



STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE
NAMIBIAN NATION,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
LAUNCHING OF THE BOOK “**CHILDREN IN EXILE – A PICTORIAL RECORD**” OF THE
FORMER SWAPO GDR CHILDREN IN THE THEN GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE 2017

SWAPO PARTY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Comrades and Friends:

I am pleased to have been invited to officially launch the pictorial record of the book of the Former SWAPO's Children in Exile in the then German Democratic Republic (GDR) which I was privileged and honoured to preface.

Against this background, I am pleased that this book vividly illustrates the life of Former SWAPO's children who were forced to live in exile during the National Liberation Struggle and who were finally offered a safe place in the then German Democratic Republic.

Directors of Ceremonies;

Much has been written and said about this specific group of SWAPO's children. This book, however, gives a face to the more than 400 boys and girls who lived without families in a strange country, learned a foreign language at their tender ages and were separated from their motherland, some for more than eleven years.

Indeed, after the barbaric Cassinga massacre committed by the white minority apartheid regime of South African against the innocent Namibia refugees on the 4th of May 1978, as the then President of SWAPO I requested the government of the then German Democratic Republic for assistance to take the injured orphaned and vulnerable children under their protection.

The Late Comrade Erich Honecker who was the Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) did not hesitate to offer hundreds of our children a safe haven in a beautiful surrounding, where they could prosper under the care of committed and dedicated adults, from both Germany and SWAPO Education and Health Centres.

When German's reunification coincided with the independence of Namibia in 1990, these children returned to their motherland many of them as orphans, while others were estranged from their families. It was indeed a difficult time of adaptation and finding a new life.

As Comrade Nangolo Mbumba, Secretary General of SWAPO Party pointed out in his preface "*many SWAPO Pioneers of yester years have grown up as they lived to witness Namibia's Independence*".

This is indeed true as many of them are now contributing to the Namibian economy in both the government and the private sector, as well as running their own private business thereby complimenting the government efforts in job creation and employment opportunities for all our people.

I therefore wish to thank all those teachers and officials who helped to make these Namibia children strong and resilient by providing them with love, care, good health, guidance and a good education.

Director of Ceremonies;

The history of Namibia's liberation struggle cannot be told without mentioning countries that made immense contribution to our struggle such as the then German Democratic Republic and other former socialist countries including the government and the revolutionary people of Cuba, the Frontline States such as Angola and Zambia amongst others, who assisted SWAPO with political, material and moral support, including providing education facilities to our children.

I am informed that the SWAPO's former children in the then German Democratic Republic were brought up under strict environment where they were taught Namibian culture as well as SWAPO ideology and principles in order for them to be aware as to why they were in a foreign country without their parents. Therefore this book is a clear testimony of their true stories and how SWAPO looked after their well-being during the crucible of the bitter armed liberation struggle!

Against this background, allow me once again to express our gratitude and appreciations to Dr. Jürgen Krause and Mr. Besse Kaplan for their great efforts in compiling this useful information in the form of a book.

I therefore want to challenge the SWAPO's former GDR children to compile your own stories that capture the historical events and your personal experiences in order to contribute to the overall history of SWAPO during the liberation struggle.

With these few words, it is now my pleasure to officially launch the book "*Children in Exile – A Pictorial Record*" of the collection of the SWAPO GDR Children in the then German Democratic Republic.

I thank you.