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## **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Minister of Women Affairs and Child Welfare, on gender equality in Namibia**

Gretchen Bauer



**“The biggest challenge facing women in Namibia today is to convince men to change their roles in society.”**

**IPPR:** In 2000 the Department of Women Affairs was upgraded to a fully-fledged Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare. Why was that done and what is the mandate of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare?

**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** At first, after independence, there was a Women’s Desk in the Office of the President and people, especially women, felt that only a desk would not have the capacity and the mandate that women wanted such an office to have. What women were looking for was a body that would be able to influence policy, a body that would have the capacity to carry out a strong sensitization program within the communities on issues related to gender, a body that would have the capacity to make a difference in the area of economic empowerment for women, and a body with the capacity to strengthen the lobbying skills of women, in areas related to women. After some time, the Desk was upgraded to a Department but it did not have the status required. For example, the head of the Department was a civil servant with the rank of an undersecretary. In this way it was very difficult for women’s issues to be articulated either in Cabinet or in Parliament. It was left to the mercy of women Members of Parliament (MPs) and women Ministers to argue for women’s issues. There was no one following women’s issues on a daily basis at a political level.

Later the Department was upgraded such that it was headed by a Director General who had a Ministerial rank. That meant there was the possibility to influence policies, since the Director General, having a Ministerial rank, could sit in Cabinet. But again, we felt that this was not enough, because the head of the office was in Cabinet by invitation. The Director General was not a full Cabinet member and it was made clear that she was there by invitation only. Even in the allocation of responsibilities, Cabinet members came first and the Director General of Women Affairs was there as an afterthought. I should also mention that even for the general public, the Department was not seen as an important actor. At public functions, the Director General of Women Affairs would be introduced last, after the Deputy Ministers and the Permanent Secretaries. This reinforced the public’s perception that the Department was not a serious body. These may seem like small things, but they had an impact. Also, communities did not perceive the Department as a government body, rather they looked at it as a non-governmental organization (NGO). And the liaison officers in the regions were not treated as representatives of a government institution, and that affected the work of the Department. At the last ordinary congress of Swapo, the Swapo Women’s Council brought up the issue of the Department of Women Affairs, saying that this office needed to be given some muscle. Women also argued that

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it is not easy to separate mothers from children, and suggested that a body to look after women's and children's interests be set up. After the last elections, in 2000 when the President set up the new Cabinet, he also established the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare. From the time the Ministry was established, one could see a difference. Even the way the staff in the regions are treated has changed, such that wherever there is an inter-ministerial committee, they are there, which was not the case before.

**IPPR:** And the mandate of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare?

**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** The mandate of the MWACW, first, is to guide government policies related to women's and children's issues. That is the broad mandate of the Ministry - to guide government policies in those areas. Another mandate of the Ministry is to oversee the implementation of gender related programs in the whole country. We monitor how issues related to women are handled in the government, in the private sector, and in the general public, as well as issues related to child welfare. The Ministry is also mandated to coordinate the national activities related to children. This is why we have made an appeal to the public for all groups involved in issues related to women and children to let us know. We are not trying to stop people from doing things; we just feel it is important to coordinate activities. This way we can inform one group of the activities of another. We would really like to see a coordination of activities, rather than competition. These are issues on which people really need to work together. That is why we ask them to register their programs with the Ministry.

**IPPR:** There are some who argue that a Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare marginalizes women's issues and concerns rather than mainstreaming them. What do you say to that argument?

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**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** I do not know what basis there is for that argument, but as far as I know, we do not marginalize women's issues. How do you marginalize women's issues if these are the issues that you are dealing with every day? Why are we, for example, organizing information sharing forums where we invite all stakeholders to debrief each other, so that we know what all are doing? If we are marginalizing women's

issues, why are we publishing a newsletter in which we ask the public to bring their articles to be included in our newsletter? If we are marginalizing women's issues, why do we have a weekly radio program in which we talk about women's and children's issues? And it is not only the staff of the Ministry who participate in that program, we even invite other people concerned with gender issues – people from the churches, people from the opposition parties - to talk about gender issues. If we are marginalizing women's issues, why are we supporting the Namibia Elected Women's Forum? This is a forum for elected women from all political parties. This Forum has gained momentum because of the Ministry. We want these elected women to be able to consult with each other. We attend all of their meetings; we share information with them. So, I feel that it really does not make sense to say that the Ministry is marginalizing women's issues. Then what are we talking about? Our entire focus is on women. You cannot marginalize your core function. Sometimes I ask myself whether we are doing something for women. But then I meet people who tell me the Ministry is doing a lot. I think we have to accept that in Namibia, especially in the area of gender sensitization, we have done a lot. Just listen to the local radio programs, you will hear people talking about women's issues, whether negatively or positively, they are still talking. That means they are aware. That is a breakthrough. It is very, very important to me that many people are starting to talk about women's issues, no matter from which angle. The fact that they are



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talking about this means that people are aware. Our strategy now is just to put the right things in their minds, because they are aware that equality between men and women needs to be discussed and must be realized.

**IPPR:** What have been the achievements to date of the Department of Women Affairs and now the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare?

**Hon Nandi-Ndiatwah:** There have been tremendous achievements. The first activity in which the Women's Desk and then the Department of Women Affairs were most intensely involved was gender sensitization. There were many workshops that were conducted throughout the country.

These workshops were very focused. There were workshops organized specifically for Members of Parliament, there were workshops organized specifically for civil servants, especially Permanent Secretaries. There were workshops organized for traditional leaders and then workshops that were open to the whole community. These workshops had a great impact. Before the establishment of the Ministry some traditional authorities, for example the Ondonga traditional authority, had to change their traditional regulations in favor of women. This is a great achievement. Nowadays, even the traditional authorities are working hard to have senior counsellors who are women. They talk about gender issues in their meetings. This is a breakthrough. You know it is not easy to get into the traditional structures in such a short period of time, but we managed. For us, this is a success that we are proud of.

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**“ We still have a long way to go. But 12 years of independence is also not a long time and when you talk about gender, you are talking about people's attitudes that have been there for centuries and centuries. “**

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And then in the private sector. The private sector has also become sensitive to gender issues in Namibia. They are really trying, even in management, to bring in more women. For the first time, the Chamber of Commerce has had a woman president. This was before the Ministry of Women Affairs was established. To us that was a breakthrough. And then in government, we passed the Local Authorities Act that requires that at

least one-third of candidates for local authorities be women. And within the political parties, for example Swapo, a decision was taken at one of the past congresses that the lists for the local authorities elections should be zebra lists, alternating women and men. We have also seen a steady increase in the number of women in Parliament, from seven to 15 to 19. So you can see that there has been a steady progress. Of course, there is still a problem with the regional councils. This is always a problem when there is one person to stand. That one is very difficult. But otherwise, really, we have achieved. Even economically, we are seeing women getting into business, especially in the fishing industry. It is true we still have a long way to go since the majority of women are still in the informal sector, which is mostly hand to mouth. But we have made some gains in that some women are involved in major economic activities. However, we have not had much of a breakthrough when it comes to land ownership. Most of the farms remain owned by men. But 12 years of independence is also not a long time, and when you talk about gender, you are talking about people's attitudes that have been there for centuries and centuries. And it is not realistic to think that in 12 years you can correct that situation.

**IPPR:** What would you say are the greatest challenges facing women and children in Namibia today? How is the Ministry dealing with these challenges?



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**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** The biggest challenge facing women in Namibia today is to convince men to change their roles in society. Because what is happening now is that society is accepting gender equality, society is accepting a larger public role for women than in the past when they were largely confined to the home, but society is not also encouraging men to increase their role in the family and in the community. That is a challenge to women in Namibia. We have to realize that women are becoming overworked. Women have to compete with men in the public sphere in order to be on par with them, but women continue to be the ones with the responsibilities at the household level, while men just concentrate on their public lives. But very little effort is being made for men also to play a role in the domestic sphere. That is a big challenge. As a person who is closely analyzing the situation, I am finding this to be a challenge – women are increasingly becoming overworked.

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Another challenge is how to change the structure of work in the public arena so that we can reduce the work burden for women who are getting in there. The infrastructure is not women friendly. For example, increasingly women are taking on leadership positions at the grassroots level. But public meetings that such women are supposed to attend take place after hours. And women have to travel from their residences to the places where the meetings are taking place. Will they be secure, travelling after hours? They are not secure. These are some of the things that people have to look

at. Is there someone to be with the children after hours? If there is nobody, then the structures are not friendly, they do not facilitate women’s increased participation in public life. There is also a challenge concerning children – and that is the breakdown of the extended family. This is not only an African phenomenon but can be seen in many other parts of the world. Family breakdown is a very big challenge to the development of children. Nowadays, there is no personal link between the community, the parents, and the children. Another challenge is to look into the immediate needs of children. Education is provided, but still parents have the responsibility to assist in that education. But sometimes it is not possible in some families. We now have a tripartite education system that is based on the parents, the student and the teacher. But now the majority of our parents do not feel that they can become involved in the education of their children. So there is a gap between the children from families that are more enlightened and the children from families that are not. Because of today’s advanced technology, many parents are withdrawing. For example, if parents are illiterate they cannot really help their children with English, with computers, and so on. Finally, we now have this problem of HIV/AIDS. The number of orphans is the biggest, most immediate, challenge we are facing. For example, it is reported that there are 85,000 orphans in Namibia, 40 percent of them because of HIV/AIDS, and some of them are even HIV positive. This is the biggest challenge we are confronting. We still don’t know how to approach this problem but I know we have to do something.

**IPPR:** The majority of women in Namibia live in the rural areas, usually working and living as subsistence farmers. What are the special issues facing these women and how is the Ministry reaching out to them?

**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** As you say, these women are primarily subsistence farmers. Increasingly, our land in Namibia is becoming unproductive and this is a big challenge to the rural women. They must contend with desert encroachment. If I think of Namibia in 1974, when I left for exile, the village where I come from was a forest, but when I came back it was a desert. This is a very



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difficult situation that the rural women find themselves in. Another problem is that Namibia is a drought prone country and it does not matter that rural women want to produce, if there is no rain, there is no rain. Then some women have tried to become involved in some income generating projects, mostly in the area of tailoring and so on, but the problem there is the markets. They don't have the markets. The government, through the Ministry, can give them small grants. But if they want to participate in agriculture and there is no rain, it is a problem. And Namibia does not have enough water for irrigation. Then they try things like pot making, brick making, but then again the problem is the market. We need to develop a market for them. We also need to make them understand the role they are playing in the economy and how important it is. They need to recognize their contribution to the country's economy. For example, basket making is a big industry in Namibia, carried out by the rural women. I think we have not assisted them sufficiently to recognize this activity. Even their income is not recorded in the national accounts, but I think they are really bringing in something.

To address the problems faced by rural women, the Ministry is working together with the First Lady who has a program focusing on rural women. We started earlier this year with conferences of rural women, covering all the regions. They have come up with very good programs of action that we are now in the process of implementing. We will now see how we will be able to assist them. But the handicap here is the budget. Everything has to be budgeted in order to be implemented. We are also looking at how rural women can contribute to the education of their children. Together with the Ministry of Basic Education we have a program that combines literacy classes and programs of economic empowerment. These are some of the programs focusing on rural women.

**IPPR:** Namibia has formed one of the first organizations for the girl child – the Namibia Girl Child Organization. But some argue that we cannot neglect the boy child, otherwise a vicious cycle of inequality and abuse will continue. Do you agree? Does the Ministry also focus on the boy child?

**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** I do agree that we should not neglect the boys. A critical area of concern is the girl child. This is in the Beijing Platform of Action. This originated from Namibia. It was Namibia that suggested that an area of critical concern relating to the youth was needed. Our original intention was to focus on children or the youth in general. Because if we only talk about gender equality and economic empowerment to adults, we will never solve the problem. We need to start from the day a baby is born. We have to find a way of focusing on gender from an early stage. At the conference we attempted to introduce a focus on children, but we were told that the theme of the conference was already agreed, all the areas of critical concern had already been identified, and everything was focused on women. So we were told, to speak of children generally would not be in line with the other critical areas of concern. So a compromise was found, to speak of the girl child. But if you look into the articles, we were talking about children, and that is what we really wanted. If you focus only on the girl child you are perpetuating division: girls are treated like this, boys are treated like that. I was shocked to learn of one country in which girls were exempted from paying school fees while boys had to pay. There again you are perpetuating inequality. When it comes to children I want them to be brought up to see themselves as equal partners, not for them to be taught that they are different. In the Ministry we are dealing with children as a whole. Last time when we went to the UN Special Session on Children we took a girl and a boy in the delegation. Whatever we do, we want to have a girl and a boy so that they see themselves as equal partners.

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**IPPR:** To what extent does the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare work with women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations? Does the Ministry feel sufficiently supported by the NGO community?

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**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** This government wants to work with women's organizations. At the time that we were preparing for the 4<sup>th</sup> UN World Conference on Women I was honored when the President assigned me to be the chairperson of the National Preparatory Committee. By coincidence it was also the time that the President appointed me to be a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. That was the

Commission that was mandated by the UN to prepare for the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women. That was also the time that the UN was emphasizing the involvement of civil society organizations in the preparations for the conference. Governments were asked to facilitate the participation of NGOs. So as the Chairperson of the National Preparatory Committee I was mandated to work closely with the NGOs. But I must also admit that NGOs in Namibia are highly political. I recall that there was an NGO meeting that I attended in order to brief the NGOs on the preparations for the conference, and I was told not to open my mouth as I was representing government. I kept quiet. But I thought it was an advantage to give information to the NGOs. Nevertheless, even up to now, when we were preparing for Beijing Plus Five, we called the NGOs together. You see our aim is to see all those working on women's issues working together. Once people go their own way, my work becomes more difficult. Because gender issues have not yet gained roots in Namibia. The question of equality between men and women, we are still nursing it, and if we stray from our focus, definitely, we are making the road longer. We are now almost getting hold of the situation, but it is still fragile. That is why, as women, we must be focusing on issues that are uniting us. You can be revolutionaries, but will your revolution help you to reach your goal? But we do work with women's organizations. We invite them to our meetings, and they are free to come to us. They invite us to their activities and we attend. But as I said, there is too much politics in the country. Once you see that groups are going their own way you say: colleagues this is not the right thing. We want women to work together in Namibia and to focus on women's issues.

**IPPR:** There is something called the 50/50 campaign that is being undertaken in Namibia and a number of other countries around the world to ensure that women are represented equally to men at all levels of decision making. Does the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare support the 50/50 campaign to bring more women into elected office at the local, regional and national level?

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**“... I want support so that we reach at least the 30 percent [women's representation at all levels] because if we fail to get it in 2004, we will not be in compliance with the SADC Declaration ...”**

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**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** Yes, I support the 50/50 campaign, but I also think that we must try to be realistic. Because we have not yet grasped the situation. First, Namibia is a member of the United Nations, it is a member of the African Union, it is a member of the Southern African Development Community. All of these bodies are preoccupied with increasing the number of women in leadership

positions. It seems that it is generally accepted that 30 percent is the required critical mass for women's representation to make a difference. SADC has even gone further by giving a deadline. They have called for 30 percent women's representation by the year 2005. Now we are in 2002 and we have not yet reached the 30 percent, but we are calling for 50 percent. Is that realistic? I am not opposing 50/50 but I am just saying that it is not realistic. For example, there will be elections here in 2004. I want support so that we reach at least the 30 percent, because if we fail



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to get it in 2004, we will not be in compliance with the SADC Declaration because there is no other election between 2004 and 2005. So that is my argument. Let us women work together and be focused and agreed on what is likely to be possible. I know the Women's Manifesto Network is leading the 50/50 campaign. But they are not serious, they are just not serious. Perhaps they just want publicity. Why can't we agree? Are we realistic to think that we can achieve 50 percent by 2004? Why not focus on what we think we might come closer to, which is the 30 percent. That is my argument. In my role as Minister of Women Affairs I go to the political parties. I talk to them. I have already written letters to all political parties in Namibia, asking them to give me the lists of women represented in their party structures. And I am doing this because as from this year I want to keep reminding them during 2002, 2003, 2004, that we must reach at least 30 percent in the 2004 elections. That is what we are doing. No opposition to the 50/50, but it is not realistic. I want women's organizations to focus on the 30 percent by 2004.

**IPPR:** You are one of now 19 women Members of Parliament in the National Assembly, making women 26 percent of that body. This puts Namibia at about 20<sup>th</sup> worldwide in terms of representation of women in lower houses of national legislatures. How has Namibia managed to achieve this, and what have been the accomplishments of these women Members of Parliament?

**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** First, we have been very consistent. We did not try to impress anybody. We tried as Namibian women to be focused and to be ourselves. People might make their own statements, but we have been very systematic in what we want. From the time of independence when we had the women's Desk, the Department, and the Ministry, we never changed our language. When we talk about equality between men and women, our focus is on social development, economic development. It is not that we are looking for a confrontation between men and women, but we are looking for a partnership between these two human beings who happen to have different sex. So this has really been the focus of women in this country: no confrontation, but focus on what we want to achieve. We have been open to everybody in as far as women's issues are concerned. Because when it comes to Parliament, whether we like it or not, this is the domain of political parties. If you do not convince the political parties, forget about women's representation in Parliament. There is an organization in this country, the Namibia National Women's Organization, NANAWO. I was honored to be the President of that organization, and that organization, when we started, was unifying women politically. When you join we do not ask which party you are from, but we know each other. You could see the leadership was from a mix of political parties. At one of our congresses, we had Honourable Pendukeni Ithana, Swapo MP, opening the congress, and we had the late Honourable Anna Frank, DTA MP, as a guest speaker at the closing. So you see how we were trying to unite the women. And that helped a lot. Because you see political parties even asking questions in Parliament: what is NANAWO doing about this and that? And we have been persistent in saying that what we are really talking about is partnership and that has helped us a lot. We need to continue working within the political parties. Now, with the Namibia Elected Women's Forum, when we take decisions within the Elected Women's Forum it is up to each elected woman to go back to her political party and say – this is what we agreed - and ask for her colleagues' support. These are some of the things that help us. But I think we need to intensify our efforts because we need to increase the number of women further; the final end is the 50/50.

**IPPR:** What about those accomplishments of women MPs in the National Assembly over the last 12 years?

**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** There are many things that we have achieved, for example, the passing of the Married Persons Equality Act. Women played a very big role in that. They spoke the same

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language, both from the ruling party and the opposition parties. There was a very tough issue whereby, in the past, the law said that the husband was the head of the family and with the new Act that was abolished. When explanations for that were called for, the interventions from women from both sides of the House were the same. So that is a very big accomplishment. And then, we have now in our Parliament a standing committee on Education, Gender and Human Resources. When we started we only had a caucus and caucuses are not well

serviced, like the standing committees are. That standing committee came into being because of women Parliamentarians. We had been meeting as a caucus, and then, over time, we felt we should have that standing committee, and we managed to get that through. In addition, the Elected Women’s Forum’s work is directed by the women’s caucus. So in addition to the standing committee, we still have the women’s caucus, and it is the women’s caucus that is serving as the secretariat for the Elected Women Forum. Now we are busy with the Maintenance Bill. It is the women’s caucus, really, that is working hard to make sure that the Maintenance Bill has addressed the real issues. The women Parliamentarians in Namibia have also played a role within the region. A SADC Regional Parliamentary Women’s Caucus has been established and Namibian women MPs were part of the steering committee to form that caucus. The Namibian women were Honourable Mushelenga, Swapo MP, and Honourable Siska, DTA MP – not from one party – so you see how we are ready to work together as women. When the SADC Regional Parliamentary Women’s Caucus was launched in Angola in April there were elections by secret ballot and Namibia was elected to the Deputy Chair position. That is because of the role that Namibian women have played. They have really made a difference in our Parliament. Even their presence there makes men think twice before they act on issues related to gender. That is very important.

**IPPR:** Namibia is far ahead of most other countries in having more than 40 percent of local councilors be women. Partly this is because the affirmative action provision in the Local Authorities Act. But what other reasons, do you think, contribute to this high percentage?

**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** It is the Swapo zebra list. That has really contributed a lot. During the first election, although the law was in effect, the percentage was not as high. But when we came to the second election and used the zebra list, that raised the percentage. Swapo became very serious about it. Some municipalities did not comply, saying there were no women to be candidates. But because it was a congress decision, when the names came to the political bureau, it insisted that every Swapo list be a zebra list. Some lists were not in compliance and they were sent back until the people finally found some women. That is what has helped that number to be 41 percent. That is also why we feel that the ward system may not be helpful. For me, as the Minister of Women Affairs and Child Welfare, I want the party list system to continue at the local level. I think we have reached an understanding on that one. Because it will assure that more women will remain in the municipalities. If we go to the ward system then we will face the same situation as in the regional councils. That would be a problem. So I am happy with that. It is another achievement of women – not to go to the ward system. And when we have so many women at the local level, that paves the way for them to go to the national level.

**IPPR:** You mentioned the 4<sup>th</sup> UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. I know that you headed up that 58 person delegation. It seems that many women activists and many women politicians in





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Namibia were profoundly affected by their participation in the conference. How important do you think the conference and the Beijing Platform of Action have been for Namibia?

**Hon Nandi-Ndiatwah:** I must say that the preparation for Beijing had a very big impact in Namibia. I cannot really say what motivated us, as people in the preparation, but I must tell you it was such a dynamic preparation. And almost everybody seems to have heard that there was going to be a conference in Beijing. Those of us who were involved talked to so many people, especially through the media. Even in remote villages in the rural areas, people knew about our participation in Beijing. It was really a preparation that did a lot of sensitizing. And even when we came back, we made a round of reporting, and up to now there is a lot of reference to Beijing. Even when we are looking at government policies, we make reference to what was agreed in the Beijing Platform of Action. It became one of our guiding documents. And up to now there is a lot of talk about it – what Beijing achieved. It is a conference that, I must say, was highly popularized in Namibia. More than any other conference. Almost everybody knew about Beijing.

**IPPR:** What are the major arguments and debates today within your party, the Swapo party, as far as women's issues are concerned?

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**“We have not yet reached the required number of women in the party leadership. So that is an issue. “**

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**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** As I said, we have always been consistent in what we are saying. First, we have not yet reached the required number of women in the party leadership. So that is an issue. Our constitution was reviewed and amended at the last extraordinary congress and the question of gender equality was incorporated into

the constitution for the first time. And we keep referring to that. So the debate is around increasing women's representation. At the local level we have managed, with the zebra list, to increase women's representation. So that one now is done. But we still have other bodies. We have the question of regional leadership. We need to think clearly about how we can increase the number of women at the regional level. During the past few months there have been regional conferences, and I am happy to say that three regions – Kavango, Hardap and Karas – now have women leaders. We also need to increase the number of women in the Central Committee, in the Political Bureau, and in the Secretariat – the people who are heading departments. We also need to increase the number of women in the top hierarchy. These are the debates. And they are justifiable debates, because the constitution of the party is very clear on the question of gender equality. Also the question of mainstreaming gender in Swapo. When we set up party programs, we must look at how they affect women and how they affect men. Do they affect them differently or affect them the same? If they affect them differently, is it negatively? And what should we do? So these are the debates that are going on within the party.

And mind you, as a ruling party, the debates going on in the party are also transferred to the debates in the government. Also what do we do about children in the country? For example, the whole question of early childhood development – how do we deal with this? Of course we know now that it is left to the community, but the government wants to sensitize and mobilize the communities and make them understand the importance of early childhood development. Because there are some communities that have no capacity, so the government has to supplement what they are doing in terms of infrastructure, educational materials and so on. But now who takes care of the caregivers? They have to be paid by the communities but that is not always possible. Early childhood development serves two purposes: it prepares the child for her career, when she gets to grade one. It also gives time to the mother to do other things when the child is at crèche. So we cannot separate this from overall women's issues and women's empowerment. Because when your child is at a crèche, you are comfortable that there is

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somebody responsible taking care of your child. Then you will be able to do your work better. That pressure is taken off – better than leaving the child with a younger brother, younger sister and you don't know what is going to happen. So early childhood development in Namibia kills two birds with one stone: giving women a chance to do other things and preparing children for further education.

**IPPR:** Last question: when will there be first woman President or first woman Prime Minister in Namibia?

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**“... I just know that one day Namibia will have a woman President”**

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**Hon Nandi-Ndaitwah:** I cannot tell you when but definitely we are hoping for that. And I think we will make it, though I don't know when. Five years from now, 10 years from now, but definitely it will come. I may not see it, but I just know that one day Namibia will have a woman President.

**IPPR:** Thank you very much for this interview.

Gretchen Bauer is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Delaware in the USA. From January to July 2002, she was a visiting researcher at the IPPR.

This is the transcript of an electronically recorded interview between Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the Minister of Women Affairs and Child Welfare, and the IPPR conducted on Wednesday 17 July 2002. It has been shortened in parts and some minor language changes have been made.