the education and health status of women;
- Reviewing laws and regulations which impinge on women's wider and active participation in Namibia's developmental and political endeavours; and
- Strengthening capacities for enhancing the advancement of women;

Our diplomats are charged to actively articulate Namibia's commitment to the advancement of women and gender equality.

Moral and Ethical Values

The contemplated full development of the Namibian nation by the year 2030 is inconceivable without strong well-developed moral and ethical values. The high prevalence of child and women abuse and crime confirm the existence of moral and ethical decay among some of the members of our society.

Therefore, the task facing the government is to inculcate in all Namibians the attributes of positive values and ethics, such as, tolerance, resilience, honesty, integrity, discipline, diligence, thrift and respect for the elders, women and the young. Some programmes and projects, targeting the family, children, youth, women and the elderly have already been set up for implementation. The roles of

the family, NGOs, private sector, the churches, voluntary organisations, individuals and the government, are crucial in instilling a sense of national pride based on Namibian's heritage and achievements. Furthermore, measures aimed at promoting moral and ethical behaviour are strictly enforced with regard to our diplomats, and codes of ethics at work places for the public service, the private sector and civil society are required.

Lessons are to be learnt from the global experience. Many other countries faced these challenges but have achieved the high measure of national discipline that we seek to emulate. And, as we seek to instil discipline in our nation, our diplomats, with their vast international exposure to different cultures and standards of both good and bad behaviour are expected to play a role, however minor, in promoting ethical behaviour.

Economic Empowerment

Given its legacy of colonial dispossession and apartheid exclusion, economic empowerment is a policy issue of fundamental importance. The economic policy of the government focuses on promoting and achieving economic empowerment, especially with regard to the majority of the previously disadvantaged members of society. But this special emphasis notwithstanding, the economic policy of the government continues, in general, to seek the advancement of all Namibians through active participation in the economic life of the country. In this regard, the policy aims at ensuring that equal opportunities are made available to all Namibians to actively participate in the economic development of the country and simultaneously improve the living conditions of the people.

As the flip side of this domestic economic policy position, economic diplomacy strives to complement the internal efforts to realise these desired goals.

Peace and Security

It is worth repeating that without peace and security, no meaningful internal stability

can be achieved and likewise development cannot take place. Therefore, the Namibian government considers it imperative to strive to ensure sustainable peace and security, and to nurture a culture of democracy and the rule of law as preconditions for stability as well as for propelling Namibia's socio-economic development and growth.

Humankind has entered the 21st century armed with an unprecedented accumulation of knowledge, that we now boast of a “knowledge-based society” and “knowledge-based economy”. Indeed, the human species has unveiled the secret of nature which might have been thought undiscoverable. In arts, literature and philosophy some human beings have demonstrated a sublimity of feeling which makes war worth renouncing.

But despite all the marvels which human ingenuity has produced and accumulated, humankind has not yet found the necessary wisdom to end all its quarrels with its fellow human beings without resorting to the use of force.

As stated before, apart from war which humanity finds difficult to abolish, there are threats posed by terrorism, the proliferation in sales of illegal small arms and the cross-border trafficking of illicit drugs. These form important items on the agendas of the United Nations and regional bodies, such as, the AU, SADC, etc. As such, our ambassadors and high commissioners, together with their teams of foreign service officials, are active participants in the global fight against these menaces to our national, regional and global peace and security.

There is not a single regional or global *indaba* or gathering to deliberate on the problems set out in this chapter, where our foreign service officials are not present as active participants. They follow up on the outcome of all such activities, compile reports and regularly send such reports home to the line ministries. They are, in other words, the ones with institutional memories of the thoughts and resolutions of those important world gatherings on peace, global trade, security, environmental pollution and development financing.

Chapter 7

BILATERAL AND REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Building Relationships

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the responsibility of executing government policy regarding each region and country in a manner that is proportionate to Namibia's interests and capabilities in any given area of the world. Thus, in most cases, our bilateral relations with individual countries are to be seen within the regional context, focused on those objectives that are prioritised and achievable.

As indicated earlier, Namibia's bilateral relations can be placed within the historical context of the struggle for independence. The country attaches high value to the decisions of the United Nations and other international organisations, particularly the fraternity of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (now the African Union) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as well as the Non-Aligned Movement.

National interests constitute an overriding factor in our bilateral relations, allowing Namibia to exercise its sovereign right when conducting business within the parameters of these relations.

The Namibian government supports and facilitates the increased external economic involvement of Namibia's private sector and other non-official entities, to tap into the vast opportunities of the SADC region, and into those of the rest of the world. For example the Namibia Investment Centre at the Ministry of Trade and Industry is aggressively engaged in the pursuit of economic relationships around the world. Namibian diplomatic missions also play a significant role in this activity, facilitating initial contacts, meetings and follow-up work.

Southern Africa

On SADC's predecessor, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), President Sam Nujoma declared that:

“...we of this sub-region including a post-apartheid, democratic, united and non-racial South Africa, are fully committed to pooling our resources for the common good of our countries and peoples. It is also a further demonstration that the peoples of this region, even when the obnoxious system of apartheid is removed, will still have the need to reach out to one another for regional growth and prosperity. SADCC will, no doubt, provide the right framework for the community of nations of Southern Africa...we are living in times where countries the world over are moving towards integrated production and trade areas. In our own sub-region, we have already made substantial progress in establishing a framework for future closer co-operation and must now examine more closely the modalities of a truly integrated single SADCC economy.”¹³

Namibia attaches great importance to its relations with SADC member states. Hence, harmonisation of multilateral and bilateral co-operation is a priority. The SADC countries, i.e., Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, share common political, security and economic goals. As an active member, Namibia is committed to co-operation through sustained regional development and economic integration.

In structuring ties with SADC member-states, Namibia is guided by the reciprocal openness of the partner countries with regards to co-operation in all relevant areas, such as, strengthening cross-border mechanisms to solve problems of drug-

¹³ Address to the SADCC Consultative Conference, Windhoek, 31 January 1991.

trafficking, small arms smuggling, the illicit sale of diamonds and stock-theft. Therefore, agreements with SADC partners are based on the principle of mutual interest. Our diplomats, as pointed out before, keep a close watch on all these.

The creation of joint mechanisms for the promotion of trade and investment, regional development, and interaction between specific regions of Namibia and those of the bordering SADC member states receives our focused attention. Namibia actively supports the collective efforts by SADC member states to develop a framework of investment promotion, which should form the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding on Investment Promotion for SADC to secure a greater share of the global pool of foreign direct investment. Our country is pressing for the acceleration of the implementation of the SADC Trade Agreement. We stand for the fast-tracked operationalisation of the SADC Free Trade Area, which was launched on 1 September 2000. This will go a long way towards making the SADC region a greater attraction for potential investors and distributors of goods and services. The protocol encourages investment in neighbouring countries by the Namibian business community.

SADC's top priority in terms of settling conflicts and concretising co-operation in the military-political area is to forge collective efforts. In this regard, Namibia supports the work of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, which was launched in 1996 as an instrument through which SADC countries would co-ordinate their policies and activities in the areas of politics, defence and security, so as to consolidate peace and security in the region; and to consolidate the work of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee. Namibia actively works to ensure that the Organ becomes an effective means of achieving security for SADC. The Organ is an important measure of confidence-building to reassure the people of this region of a regional capability to adequately counter efforts to destabilise the region or to undermine the governments in the region through undemocratic means. During the opening years of this decade, SADC has been engaged in the process of developing a regional security mechanism. Namibia has actively participated in this process as part of its foreign policy to promote regional and international peace and stability. As part of this effort, early on, our country, together with Angola and Zimbabwe,

accepted an urgent appeal by the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to come to its aid, following the armed invasion of that country by Rwanda and Uganda. Our acceptance of the appeal by the DRC to intervene was anchored in Namibia's full support for the inviolability of the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the DRC.

Since then, SADC has developed a Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, which formalised the functions of the Organ, and further strengthened regional co-operation in the area of politics, defence and security, thus making the co-ordination of these areas more consistent than before. SADC Heads of State and Government signed the Protocol at a summit held in Blantyre, Malawi, on 14 August 2001. It should be further mentioned that SADC is in the process of developing a Mutual Defence Pact for the mutual co-operation in matters of defence and security, as provided for in the Protocol.

In our efforts to accelerate regional integration, Namibia has actively participated in the restructuring process of all SADC institutions, that commenced in 1999. The restructuring became necessary taking into account that SADC has expanded both in size and mandate, following its graduation from a Conference to a Community. Hence the need to re-orient its formal structures, management systems and procedures. Another constraint was the decentralised structure of the organisation with no clear line of authority and accountability. Various sectors and commissions, functioning independent of the Secretariat, co-ordinated most of the regional activities. Also important to note is that the absence of a regional Strategic Development Plan resulted in inconsistency and a lack of harmonisation of regional projects and activities.

The new and approved structure of SADC has addressed these problems and all other institutional constraints. In particular, the new structure has clustered all sectors and commissions into four directorates, namely, the Departments of Strategic Planning, Gender, Development, and Policy Harmonization. The latter is responsible for project development, and co-ordination of all SADC activities. In addition, SADC National Committees are being established in all member states to

provide inputs in all SADC projects and activities, and to monitor the implementation of these projects and activities at national level in collaboration with the Secretariat at the headquarters.

With the implementation of the new SADC structure now underway, Namibia is effectively participating in the execution of key regional activities, particularly the formulation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. In so doing, we are keeping in mind the priorities and common agenda we collectively set for the region in the new structure of SADC, such as, poverty alleviation, the fight against HIV/AIDS, consolidation and sustenance of a conducive political and economic environment, and promotion of economic growth through regional and foreign investment and trade. Our foreign service officials in the region are fully engaged in these activities.

South Africa is Namibia's key neighbour and its number one trading partner with the total volume of trade standing at N\$10 billion annually, which represents about 80 per cent of Namibia's foreign trade. There is, moreover, an important mechanism to strengthen these economic ties, namely, quarterly meetings at the level of heads of state. This has been established to give priority attention to joint economic projects and other initiatives. Namibia-South Africa relations are underpinned by a myriad of agreements in various fields of common interest. Both Namibia's foreign policy and diplomacy are kept active in these efforts.

Botswana is an important neighbour. Co-operation within the framework of the various agreements, already concluded between the two countries, is a clear testimony to flourishing and diversifying co-operation. The agreement regarding the permanent demarcation of borders along the Kwando/Linyanti/Chobe rivers is one clear demonstration of the evolving spirit of good neighbourliness. The construction and commissioning of the Trans-Kalahari Highway, three years ago, is another watershed in the Botswana/Namibia development partnership. Indeed, an even bigger project is envisaged, namely the Kavango and Upper Zambezi International Tourism (OUZIT) undertaking. This major regional project also involves Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Angola has been and continues to be a strategic ally and offers great potential for co-operation. Angola is rich in natural resources and a potentially wealthy country. As a result, the Namibian government is encouraging the private sector to be involved in that country's reconstruction and industrialisation process, particularly in the fields of mining, marine fisheries, water, agriculture and infrastructure development. Namibia intends to further deepen and strengthen economic relations with that country for the mutual benefit of our peoples.

Namibia is happy to support the peace process enduring in Angola, and the DRC. Our country has demonstrated its commitment to good relations with the governments and peoples of these two countries. And despite the difficulties it is currently facing, Zimbabwe remains the second largest economy in the region whilst the DRC offers enormous potential for trade and investment, water and electrical power.

Zambia is equally an important neighbour. Our two countries are working towards the full exploitation of the opportunities provided by proximity and cross-border affinities. In this regard, extensive infrastructure development is currently taking place to deepen economic co-operation between the two countries. For example, Zambia and Namibia launched, in 2002, a project for the rehabilitation of the Livingstone-Shesheke-Katima Mulilo road and the construction of the Katima Mulilo bridge over the Zambezi River. Furthermore, a major agricultural joint venture on both sides of our border is planned to achieve food security in the two countries. Therefore, the relations between Zambia and Namibia are acquiring broadening and deepening economic dimensions.

Africa and the Middle East

Namibia's major priority is to build strong ties with all African countries. The African Union (AU), as the principal continental organisation, embodies the aspirations of the African people. Namibia actively participates in all the activities of the AU and works to strengthen the capacity of this continental organisation at all

levels. Similarly, Namibia fully supported the efforts to establish branches of the African Union, such as, the Council of Heads of State and the Court of Justice, the Pan-African Parliament, Central Bank and other institutions. The African Union is a realisation of the noble ideals cherished by the founding fathers of the Pan-African movement more than a century and a half ago. It provides a platform that enables all the peoples of Africa, including those in the continent's diaspora, to fully participate in the process of Africa's socio-economic development and integration. The transition from OAU to AU has set in motion the process towards the continent's long-cherished ideal of greater unity and solidarity for Africa's more than 700 million people.

Given the reality of globalisation and the formation of trade and political blocs within Europe, the Americas and Asia, birth of the AU should, in due course, enable the continent to negotiate from a position of strength for better trade relations with the rest of the world. With careful planning and skilful stewardship by the Chairman of its Commission, the AU could also become one of the world's significant political blocs, bringing together some 53 countries.

An effectively functioning AU, keeping in mind that it will first have to go through a teething transitional period of establishing the practicalities of how it will work during these initial stages, would need to ensure social cohesion, help shake off the vestiges of colonialism which for so long impeded African nation-building and Africa's many "false starts" over the last few decades, and steer African countries towards a position where they would be able to assume their rightful place in the world economy. If successful, it will truly provide an elevated framework for co-operation and the integration of the continent.

Although the AU inherits some of the structures of the OAU, which for nearly four decades successfully worked for the political liberation of Africa, it is now facing new and major challenges that call for a somewhat different style of work and new priorities, such as, the urgency to act collectively to avert conflicts and to reverse the trend where the continent's agriculture-driven economies are under-performing, mainly due to unfair trading practices by rich Western nations. These challenges,

which include the conduct of economic diplomacy, need to be met through political commitment and the sheer will to enable Africans, in the words of former OAU Secretary-General, Salim Ahmed Salim, to “live in dignity and prosperity as a people.”

As emphasised from the outset, the promotion of peace and security on the African continent is of vital importance, mainly because peace and security are prerequisites for development and economic growth. Consequently, Namibia plays an active role in the work of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and its Central Organ whose task is the promotion of preventive diplomacy, mediation, conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Namibia has ratified the protocol for the establishment of the AU Peace and Security Council that is intended to replace the above-mentioned OAU Mechanism.

The participation of the Namibian business community in development projects on the continent is being promoted actively because such involvement is certainly essential to enlarge the country’s economic space. To that end, our diplomats are playing an important role, at many fora, in marketing Namibia and Africa as a conducive environment in which to do profitable business.

The ministry encourages and facilitates increased trade between Namibia and other African countries with the hope of creating additional employment opportunities for the Namibian workforce. Investment in the export processing zone (EPZ), which offers various incentives, is being promoted not only by the Namibia Investment Centre but also by Namibia’s representatives abroad. Similarly, a diplomatic network, covering the whole region, comprising both residential and non-residential representation, is being pursued with vigour and a sense of mission.

Namibia has established Joint Commissions for Co-operation with several other African countries, which include Algeria, Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Namibia’s position regarding the Western Sahara is that the international

community should respect the wishes and aspirations of the people of that territory, particularly their right to self-determination. The present impasse should be broken by initiatives that are in compliance with the UN Settlement Plan, which was agreed upon by the parties. Our own experience with colonial occupation by a powerful neighbour has shaped our outlook so as not to accept such an occupation anywhere in the world.

In the Middle East, we maintain good diplomatic relations with many, if not all, of the countries in that region. Namibia's relations with Kuwait are the warmest of those with that part of the world.

It should also be noted that Namibia is committed to the Middle East peace process. We yearn for a lasting settlement of the Palestinian issue. Namibia believes that the focus should be on peaceful negotiations within the framework of UN resolutions. The establishment of an independent Palestinian state, existing side-by-side with Israel, is the only way to achieve lasting peace and security in the Middle East.

Europe and North America

Namibia's political and economic linkages with the European Union (EU) play a major role in our foreign policy. We consider the EU as one of our important partners. We attach great importance to strong and durable relations with the EU countries. The ongoing unification processes within the EU, covering transition to a common currency, institutional reforms and the emergence of a joint foreign and security policy, as well as the expansion of the EU to include new members, are likely to have serious political and economic impact on our relations with Europe in terms of the focused attention we were receiving during the first decade of our independence. Official assistance seems set to dry up; and preferential market access, which Africa enjoyed for more than two decades, may soon be replaced by reciprocal trade arrangements. Therefore, Namibia, together with its African, Caribbean and Pacific partners, is taking steps to be able to cope with these eventualities in its bilateral and multilateral relations with the EU.

The relations between Namibia and Germany are of a special character and, indeed, multi-faceted due to historical reasons. Presently, most of the effort is devoted to enhance trade and investment, tourism, development co-operation and people-to-people contacts. Many benefits are accruing to both Germany and Namibia from the relations, but, of course, more to Namibia than Germany.

Many of Namibia's traditional allies and friends are found among the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Interaction with many of these influential European states provides Namibia with important inputs for development and economic growth. Therefore, there is fairly good scope for expanding the relations with these countries, particularly in areas of trade and investment, technical partnerships and development co-operation. Russia is a prominent partner in this region for bilateral co-operation.

The United States of America is Namibia's strong trade partner. Our efforts are directed towards ensuring greater access to the US markets for Namibian products, including textile and agricultural products. This is being pursued within the framework of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides preferential treatment for some African countries. AGOA affords qualifying African countries the opportunity to gain access to markets in the United States. The Act is aimed at supporting and encouraging manufacturing activity on our part, social and political reforms, while at the same time strengthening trade, investment and overall economic ties between the US and Africa.

Exclusive benefits for AGOA beneficiaries, including Namibia, are an increased list of items made eligible for GSP (General System of Preferences) treatment in terms of AGOA, as well as providing an additional opportunity for investors and traders by extending the GSP for beneficiary African countries, and by exempting these countries from competitive need limitations.

Apart from the benefits Namibia can derive from eligibility in terms of AGOA, such as, assistance with trade and export promotion, it also stands to benefit from established equity and infrastructure funds, as a qualifying country. Moreover,

Namibian farmers, businesses, workers and manufacturers can benefit in terms of access to modern technology and farming techniques. The arrangement could also lead to the creation of a receptive environment for trade and investment.

There exists scope for expanding relations with Canada in the areas of trade and investment. Hence, development co-operation between Namibia and Canada is being further explored.

Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean

South-East Asia is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies. A large percentage of the world's buying power is resident in Asia where the most populous nations of the world are found. These factors make Asia an important bloc within the international context. For that reason, Namibia places a high value on relations with the countries in that region.

The Asian region also offers bilateral and multilateral opportunities for stronger co-operation, particularly in terms of South-South co-operation, and within the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, to ensure that globalisation and liberalisation bring equal opportunities for developing countries. As a result, Namibia is actively building all-round and mutually beneficial relations with various Asian states, primarily with China, India, Indonesia, Japan, North and South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. The focus is on strengthening traditional partnerships with India and China, by way of extending co-operation in the areas of industrialisation, human resource development, service sector development, technology transfer, tourism, trade and investment.

Namibia fully supports UN initiatives and other international efforts aimed at reducing tension in Asia, strictly adhering to the principle of settling international disputes by peaceful means. Namibia welcomes and supports the latest developments in the Korean peninsula, namely the rapprochement between the Korean states, with whom we maintain mutually beneficial diplomatic relations. Namibia supports the concept of nuclear-free zones in the world. Namibia believes

that the longstanding dispute over Kashmir, pitting India against Pakistan, should be resolved peacefully through bilateral dialogue. Further, in its relations with China, Namibia strictly adheres to the "One-China" policy.

In the Pacific region, Australia and New Zealand are countries with which growing co-operation is being realised.

Relations between Namibia and countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela, are also important. Namibia has benefited considerably from the development experience of several of these countries. Evidently, there is a good potential for economic co-operation. Brazil and Cuba deserve special mention in Namibia's relations with this region. Ties with them are being continuously strengthened, especially in the areas of technical assistance, naval co-operation, human resource development and training, and agriculture.

Namibia will seek to further expand the scope of its relations with all countries in Central and South America, and the Caribbean, to ensure a higher level of political dialogue and economic co-operation as well as to develop technical and defence co-operation.

Chapter 8

SOME KEY AREAS OF MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

Multilateral Diplomacy

Namibia has joined the community of nations at a time when multilateral tasks of diplomacy have proliferated considerably. As such, the country's small team of diplomatic personnel, which is already over-burdened by bilateral challenges, has found itself faced with a variety of bewildering transnational tasks, such as, terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, the smuggling of immigrants, environmental abuse, human rights issues, etc. Indeed, our diplomats have to participate in the work of international organisations and conferences, negotiations and conclusions of agreements, protocols, conventions and treaties. This dramatic increase in the tasks of multilateral diplomacy since the 20th century, represents a corresponding increase in interdependence among nations. At the same time, international political dialogue has intensified, often involving several heads of state and government in direct encounters at summit levels, regionally and internationally.

Due to its unifying role in the world, the UN and its agencies occupy the central place among international organizations. The Bretton Woods institutions, i.e., the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have also gained in importance, as has the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Since independence, Namibia's policy regarding multilateral institutions has focused on effective articulation of the country's specific needs in areas like health, agriculture, metrology, maritime affairs, education, science and technology, the environment and industrialisation.

As a small developing country, Namibia is an active participant in the G-77 group and in all the programmes aimed at stronger South-South co-operation and North-South dialogue as well. Our country sees itself as a bridge-builder, and works for stronger mutual understanding and fruitful co-operation among all nations.

The United Nations

Speaking at the 55th session of the UN General Assembly on 20 September 2000, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Theo-Ben Gurirab, declared that:

“The Millennium Declaration (is) the result of this concerted effort to meet the daunting challenges of this century with boldness and courage in a truly global united front ... Member states must forge a new global partnership between the wealthy and powerful nations and those whose present circumstances leave them mired in the seemingly intractable maze of a merry-go-round type of development. The North must be gracious and generous and give what has been acquired from global resources to assist poor and weak countries to help propel them into the orbit of sustainable and irreversible social and economic growth. For its part, the South must not only take sober stock of our present challenges, but also devote energy and creativity to genuinely engage all our countries in a common effort aimed at social development and human security. To do so, we must rise above the temptation to settle scores through armed conflict, (and) place the will and genius of our people at the helm of national reconstruction.”

Against this background, we could not but respond without prevarication when the UN Secretary-General made an appeal for troops contribution to peace-keeping operations in places like Cambodia, Angola and Liberia.

One of the issues confronting the UN today is the unyielding demand for reforms of that world body, particularly the strengthening of the General Assembly and the

expansion and democratisation of the Security Council. At issue are the Charter provisions that the UN belongs to all its member states, collectively and individually. As in an extended family, all of them, big and small, rich and poor, developing and developed, should have a meaningful stake in it. The General Assembly, the policy-making and representative organ of the UN, should be enabled to play that role effectively. The Security Council needs to be expanded and made more democratic, increasing its membership, both permanent and non-permanent. It is equally imperative for the General Assembly and the Security Council to better co-ordinate their activity, together with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the other vital institutions of the UN. Accordingly, Namibia welcomes the recent announcement by the Secretary-General of the establishment of a Panel of Eminent Persons to make proposals and/or recommendations on the way forward.

Nuclear Disarmament and Security

Namibia subscribes to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control. It has actively participated in the international dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation, through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and in the UN General Assembly. Our country has worked for the implementation of Security Council Resolutions relating to nuclear disarmament, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT), and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Our diplomatic missions to New York, Vienna and Brussels participate actively in the deliberations of these organisations. Namibia has also acceded to conventions that relate to disarmament in general, and to nuclear and chemical non-proliferation, in particular. On the whole, Namibia supports the efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.

UN Agencies and Our Social Agenda

Namibia is an active member of various UN specialised agencies that have been assigned the responsibility to resolve global social and developmental issues.

Article 95 of the Namibian Constitution stipulates that the country is to be a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and to adhere, where possible, to its international conventions and recommendations. In compliance with this constitutional provision, Namibia has ratified a number of major conventions including the core ones. As a result of a joint mission between the Ministry of Labour and the ILO, all regulations and laws pertaining to health and safety at work places were amalgamated into one single regulation of 19 August 1997. With this, most of the health and safety requirements at work places were fulfilled. Prior to that, the Labour Act of 1992 incorporated most of the requirements contained in the ILO convention, such as, the rights of employees, restriction of the use of child labour and the implementation of affirmative action.

Multilateral agreements (with several organisations) have contributed to the social and health development of Namibia. Notable among these agreements are those with: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which contributes to the human development resources, cultural heritage and the arts; the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), which has been actively involved in providing support to the Namibian children through immunisation and feeding programmes; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which has supported the formulation of Namibia's National Population Policy for Sustainable Human Development and its implementation; and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which has been a partner in supplementing developmental programmes of the government and by co-ordinating the activities of the UN agencies that are active in the country. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has also played a vital role.

The World Health Organisation has contributed to Namibia's health sector by providing experts and logistical support to the Ministry of Health and Social

Services. In the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Namibia needs substantive and continuing assistance from the WHO.

World Bank, IMF and WTO

The international financial and trade institutions have evolved since their creation over five decades ago. They have begun to reflect the concerns of developing nations a little more than before. We note that the World Bank is now more receptive to the contribution made by UN member states to international, regional and national development policies. This comes as a result of the annual world development reports focusing on developmental policy issues at regional and international levels. In the past, the IMF and the World Bank tended to dictate to member states, particularly developing countries, on development policies with mandatory requirements of technical or financial assistance. That has since changed. Hence, the IMF is currently a partner with Namibia on matters relating to fiscal and monetary as well as educational policies.

The World Trade Organisation, which has been discussed above, is an important forum where member states are able to participate in the negotiations and decisions on world trade matters. However, the developing countries need level playing fields for their exports. But, as pointed out earlier, they still face all kinds of protectionist barriers by the nations of the affluent North.

Non-Aligned Movement

As stated in an earlier chapter, the Namibian Constitution prescribes that Namibia “adopts and maintains a policy of non-alignment” (Article 96). Consequently the country has been an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement, participating in all its activities right from 1990. The President leads Namibian delegations to every summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Movement remains a relevant unifying force for all developing countries, even after the Cold War.

The Commonwealth

As noted, Namibia is a member of the Commonwealth. As an active member of the organisation, our country participates at all levels of Commonwealth activities, including the highest level, which is the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM).

The Commonwealth Secretariat provides valuable technical assistance that has contributed to Namibia's capacity building through civil service training, health, agriculture, education and various economic sectors.

Environment

Namibia has an unshakeable commitment to the protection of the environment as affirmed by Article 95 (i) of the Constitution that sets out the principles of state policy regarding the welfare of the people. Namibia recognises that the environment is a global issue and this, therefore, forms part of its core external policy. Namibia has signed and ratified global instruments on the environment, and has also revised domestic legislation to conform to international obligations on the subject.

As a responsible international player, Namibia is engaged in initiatives aimed at addressing global environmental and conservation issues. It is equally active, in co-operation with neighbours, regarding the sustainable management of natural resources and eco-systems. This agenda figures prominently within SADC.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is a significant contributor to our national programmes to develop strategies for achieving sustainable management of our environment. The technical expertise of UNEP specialists has been of special value to our efforts.

Marine Resources

Namibia is among the top 10 fishing nations of the world. It has a well-managed

coastline, which is 1,500 km long, and is rich in marine resources. Exports of fish and other marine products contribute 22 per cent to the nation's total exports of goods and services. The GDP share of the fisheries sector in the economy doubled during the past decade, and there is considerable expansion potential currently being addressed. It should also be noted that Namibia's expanding fishing fleet has made the country a significant player in the global fishing industry.

The management of the industry is the responsibility of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, which also handles participation in specialised bodies like the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), and the Commission on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). Namibia is a party to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and a participant in other related international protocols and related diplomatic activities. It is also a participant in the open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

One of the issues to be determined, on the basis of a rigorous cost-benefit analysis, is the potential claim to the continental shelf that extends beyond 200 nautical miles that Namibia could make to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLCS).

The stipulated deadline for this is November 2004. The country is represented at the inter-ministerial meetings on the delineation of the continental shelf.

The country is thus busy building up legal and diplomatic expertise concerning the Law of the Sea. The aim is to safeguard and advance national interests in the ongoing global dialogue. Marine and continental shelf wealth is an invaluable resource for Namibia's present and generations to come.

Treaties and Conventions

In respect of multilateral agreements to which Namibia is signatory, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs serves as the facilitator, in co-operation with the relevant line

ministries and the Office of the Attorney General. It also participates in the negotiation and interpretation of multilateral treaties, through the Treaties and Agreements Directorate. It is also the point of contact in relation to international legal organisations, including the International Court of Justice, the International Law Commission, the International Criminal Court, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority, and Interpol.

International law is one of the principles of foreign policy laid down in the Constitution, entailing adherence to the general rules of public international law, and the upholding all multilateral and bilateral treaty obligations.

South-South Co-operation

South-South co-operation is a cherished dream of many leaders of the developing world. There are clear advantages in sharing development experience. However, the actual delivery of this promise has not met the anticipated levels, partly because the developing countries do not have the marketing ability to match that of the rich countries, and partly because the same models of development and technology that the rich nations offer mesmerise all countries of the South.

The best yardstick to apply in judging issues relating to South-South co-operation is national advantage. If it is clear that it will benefit our nation to pursue an option in technology or in any other developmental activity that comes from a fellow-South country, it should be followed up. One area where this may be particularly applicable is in educational technology, where the models of the South may be more appropriate to our circumstances.

In dialogue within the G-77 and other developing world groups it would be worthwhile to work for concrete expression of South-South co-operation.

Chapter 9

THE DOMESTIC STAKEHOLDERS

Democracy and Foreign Affairs

The past decade has seen a surge in the democracy movement around the world. On our continent, the independence of Namibia became a precursor to the democratisation of South Africa. The 21st century promises the strengthening of democracy around the world. Namibia, with its own profound attachment to the ideal of national self-determination, rejoices in this.

While the political contours of each democracy are different, the fundamentals are similar – a system of governance in which those who rule are accountable to the people through an open electoral process in which all citizens participate, without fear or discrimination. Democracy also entails the guarantee of fundamental rights, equality for all, the rule of law, and the delivery of socio-economic benefits to all the people. Namibia applauds the reality that across the African continent and elsewhere, in country after country, military dictatorships have given way to democratically elected governments. There is now a virtually universal rejection of non-democratic regimes across the world.

In a democracy, citizens have a right to knowledge and expect to be informed of issues that affect the nation in domestic and in international affairs. In an increasingly interconnected world, no nation is an island. The speed of technological transformation and communication adds to interdependence between nations and peoples. This translates into a domestic public policy agenda for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry must, therefore, both inform and educate public opinion about developments abroad that affect the country and its citizens. It must also be responsive to public opinion. This happens routinely during parliamentary

business and through the media, official and non-official sources as well as in regular contacts with the citizenry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' responsibility towards the development of healthy and mature public opinion can also be addressed through a dedicated unit for this purpose, resources permitting. In the interim, the work of internal outreach should be seen as an additional function of one of the existing units of the ministry.

One of the ministry's main tasks is to inform and involve the youth in foreign affairs issues, and engender among them a sense of internationalism. This can be done through means, such as, essay writing competitions, topical debates and sports activities for students at universities and polytechnics, as well as those at secondary schools. Such efforts would have the additional merit of attracting some of the participants to consider a career in the foreign service, and in engaging them towards other international fields.

Domestic Outreach Programme

In similar fashion, sustained contacts with a wide range of non-state actors with regards to different aspects of external relationships are of considerable value. These civil society partners include, among others:

- The Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) and other business and financial bodies. Their collaborative activities with foreign partners are invaluable in achieving economic goals in trade, investment, technology and other fields. We encourage them to enter into agreements with their counterparts abroad. Captains of business and industry the world over are included in high-ranking official delegations that travel to foreign countries. This is also a regular practice in Namibia.
- Many of the academic institutions, professional associations, cultural entities and community groups or individuals active in their own areas of specialisation are engaged in international exchanges that are of special value to the promotion of mutual understanding and joint ventures. Co-operation between universities,

polytechnics and other advanced institutions of learning have special role in advancing mutual sharing of experiences, and in creating better understanding across borders. Furthermore, the rich cultural diversity of Namibia is of an indispensable value in a world that is increasingly celebrating such diversity and mutually beneficial exchanges.

- Partnerships between professional associations of architects, doctors, engineers, lawyers, and women's groups, and contacts between developmental NGOs and other grass-roots organisations contribute towards socio-economic development. They, collectively and individually, have the capacity to influence relationships between nations and peoples.
- The media has a special role in projecting images across the world, creating better understanding that pierces through stereotypes and unfounded fears. Hence, it is expected, officially or independently, to be truthful, fair, objective and self-policing within the framework of the freedom that they are guaranteed under our Constitution and in keeping with universal democratic values.

Women and Youth

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can make its contribution to the national policy of giving a high priority to women and youth affairs in two ways.

The first is by giving high priority to the affairs of women and youth. It is thus, logically important to focus on the welfare of Namibian students studying overseas. That should be seen not only as a consular issue but also as a matter that should engage the personal attention of the ambassador, since these young persons are the future of the nation. Sufficient resources should be provided for them.

The second is to use missions to look for opportunities for enhanced aid and foreign scholarships, that would benefit both women and the youth. While the aid issue is handled primarily by the National Planning Commission, the missions can play an important support role.

It is a domestic responsibility for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to sustain contact with, and be accessible to all the above constituencies. Open dialogue and exchange contribute towards building sound international relationships, based on the principle of participatory pluralism that is the strength of a democracy. This is of special value in our pursuit of economic diplomacy, and consolidation of good governance at home.

Chapter 10

DIPLOMACY MANAGEMENT

A Professional Service

Periodic evaluation of all government activities, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' operations, is necessary. After 14 years of independence, the ministry must know the level of its operational efficiency, professionalism and accountability. It is also necessary to keep pace with new paradigms in the world of diplomacy. Upgrading operational specificities in terms of techniques of building relations; mastering negotiating skills; and acquisition of appropriate expertise in the areas of security, disarmament, multilateral economics, and global environmental issues is an absolute necessity. Such broad knowledge is necessary for diplomats who, by nature, are not masters of one subject but rather jacks-of-all-trades. They should know how to handle all themes and be able to weave them into multilateral and bilateral projections of national interests. It is thus, important to know the current levels of skills and capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The foreign service is a distinct professional entity, and, indeed, a sub-unit within the general public service, with specific features needed for the performance of its specialised responsibilities. That has, indeed, been the *de facto* position over these years, and should be recognised in our regulations.

In practice, the foreign service has been functioning as an “integrated” service, handling a broad variety of tasks, including political, economic and commercial, information, cultural, and consular (five missions have commercial officers seconded from the Ministry of Trade and Industry), at home and abroad. It is interesting to know that a number of large countries that had specialised branches within their diplomatic service have also moved towards this concept of integrated

diplomatic work. Different segments of external relationship are now interconnected. These include political work and economic tasks (which now draw most of the attention), such as, investment and trade promotion Furthermore, in small missions like those of Namibia, officials necessarily should have multi-functional skills.

Namibia primarily needs professional diplomats possessing multiple skills. That mandates a dedicated foreign service training institution of our own, which could be established in partnership with the University of Namibia, and other suitable external allies. Such an institution would address the needs for mid-career training, and run specialised programmes for senior diplomats as well. It might also assist other countries in Southern Africa. The project is to be pursued as a priority task.

Foreign service officers need to keep abreast with domestic economic and social developments, particularly at a time of rapid economic growth in Namibia. One method is to have all officials travel within the country for up to a week, immediately prior to taking up an assignment abroad. That should be done with due permission from the mandated authority, to visit places and institutions relevant to work at the place of assignment. For instance, this may entail visiting areas of economic activity that are connected with Namibia's exports. These officials would also call at ministries and agencies, public and private, which are active in the country of assignment.

The Structure

In 1990, with the assistance of Ambassador E.M. Debrah of Ghana, assigned by the Commonwealth to help the ministry at its inception, the initial structure for the ministry was created. Over the years, the ministry has undergone minor modification in terms of operational structural reorganisation, (for example; the Legal Division has moved from what used to be the Legal and Consular Department to the Multilateral and Policy Co-ordination Department (MPC); the Consular Division is now part of the Protocol Department). The structure is continuously reviewed.

The Deputy Permanent Secretary assists the Permanent Secretary in supervising and co-ordinating the ministry's day-to-day activities. Officials at the rank of Deputy Permanent Secretary or Under Secretary head the four Departments: Regional and Bilateral Affairs (RBA), MPC, Protocol and Administration.

Currently, there are 132 officials in the A (Professional) Branch of the Foreign Service, of whom 70 are at headquarters while 62 are deployed abroad in 20 diplomatic missions. That gives a headquarters to missions ratio of 1 to 0.94, which is a good balance between the two wings. It also gives an average of just 3.3 diplomats from the ministry deployed in each mission, clearly indicating that the missions are small in size. Hence, it is proposed to gradually increase the size (in terms of personnel) subject to the availability of resources. Six of 20 of the current heads of mission are women.

With regard to the B (Administrative) and C (Secretarial) Branches of the service, the goal is the same as that of A Branch: to improve training, and enhance motivation as well as career opportunities, so as to generate higher value from the foreign service. The same principles of rigorous selection, and encouragement for officials to learn foreign languages which applies to Branch A of the service, would be valid for Branch B, which provides administrative personnel for both the headquarters and for missions abroad.

The size and the location of Namibia's diplomatic missions are under continuous review based on the following factors: national security; old and new political ties; economic and commercial interests, including markets for Namibian products; the process of regional economic integration; development co-operation, bilateral and multilateral; and nationals requiring consular services. The objective is to utilise existing resources optimally, without seeking an increase in personnel posted abroad.

A three to four-member Postings Committee comprising Deputy Permanent Secretaries, appointed by the Minister and chaired by the Permanent Secretary, is

responsible for selecting those to be deployed abroad. The appointment of the Heads of Missions is the prerogative of His Excellency the President. The recommendations of the Committee need the approval of the Minister.

The structure allows for the possibility of “non-resident ambassadors”, who may be located in Windhoek, and cover their country of accreditation through two or three annual visits. It is an economic way of facilitating and preferable to having no representation at all.

Operational Methodology

The annual management plans for the missions articulate quantifiable goals and economic objectives. The targets provide the missions with objectives to aim at, whilst projecting their activities within a pro-active framework in harmony with economic imperatives. That constitutes a concrete measure in implementing economic diplomacy. In addition, the missions furnish headquarters with periodic reports, including annual reports that detail the work performed.

Change and Adaptation

Change is the only constant thing in the world. At present, the external environment is volatile and turbulent. Globalisation and the interdependence of nations add to the ways in which external factors impact on the life of countries. That means our system has to adapt to the pace and range of change. We need a robust diplomatic system rooted in our own ethos and needs. The system should be flexible enough to adapt to the demands of today and tomorrow. Given the fact that the diplomatic methods and techniques are fairly similar between nations, while also possessing their own particularities, we need to learn from others and use new ideas to serve our own needs. Therefore, we need a strong, resilient system of our own, which should borrow the best ideas from other countries’ experiences, but only if such ideas serve our permanent interests.

Chapter 11

THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ABROAD

The Cutting Edge

While the headquarters determines the policy and provides the guidelines for the conduct of diplomacy, the missions abroad constitute the delivery system. They function in conditions that vary greatly. But, collectively they are the cutting edge of our diplomacy. It is thus our goal to keep the missions well prepared for the tasks they have to perform.

By virtue of their customary high profile and prominence in foreign capitals, ambassadors and high commissioners bear a particular responsibility as representatives of the head of state. Our institutional measures strengthening the diplomatic machinery aim at optimal conditions for consistent high performance by heads of missions and their teams.

The mission represents the government and the people of Namibia. Therefore, all offices, ministries and agencies, and citizens, must make use of the missions, taking advantage of their expertise regarding the foreign country, and diplomatic facilitation. Utilising the missions enhances personnel expertise and experience, as well as the capability of the mission. As a result, national interests are advanced in a two-way process.

The head of a mission, the ambassador or high commissioner, is the guide, team leader and *de facto* head of the mission's family. The mission is an outpost of Namibia in a foreign land. Hence, teamwork is vital for the mission's success. To that end, all home-based officials share equal responsibility for advancing national interests abroad and at home. Therefore, the headquarters' staff constitutes an

essential part of all missions abroad.

Integrated Diplomacy

There are four broad functions that are permanent in the work of Namibian missions. These are outreach, reportage, service and management:

Outreach encompasses the classic diplomatic function of negotiation, and the task to build local networks of allies and friends, consisting of political personalities, parliamentarians, business and civic leaders, academics and specialists, and decision-makers of all categories. As part of a process of “democratisation” of foreign policy in most countries, the coverage of diplomacy has expanded to include all the additional players in the field. Much of the work depends on the initiative and imagination of the diplomats in the field. Building connections that lead to mutually beneficial activities thus becomes an important necessity. Economic promotion is a vital part of outreach diplomacy, which also calls for imaginative use of local opportunities.

Reportage is another classic function that has also changed. In the age of instant communication, information from 24-hour news channel reaches all corners of the global village instantaneously. Also available as conduit of ready information are many journals providing scholarly analysis of world events. However, the need for clear-headed diplomatic reportage based on the specific interests of one's own country remains. Therefore, the purpose of embassy reports is to engage headquarters in a two-way informative dialogue (which may also involve other missions concerned with the subject), focusing not on good news *per se*, but rather on information and assessments that should contribute towards decision-making by headquarters. To that end, honest and integrity are essential.

Service is sometimes seen as a routine task but it is no less vital. It includes consular services, the issuance of visas to foreign visitors to Namibia, and the provision of a wide range of services to Namibian citizens abroad. The speed and efficiency with which the work is done often contributes to the image of the mission, and of the

country. Servicing also includes replies to commercial enquiries from home-based exporters looking for markets, and foreign traders seeking to enter the Namibian economy for trade, investments and other commercial activities. No less important are general enquiries from members of the public in foreign countries (some of the enquiries are sent via the Internet). Courteous and positive responses are important if the country's good image is to be enhanced and maintained.

Management covers the regular tasks of administration of the mission, financial control, and the mission's interaction with headquarters. Management and self-audit of performance is the other element. It is through the management plan, action plans and other such devices that headquarters is able to gauge the mission's performance.

Economic Diplomacy and Management Methods

Most Namibian missions are small in size, with between two to four functional diplomats. It is inevitable that they need a wide range of skills to handle different tasks. Therefore, it is crucial that they should all be intimately familiar with economic diplomacy, both because this is Namibia's vital need, and because economics has become the platform on which relationships among countries are founded. To that end, trade and investment promotion are central objectives for Namibia's valorisation of the country's rich resources; and for job creation, socio-economic growth, and distributive justice for all Namibian people and regions. Economic diplomacy is also at the centre of our training programmes for professionals at all levels.

Diplomatic missions play a strong role in mobilising economic and technical co-operation from bilateral and multilateral partners. In addition to being channels of contact, they also advise headquarters on shifts in aid policy and the economic priorities of the country's diplomatic partners.

The Internet is an instrument for global change, affecting our diplomacy in the same way that it is transforming other aspects of contemporary life. The building of a secure "Intranet", as a safe network within this Internet, will provide a modern and

rapid means of communication with far-flung effects. This is a priority for the ministry. Some of Namibia's missions are in capitals where reliable access to the Internet is not yet possible, or where local conditions warrant a fail-safe communication system of our own. At these places, the direct radio link remains the best option. As for the rest, the bulk of communications will be shifted to the Intranet. This would also achieve significant economy over the current heavy use of the telephone and the fax. For secure communications of a confidential character, the classic diplomatic bag shall remain the vehicle of choice.

A system of periodic inspection of diplomatic missions is a corollary to the overall mission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in terms of good management of government affairs. However, the number and size of Namibia's missions is not large enough to justify a permanent "inspectorate". Nevertheless, periodic and objective inspections will continue to be undertaken to assist missions to perform at their best, and to find rapid solutions to genuine difficulties over logistics.

Diplomatic Service and Career Ambassadors

The ministry is keenly aware of the importance that career officials need reasonable expectations that they will eventually rise to the position of ambassadors or high commissioners. This is particularly needed to sustain morale in the diplomatic service of Namibia. Compared with the home civil service, an official with five, 10 or even 15 years seniority has rather limited influence in an embassy. He or she will have risen in grade in the normal course of promotions being available, but the real position of independent authority comes only when he/she heads a mission.

In this context, the Namibian government, headed by the President, who has the sole prerogative of appointing Namibian heads of mission, regards it as imperative to strike a healthy balance between career diplomats and political appointees. Namibia's policy on career diplomats is in line with that of all countries in the world, with the exception of the US where, since the early days of independence, the appointment of public figures as heads of mission was seen as normal. No other advanced country works in this manner.

Non-Resident Ambassadors

Namibia as a developing country is constrained by lack of resources to open missions in most of the countries in the world. Consequently, the appointment of non-resident ambassadors helps to address this problem. A non-resident ambassador is not a substitute for a resident ambassador. Since the non-resident ambassador may be in a position to visit the country of accreditation barely two or three times a year, his/her linkages in the target country are not continuous or as deep as that of a resident ambassador.

Therefore, the real comparison is between having a non-resident ambassador and having none at all. From this perspective, the advantages are very clear. The appointment of non-resident ambassadors provides a means of sustaining contacts with a wide set of countries to initiate the process of building economic and other linkages. It also gives the option of shifting to a full resident mission when circumstances warrant it. Most importantly, it has the further advantage for Namibia to give ambassadors' rank to a wider range of officials and to groom them for full resident charge later on.

Chapter 12

TOWARDS A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Recruitment and Training

A guide to an improved recruitment policy is under preparation. It is designed to cover a system of recruitment examinations, including written tests, interviews, and induction training to be undertaken at a new Foreign Service Training Institute. With regards to foreign language requirements, the system makes it compulsory for new recruits to learn at least one, with a rewarded option.

Performance Appraisal, Motivation and Morale

Performance appraisal is vital in the foreign service because operating far away from headquarters and in relative isolation requires frequent evaluation. Since a higher standard of responsibility falls on all the officials – not just the heads of mission – headquarters needs to know at all times the level, quantity and quality of service(s) each official delivers in order to estimate how much should be done operationally so as to keep pace with the other world countries.

Due to differences in levels of economic development, and climatic conditions pertaining in host countries; and the need to strike a balance between high morale and discipline on one side, and achieving uniform working conditions (for all diplomats) on the other, rotational posting is the norm.

Professionalism and Specialisation

Professionalism is the key to building stronger credibility in the foreign service vis-à-vis the performance of officials both at home and abroad. It is also the way to add

virtue to the capability of officials to serve the interests of Namibia. The goal is to selectively have a good range of skills in foreign languages available to the ministry in the next few years.

All officials would be expected to have a working knowledge of economic diplomacy, in its specific application to serve the needs of promoting Namibian interests abroad. To that end, mid-career training will remain a permanent feature of the Foreign Service Training Institute.

One functional activity that all diplomats need to master is information and media-related work. Modern and effective diplomacy is closely linked to information and communication skills. Hence, it is vital for diplomats (ambassadors and first secretaries included) posted abroad to access and reach out to media practitioners covering daily and periodic publications, as well as TV and radio. They must constantly interact with news media practitioners, and use the contacts for the furtherance of national diplomatic objectives. It is specialised work that has now become integral to mainstream diplomacy, in the same way as economics.

In many countries, high quality local personnel are available and they play an important adjunct role in missions abroad. Using the tools of motivation and reward, plus additional local training where it is appropriate, it is possible to derive better value from such personnel, and this too is an aspect of the overall HR policy that is pursued for optimising performance.

Chapter 13

A HOLISTIC POLICY TO SERVE THE NATION

Like all the branches of the government of the Republic of Namibia, the ministry should be judged in terms of the overall services it provides to the people of Namibia and to the international community. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' mission statement set out at the beginning of this document outlines that task. The statement guides the operational world of the ministry and of all Namibian missions abroad.

Future Direction

The principles underlying Namibia's foreign policy have been laid down in the Constitution. The objectives are clear and constant. This White Paper presents them in a concentrated form, reiterating the familiar and the well-established. The implementation of the policy, through the apparatus of its diplomatic system, is consistent with strategic purpose, but flexible at the level of tactics.

As a small nation within the global community, Namibia has no pretensions as to the role it can play in world affairs. Its first priority is the safeguarding and promotion of its own interests, and pursuit of good neighbourly relations in its own region, for peace, security and inter-state co-operation.

Therefore, its concentric circles of focus, which begin with the most important, are the immediate neighbours, the SADC sub-region, and the continent of Africa. These are followed by the nations of the non-aligned and developing South, the Commonwealth, and the broad community of nations within which many of Namibia's friendships were forged in the difficult days of the liberation struggle. To put it another way, Namibia logically begins with its own neighbourhood, but is

open in spirit, and in mutually beneficial co-operation, to the entire world, without discrimination. Of course, in the case of countries that have a large capacity to interact with us, and engage in political, economic and other exchanges over a broad spectrum, our relations develop even faster. But there is no exclusivity or discrimination. Namibia seeks friends everywhere.

For a small country of Namibia's size and means, we boast of a large diplomatic community and enjoy a high international profile, making the country a favoured conference venue. Thus, Namibia's foreign policy and diplomacy cannot but be constantly active internally, regionally and internationally.

Today all states, large and small, find that the concept of absolute sovereignty of nations is under pressure. There are new limitations that include treaty obligations, accepted through bilateral and multilateral negotiation as indispensable ground rules in a progressively interdependent world. One example, referred to earlier in this document, is the WTO regulations that restrict tariff policy, or stipulate a mandatory international arbitration mechanism whose decisions have to be accepted as binding. Then there are other factors – evolution towards new principles of human rights and basic obligations of states – manifesting the international community concern on issues that would have earlier been regarded as lying within the domestic domain of nations. As a nation committed to upholding international law, Namibia cautiously welcomes these developments, provided that the entire international community democratically participates in the elaboration of these concepts through its legitimate organ, the United Nations. However, Namibia is opposed to unilateral intervention, humanitarian or otherwise, outside the UN Charter.

The evolution in international law also underscores the importance of early action to democratise the UN. This will surely be a priority for action by the international community in the years ahead.

Namibia looks to the world with the clear and open gaze of a young state, confident in faith in the rule of international law and multilateralism as exemplified first of all by the United Nations. It is committed to peaceful co-operation with all, and it seeks

a collaborative external framework that is conducive to its national policy of stability, harmony among different national communities and groups, and sustained growth for the benefit of all the people.

Vision 2030 articulates Namibia's goal of raising itself to the level of an efficient and competitive knowledge-based industrialised nation in the next three decades. The ministry is tasked to create an external environment that facilitates the realisation of these national goals. It also seeks to project these national goals externally in order to mobilise the essential external inputs into our efforts, firstly in the form of economic integration within the SADC region, secondly, through the realisation of the African Union, and thirdly, by strengthening beneficial co-operation around the world.