The Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament of Namibia

6 - 10 May, 2013
“Ensuring that the Voices of Tomorrow’s Leaders are Heard.”

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The Children’s Parliament of Namibia

Improving the Rights and Welfare of Children and Young People

The primary goal of the Children’s Parliament is to lobby or advise government and its agencies responsible for law-making and their implementing machinery to fast track policies that would improve the rights and welfare of children and young persons in accordance with national legal instruments and international convention provisions.

“The Mission of the Namibian Children’s Parliament is to help create a society with a high sense of responsibility, of which children and the youth are partners with adults.”

The Children’s Parliament is the mouthpiece of children and young persons. It should serve as an introduction to the work being done regarding children and young persons in Namibia.

The Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament of the Republic of Namibia was led by the Speaker, Ms Sandré Botma, and deputised by Mr. Shaandre Finnies. The session was held in the National Assembly Chambers in Windhoek from 6-10 May 2013, under the theme “Ensuring that the voices of tomorrow’s leaders are heard”.

Fifty five learners, four from each of the thirteen regions and three Junior Councillors from the City of Windhoek participated as well as veterans from previous sessions.

At 09h00 fifty-five students became young parliamentarians as they began filing into the National Assembly Chambers. With the words; “This Session is called to order,” so began the 4th Session of the Children’s Parliament.

The Speaker of the 3rd Session of the Children’s Parliament, Hon. Giovanni Britz, welcomed the new Hon. Members.

Diamonds are made from coal, he told the Hon. Members as he warned them of the pressure, and honour, that came with being a young parliamentarian.

The Hon. Members took the oath of allegiance to the Children’s Parliament.

Then the serious work of electing the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker took place with Hon. Sandré Botma being elected as Speaker and the Hon. Shaandre Finnies elected as Deputy Speaker.

With the words; “Honourable Speaker, I give notice...” Hon. Members introduced motions that were seconded and placed on the agenda.

Hon. Agnes Tjongarero, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social and Community Development.

Hon. Tjongarero began by offering a quote by Nelson Mandela: “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which we treat our children.”

She added that the Fourth Session was being held in a time of “barbaric rape and killing of innocent young women and girls.”

She urged the youth to demand, in one voice, the end of violence against women and girls.

“You always have choices, make use of them,” she urged the Hon. Members as she declared the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament officially open.

The Rights of the Child

Opening Address by Hon. Agnes Tjongarero, MP & Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social and Community Development.

She reminded Hon. Members of the duty they had in representing the hundreds of thousands of youth who were not in the chamber.
Top: The Speaker of the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament Hon. Sandré Botma (left) from Otjozondjupa region and Deputy Speaker Hon. Shaandre Fin- nies (right) from Karas Region.

Middle: Hon. Members taking the Parliamentary oath.

Bottom Left and Right: Hon. Members during the debates.
Gender Equality and Child Welfare

Hon. Rosalia Nghindinwa, MP, Minister on Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

The Hon. Minister asked Hon. Members to take full advantage of the week and to be mindful of the sacrifices that were made to bring about an Independent Namibia.

She reminded the Hon. Members that it was on 4 May, 1978, that innocent women and children were killed in the Cassinga refugee camp in Angola.

The camp was attacked by soldiers of the South African Apartheid regime.

After observing a moment of silence for the victims she went on to list the work the Namibian government has done to protect the rights of children.

However, she noted that many challenges remain for the Youth of Namibia.

“Do not take short cuts in life,” she warned Hon. Members, “they are too dangerous.”

One in every three Namibian children grows up in a household that is poor.

But there is still much to do added the UNICEF Country Representative.

The recently published Child Poverty Report shows that 1 in 3 Namibian children live in poverty.

She reminded Hon. Members that more needed to be done.

An example, she pointed out, is the Child Care and Protection Bill that may be tabled sometime in 2013.

“With passion and determination, let us join hands to grab this unique opportunity so that together with our children, young people, the Government of Namibia and other stakeholders, we can truly create a Namibia fit for Children.”

Mrs. Micaela Marques De Sousa, UNICEF Country Representative.

Mrs. De Sousa reminded Hon. Members that Namibia was one of the first countries to sign and ratify The Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The four core principles of the Convention are nondiscrimination, devotion to the best interest of the child, the right to life, survival and development and respect for the views of the child.

Youth rights are crucial to Namibia’s future development, as 43% of Namibia’s population is under the age of 18.

Mrs. De Sousa said that Namibia is leading by example in its commitment to children in early and middle childhood (0-9 years).
In Namibia at least 13,000 children under the age of 14 are HIV positive.

A large number of women are infected at a young age during their first sexual encounter.

2010/2011: 73% of new HIV infections among 15-19 year olds occurred among women, 27% were amongst men.

30% of sexually active girls reported that they had received money or gifts in exchange for sexual intercourse in the past twelve months.

One in four sexually active girls had two or more partners in the past 12 months.

In Sub-Saharan countries with high HIV prevalence, young women (15-24 years old) are about 2-4 times more likely to be infected with HIV than young men.

The Big Issues Facing Namibia’s Youth

Poverty
HIV / AIDS
Youth unemployment
Alcohol and drug abuse
Early school dropout rates
Migration of young people from rural to urban areas
Premature sexual engagement leading to teenage pregnancies
Alcohol fetal syndrome amongst children born from alcoholic mothers
Unacceptable bad behaviour among youth aggravate by the challenges facing youth

About 5 million young people were living with HIV in developing countries in 2009: 3.2 million young women and 1.7 million young men.

The recently published Child Poverty Report shows that 1 in 3 children live in poverty.
A large percentage of Namibians report being forced into their first sexual experience.
14% of children leave school because of early pregnancy.

Confronting stigma and discrimination is a prerequisite for effective prevention and care, and reaffirms that discrimination on the grounds of one’s HIV status is a violation of human rights.

Top Left: The valedictory speech was delivered by the Speaker of the 3rd Session of the Children’s Parliament, Hon. Giovanni Britz.

Top Right: Young parliamentarians vote.

Middle Left: National Assembly Chambers.

Bottom: Hon. Members taking the Parliamentary oath.
Children’s Rights

Widely Ratified but Not Universal

Namibia was amongst the first countries to sign and ratify The Convention on the Rights of the Child and has signed several key international agreements aimed at protecting children’s rights.

The Ministry of Women and Child Welfare was established in 2000 while youth rights are represented in several associations and government Acts:


   - Slavery and the sale and trafficking of children
   - Child prostitution or pornography

Youth and Child Welfare Acts include:
- Combating of Rape Act, 2000.
- Combating of Domestic Violence Act, 2003
- Criminal Procedure Amendment Act, 2004
- The National OVC Policy, 2004
- The Children’s Status Act of 2006

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in history, currently ratified by 193 States.

America is among only three countries that have not ratified the United Nations’ 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which UNICEF calls “the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.”

The other two countries are South Sudan, which recently became a country in 2011, and Somalia.

During a 2008 youth debate between the presidential candidates, Barack Obama and John McCain were asked whether they would seek to ratify the treaty.

President Obama responded:

“It’s important that the United States return to its position as a respected global leader and promoter of human rights. It’s embarrassing to find ourselves in the company of Somalia, a lawless land. I will review this and other treaties, and ensure the United States resumes its global leadership in human rights.”

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

“Rights” are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is the best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

Article 1: Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2: All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3: All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4: The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Article 5: Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6: You have the right to be alive.

Article 7: You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8: You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9: You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 10: If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11: You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12: You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13: You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14: You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

Article 15: You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn’t harmful to others.

Article 16: You have the right to privacy.

Article 17: You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18: You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

Article 19: You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 20: You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.
**Article 21:** You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

**Article 22:** You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

**Article 23:** You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

**Article 24:** You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

**Article 25:** If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

**Article 26:** You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

**Article 27:** You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can’t do many of the things other kids can do.

**Article 28:** You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

**Article 29:** Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

**Article 30:** You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

**Article 31:** You have the right to play and rest.

**Article 32:** You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

**Article 33:** You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

**Article 34:** You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

**Article 35:** No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

**Article 36:** You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

**Article 37:** No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

**Article 38:** You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

**Article 39:** You have the right to help if you’ve been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

**Article 40:** You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

**Article 41:** If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

**Article 42:** You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

**Articles 43 to 54:** These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

Top: Special Assistant to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Simon /Uirab (left), Deputy Speaker Hon Shaandre Fin- nies (second left), Adv. Bience Gawanas (middle right) and Speaker Hon. Sandré Botma (right).

Middle Left: Hon. Member making a point.

Bottom: Mr. Stewart Sukuma and young parliamentarians.
The UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador gave delegates an inspiring motivational talk.

Although Stewart Sukuma is now a household name in Mozambique, his success was hard earned.

“The reason I am here today is because I was once a child as well,” began Mr. Sukuma as he told the delegates about the challenges he faced as a youth.

He grew up in a village in northern Mozambique, his childhood overshadowed by the Mozambican war.

There were other challenges. Early on his parents divorced and his mother was left to raise seven children.

“My Mum always tried to teach me the important values in life”, he explained.

“We come from mothers, and yet, we are killing them.”

His mother managed to send him to school but he endured much hardship.

“We come from mothers, and yet, we are killing them, I think we should talk about this,” he said.

He told the delegates that it was their responsibility to stop the cycles of suffering and violence.

“You have to fight for the things you want, without lying or stealing or hurting anyone. Many others have done this.”

“You will have to be responsible for everything and this will be your project for life”, he said.

Mr. Sukuma ended the talk by joining the delegates in singing, “We are the Voices of Freedom”, the song he has dedicated to the Children’s parliament.
Overview of the Proposed Child Care and Protection Bill

Key Topics

Namibia’s main law on children is the Children’s Act 33 of 1960, which was inherited from South Africa at independence. This law is very outdated. It is also a colonial law which is not well suited to African situations. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare wants to replace the old law with a new Child Care and Protection Act. The new law should work better to protect and assist Namibian children.

- Definition of “child”:
  A child is defined as anyone below age 18, but at what age should a person become an adult in the eyes of the law: 18, 21 or some other age?

- Overall objectives and guiding principles:
  What principles should apply to children’s rights? How do we know what decisions are in a child’s “best interests”?

- Child Welfare Advisory Council:
  A group of experts appointed by government to monitor the implementation of the law and advise on child rights issues.

- Children’s Ombudsman:
  A new government official who will investigate and act on complaints about abuses of children’s rights.

- Children’s courts:
  Measures to make court proceedings more comfortable for children and to ensure that children can participate in decisions that affect them.

- Prevention and early intervention services:
  Services to help families address problems that may harm children, before they become too serious.

- Children in need of protection:
  Procedures for removing children from their usual homes and placing them in alternative care when this is necessary for their safety and protection.

- Foster care:
  Procedures for putting children in the care of persons who act in the place of parents temporarily, or sometimes for longer periods of time.

- Adoption:
  Rules, procedures and safeguards for adoption of children by Namibians and citizens of other countries.

- Child trafficking:
  Measures to protect children who are moved from one place to another for the purpose of exploitation.

- Consent to medical procedures:
  At what age may children get medical treatment without the permission of a parent? Have access to contraceptives? Have an HIV or pregnancy test?

- Corporal punishment:
  Guidelines to help parents and other caregivers apply discipline without being abusive.

- Other child protection measures:
  Protective measures for children in particularly vulnerable situations.

  - Child-headed households: rules to support and protect households where there is no responsible adult to take care of the children.
  - Worst forms of child labour: offences aimed at preventing the sexual and economic exploitation of children.
  - Child safety at places of entertainment: safety measures at events likely to be attended by large numbers of children.
  - Crimes relating to child abuse and neglect.
“Who am I”, asked Adv. Bience Gawanas, as she addressed the young parliamentarians.

Her list of roles include being an advocate, a commissioner, an ombudsman, a woman, a Namibian, an African, a black woman, a mother, a sister and a grandmother.

“I would like all of you to ask yourselves: who am I? As you peel off the layers of the onion then you get to the core and that is the core of who you are.”

“Live your life to the fullest, live your life in such a way that you have a life that matters.”

“We grew up in apartheid, we grew up in a matchbox house, eleven of us,” recalled the Advocate. She finished her matric in 1974 with dreams beyond apartheid and beyond her means.

Adv. Gawanas dreams were delayed considerably as she unavoidably got drawn into the politics of the time.

Her older brother was murdered, his body mutilated and abandoned in a police mortuary.

Police reports claimed that he was not murdered but was run over by a car. She realized that she could not expect a white policeman, judge or lawyer to bring justice to black people.

Adv. Gawana’s journey for justice took her into exile to England for twelve years. She became a lawyer and realized that justice is more complicated.

“We can only be human if we treat the other person as human,” she said, adding that justice was for all who deserve it.

She asked the delegate, now that the struggle is over, what are the challenges facing them today?

She urged the Hon. Members to become advocates for the Child Care and Protection Bill that is in the process of being finalised by legal drafters.

Address by Ms. Celeste Feris, Control Social Worker: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

Ms. Celeste Feris addressed the Hon. Members on the proposed Child Care and Protection Bill that is in the process of being drafted.

As background, Ms. Feris told the Hon. Members that the existing Children’s Act drafted in 1960 was now redundant.

Ms. Feris outlined why children need to be protected and why the Child Care and Protection Bill is so important for Namibia.

The draft Bill consists of 18 chapters that extensively cover the rights and protection of children.

Ms. Feris briefly outlined parts of the legislation such as international adoption, vulnerable children, child headed households and children with disabilities.

She urged Hon. Members to become familiar with, and to support the draft Bill: “Your goal is to ensure that this important piece of legislation is enacted”.

Proposed Child Care and Protection Bill

Address by Ms. Celeste Feris, Control Social Worker: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.
The third day of Children’s Parliament began with an address by the Hon. Dr. David Namwandi, MP, Minister of Education.

The Hon. Minister of Education told Hon. Members that they must be creative in all ways

“Be aggressive in your search for skills and knowledge because the creative process is systematic, logical and is driven by knowledge,” he said.

“We rely on you, the young generation, a digital native generation, for the survival of generations yet unborn,” he said.

He reminded Hon. Members that they carried the weight and responsibility of representing all of Namibia’s youth.

“I urge you to dedicate yourselves personally to things you can change, areas where you can make a difference,” he said, adding that Hon. Members must aim to be the very best at everything they do.

He left Hon. Members with a clear message:

“Respect, mutual understanding, tolerance, discipline, and above all, hard work is what will distinguish you from the rest.”

After the address, Hon. Members engaged the Minister of Education in a lively discussion covering aspects of education in Namibia.

The Hon. David Namwandi, MP, Minister of Education.

The Hon. Onesmus Fillemon added his voice to the debates on OVC grants when he told delegates that he himself is an orphan.

He described some of the challenges he faces on trying to live on N$200 a month.

The Hon. Onesmus lives with his sister in Okatana. “Now I am in Grade 9 there is not much chance to help myself,” he said and motivated delegates to support increasing the grant.
Ms. Kampala discussed intellectual disabilities and the role the Special Olympics plays in Namibia.

According to the 2001 census, 1 in 20 Namibians has an intellectual disability.

“Sometimes children are tied to trees, or are tied up in the house, because parents do not know how to handle the behaviour of their children.”

Ms. Kampala spoke about the need to provide support for this underserved population.

She explained that there are many myths about intellectual disabilities.

She described how children with intellectual disabilities are often hidden away by families or even tied up because parents cannot manage the situation.

“Sometimes children are tied to trees, or are tied up in the house, because many parents do not know how to handle the behaviour of their children.”

She explained that intellectual disabilities are often caused while the child is still a foetus, if the mother drinks or abuses drugs.

Ms. Kampala then went on to describe many aspects of the Special Olympics and how Hon. Members could get involved.

“I have pledged my commitment to this cause which raises one question, where do you stand?” Sunny Boy, the Special Olympics Ambassador for Namibia.

Hon. Members were invited to sign the Banner of Hope to show their commitment to this cause.

Sunny Boy, the Special Olympics Ambassador for Namibia, urged Hon. Members to take a stand for people living with intellectual disabilities.

“If we are to have a society that is inclusive, where children and adults with intellectual disabilities are accepted, then the change has to start with us.”
84% of all households in Namibia have access to safe drinking water (75% piped water and 8% borehole or protected well).

Stagnant water use accounts for 13% and 3% make use of flowing water. While 99% of urban households use piped water, only 57% of rural households use piped water.

Only 32% of households use electricity for cooking, 42% for lighting and 21% for heating.

Wood/wood charcoal is commonly used as a source of energy by 56% for cooking, 3% for lighting and 45% for heating. Candles are used by 38% households for lighting.

Of those surveyed flush toilets are used by 40% of households while 10% use pit latrines, less than 1% use the bucket toilet and 49% use bush or no toilet. A large proportion of urban households use flush toilet (78%), compared to rural households (10%).

The availability of modern toilet facilities has improved only modestly over the past years. The percentage of households using bush or no toilet has decreased slightly both in urban and rural areas since 2003/2004.
**In my own Experience**

**Do Circumstances Determine one’s Destination?**

Dr. Helena Ndume’s Address:
“My own experience: Do circumstances determine one’s destination.”

Dr. Ndume shared her life experiences with the Hon. Members, offering wise advice as well as real world suggestions that were relevant to the youth.

“In 1974, many people started leaving Namibia to join the liberation struggle,” recalls Dr. Ndume.

To escape the Apartheid Education system Dr. Ndume joined SWAPO.

At that time the very act of a young Namibian girl getting a good education was an act of courageous activism.

Dr. Ndume knew that the education she gained would be as powerful as the work fellow soldiers were doing on the battle front.

“Together with three other young women she left late one night and began a journey that would take her from a SWAPO camp to the universities of Germany.

Her break through came when she received a scholarship to study in Germany.

Although she wanted to study fashion design, it was decided that she should study medicine as this was seen as an important skill in a liberated Namibia.

“It was double work but we were determined,” she recalls, adding that she had to study medicine in German, a language she did not know.

She graduated as a doctor and returned to an Independent Namibia and began her internship at Katutura hospital. Although she wanted to study occupational therapy she was advised to become an Eye Specialist.

“I stayed put again as you have to respect your elders who have the experience of life,” she advised. She warned Hon. Members of the many challenges facing them today, which are different, but no less dangerous than the ones she faced.

She urged the Hon. Members to follow their dreams but added that they should remember the sacrifices made by others.
Visiting Ugandan Delegates
Delegates from Uganda attended the Children’s Parliament on a fact finding mission.

Uganda’s parliament is planning on introducing their own Children’s Parliament and the delegates were interested to see the Namibian Children’s Parliament in progress.

Ms. Nanteza Kawesa commented that they had chosen to observe the Namibian Children’s Parliament as it was one of the most established and successful children’s parliaments in Africa.

Miss Youth Namibia 2013
Ms. Dorcas Mbevo, Miss Youth Namibia 2013, attended the final day of the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament.

Hon. Members did not hesitate to get their picture taken with the youth ambassador.
Setting Career Goals

Address by Mr. Tim Ekandjo: Chief Human Capital: MTC. “How to achieve career goals”.

Mr. Ekandjo inspired Hon. Members with his address in which he provided practical advice on how to set career goals.

“Never forget where you come from, as a human being.”

He gave Hon. Members real-world advice about the job market they will be entering.

He made it very clear that Hon. Members will not get to their destination unless they set clear goals.

Follow your passions, do not follow the trend, he said.

Your career will be with you for your entire life, it should nourish you, explained Mr. Ekandjo.

He told Hon. Members that they should be guided by the principles of honesty, and self-respect.

He added that it is important to show respect to elders.

“Never forget where you come from, as a human being,” he said.

When asked who had inspired him to become who he was today he told the story of his mother who started out working in a factory and then went on to become a tea lady.

She made sure he received a good education which helped him get to where he is today. His great respect for his mother drove him to be successful in his own career.

Draft Birth, Marriages & Death Registration Bill

Representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration as well as The Legal Assistance Centre briefed Hon. Members on the draft Birth, Marriages & Death Registration Bill.
Appreciation and Word of Thanks
The Hon. Members of the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament expressed appreciation to the National Assembly, the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Education as well as UNICEF for convening the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament.

Special Thanks
Hon. Members bestowed gifts of appreciation to Beaulla (bottom) and Shepherd (left) for taking care of them during the Fourth Session.

Beaula and Shepherd were the Hon. Member’s chaperones for the duration of the Session.

Above: Special Assistant to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Simon J. /Uirab (right), Anna Hoxobes (middle) and Lynette Cloete (right).
The Fifth and Final day of the Children’s Parliament

Closing Comments

The fifth and final day of the Children’s Parliament took place on Friday, 10th May 2013.

This marked the end of the Session, held in the National Assembly Chambers, that ran from the 6-10 May 2013 under the theme: “Ensuring that the voices of tomorrow’s leaders are heard”.

Fifty-five learners, three Junior Councillors and veterans from previous sessions participated.

Much of the final day was dedicated to reviewing and preparing the final Communiqué which will be tabled in the National Assembly.

Mr Jakes Jacobs, Secretary of the National Assembly addressed the Hon. Members with final comments. As he congratulated the Hon. Members on the eloquent and, at times, intense debates he reminded them not to forget the simple things in life.

As an example he reminded Hon. Members of the many uses a simple whistle can have.

Closing comments were made by Hon. Agnes Tjongarero, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social and Community Development.

“I want to thank everyone involved in organising this Session, it may look easy but it is not”

Hon. Agnes Tjongarero.

She thanked the Children’s Parliament Founding Father, Hon. Theoben Gurirab, Speaker of the National Assembly. She gave a special thanks to Simon J. /Uirab, Special Assistant to the Speaker, and his tireless team who delivered the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament.

Hon. Tjongarero bid the Hon. Members farewell and closed the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament.
Motions Tabled

The Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament tabled 98 motions for debate of which 34 were adopted, 9 motions rejected, while 19 were withdrawn and 36 were replied to by the Minister of Education, Hon. Dr. David Namwandi.

Motions Adopted
1. Recommend appropriate measures to address passion killing in Namibia.
2. Recommend increasing OVC grants.
3. Debate the Role of the Children’s Parliament and how feedback can be obtained.
4. Recommend that business facilities be set up in rural areas to create working opportunities.
5. Address the lack of adequate school resources and equipment in the field of science.
6. Build shelters in the country for homeless citizens and make provision for food.
7. Provide accessible and quality health facilities in all parts of the country where they are needed.
8. Provision of free or subsidized transport for learners in rural areas to and from school.
10. Introduce sports management as an optional choice school subject.
11. That the government pays more attention to sports and the upgrading of sport facilities.
12. Include community development in the education system.
13. Provide easily accessible water in rural areas.
14. Ensure that women and children are protected in cases of rape and murder.
15. Treat and rehabilitate young drug abusers.
16. Provide free health services for all school going children in Namibia.
17. Recommend ways to reduce the high unemployment rate amongst young people.
18. The lack of friendly services at health facilities and unhygienic conditions at these facilities are a concern.
19. Make ICT a compulsory subject in Namibian schools.
20. Build youth and recreational centres to allow and encourage healthy and productive interaction between young people with emphasis on non-alcoholic and zero tolerance of harmful activities.
21. Address the poor construction of hospitals and roads.
22. Petty crime offenders should be sentenced to community service rather than being sent to prisons.
23. Strict measures be taken against learner’s who show lack of discipline.
24. That the government introduce ways to provide proper housing structures at cheaper prices for poor people.
25. The proposal of the creation of a 14th region called Ondonga region in Namibia should be rejected.
26. That the government constructs water storage facilities in flood stricken areas to harvest rain water for human consumption and agricultural projects.
27. Government channel more financial resources to all thirteen regions in order to fast track development.
28. That the government should invest more in anti-poverty programmes.
29. Address the issue of the violent behaviour of Police Officers in arresting youth and to stop physical attacks on the youth.
30. Recommend that a chapter on the Namibian Constitution and the rights of the children be introduced in the Social Science subject, and that copies of the Namibian Constitution be freely distributed to all school learners.
31. Create more awareness and exposure of the Children’s Parliament to the greater Namibian youth.
32. Address the role of the juvenile centres and why they are not succeeding in rehabilitating young offenders.
33. Create of a link between education, “living green” and community services.
34. Address the construction of tarred roads in rural areas.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Children's Parliament requested and recommended that the report of proceedings of the Fourth Session of the Children's Parliament be tabled in the National Assembly for consideration.

The Children’s Parliament also recommended that the National Assembly continue the tradition of holding Children's Parliaments in the interest of the Namibian youth.


The Children’s Parliament was hosted by the National Assembly in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

The theme of the session was “Parliament – The People’s House and Guardian of the Children’s Rights and Future”.

The Second Session of the Children’s Parliament of the Republic of Namibia was held from 6th - 9th May 2008 under the same theme which was used the previous year.

Forty-two learners, three from each region and three Hon. Members of the junior town council of the City of Windhoek as well as three former young parliamentarians participated in the Session.

All sessions are chaired by the Speaker of the Children’s Parliament chosen at the beginning of each meeting by all participants and the proceedings follow the guidelines and rules governing the Namibian National Parliament.


Forty-two learners, three from each region and three Hon. Members of the junior town council of the City of Windhoek were invited to participate.

The Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament tabled 98 motions for debate of which 34 were adopted, 9 motions rejected, while 19 were withdrawn and 36 were replied to by the Minister of Education, Hon. Dr. David Namwandi.

The Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament was hosted by the National Assembly in Windhoek. The session took place from 6-10 May 2013.

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Fifth Session of the Children’s Parliament to be Convened in 2014

Hon. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker of the National Assembly, had a vision to involve children in parliamentary debate which lead to the founding of the Children’s Parliament.

Hon. Paulina Fillemion listens to the Hon. Members as they debate her Motion to provide cereals and grains to learners who are in need.

Hon. Dora Kakumai debates the motion she raised.

Hon. Nzaki Mwilima debates his Motion to make Community Development a school subject.

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Fifth Session of the Children’s Parliament to be Convened in 2014
Hon. Speaker Sandré Botma.

Hon. Vibricho Kapunda.

Hon. Wilhelmine Shoongeleni.

Hon. Ludvino Magalhaes.

Hon. Cecilia Nangolo.

Hon. Meriam Muhenje.

Hon. Warren Moncho.

Hon. Wilmie Mouton.
Hon. Benjamin Gariseb.

Hon. Sem Uutoni (veteran).

Hon. Nasilele Sitali.

Hon. Dora Kakumai.

Hon. Natasha Madyaad.

Hon. Almut Mathis.

Deputy Speaker, Hon. Shaandre Finnies.
Hon. Tracey Shaahamange.

Hon. Kamanda Kamaatu.

Hon. Sushmita Mutjavikua.

Hon. Natasha Nantes.

Ms. Dorcas Mbevo, Miss Youth Namibia 2013.

Hon. Issay Kamati.

Parliament Buildings where the Fourth Session of the Children’s Parliament took place.
Parliamentary staff observing the debates.
“Ensuring that the Voices of Tomorrow’s Leaders are Heard”