



19 July 2024

The Widower, Mr. Ghenno Himarwa and the Entire Bereaved Family  
Mariental Rural constituency  
**HARDAP REGION**

Dear Mr. Ghenno Himarwa, the Widower, and the Entire Bereaved Family

### **MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCES**

We have learnt, with deep sadness, of the passing on of your beloved wife, sister, former Governor and Minister as well as a Veteran of our National Liberation Struggle, the Late Comrade Katrina Magdalena Hanse-Himarwa, on Sunday, 14 July 2024, at 05h15, at the age of 57 years, when she was taken to a local hospital in Windhoek with colon cancer which she has been battling with for a long time.

The passing of the Late Comrade Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, commonly known as 'Hurricane Katrina', a nickname she earned during her tenure as Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, not only causes deep sorrow and sadness to the bereaved family but also to the SWAPO Party rank and file, the education sector, her community and the nation at large.

We therefore join the family and share in your pain as we wish you fortitude and solace as you navigate through this dark cloud that hovers around you in this time of sorrow.

Although the passing of the Late Comrade Katrina Hanse-Himarwa causes deep sorrow and grief, we should nevertheless celebrate her exemplary deeds as she devoted her life to her family, her community, the SWAPO Party and the entire Namibian nation.

Therefore, today we remember and mourn a daughter of the soil who joined SWAPO during the liberation struggle under the tutelage of the Late Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi.

Indeed, when the young fearless sons and daughters of our motherland united under the banner of the Namibia National Students Organisation (NANSO) affiliated to SWAPO, to oppose apartheid and colonialism, the Late Comrade Hanse-Himarwa was among those who organised anti-apartheid protests against the white minority South African regime.

At the time of her passing, she was a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SWAPO Party when she was appointed to the Politburo in 2022.

She was a fine public servant who served her country with diligence and therefore this is a real blow to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, her comrades and to the country at large as she was an exemplary public servant, amongst the finest. She was dedicated, committed, hardworking and a consummate professional.

She served as Minister of Education, Arts and Culture from 2015 to 2019. Before that, she held various positions after winning the Mariental Rural Constituency in the 2004 local elections for SWAPO and was appointed as Governor of the Hardap Region, a position she held until 2015.

She was also one of the eight presidential appointees to the sixth National Assembly of Namibia to become a non-voting member until the 9 July 2019, when she resigned from her position as Minister of Education.

This is an extremely broad range of experience and testimony to the Late Comrade Hanse-Himarwa's versatility, her adaptability and above all the depth of her expertise. In this regard, she was a woman of all seasons who was fit for purposes in whatever role or portfolio she was assigned to as she would throw herself fully into it, and take it upon herself to become fully acquainted with the sector and its issues.

Furthermore, she was a tried and tested member of SWAPO and her departure has left a void in the Party, the more so at this crucial time when we are preparing for Presidential and National Assembly elections.

During this time, we were counting on seasoned leaders like her to rally people to participate in the elections in November. No doubt she would be out with us in our communities for door-to-door campaigns. She had boundless energy and a cheerful spirit, even when she was not well.

We will thus miss running into her in the corridors of the SWAPO Party Headquarters, the National Assembly and State House where she would pull us aside for a quick chat.

I have over the past few days heard her described as both thoughtful and compassionate, something that I wholly agree with. Her training as a teacher gave her a deep understanding of the needs of our people, particularly those of children, of vulnerable women, and of people with special needs.

Fellow Mourners, death stalks us all. None of us knows when our time on this earth will end. What is important is that we use this life to sow good works that outlive us. Our departed colleague has left behind many good works. But what she has also left behind is a reminder that the values we live by define us more than what we wear, the languages we speak, where we live, and what we have or do not have.

The Late Comrade Hanse-Himarwa had many virtues. She was generous in spirit and had a charming personality. She had the endearing ability to lift any mood and fortify any resolve in even the most difficult situations. She had a sense of humour and never hesitated to speak up for what she believed to be right, no matter the cost.

Thus, we will always remember the young firebrand student activist who fought for our liberation from tyranny, guided not by ambition or expectation of reward, but by her principles.

We will remember the committed member and leader of the SWAPO Party Politburo and Central Committee. We will remember her as a spirited and lively Member of Parliament who won the respect of her peers. We will remember the intellectual force of her contribution in every structure that she served. We will miss the way she swayed, cajoled and persuaded many with her rich and booming voice, her charming words and her wonderful sense of humour.

To her family, it could not have been easy. We know that she was open about the illness that befell her. In doing so, she was saying to us: *I know what it feels like. I have been through it too. I am with you, and you do not need to feel alone.* She took us as the nation into her confidence, and she permitted us in her private space to share in her sorrow. And today, we mourn with you as an extended family, for she was not just our leader. We claim her too as our family member and our sister.

As we pay homage to her today, let us remember that it is not enough to eulogise our departed Comrade. We must complete what she was not able to finish in her lifetime.

She was a leader who understood the power of collective leadership, of discipline and of forging unity. She was gentle, but could be firm and uncompromising when the occasion demanded. It is because she did not forget her roots and the people she committed to serve when she ascended the ranks to high office, that her place in their minds and hearts is forever assured.

To the Widower, Mr Ghenno Himarwa and the entire bereaved family, our hearts go out to you as you go through the grief of a loss so overwhelming. As you walk through this difficult dark valley, I wish that you are granted the strength to go through your bereavement and left only with the cherished memories of your beloved wife, sister and friend, the Late Comrade Hanse-Himarwa. It is also my wish that you are consoled by the knowledge that her formidable legacy lives on. May it be that others step forward to follow in her footsteps and take up her mantle.

As the Late Comrade Katrina Hanse-Himarwa takes a befitting rest, allow me on behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma family and indeed on my own behalf, to extend our deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the entire bereaved family as well as all comrades for this irreparable loss. I extend my wishes for strength to the family in this difficult time of mourning.

May we too speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. May we too give comfort to those in need. May we put love of country before love of self. May we forever stand on the side of right, not for the sake of expediency, but on account of conviction. May we, like our departed Comrade, regard service to our country as the highest calling, and do so with humility and courage.

May the Soul of the Late Comrade Katrina Magdalena Hanse-Himarwa Rest in Eternal peace!



Sam Nujoma  
**FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**FOUNDER**  
The Sam Nujoma Foundation