

WHITHER COMNAM? UNTAG Period in Namibia

By R. H. Green

1. The entry of UNTAG into Namibia and the inauguration of a diarchy between Secretary General's Special Representative and Botha's Special Representative (the AG) creates a paradox for the Office of the Commissioner:
 - a. it can for the first time send personnel to Namibia (not perhaps in UNTAG but to do studies and liaise with other UN agencies);
 - b. but it is presumably bound by the 'impartiality' doctrine (however, if that is read as not working with AG or any parties and so going to Churches and Trade Unions it does not really prejudice Comnam's work as SWAPO, SWANU, Damara Chiefs, NCPD, etc., presumably will be tied up with election work anyhow);
 - c. and it is clear that the Council for Namibia will not become a government as the diarchy will be followed directly by independence.

2. Thus I would submit Comnam now enters into a set of opportunities for furthering the Nationhood Programme through specific field research and pre-programming designed for use after independence. It should - as before but more urgently - try to coordinate other UN bodies and ngo's with this work and its post independence implementation. (For example, both UNICEF and ILO have clear plans with the former already discussing them with "technically competent Namibians with wide expertise and internal contacts" in Luanda whom it anticipates will form the independence government. An 'impartial' way of saying something shorter, i.e. it has been dealing with SWAPO and does not see itself as seeing different people. If all UN agencies do this overlap will ensue. If some - e.g. IFAD - do not then gaps will ensue. Comnam can take the lead in coordination. My impression is that were this done quietly the Special Representative would welcome it.)

3. Seven specific information collection/pre-programming cases are set out. So far as I know no other body is actively doing anything on the ground albeit I note where I believe interest (and thus people and/or money or 'sub-contracted' study for Comnam) exists. While I cannot speak for them I would also note that my experienced Namibian friends believe these to be issues of some importance where they cannot act until independence but would then need data/pre-planning base to act fast. I have not listed Central Bank because I believe Comnam - Ben Amathila and Sweden already have this in hand. If not it is one of priority list. As any independent government will need such a study no 'impartiality' problem.

4. Swakopmund Reactivation

South Africa's remaining in Walvis Bay when Namibia is independent will be illegal. Even if it could remain, by relevant international convention all port-transport-commercial-fishing assets created to serve Namibia would pass free of liability to government of Namibia. But RSA is no respecter of international law and it is prudent to assume it will remain squatting on Walvis Bay and all of its facilities which it will seek to use to dominate independent Namibia.

Therefore, pre-engineering and rough costing studies for an alternative port are both vital and urgent. In practice only one option is viable - reactivation of Swakopmund:

- a. Luderitz is too far South, has inadequate rail line and a shallow, narrow channel which is in hard rock so not readily improved;
- b. Mocamedes (Angola) is too far North and rail/road links to Northern Namibia would require major construction/rehabilitation;
- c. Beira and Dar es Salaam (via road to Katima Mulilo and on to rail line at Livingstone in Zambia) are simply too far, too slow, too expensive;

- d. Air is too expensive especially for petroleum (250,000 tonne), coal (100,000 tonne) grain (100,000 tonne).

Swakopmund should be reactiveateable in six months for \$20,000,000 to \$40,000,000:

- a. it is on main rail line (Windhoek-Swakopmund-on to WB) so only added sidings for loading, unloading would be needed;
- b. a laid up oil tanker (say 50,000 to 75,000 tonne or 2 times 30,000 if cheaper) could be grounded as an oil storage facility with a pipe line (fixed or hose) to a buoy in deeper water for offloading from tankers;
- c. floating cranes and lighters could handle 500,000-600,000 tonnes dry cargo quite readily (as they did in Dar es Salaam after UDI before new berths were complete). Coal by lighter is not ideal but with grab floating crane or grabs on carrier it is feasible;
- d. the harbour is largely protected by the spit coming up from Walvis Bay and by headlands (NB it is not at mouth of Swakop which is about 15 kilometres south of it on channel to WB). Conceivably 2 to 4 derelict ships filled with gravel could be sunk as breakwaters but this may not be necessary;
- e. In 1902-04 Walvis Bay was deep enough to take 3 and 4 funnel transatlantic liners bringing in troops. Newsreels showing one on each side of the jetty are extant. This suggests simple sand dredging could rapidly restore depth for at least 12-15,000 tonners in harbour proper and perhaps up to 30,000 tonnes half a mile out (for coal, oil);
- f. In the medium term Walvis Bay will become non-economic anyhow. It is at end of a long, narrow, shallow channel and has a constricted basin. The Trans-Kalahari bulk terminal needs to be (per engineering study) at mouth of Swakop and at that time at least an oil and a container terminal should go there too.

The immediate need is a technical study of:

- a. engineering requirements;
- b. probable time required;
- c. probable cost;
- d. key personnel needed - technical assistance plus training.

The obvious source of such a study (or of finance and a firm to do it) is the Netherlands. There is support for Namibia; detestation of idea RSA would choke it; a desire to get contracts and trade combined with port expertise (vide interest in Beira). A Dutch study could well lead to a Dutch grant/soft loan at independence and a competent Dutch firm to do the job.

The importance of this cannot be overstressed. Without a deep water port it controls, independent Namibia can and will be squeezed by RSA. With one RSA may abandon WB as an economic millstone (albeit it may still hang on to it as a destabilisation point even though it is a useless death trap as a naval base).

5. Heavy maintenance capacity (railway rolling stock and heavy lorries/buses) needs:

- a. an inventory of what exists;
- b. an estimate of how much is done now in RSA (most railway seems to be at Upington in Cape or WB where RSA may remain illegally);
- c. a rough costed study of what equipment and buildings are needed to provide interim self-sufficiency in repairs and a donor pre-disposed to act fast were it to receive a request at independence.

Unless transport equipment can be repaired in Namibia transport will either grind to a halt or operate 'courtesy' of RSA.

This issue was discussed at Stockholm transport conference in early December. I believe Nordic sources (perhaps via Nordic Council?) are interested. There is consultancy, design, equipment and ongoing

technical assistance capacity in those states as well as a practical commitment to independent Namibia.

5A. Related lorry-bus-rolling stock and traction power study:

- a. inventory of numbers of light lorries, small buses, heavy lorries, large buses, petroleum road tankers, locomotives, bogies (by main type, e.g. ore/coal, container, petroleum, general cargo, passenger coaches);
- b. monitoring outflow to RSA (it will happen and cannot really be halted before independence as departures will be legitimate, the problem is non-return);
- c. rough estimates by October of probable early replacement needs and tentative lineup (earlier) of donor ready to move at once on post independence request.

Again Nordic area may be best place to look. Vehicles are useable (may not be optimal) and railway equipment good (if high cost) - the plus points are likely speed of response and willingness to provide on grant or soft loan terms.

If Federal Germany is willing to organise to move equally fast on comparable terms it is probably a better source for lorries and buses.

6. Windhoek water supply poses grave technical and personnel problems. It is highly sophisticated in reclaiming, purifying, recycling used water. If this part of system (supposedly 30-35% of total supply) breaks down either there will be a very serious water shortage or a very real risk of a massive cholera epidemic.

The need seems to be:

- a. details on main sources and supply systems including but not only recycling element;
- b. identification of chemical and frequently used spares needs;

- c. enumeration of key personnel (and probable risk of their early departure) to keep system running properly.

The best source of people to do this may be Zimbabwe - specifically Harare water department which operates (very efficiently) what is said to be the most comparable metropolitan system. Perhaps CFTC at Commonwealth Secretariat could finance Zimbabwe team if Comnam hasn't the funds.

7. Ruacana electricity complex rehabilitation pre-engineering and costing study and donor pre-positioning is crucial:
 - a. key personnel studies for Ruacana Falls generation, transmission, main distribution systems to identify tentative technical assistance backup needed to avoid breakdown if many present personnel leave suddenly;
 - b. rehabilitation (if any) and ongoing supplies, spares needs of Ruacana Falls generation;
 - c. rehabilitation needs of Ruacana-Windhoek transmission line (a regular sabotage target albeit it may well be pylons can be replaced and lines restrung before November);
 - d. rehabilitation needs of Caleuque sluice (water level control) to be done with cooperation of Angola in whose territory it is.

Finland and Canada are two countries expert in these areas whose attitude to Namibia suggests they might respond positively and promptly to approaches.

8. Internal refugees - deslocados - probably number over 250,000. Action is needed over April-November as well as after independence. The main concentration - up to 200,000 - appears to be in the Ondangwa-Oshakati-Ongwadiva triangle ('normal' population perhaps 50-75,000) which implies depopulation or near depopulation of much of rural area in Ovambo magisterial district - so-called Ovamboland).

What is needed - apart from immediate food, shelter, medicines and vaccines which ngo's (including church-related ones known to Namibian Churches), WHP, UNICEF, EEC should be asked to provide with some Comnam coordination if they desire it - are data:

- a. how many deslocados? Where?
- b. from where? Probability of short term return to homes? If so what rehabilitation needs (transport, building materials, seeds, tools, core livestock units, food)?
- c. sanitation, water, shelter, food, medical service needs of deslocados in areas of refuge, especially 0-0-0 triangle.

Presumably UNHCR can and will coordinate the return of the 100,000 odd Namibians who are refugees in neighbouring states. Nobody, however, seems to have a clear remit or clear data about the larger numbers of human beings (many in much worse conditions) who are deslocados in Namibia.

Note the AG may try to foist the 'Angolan refugees' (i.e. UNITA camp followers or reserve forces) on Comnam. There is an 'impartial', technical answer - Comnam's remit is for Namibians and whatever else Savimbi's outfit may be they are not Namibians.

It is not quite clear who might finance and staff this exercise. There is ngo and academic expertise (e.g. at Oxford and elsewhere in UK) and presumably some general government humanitarian concern. As this is eminently non-political perhaps UK and Federal Germany would be willing to provide resources? Or even USA?

9. Crop production outturns and especially potential in Namibia are near terra incognita not because there are no data but because it is scattered inside Namibia. It needs to be retrieved over April-November or it may be irretrievably lost.

The key data areas are:

- a. actual outputs, techniques, yields per hectare of 'traditional' Northern cultivation; Okavango Valley African irrigated farms; crops on 'white' ranches (and especially Tsumeb and Otavi Highland mixed farms); irrigation schemes (especially the Hardap scheme near Mariental and perhaps smaller Southwest artesian production plus Consolidated Diamond Mines pump irrigated farms on the Orange River);
- b. experimental station and research results in Namibia (believed to be substantial);
- c. relevant Botswana/Zimbabwe semi-arid area practice and research data (available from SACCAR in Gaborone and/or SADCC Agricultural Sector Coordinating Unit in Harare);
- d. present key personnel in research/extension and likelihood of staying (supposedly most are German settlers and minded to stay but this needs to be checked);
- e. draft programme of research, extension, input supply, marketing and crop pricing to further enhanced crop production especially by small black farming households but also on the larger ranching units (whoever operates them after independence).

The logical agencies to do this would appear to be IFAD and/or ICRISAT and/or IDCD (Canada). ICRISAT tends to have a very long lead time (and FAO's past Namibia work has not been very applied or thorough) so IFAD and ICDC would appear the most promising options.

10. English is the chosen national language of virtually all Namibian parties (not just the Liberation Movement). Therefore it is urgent to devise (and test) a programme for rapid, mass English teaching.

Work has been done by the National Council of Churches of Namibia and by UNIN (Distance Education) and research by the Commonwealth Secretariat. What is needed now is:

- a. to collect all work and experience to date;
- b. to have a NCC-UNIN-CS workshop to agree on ways and means including test programmes (training trainers, distance education, urban and rural language groups);
- c. to begin test projects;
- d. to carry out a design study including costs, personnel, training material requirements for full scale programme (subject to revision on basis of results of "c").

Possibly the Commonwealth Secretariat could provide some funds and personnel. As Sweden is dominant and Federal Germany second source of adult education support they could also be approached.

11. All of these projects are:

- a. of crucial importance;
- b. needing action before independence at least at study and pre-positioning donors to allow rapid construction after independence;
- c. quite "non-political" in the sense that any government of independent Namibia would want the data so that 'impartiality' is not 'violated' even though most or all do appear in UNIN's 1985 overall survey volume.

12. Comnam should encourage UN specialised agencies:

- a. to go in to do studies within their remits over April-November;
- b. to liaise with Comnam to avoid overlapping and to point out gaps needing to be filled.

It is probably better placed to do this than the Special Representative who will have his hands (and feet!) full with peace-keeping, election nurturing and AG containing!

However, Special Representative has indicated (in conversation with UNICEF Deputy Managing Director) he would be glad to create a small data collection unit to seek out and 'bank' official data. This would obviate multiple trips to same source. The unit would take advice (and presumably special requests) from Comnam, UN agencies and ngo's. This appears to be worth following up.

13. In my opinion personnel used by Comnam in Namibia before independence should be either technically qualified present Comnam staff or low profile (i.e. not publicly identified with Namibian struggle) to avoid AG challenges to Special Representative. This is less true for specialised agency or governmental agency teams (e.g. ILO proposes to use Neville Rubin and myself to head up a team - tentatively in May). If Norway would agree personnel from Christian Michelson Institute (notably John Scott) might be useful. (Scott is, of course, clearly associated with Namibian liberation but work in corridors of EEC and CMI studies means he is not high profile in contrast to - say - myself).
14. Whether Comnam has a role after Independence needs thinking through and discussion with "experienced, relevant Namibians likely to form independence government" now. It could be argued - no, it's a UNDP role. Maybe, but special UN representatives/offices are not unknown (e.g. Ethiopia 1985) and Comnam may by November have enough of a lead in experience - especially in data collection and coordination - as to justify 18 to 30 month existence centred in Windhoek. That is really for Namibians to decide but question could usefully be put now to allow forward thinking by them and - depending on tentative response - forward planning (and budget mobilisation) by Comnam.



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