



ADDRESS

BY

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

HONOURABLE PROF. PETER KATJAVIVI

AT THE

***INAUGURATION OF THE MEMORIAL FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE
BATTLE OF OHAMAKARI AND THE GENOCIDE IN NAMIBIA 1904-1908***

ON

11 AUGUST 2009

AT

BREMEN, GERMANY

17H00

Director of Ceremonies;
Senator Dr. Reinhard Loske
Michael Weisser from D.U.R.S.T.-Exhibition
Ralph Saxe from Verein Der Elefant eV
Prof. Dr. Jutta Berninghausen from Hochschule Bremen
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present here;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Distinguished Captains of Industries;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Evening

I am happy to be here in Bremen, Germany to witness this historic event ‘The Inauguration of the Memorial to the Victims of the Battle of Hamakari and of the Genocide in Namibia 1904-1908. It gives me great pleasure and honour to witness this important gathering on behalves of the Government Republic of Namibia which has brought together this evening. We can share knowledge, experience and lessons learnt with respect to our colonial history and its consequences.

We are pleased to note that the leadership of the City of Bremen has found it appropriate to pay tribute to the memories of the victims of the war of 1904 – 1908 by erecting this monument. It is indeed a welcome gesture of goodwill to us in Namibia and to all those people in the world who value lives and dignity of mankind. In this respect, we commend your initiative to erect this monument dedicated to the memory of Namibians who lost their lives during the colonial war.

To you Mr. Senator, and your colleagues who are associated with this important initiative, we simply cannot thank you enough for what you have done for both Germany and Namibia. Your bold initiative to erect this monument has brought back the memories of those who lost lives during the terrible colonial war far away in Africa.

Today we are here having the opportunity to remember them and to pay homage for them. This is possible because of what you have done through this auspicious occasion.

Director of Ceremonies,

At the 2004 Bremen international conference on colonial conflicts in Namibia from 1904 to 1908 - the so-called Herero symposium - then Mayor Dr. Henning Scherf, President of the Senate of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, in his talks with representatives of all Namibian groups concerned and participating in the event, pledged that a memorial be erected in Bremen to commemorate the victims and recall the need for reconciliation. Through an initiative by Bremen African Archives in co-operation with The Elephant Cultural Centre (Verein DerElefant! e.V.), Dr. Scherf's pledge is now put into operation.

I am reliably informed that the memorial is composed of concrete, gravel, up to 300 medium-sized boulders and four larger rocks of an oblong shape and a length of about 70 to 100 cm. The boulders and rocks are collected in the Ohamakari (Waterberg) area. The gravel and the concrete are German products. The gravel concrete, covering the ground of the rotundal memorial, symbolises the *base of memory*, the 300 Namibian boulders stand for the countless *victims of genocide*, the four larger rocks represent the *groundstones of reconciliation* which we have to set.

The memorial is integrated into the garden landscape of the park around the Bremen Anti-Colonial Monument, the *Brick Elephant*, well known to anyone who has walked the area around the Bremen central station.

I am happy to hear that the Brick Elephant was erected in 1932 to commemorate the German colonial past and was re-dedicated to be a monument to anti-colonialism and reconciliation to celebrate Namibian independence in 1990, in the presence of then Minister of Education, Nahas Angula and currently the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia. The neighbourhood of the memorial to the Brick Elephant and its landscape garden-type surrounding associates a relationship to a friendly and balanced environment. The memorial is situated on the visual central axis of the Brick Elephant, close to the verge of the green along the well-visited *Hohenlohe Straße*. Thus a visible correspondence is created with the larger monument, without interfering with its original dominance of the complete scene. There will be no path to or around the memorial; it presents itself to passers-by on the side-walk of *Hohenlohe Straße*.

This Memorial is understood as a further manifestation of the process of reconciliation between Germany and Namibia, which the colonial apology by the German Minister of Economic Co-operation, Ms Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul on the occasion of the 100st anniversary of battle of Ohamakari in 2004, for the atrocities committed by Imperial Germany. The links established in the implementation phase of the memorial project with the Okakarara Cultural Centre are expected to leading to vibrant exchanges between Okakarara and Bremen in which, in particular, the youth, our common future and the most important beneficiaries of reconciliation, will participate.

The memorial project is co-financed by Bremen's Senator for Environment, Works, Traffic, and European Affairs, the Schwachhausen Local Government, and the Green Party. Prof Manfred Hinz from the Faculty of Law of the University of Namibia and Mr. Thomas Frank Gatter of the Bremen Africa Archives, University of Bremen, has been responsible for guiding and directing the memorial project; Mr. Gatter also designed the lay-out of the memorial. Mr. Heiner Schneider-Waterberg is thanked for assisting in collecting the stones and carrying them from the mountains to the street. Mr. Gunther Hilliges, the former Head of the Bremen State Office for Development Assistance, was the driving political force behind the implementation of the project. Mr. Harald Schütt, Windhoek, took care of all the technicalities to move the Waterberg stones from the Waterberg to Bremen. The Honorary Consul of Namibia to Bremen and Hamburg, Mr. Klaus Thesenfitz, thankfully funded the transport of the stones.

If we are to achieve sustainable development and well being of the majority of our people then the wise words of President Julius Mwalimu Nyerere of Tanzania when said "*we must run while they are walking*" must guide us. We should put into practice these words and make them the conveyor belt to support us during this race. We need to fully work together as partner in the fight against poverty and economic emancipation of both our countries people as we have common interest.

In conclusion, allow me to wish both countries a healthy long-lasting relationship. I encourage you to remain focused in finding lasting solutions to these perennial problems a driving force to curb poverty and rural under- development.

It is now my honour and pleasure to officially inaugurate this on behalf of the government of the Republic of Namibia. I Thank You.