



Remarks

By

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Representative**

Nangolo Mbumba 75th Birthday Celebration

SWAPO Secretary General, Mr. Nangolo Mbumba;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

It is with great pleasure that I address all of you on this very special day. Let me start by thanking members of my family, the Mbumba family, and the Namibian Federation of the Visually Impaired (NFVI) for according me the honour me to speak on this special occasion.

The 15th of August is distinctive, as on this day, 75 years ago, a man who epitomises decency, who over the years has embodied the best of the Namibian liberation struggle and is our Comrade, Teacher, Father, Uncle and husband, Nangolo Mbumba, was born.

As his 'family' here today, we are aware that he would not want us to speak about his journey. But Uncle, allow me to incur your wrath by reminding our guests of just who you are.

As the firstborn to Tatekulu Erastus Mbumba and Kuku Johana Jason in Oshitayi, Oshana region in 1941, Nangolo Mbumba spent his early years with his Grandmother -GwaaKambonde. He attended primary school at Olukonda and due to lack of resources to send him to high school he became a cattle header instead.

Since he was 'a smart boy' teacher Shongolo advised his grandfather (who was a church elder) to send him to school. He successfully completed his high school at Oshigambo before leaving his mother, 8 siblings and grand-parents for the liberation struggle.

Nangolo Mbumba was not only intelligent but known to be cheerful with many friends of all ages. He could always be found jogging, while singing in a dry water pan near the house.

Despite the odds, he went on to study at Southern Connecticut State University in the United States, where he graduated with a BSc in 1971. Two years later in 1973, he graduated from the University of Connecticut with an MSc in biology.

Thereafter Nangolo Mbumba began teaching at Harlem Preparatory School in New York City and returned to Africa in 1978. He worked as the Head of the Science Department at the Namibia Education Centre in Kwanza Sul, Angola. In 1980, he was promoted to the post of Principal of the Centre. He officially took a position with SWAPO in 1985 as Deputy Secretary for Education and Culture.

Nangolo Mbumba has continued to climb the ranks and has served this country in several capacities, including as: Minister of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (1993-1996), Finance (1996-2003), Information and Broadcasting (2003-2005) Education (2005–2010), and Safety and Security (2010-2012). He is currently a member of the National Assembly and the Secretary General of SWAPO.

These achievements demonstrate his passion for excellence, his country and the Namibian people.

If you were to ask our Comrade, Teacher, Father, Uncle and husband what his most significant achievement is, he would say it is being a loving husband to the beautiful, caring, hardworking and loving Sustjie and father to his wonderful children, grandchildren; and to thousands of us who form part of his extended family.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The love and care that Nangolo Mumba, has had for so many people throughout his lifetime is what brings us here today. As Patron of the NFVI, and true to his character, Nangolo Mbumba has dedicated his birthday to raising awareness about the important work that NFVI undertakes and the financial constraints the organisation is facing.

The NFVI is a non-governmental organization and was founded in 1986 as an umbrella organisation of the regional associations for the visually impaired in Namibia. The Federation aims to:

- promote the well-being of blind and partially sighted people;
- provide services needed by the visually impaired;
- enhance the confidence of its members as productive members of the Namibian community;
- disseminate information and promote a positive attitude in Namibia towards the visually impaired.

Over the decades, NFVI has touched thousands of lives. Of the approximately 98,000 people with disabilities in Namibia, over 16,000 have visual impairment¹, and the NFVI has 15,000 members in all the 14 regions.²

The NFVI works actively with various ministries, schools for the visually impaired, the National Federation of People with Disabilities, the National Disability Council, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia (ELCIN), amongst others.

Ladies and Gentlemen

¹ Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) Disability Report (based on 2011 Population and Housing Census)

² <http://visuallyimpairednamibia.com/>

Namibia has declared a war on poverty, declared that poverty will be eradicated by 2025 and that no one will be left behind; this should include the visually impaired.

NFVI is financially challenged and its doors are threatening to close. The organisation requires some N\$ 1,735,246 to operate annually. We hope that everyone here today, will help to raise awareness about this important organization, its needs and pledge support to ensure that the doors of the NFVI remain open.

Booker T Washington said that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life but rather by the obstacles which one has had to overcome while trying to succeed. Nangolo Mbumba has set an example for the next generation of Namibians on overcoming obstacles and demonstrating the importance of service in support of ones people.

We hope that you will help to make this a memorable 75th birthday by supporting NFVI and by 'Keeping the Blind Visible'!