

Namibia President given rousing reception by MPs

Namibian President Hifikepunye Pohamba received a rousing reception by MPs in the National Assembly today as he saluted the strong bonds between his country and South Africa.

Addressing the National Assembly, Pohamba - who is on a two-day visit to the country - said he never imagined to see a free South Africa in his lifetime or least of all to be addressing his country's former occupier in its National Assembly.

Namibia - formerly known as South West Africa - was governed by South Africa from 1915 to 1990 according to a League of Nations mandate that South Africa administer the territory.

Pohamba said he always believed he would never see Namibia gain independence in his lifetime.

"I thought the children of my children would be the ones who were going to get independence," he said.

He congratulated former Home Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma on her recent election as AU Commission chairperson and said Namibia would extend its full support to her.

"Namibia will extend full support to Dr Dlamini Zuma in carrying out her important responsibilities. We wish her well," he said.

Pohamba also commended South Africa for hosting the Pan-African Parliament, which he said was an important continental institution for African policymakers to promote and strengthen the ideals of Pan-Africanism and democratic governance.

He also commended South Africa for bringing out the new Nelson Mandela banknotes, which were released into circulation yesterday.

Good progress, he said, had been made in co-operation between the two countries in trade, capacity building, energy, infrastructure development, environmental conservation and sustainable socio-economic development.

He said Namibia continued to call for the speedy reform of the UN, specifically the UN Security Council, in order to make it more representative and democratic, in line with the Africa Common Position.

Namibia also backs the formation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area, which brings together the East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Comesa, he said.

He urged Africans to further strengthen unity and work together to harness the vast human and natural resources on the continent for the benefit of all Africans.

"We recognise that the task of developing our countries, our region and our continent has not been easy.

"However, we must remain steadfast in our resolve that we can overcome the challenges ahead," said Pohamba.

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