

Election Watch X

Produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

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Will the parties deliver on gender equality?

There has been much ado, media hype, and talk over the course of this year on the issue of gender parity. And now that most political party manifestos and party lists have been released or confirmed, it's time for an assessment on what the upcoming elections might deliver for women.

At government level, a number of policies, action plans and ratified regional protocols support the drive for gender equality. With these instruments in place, there is no doubt that at least theoretically, Namibia is committed to gender equality. For example, the National Gender Policy calls for an increase in women's participation at all levels of decision-making, as well as the provision of support to these women; while the Gender Plan of Action outlines how this goal should be achieved, by highlighting capacity building, skills development, mentorship and confidence building for women in parliament and other areas of public sector; and representation in all spheres of public life. Other instruments that support gender equality beyond governance include Vision 2030 and the National Development Plans; the Married Persons Equality Act (1996); the Combating of Domestic Violence Act (2003); the Traditional Authorities Act (1995); and the Local Authorities Act (1992).

In addition to these national policies, Namibia in 2008 ratified the Southern African Development Commission (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, which calls all member states to ensure that by 2015, "50 percent of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, the cabinet, parliament, judiciary, all tribunals and commissions, including human rights bodies, civil society, traditional structures, trade unions, political parties and the media are held by women."¹ Namibia has also signed or ratified a plethora of other regional and international instruments, conventions and protocols – many of which are combined and streamlined in the SADC Protocol.

However, despite all these wonderful policies that highlight Namibia's theoretical commitment to gender equality in governance and beyond, the practical reality is different.

Currently, all levels of political governance – except the local authority level – hold less than 30 percent of women in office, as illustrated in the table on the right.

The main reason that the local authorities continuously have at least 42 percent women representation is because of quotas that call for this in Part 4 of Section 6 of the Local Authorities Amendment Act, which stipulates that: "For the purposes of any election contemplated in paragraph (a) of subsection (2), each party list shall contain as candidates for such election (a) in the case of a municipal council or town council consisting of 10 or fewer members or a village council, the names of at least three female persons; (b) in the case of a municipal councillor town council consisting of 11 or more members, the names of at least five female persons".²

All other pieces of legislation that could determine the gender distribution in governance are silent on the topic of the representation of women, leaving parties to decide for themselves on whether and how they will ensure the gender equality envisioned in these instruments, into their structures. Despite various recommendations on gender made



Table 3: Women Office Holders in Namibia

OFFICE	Members/Councillors	Number of Women	Percentage of women
Cabinet	26	5	19%
National Assembly MPs	78	19	24%
National Council MPs	26	7	27%
Regional Council	107	13	12%
Regional Governors	13	3	23%
Local Authority	323	135	42%
Mayors	30	8	27%

Source: Gender Links, 2011

for the review of the electoral law, the new Electoral Act (Act 5 of 2014) does not make a single mention of the words 'gender', 'woman', 'female/male', 'equity'; and in this way, avoids prescribing how political parties should/can integrate gender equity in their party lists and other candidate selections. The only respect in which gender is mentioned in the Electoral

Act is in terms of prescribing that parties "may not exclude or restrict membership of the political party on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status", and that they "may not advocate or aim to carry on its political activities" on these grounds either.

Recommendations that had been made to the LRDC included an Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) submission that proposed that "for the party list system in National Assembly elections, a 'zebra system' could be introduced in which female and male candidates are alternated on the list to ensure a 50:50 gender balance. For first-past-the-post regional elections, parties should be required to nominate a certain proportion of female candidates." The Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC) itself, in a report written by Professor Gerhard Töttemeyer following national consultations in 2012 on electoral issues, proposed that "gender equity should be pursued in all positions relating to electoral tasks"; that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD) of the "50/50 Bill related to Regional Government, National Council and Local Authority representation"; and that "The 'zebra' method of nomination when candidates are nominated for elections at national and local level should be legalised."

1 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, 2008

2 Local Authorities Amendment Act, Act 3 of 1997

ABOUT ELECTION WATCH

Election Watch is a bulletin containing electoral analysis and voter education that will appear regularly in the run up to the 2014 National Assembly and Presidential Elections. It is produced as a PDF download and as a printed newspaper insert. Election Watch is a project of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). It is produced with the support of the European Union and *The Namibian newspaper*. The content of Election Watch is the sole responsibility of the IPPR.

Comments and feedback should be sent to the IPPR, PO Box 6566, Windhoek, Namibia.

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The recommendations relating to the National Assembly were not incorporated into the Electoral Act, and those related to legislation on the regional councils and National Council are yet to be considered in the relevant acts. As such, at the regional and national level, political parties are left to voluntarily incorporate gender into their party lists and programmes. In this regard, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) notes that political parties are essentially the “gate-keepers” of women’s political participation.

With the National Assembly and Presidential elections taking place at the end of this month, this is a prime opportunity to assess just how serious the various political parties are about gender.

Importantly, none of the nine parties fielding a Presidential

candidate in the 2014 Presidential election have fielded a female candidate for this position. The candidates fielded for the Presidential race include: Hage Geingob (Swapo), Hidipo Hamutenya (RDP), McHenry Venaani (DTA), Usutuaije Maamberua (Swanu), Epafraas Mukwiilongo (NEFF), Ben Ulenga (CoD), Henk Mudge (RP), Asser Mbai (Nudo), and Ignatius Shixwameni (APP). It is worth noting, however, that Swapo considered female candidates in the party race for a Presidential candidate. In the case of Swapo, this was Pen-dukeni livula-lthana, who alongside Jerry Ekandjo, lost out to Hage Geingob.

The make-up of the various party lists, as well as the contents on gender of the party manifestos, provide better insights into the level of and plans for gender equality within each contesting party.

The extent of women’s representation in national legislatures or executives in any given country is determined by a wide range of factors. These include the general progress towards achieving equality of rights and opportunities among women and men in the public and private spheres, the design of political and electoral systems and the level of institutionalization of, and transparency in, political decision-making. Within this complex set of factors, however, political parties are increasingly referred to as the “gatekeepers” of democracy – and of women’s political participation in particular.

Source: OSCE, 2014. *Handbook on Promoting Women’s Participation in Political Parties.*

About the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

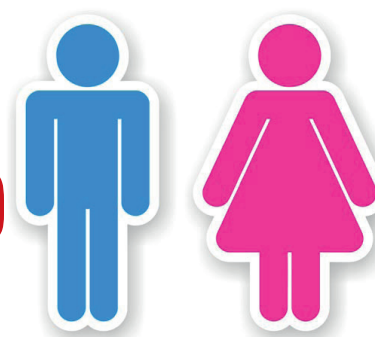
The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development looks into integration and main streaming of gender issues into the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building initiatives which is important to the sustainable development of the SADC region.

The Protocol aims to provide for the empowerment of women, to eliminate discrimination and achieve gender equality by encouraging and harmonising the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies and programmes and projects.

It is also a tool used to set realistic, measurable targets, time frames and indicators for achieving gender equality and equity and monitor and evaluate the progress made by Member States thereof. To this regard The Protocol clearly speaks to issues of constitutional and legal rights, governance, and education and training, productive resources and employment, gender-based violence, HIV/ Aids and Conflict Resolution.

(Source: SADC, <http://www.sadc.int/documents-publications/show/803>)

Which parties feature the most women on their lists?



Section 77 of the Electoral Act stipulates that registered parties that intend to take part in the election must submit a list of candidates, in writing, to the Electoral Commission, and that this list should indicate the names, sex and residential addresses “of at least 32 but not more than 96 candidates nominated with a view to the filling of any seats in the National Assembly to which the registered political party may become entitled” through the election.

IPPR analysed the party lists of the 16 registered parties (the lists can be found on the Election Watch website at www.election-watch.org.na) to establish the representation of women in each party. Additionally, where information on the 2009 candidate lists was available, information on this make-up is also provided.

All the parties can be commended for having at least 30 percent women representation on their party lists. However, across all parties, the number one position on the list is held by a man, and at least three parties have only two women in the Top 10 positions. Nevertheless, and importantly, ten of the sixteen parties taking part in the 2014 National Assembly elections have at least 40 percent women representation in both their Top 10 and in the entire party list.

Best Performers: The Republican Party comes out tops in terms of gender representation in the Top 10, with 6 out of 10 candidates on the list being females (in fact, 4 of the top 5 on the list are women). Other top achievers in this regard include CDV, CoD, DPN, Swanu and Swapo, each with an equal gender representation in the Top 10 (with CoD, Swanu and Swapo using a zebra style in their top 10).

The Christian Democratic Voice (CDV) and the Congress of Democrats (CoD) boast the highest number of women in their party lists, with 53 percent each, although they do not make complete use of zebra list systems. (CoD uses a zebra style for its Top 10, but then breaks away from tradition from #11 onwards, with female candidates taking posi-

tions 10, 11 and 12). Both parties feature 50 percent women in the Top 10. CoD’s placement in this regard is in keeping with its 2009 list, and in its manifesto, the party clearly states its commitment to gender equity. CDV is less clear about gender equality in its manifesto, stating only that it would take women’s participation seriously.

Next up – in terms of the full party list – is Swapo, with a 50 percent split between men and women on the party list, using a zebra-style format. This is a huge improvement from the 33 percent of women candidates fielded in the party’s 2009 party list, and an even greater leap from the 20 percent in the Top 10 five years ago. This change in the

numbers on the Swapo list compared to 2009 is a result of the party’s decision at its extraordinary congress in June this year to amend “the party’s constitution to implement a policy which says that 50 percent of all leadership positions must go to women”. If election outcomes continue to present the same results as in the past, Swapo’s adoption of this amendment essentially presents the greatest opportunity for Namibia to get closer to fulfilling the SADC protocol. All the parties, including Swapo, have a male at the top of the list, and 10 of the 16 parties have more males than females in the Top 10 of their lists. So realistically, Namibia will not achieve 50/50 by 2015, but the enhanced

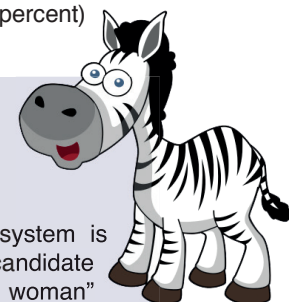
composition of most political parties certainly brings it closer to the SADC Protocol ideal.

Worst Performers: Parties with the least number of women in their Top 10 positions include the newly formed Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) (which has six men at the top of its list), RDP and the Workers Revolutionary Party (which previously competed in the elections under the name of the Communist Party). Each of these parties only have two (20 percent) women in the Top 10 on their party lists. When looking at the entire list, RDP fares a little better (with 39 percent women representation), but WRP and NEFF remain at the bottom of the list with 31 and 32 percent of women on the entire list respectively. Although DTA has 4 women in its Top 10, it is important to note that it only has 5 women (25 percent) in its Top 20.

Table 3: Gender representation on the party lists of the 16 parties taking part in the 2014 National Assembly Elections.

Party	2014		2009	
	Percentage of women candidates on the full party list	Percentage of women in Top 10 on party list	Percentage of women candidates on the full party list (2009)	Percentage of women in Top 10 on party list (2009)
All People’s Party (APP)	45	40	42	20
Christian Democratic Voice (CDV)	53	50	-	-
Congress of Democrats (CoD)	53	50	50	50
Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN)	39	50	38	50
DTA of Namibia	45	40	42	40
Monitor Action Group (MAG)	40	40	32	0
Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF)	32	20	-	-
National Democratic Party of Namibia (NDP)	48	50	50	50
National Unity Democratic Organisation (Nudo)	30	30	32	30
Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)	39	20	32	20
Republican Party of Namibia (RP)	46	60	50	40
Swanu of Namibia	43	50	42	30
Swapo Party of Namibia	50	50	33	20
United Democratic Front of Namibia (UDF)	36	30	51	40
United People’s Movement (UPM)	48	40	-	-
Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP)	31	20	65	60

Embracing the Zebra



A ‘zebra’ or ‘zipper’ style system is one in which “every other candidate on the list must be a woman” (International IDEA 2007), i.e. with men and women alternating positions on a party list.

Among the sixteen political parties taking part in the 2014 election, only Swapo applies a zebra style throughout its party list. Other parties have, however, embraced the zebra list in their own ways.

CoD uses a zebra listing only in its Top 10, allowing for 50 percent in this instance, though the entire list is made up of 53 percent women. Swanu makes use of a zebra list for the Top 20 positions on its list, while DPN has an alternating list until position 19 on its list. NDP alternates the first 8 positions on the list, while CDV has male/female alternates in its Top 6.

Interestingly, although it has two males at the top of its list, the APP uses a zebra style from positions 2 to 29 on its list.

Most improved parties: The parties with the greatest improvement in terms of more equal gender representation in their Top 10, compared to their 2009 lists, include MAG (which went from having no women in the Top 10 in 2009, to 4 women in 2014 ... although the Top 5 positions are all held by male candidates) and Swapo (from 2 women in 2009 to 5 in 2014). The APP, RP and Swanu also made important improvements to their Top 10, each adding two more women compared to their previous placements.

Declining parties: The WRP made the biggest backslide in terms of gender representation in its Top 10, going from 6 in 10 women in 2009 (under the Communist Party), to only 2 in 10 women in the 2014

election. On the full party list, it also declined from topping the list in 2009 with 65 percent women's representation, to falling to the bottom of the list with only 31 percent women on this year's list. UDF also did some backsliding, going from 4 (2009) to 3 (2014) women in the Top 10, and from 51 percent women's representation on its 2009 party list, to only 36 percent women's representation on its current list. All other parties that competed in the 2009 election (DTA, NDP, Nudo, RDP) maintained their status quo.

Beyond the numbers, the question of the quality of the candidates taking on these positions has often come up as an argument against quota systems. These pronouncements are often gendered, taking on the assumption that women are less competent

than men in terms of being able to contribute in parliament, or at other levels of decision-making. When considering this quality versus quantity argument, it is important that the quality of both male and female candidates are considered, and that both sexes are empowered to ensure enhanced service delivery to Namibian citizens. In this regard, the IPPR has stated that skills shortages in Namibia's governance structures should not be assumed to be gender-specific; and recommends that "While women have been disenfranchised over the years, and this training is critical...in ensuring a working democracy with leaders who know how to do their jobs, it is important that a holistic approach is taken when it comes to training." (IPPR, 2013.)

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WHAT THE PARTY MANIFESTOS SAY ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY

Reading the various party manifestos provides important insights into how each party takes on the topic of gender equality at different levels. The table below highlights statements made in reference to gender and/or women's empowerment in the available party manifestos.

APP	"The All People's Party is for total gender equality. 50/50 in decision-making structures must become a reality in our lifetime. The All People's Party will make sure that for any minister that is of a sex the deputy shall be of another sex. We will also make sure that this applied to the whole public service at the management cadre level and for all positions at state owned enterprises, at municipal, town council and village council levels. We shall also offer incentives to those private companies who implement the 50/50 policy in their establishments."	RDP	With regards to enhancing the participation of women in governance and in decision-making positions, RDP notes that it will "Increase the role of women in government to participate in key decisions making structures"; and that it will promote "leadership with the focus on the gradual implementation of equal (50-50) gender representation based on merit."
CDV	Aside from stating that "the CDV would take women and youth political participation seriously", the party does not present a clear position or strategy on gender representation/equity.	RP	RP does not contain a specific clause on gender equality, but notes that it will ensure "that the BEE includes the empowerment of all black citizens of Namibia, including the workers, women, the youth, people living with disabilities and those living in the rural areas and not only the middle class."
CoD	In its manifesto, the CoD highlights its commitment to gender equity as one of its core values and political principles. It states that "The CoD shall deliberately pursue a gender-balanced policy, and shall specifically promote the advancement of women, as well as protect their interests."	Swanu	Under the section on 'Democracy' in its manifesto, Swanu notes that "within the ambit of democracy and equality, Swanu gives its full and unconditional support to the objective of meeting a 50-50 gender balance in all of the country's public institutions. As a sign of Swanu's uncompromising stance on this issue, the party has already inculcated a 50-50 balance in its structures."
DTA of Namibia	The DTA of Namibia's manifesto contains a section titled "Women: Mothers of our Souls Builders of our Nation" in which it outlines a number of important commitments related to women, including the highly publicized idea of instituting a Single Mother's Grant. With respect to gender equality in governance, the DTA's manifesto states that the party "recognizes the important role of women in development of the society and growth of the nation, and remains committed to give a high priority to Women's Empowerment and welfare." It goes on to note that it "Women's welfare and development will be accorded a high priority at all levels within the government, and DTA is committed to 30% reservation in parliamentary seats with in line with SADC Protocol and AU requirements." With regards to the judiciary, the DTA also noted that it "Aims to enhance the number of women in the Bar as well as Bench, reducing the gender gap in judiciary."	Swapo	Swapo's manifesto contains a section titled 'Gender Equality and Mainstreaming', which highlights several actions that Government has already taken, including the National Gender Policy and the National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) "which serves as a guide for the implementation of the National Gender Policy 2010-2020 especially in the areas of GBV and human rights". It also highlights a number of activities currently taking place through Government efforts (note that a distinction is being made here between party and government). Under its promises on gender, aside from ongoing efforts to mainstream gender, something new that the party presents includes efforts to "Mentor and coach women politicians to take up leadership positions. The objective is to empower women economically, socially and politically through creating conducive environment and strengthening institutional capacity to engage in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process that show gender results."
NDP	Does not mention gender equality. The word 'gender' does not appear in its manifesto. The word 'woman' only appears with respect to violence (see pg. 4)	UDF	The UDF manifesto does not contain any clear stance or programme on gender, except for a pledge in the manifesto promising the "involvement of women".
NEFF	The NEFF makes no mention of gender representation/equity	UPM	The UPM's Manifesto does not contain any special provisions on gender, except in its 16 th point, which notes that the party will "make use of the parliamentary forum to address issues regarding Education, Health, Gender Equality, GBV, economic, social agriculture and other important services at all levels of government."
Nudo	In a section titled "Women Empowerment and Gender", Nudo defines the problem as being that "Inequality of women to men as a societal design is the root cause of women dependence on men." The party's solution to this problem is as follows: "There will be preference for women in position of power and employment in order to raise their participation. Women will be equal participant in decision making and partners in the economy. The rights of vulnerable will be protected."	*Manifestos for DPN, MAG and WRP were not available for assessment.	

WHAT IS THE IPPR?

The Institute for Public Policy Research was established in 2001 as a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to deliver, independent, analytical, critical yet constructive research on social, political and economic issues which affect development Namibia. The IPPR was established in the belief that development is best promoted through free and critical debate informed by quality research. The IPPR is independent of government, political parties, business, trade unions and other interest groups and is governed by a board of directors consisting of Monica Koep (chairperson), Bill Lindeke, Graham Hopwood, Ndiitah Nghipondoka-Robiati, Daniel Motinga, Justin Ellis and Michael Humavindu.

Anyone can receive the IPPR's research free of charge by contacting the organisation at 70-72 Frans Indongo Street, Windhoek; PO Box 6566, Windhoek; tel: (061) 240514; fax (061) 240516; email: info@ipppr.org.na. All IPPR research is available at <http://www.ipppr.org.na>. Material related to Election Watch is available at <http://www.electionwatch.org.na>

Party strategies to combat Gender-Based Violence

Over the past few years, Namibia has seen increasing trends in the incidences of violence against women, or what has come to be known as Gender-based Violence (GBV). Common forms of GBV in Namibia include “domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, forced marriages, baby-dumping and human trafficking. These types of violence prevent Namibians, especially women and children, from living in a safe and healthy environment, and undermine their exercising of a host of other rights.” (National Plan of Action on Gender-based Violence 2012-2016) These acts of violence are captured in the media regularly, and present a difficult challenge for the country. Even with a National Plan of Action on GBV that “outlines actions designed to prevent GBV, to improve the implementation of laws and services aimed at victims of GBV, and to provide adequate support services for survivors”, alongside other policies, Government continues to struggle to keep GBV under control. Given this spate of GBV, some parties have taken the opportunity to outline solutions/strategies in their party manifestos to address this growing problem.

In response to violence against women and children, NDP states that it will call on God to assist in dealing with the social ills experienced in Namibian society. The party states: “The killing of our mothers and children, the violence against women and young girls and even the high rate of deaths in Namibia is too high. The NDP Government will introduce a motion in the parliament for the state to assist all stake-holders with capitals and other forms of assistance to run their administration affairs according to the churches in Namibia has been developed from strength to strength. God the creator and Redeemer should be asked to answers from our prayers to stop sin through the word of God.” This approach (in addition to the policies and action plans in progress) was also used at a national level in March this year, when the President called for a national day of prayer against GBV.

Nudo also speaks to the issue of GBV, stating in its manifesto – under a section on ‘women empowerment and gender’ – that: “The levels of poverty and dependence of women economically on their male spouses is the biggest cause of GBV and child abuse.” The party promises to work on “developing better ways to reduce all sorts of violence (domestic, work places, gender-based and public violence)”.

With regards to GBV, the Swapo Party promises “Continued reform of legislation applicable to gender-based and domestic violence aimed at preventing gender-based and domestic violence in Namibia.” It also states that it will “Strengthen the implementation of laws, policies and programmes directed towards the combating of antisocial practices and behaviours, such as crime, illicit substance and alcohol abuse, child abuse, gender-based violence and intolerance.” Swapo also promises to carry out a prevalence study on GBV, which will, amongst other things, “ascertain the magnitude of GBV in Namibia”; “identify the attitudes and practices that impact on men, women and children’s lives, including traditional norms and practices with respect to GBV”; and “hold sensitisation workshops on GBV and Legal Literacy workshops and other gender issues targeting traditional leaders, key service providers including police, faith-based leaders and the whole community.”

UDF highlights “Domestic Violence and Passion Killings” as one of the many challenges facing the country. Alongside “Corruption, Self – enrichment through government tenders, Increasing Unemployment rate, Rising inflation, Housing shortages and the HIV / AIDS pandemic”, the party states that GBV is “threatening the peace and stability of our country and the progress of its people”. It does not state a clear strategy on combating GBV, but highlights that it “wants to change the political landscape of our country by transforming the relationship between government and people,” pledging to, amongst others, strengthen institutions.

In responding to GBV, the DTA of Namibia’s manifesto outlines a number of strategies, including:

- Strict implementation of laws related to women, particularly those related to gender-based violence.

- Fund for relief and rehabilitation of rape victims to be introduced by Government, DTA will clear this on priority
- Establishment of Safe Havens/Shelters for survivors of Gender-based Violence

In its manifesto, Swanu points out that “the state of Namibia’s women and children also leaves a lot to be desired. The exceedingly high rate of gender-based violence and specifically the gruesome killing of Namibian women is a dark stain on the country.” The party accuses the current government of not having “shown much innovation or urgency in trying to protect Namibian women and children from all manner of abuse”, and promises to respond to the spate of GBV by:

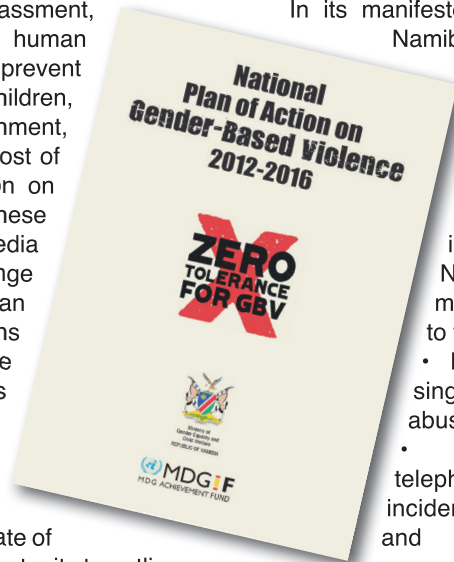
- Providing further financial support to single mothers so that women are not kept in abusive relationships due to finances;
- Creating an easy-to-dial dedicated telephone line where gender violence cases/incidents can easily be reported to the police; and
- Enacting stricter and much harsher laws to punish those who commit gender-based crimes such as rape, battery, murder, etc.

The Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) prioritises combating gender-based violence, alongside other priorities, and plans to consult broadly in addressing GBV.

It notes in its manifesto that it will “Collaborate with the church and other Civil Societies in combating social evils, such as, alcoholism, drug abuse and gender-based violence and other forms of moral degeneration.” Under a section on ‘Gender’ the RDP states more specifically that it will institute the following measures to deal with GBV:

- Introduce awareness programmes at all levels of the educational system;
- Collaborate with community, traditional and religious leaders and NGOs to fight the scourge of violence;
- Impose stiffer sentences on those who rape.

The CoD, CDV, and NEFF do not have any clauses or sections within their manifestos that speak to the issue of Gender-based Violence.



LGBTI issues absent in party manifestos

A gender subject that is often seen as taboo or controversial in Namibia is that of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) issues. Interestingly, none of the political parties studied for this paper include any pronouncement in this regard, although for the most part, they state that they are welcoming of all Namibians. Despite its topical absence from the manifestos, however, in the context of elections, it is important to note that at least one party – the NEFF – took a public stance against homosexuality.

Soon after the party was formed and came out to the public, it resorted to what the Windhoek Observer described as “gay-bashing”. In an article in the Windhoek Observer, the NEFF was reported to have lashed out against homosexuals, noting that it rejected homosexuals in its leadership structures, whilst at the same time stating that it was not homophobic. The Namibian Sun also alluded to NEFF leaders stating that “homosexuality is threatening the very existence of Namibia as an independent State”, and alleging that that “gay activists are penetrating northern rural areas, luring youngsters with money and food on condition they practise homosexuality”. The paper reported that the NEFF would seek “an urgent meeting between the Head of State, churches and traditional leaders to address ‘the gay issue’.” The party’s manifesto, however, does not make any proclamations in this regard.

In response to questions from the Namibian Sun on NEFF’s anti-gay stance, Venaani of the DTA “was explicit in his view that gay people also have rights and that Namibia is a secular State”, though he added to this that “gays should not try to impose their views on other people.” The Sun quoted him as saying that “They (gays) must have rights in this country. They are voters too and it is their choice. My politics does not want to dictate who should do what in their bedrooms.” (Namibian Sun, 2014)

Aside from the NEFF, no other parties have made public pronouncements on LGBTI as an electioneering tactic in the run-up to the 2014 National Assembly and Presidential elections, although some may have histories of either supporting or flouting gay rights.

A gender-sensitive parliament is one that:

1. Promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures.
2. Develops a gender equality policy framework suited to its own national parliamentary context.
3. Mainstreams gender equality throughout all of its work.
4. Fosters an internal culture that respects women’s rights, promotes gender equality and responds to the needs and realities of MPs – men and women – to balance work and family responsibilities.
5. Acknowledges and builds on the contribution made by its men members who pursue and advocate for gender equality.
6. Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality.
7. Equips its parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions, and ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration.