

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELENCY DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND
FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE BATSHARA ANNUAL
FESTIVAL

01 AUGUST 2010

SANGWALI
CAPRIVI REGION

The Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Honourable Governor of Caprivi Region, Mr Leonard Mwilima;
Honourable Councillors of Caprivi Region;
Honourable Chief Borniface Shufu of Mayeyi Traditional Authority;
Honourable Chief Kisko Liswani III of Masubia Traditional Authority;
Honourable Chief Mayuni of Mashi Traditional Authority;
Honourable Chief George Simasiku of Mafwe Traditional Authority;
Honourable Members of the Mayeyi Traditional Authority and other Traditional Authorities;
Distinguished Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow me to express my deep appreciation and distinct honour for the invitation extended to me to attend this 2010 Batshara Annual Festival commemorated annually by the Bayeyi Community.

Indeed, this area is well known for its rich history and brave chiefs. It is in this area where the Great King Sebetwane from Basutholand, crossed from Botswana to Barotseland and finally came back to settle in this area. I am informed his grave is around here. His son Chief Sekeletu whose grave is at Malengalenga took over the reigns. This is also the same area where an imperialist David Livingstone crossed through this area on his way to Northern Rhodesia now the Republic of Zambia. Some missionaries by the names of Helmore and Price followed him through to this area, but Chief Sekeletu resisted their entry and poisoned them to death.

In addition, the German colonialists caused havoc by killing our people in their resistance to land grabbing. After the Germans were defeated by the British; the colonial White South African regime illegally occupied the land by forced removals and relocation of our people.

It is for this reason that the Namibian people took up arms to liberate themselves from the yoke of colonialism. We fought and defeated them militarily and took back our country. Although the political struggle has been won, the second phase of the struggle for economic independence has just commenced.

Director of Ceremonies;

In Namibia, Traditional Authorities in collaboration with the government should play a greater role in the distribution of customary land by ensuring that land is effectively utilized. The Government is aware that there are greedy people who grab and claim pieces of land to themselves and rob widows and orphans of their valuable land. I want to urge such people that the law of the country will take its course on them. The Government of the Republic of Namibia will not allow such anarchy to continue unabated. If you know of such people please report them to relevant authorities.

Director of Ceremonies;

Allow me to underline a few words to our men and women in this area and to all the Namibians in general. I urge you to work harder in your maize fields to prevent hunger and poverty. Do not become lazy and become beggars. The soil in this area is very fertile and if utilized effectively and fully it will produce a lot of food. Caprivi is a potential food basket for the rest of Namibia.

Equally, I urge the youth in particular to refrain from alcohol and drug abuse and concentrate on their studies. These are harmful substances that can destroy your future; and I want to urge all parents to guard against their children's use of such substances. When they indulge in such practices, they will start committing crimes which is contrary to the laws of this country. If your child is a culprit in such practices do not protect him or her, but report him to the police. I want to urge the law enforcement agencies to arrest such people on the spot.

I am informed that a new secondary school is under construction and about to be completed. The youth of this area will now have no excuse as the hostel facilities will be completed soon. Make use of these facilities by studying hard. I want Namibia to produce scientists, geologists, marine biologists, doctors, etc, to come from this community as well. Education leads to a better and bright future. So you should refrain from laziness and alcohol and drug abuse as it will take you nowhere but complete destruction.

Director of Ceremonies;

I am appealing to all the people to put an end to domestic violence. Women should have their rights and freedoms in the community. Anyone who will be caught harassing or raping a woman should be dealt with accordingly. It is proven that girls are even more academically hardworking and intelligent than boys. So never look down upon girls. Similarly, there are men who are abusing their women when they abuse alcohol. Such practices should be stopped with immediate effect. Women are our mothers and sisters and we will not sit quietly while our women are being battered and be dehumanized. We should equally respect and look after our elderly people. Children should obey their parents and elderly people and should respect each other. I am told there are youth who rob their grand parents of their old age pension. As soon as they receive pension; the youth grab the money from their grand parents. Others even assault and kill them. Such practices should stop immediately and anybody who will be found doing that will be charged of crime and liable for prosecution.

Director of Ceremonies:

I am informed that the bridges to Rupara/Nkasa National Park have just been completed. I, therefore, urge you to take care of these infrastructures and guard them jealously. Equally you have a lot of natural resources in the National Parks of Rupara/Nkasa and Mudumu and therefore do not plunder your animals in these National Parks because they are a source of attraction to tourists and generate income for our communities.

Director of Ceremonies;

Honourable Chief;

Traditional Authorities are our guardians and we should give them the respect that they deserve. It is through them that the law and order, as well as cultural values and norms are transmitted and maintained in the communities. All the people are therefore urged to respect traditional leaders and also to cooperate with them as well as with the Government.

Equally, I want to appeal to all the Traditional Authorities and their subjects to cooperate with each other and with the government for the sake of peace and national unity. Investors will only come to a place where there is peace. So please I urge you to maintain peace in this region. We should learn how to solve conflicts peacefully and amicably, and forge ahead with national development. We must first of all think ourselves as a nation not as tribe, in that way we can inculcate nationalism in our children. In conclusion, I seize this opportunity to wish you a joyous festival.

I thank you.