



Maiden Speech

By

Hon Marlayn Mbakera

SWAPO Party Member of Parliament

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Brief Introduction

It is my honour to present my very first contribution to this August house.

I would like to take this moment to thank the Namibian Nation that have demonstrated their trust in the Swapo Party by voting the party into power and in doing so ensured that we have seen an historical sworn in of the first female President of our Republic. In the same vein by putting their trust in the Swapo Party, Namibians have sent me to the 8th Parliament to represent them.

Marlayn Mbakera was born and bred in Otjiwarongo. Raised by a single mother, a strong believer of God, a courageous woman, Renathe Tsibes and Born between 3 siblings, Richard, Serolda and my baby sis Olivia, our childhood was not so rosy.

My mom had to give up our house and moved to Windhoek as she wanted to become an enrolled nurse. We had been divided into family homes of my mom's siblings. I ended up in my uncle's home. My uncle took over the responsibility of my upbringing and during holidays my mom's room at the nurse's home was my second home.

My uncle was a liberation stalward, a Swapo Veteran. He was jailed on so many occasions together with late uncle Hans Boois., but they never waived. My late uncle Manfred /Uxamb after Independence became the first black Mayor of Otjiwarongo. I am proud to say that me been brought up in his house, shaped my character, my political career.

I started as Nanso member together with Honourable Juliet Kavetuna, Hon Hilda Jesaya, Paulus Iyambo ,Late Jeffrey Shipanga, Aina Shipanga, Rauha Mwetako, Mbarakie Ushona and others. Due to our resistance to be taught by teachers who will come with army uniform and guns, some of us have been expelled from schools. Our names were send to different schools as we have been labeled Swapo kids, trouble makers.

After loosing a whole academic year I went to a then girls school, S I Gobs in Omaruru, were I have matriculated.

Due to financial challenges I could not go to further my studies. I went to work as receptionist at Metropolitan Namibia, and thereafter I started at the Otjwarongo Municipality as a Cashier. I enrolled as a distance student since then and have obtained my Certificate in HR, Diploma in Public Sector Management, A Degree in HRM and lastly an Honours Degree in Management.

I have been working for Otjiwarongo Municipality for over 23 years and by the time I resigned I was the Executive Corporate Services.

I always wanted to serve my community closely, I had this desire to see the lives of my community to change, I wanted to do something for the single mothers, the child headed households. I have realized that I could not really do much sitting in the office as an administrator.

I resigned to stand as Otjiwarongo Constituency Councilor during the by elections that was held in April 2020. In 2020 Regional and Local Authority Elections I was re - elected as Otjiwarongo Constituency Councillor and Chairperson of the Otjozondjupa Regional Council.

My over 5 years as a Regional Councilor was the most fulfilling time in my life. To serve people gives me joy. To see people's life's change brings me fulfillment. When a single mother would come to my office pushing her child in a wheelbarrow and my office giving that child a wheelchair, that brought me certain sense of joy.

When a single teenage mother would walk in to my office, close the door and started crying, hopeless, suicidal, I would cry together not knowing exactly what the problem is, - those moments, yes, those moments will never be forgotten.

Yes, when a parent will come in and tell you, I cannot bury my child, it has been 3 weeks now, and you help that parent, the joy you see in

their eyes, yes, that was the fulfilling moments. Some of us took in strangers into our homes because they had nowhere to sleep.

Being a Regional Councilor is underrated, its a job were you put in your heart, your soul and your resources to help your fellow human being.

Honourable Speaker, Honorable Members,

I bring to this house the firsthand experience of the needs and daily struggles of our people, and equally constraints and limitations faced by local authorities – those we rightly call the **government of proximity**. Today, i rise as a voice for every citizen who's dignity depends on whether their local municipality delivers or not.

Local Authorities are often the first and only interface our citizens have with the state. They are the closest to the people most attuned t their needs, and the most visible face of the government.

Whether it is access to clean water, sanitation, affordable housing, waste management or roads, these are the services people rely on daily. And yet, Municipalities are expected and repeatedly ask to do more with less.

Namibia like many developing countries is experiencing rapid urbanization. Today over 50% of our population lives in urban areas and that number is projected to rise significantly over the next five years. This urban shift brings both opportunity and pressure. It demands that we **rethink**, our fiscal priorities and planning frameworks to accommodate growing urban population, while still ensuring that rural areas are not left behind.

It is in the best interest of our national government to prioritise investment in local authorities. We cannot speak about Vision 2030, the Harambee prosperity Plan, Sustainable Development Golas or even

Swapo Party Implementation Plan without simultaneously empowering and resourcing the very entities tasked with delivering those visions at the grassroots level.

The principles of subsidiarity and decentralization are not just academic concepts – they are constitutional commitments and practical tools for achieving development. When we have place decision making authority and resources closer to the people , we create a responsive , inclusive, and participatory democracy and service delivery.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable members

This is why I stand in this house today to make a call for the establishment of a predictable, transparent and needs based funding model for local authorities , a model that will ensure :

1. **Regular and Formula based fiscal transfers** that considers population size, poverty levels, infrastructure needs and capacity
2. **Clear rules and roles in intergovernmental fiscal relations**, enhancing coordination between central regional and local government
3. **Capacity Building** to support financial management, planning and accountability at local level
4. **Strong legal framework** that protects the fiscal autonomy and integrity of local authorities, while ensuring performance based outcomes.

Municipalities are burdened with heavy mandates but are starved with resources. It is time we correct this contradiction. It is time for this parliament to chart a new path – a path that recognises that Municipalities are not junior partners, but essential players on the frontline of progress.

With that in mind, i present the following for consideration in proposing a Special Funding Model for Municipalities

When taps run dry, when waste piles up, when roads become impassible, our people are turning to the municipalities. Prioritising funding for municipalities is not an act of generosity, but a constitutional obligation to protect the dignity of every citizen through reliable and timely service delivery. Such funding will restore trust in our government, promote civic pride and inspire community participation.

Today, many municipalities are forced to charge high tariffs just to stay afloat. This places an unbearable burden on the very people we need to serve. A special funding model would allow municipalities to reduce service costs, making essentials like water, sanitation, waste collection affordable – even for the poor. That is social justice in action.

Without targeted funding model, development becomes concentrated in already affluent areas while smaller towns and rural communities are left behind. A special funding model will ensure that every region will receive its fair share of budget.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable members,

Another thorn in the flesh of our municiplaities are the cost of water. Namwater is charging the municplaities between **N\$ 15 – N\$ 17.60** per cubic. The municiplaities more or less charges pre – paid consumers **N\$ 27.00** per qubic, **N\$ 34.00** per conventional meter house hold consumers and around **N\$ 50 .00** for business excluding VAT.

People in the informal settlement are paying N\$ 55 but that also includes small cost of refuse removal and rent for land.

The municipalities also spend a lot of money on water infrastructure damage due to low quality of water. (water is full of lime) . While Namwater is claiming that their water tariffs are on cost recovery basis, municipalities cannot even break even.

Some municipalities are getting N\$ 900 000 bill from Namwater while they have only charge N\$ 350 000 to N\$ 400 000 to their consumers, the rest is water loss or unaccounted water usage, mainly due to infrastructural damage.

Water has simply become unaffordable. Many municipalities owe Namwater millions of dollars and such debts continue to grow. Community members owe Municipality, municipalities are running to debt collectors , debt collectors make millions and our poor community members and pensioners are worse off.

Municipalities cannot even afford to give social tariffs to pensioners or vulnerable people or even incentives to business.

Again with the establishment of a special funding model can help ease the burden on municipality and municipality can provide water on a subsidize rate to the end user.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable members,

We must be mindful that through establishments of REDS, municipalities have suffered loss of revenue. Municipalities are only relying on land sales to survive, if they make land expensive, housing becomes unaffordable. Municipalities are bleeding. Soon they will not be able to afford salaries of their employees.

Therefore i would want to see that the 8th Parliament considers establishment of special Municipal fund for the municipalities. Such fund will not be about creating new bureaucracy , but about breathing life into the constitutional vision of decentralization, equity and service to our people.

Let the history remember that it was this parliament, this generation of leaders, that boldly prioritised the people closest to the ground. Let us give life line to our municipalities by funding them. It is really necessary and long overdue.

In Conclusion

May I take this moment to thank my husband Percy and my 3 boys, Ngurungunda, Uaomba and Ngatangue for understanding my passion to serve, for their patience with me and their unconditional support. Without your support and understanding, I would not be here today. My uncle who did not live to see this day, OME may your beautiful soul rest in peace.

~~My family, Mbakera, Tsibeb, Nanuseb, Uxamb Family~~
I thank you, ~~I thank you for your supp~~

* .Cele Governor Uenkua

* .Cele. Imms Namaseb

* Tsibeb, Uxamb, Nanuseb, Mbakera family