



**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**

1st ANNUAL NAMIBIA POLITICAL YOUTH FORUM



Held: Heja Lodge, Windhoek

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Theme: Political Youth Engaging Towards VISION 2030

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Table of Content

- 1. Introduction and Background**
- 2. Objective**
- 3. Structure and organization of the forum**
 - 3.1 Participants**
- 4. Themes of the forum**
 - 4.1 Political youth engaging towards VISION 2030.**
- 5. Challenges of the forum**
- 6. The way forward**
- 7. Conclusion**
- 8. Recommendations**
- 9. Photo Gallery**

1. Introduction and Background

Today's youth are tomorrow's workers, entrepreneurs, parents, active citizens and indeed leaders. The time was right for the youth to sit down and iron out their future. This was done in the spirit of democracy and harmony. As political youth wings they needed to know how our government works from the local, regional, national and international levels. At the present stage a lot was to be desired as the youth wings were not involved in most policymaking process e.g. Vision 2030.

The political youth forum was to serve the youth in promoting and advancing greater youth participation in Namibia's development.

Opening ceremony

The Hon. Minister of Sports, Youth, National Service and Culture officially opened the forum on behalf of the President of the Republic of Namibia where he touched on the role of the youth in politics and explained the difference between the state and government and how the youth can utilize their power to change policies to their advantage. The chairman of the LOC did the welcoming remarks as the Resident Representative of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung underlined the importance of participating in democracy. The Secretary General of the National Youth Council raised the notion of youth as the leaders of today and tomorrow and that they should undertake the challenges that come their way. The FES Intern gave the Vote of Thanks and stressed the importance of the presence of government leaders at the forum.

2. Objective

1. Develop a dialogue with young people on how to effectively contribute to vision 2030.
2. Identify ways of strengthening linkages between parliament and youth movements
3. Evaluate youth programs implementation by government
4. Discuss how youth can participate in the mainstream of the economy.

3. Structure and organization of the forum

The NYC in collaboration with the FES organized the first ever annual political youth forum which was held at the Heja Game Lodge from 12 to 14 October 2007, Windhoek, Namibia. As a practical measure of fostering greater interaction and cooperation among participants.

3.1. Participants

The meeting brought together 45 youth leaders from different political parties. Gender and minority political parties' representatives were used as important criteria in the selection of the participants to the forum.

4. Themes of the forum

4.1 Political Youth Engaging Towards VISION 2030.

4.1.1 Sub-Themes

a. Youth and Vision 2030

We discussed the shortcomings of Vision 2030 which was presented by a researcher from NEPRU and a representative from cabinet secretariat. The participants felt that, more advocacy must be done towards vision 2030 and also wanted to be consulted with the upcoming NDP-3 as they were not consulted before. They called for the creation of vision 2030 commission where all government activities will be coordinated within the said plan. As at present stage government activities are overlapping each other.

b. Youth and Economic Participation

There were three presenters, Mrs. Rittmann, who discussed on how the youth can benefit via SME and Broad Based Economic Empowerment (BBEE). Lazarus Jacobs presented on entrepreneurship and how the youth can empower themselves instead of waiting on the government for employment. Finally, Mr. V. Rukoro talked about how the youth can benefit from small and medium enterprises and how to get readily-available funding from financial institutions based on feasible business plans.

The youth then called for a platform where they will be a public-private dialogue to benefit the youth business-wise.

c. Youth Globalisation and International Politics towards 2030

We had presentations from Professor Du Pisani and Mr. Andrew Niikondo based on global youth culture. The professor emphasized on the youth participation in global village and encouraged vigilance as globalization is here to stay. Mr. Niikondo reported that the youth are ignorant are towards the general current affairs and politics but is very much aware on social activities. They both urged the youth to participate in the National sphere regarding economy and international relations. The youth called for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform the nation on Namibia's position in terms of trade relations and foreign policy.

d. Youth in Politics

Graham Hopwood and Prof. Du Pisani spoke on politics. Hopwood said the youth are participating in politics but feels that much more participation is needed. This stems from the belief that there is a brain drain that politics is meant for the elder's only and bored youth. Most of the youth would rather attended social functions or parties than attend political rallies. He also touched on why the youth are discouraged in participating in politics. The youth only get promoted in parties when they propagate in meetings. It is also known that culturally, it is difficult to question the elders

Dealing with the problem: encourage more forums, party involvement in Civic education and take advantage of the provision in their party constitutions.

Du Pisani talked about the demand and supply curve in democracy and he also stressed that there is a high supply of unutilized democracy and encourages the youth to demand the democracy. He also stated that the youth is ignorant regarding their rights as citizens of Namibia.

e. Youth and Education

A presentation by Mr. Nande Kayala.

He said the youth came up with idea to establish a school of arts and culture, to keep African knowledge and tradition within the youth. Education is a long-term process that ensures the transfer of knowledge for the generations. Kayala also spoke on how to go about the role of education in society, which would be provision of skills and knowledge about the economy. According to Kayala, the shortcomings on Vision 2030 are poor quality systems and ineffectiveness, a repetition of plans that have been coated as “new”, and inequality of distribution of resources including finances between the urban and rural areas.

Recommendations: provision of libraries all over and proper qualification licensing of teachers according to different standards. In response the youth wanted Grade 11 students to repeat upon failure of the grade instead of allowance to continue to matrix level. Some felt that the standards currently are too high and consider lowering them. However in a nutshell; they saw the need of a knowledge-based society and higher employment of human resources.

5. Challenges of the forum

5.1 Time:

As time was limited the programme was too congested to allow enough discussion, this was a challenge to engage participants into the group discussions as they were more open to share their views.

5.2 Political parties:

The different political parties should organize themselves as it would make it easier to convey information and engage into participating in forums such as these, for example COD. Who were not represented at the forum.

5.3 Facilitators:

Some resources persons were reluctant to attend because the forum was held during the weekend. Although all facilitators confirmed their presence some didn't attend the forum.

5.4 Weekend:

Some people could not attend the forum, because private commitments.

5.5 Knowledge sharing:

It was a challenge as some participants were not well informed of the agenda of the forum and therefore share any insight on topics discussed.

6. The way forward

6.1 Regions:

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) felt that the resolution should be disseminated to all the 13 regions for the youth to understand the concept behind the 1st Annual Political Youth Forum. They should also enlist and form partnerships with organizations such as NID and the Namibian Democratic Support Centre to drive the message to the grassroots.

6.2 Resolutions committee:

An agenda should be provided beforehand and ensure that all resources required will be provided for to ensure proper recording of proceedings and report back sessions.

6.3 Knowledge sharing:

Registration forms for participants should be handed out with the agenda of the forum so that every participant will be informed about topics and themes.

7. Conclusion

The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Nahas Angula officially closed the forum but also encouraging forums such as these to take place and gave the National Youth Council (NYC) to form a Youth Parliament to engage youth in promoting youth issues effectively and efficiently towards Vision 2030. Meanwhile, the Secretary General of NYC did the welcoming remarks whereas an FES Intern made a statement on behalf of the sponsors, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Chairman of the LOC gave the vote of thanks and the way forward.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Time: Allocate more time to resources person & discussion and during the week instead of weekends.

8.2 NYC and FES: Strengthen the partnership and allow other development partners to come on board.

8.3 Themes: Remain within the Vision 2030 and add on the NDP'S 1 up to 7.

8.4 NPC: They should or rather must attend the next forum.

9. Photo Gallery

