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Assessing Namibia's performance two decades after independence

Part 1: Initial position, external support, regional comparison

Thomas Christiansen

Abstract

This paper presents the results of a study which reviews Namibia's performance over its two decades since independence. The study examines the achievements and shortcomings of the country in various fields: politics, civil society, economy, and social / socio-economic development. The results have been split into two separate but interconnected papers. This first article analyses Namibia's situation at the dawn of independence, its external support by foreign countries and Namibia's overall performance as compared to the neighbouring countries Angola, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The present paper evaluates in particular data drawn from the World Bank Development Indicator Database and the 2010 Ibrahim-Index of African Governance. A subsequent second paper will present a more detailed appraisal of the above-mentioned development sectors.

Introduction: is the glass half-full or half-empty?

On 21 March 2010 Namibia celebrated its 20th anniversary of independence. Not only was this a very special day for the country and its citizens, it also provided an occasion to look back and reflect upon what had been achieved and what chances had not been taken during these two decades. Hence, in both the run-up to this anniversary and in its wake, this topic was widely discussed across societal spheres: on the political level, by the media, by academics, and among ordinary citizens.

Newspapers and journals compiled special issues or 'independence inserts' on this occasion, filled with personal reviews as well as academic and semi-academic analyses.¹ In a public celebration in Windhoek's Independence Stadium Namibia and its political leaders celebrated themselves and their achievements.² Numerous speeches and presentations were given, articles were written and panel discussions and workshops were held, all reviewing (from different perspectives) the 20 years of independence.³

¹ Compare for example issue 1, 2010 of the *Namibia Magazin*, published by the Deutsch-Namibische Gesellschaft e.V. (NDG) or the special insert of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* in Windhoek, 19.03.2010.

² For comments on the independence celebrations see Godwin Kornes, "Namibia at 20. Eindrücke von den Unabhängigkeitsfeiern", *iz3w*, 319, 2010: 5.

³ Compare for example Henning Melber, "20 Jahre Republik Namibia. Eine Zwischenbilanz", *Afrika Süd*, 39 (2), 2010: 27-29; idem, "Licht und Schatten. Eine bilanzierende Rückschau", *Allgemeine Zeitung*,

Despite all the celebrations of and all the propaganda on how well the country has done, there were also thought-provoking voices, not only from Robin Sherbourne, the country's leading economist, but also from senior politicians like Prime Minister Nahas Angula.⁴ It speaks for a self-critical appraisal of the past that the Prime Minister himself questioned in public whether – the many achievements notwithstanding – there had been sufficient development over the last 20 years. Using a familiar metaphor, he concluded that the 'glass' can be considered to be 'half-full' as well as 'half-empty', depending on the individual perspective.⁵

During a "Namibia – 20 Years of Independence" workshop in Würzburg in May 2010, Neville Gertze, Namibia's Ambassador in Germany, stressed the achievements of the SWAPO government and emphasised the 'disadvantaged' situation of the country 20 years ago. In particular the ambassador pointed to the extremely poor level of education in 1990. Gertze also alluded to the fact that, at that time, the country's elite had been scattered all over the world. He recalled that when these Namibian exiles returned after 1990, they came back from countries with totally different models of society: egalitarian democracies in Scandinavia, capitalistic systems like the USA, socialistic countries like Cuba, the Soviet Union and the former German Democratic Republic, and also from various African countries in transition. According to the Namibian ambassador, even communication between the repatriates turned out to be a problem because they had lived for years using entirely different languages. Moreover, they brought back conflicting ideas of how Namibia should be run in the future and how the political system and civil society should develop. The ambassador concluded that – taking into account these constraints – the country had definitely done well and had every reason to be proud of its achievements.

Henning Melber, Gertze's opponent in this podium discussion, delivered a much more sober assessment.⁶ Melber identified numerous shortcomings and brought up a number of painful subjects and facts. After 20 years of SWAPO rule, poverty among large sections of the population has hardly (if at all) been reduced. The life expectancy has actually fallen and Namibia is still the country with the world's most unequal income distribution.⁷ Melber also pointed out numerous examples of corruption and mismanage-

13.03.2010: 6-7; Heribert Weiland, "Zwanzig Jahre lang Neuanfang: Bleibt Namibia auf Kurs?", *Namibia Magazin*, 1, 2010: 27-28.

⁴ Compare Robin Sherbourne's thoughtful personal views in the introduction to the new issue of his *Guide to the Namibian Economy 2010*, Windhoek, Institute for Public Policy Research, 2010: 6-8.

⁵ Nahas Angula during a speech at the University of Namibia on March 2, 2010, quoted in Melber, "20 Jahre": 29.

⁶ Melber is a Namibian of German ancestry and Director of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala (Sweden) (<http://www.dhf.uu.se/>). He became a SWAPO party member in 1974 and actively promoted Namibia's struggle for independence. Black-listed by the South African apartheid regime, he was forced to spend several years in exile. Though still a SWAPO party member, he is one of the harshest critics of SWAPO and SWAPO's politics.

⁷ See various government-critical articles by Melber in this respect, for example: Melber, "Licht und Schatten"; idem, (ed.), *Transitions in Namibia: Which Changes for Whom?*, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet,

ment in government-owned enterprises as well as in government institutions.⁸ According to him this has led to the development of a new (black) economic elite which “uses its access to the country’s natural wealth to appropriate public goods and state property for private self-enrichment”⁹.

According to Melber, these so-called “fat cats”¹⁰ are the actual beneficiaries of redistribution programmes like ‘affirmative action’ and ‘black empowerment’ which were originally introduced to provide better access to land and jobs to genuinely needy and disadvantaged Namibians.¹¹ Melber also criticised fiercely the deficits in the development of a truly democratic political culture by (and within) the ruling SWAPO party and its lack of political tolerance towards deviating political views and other political parties.¹²

Discussing the issue of ‘Namibia’s performance’ with ordinary Namibian citizens, one finds that opinions tend to be strongly influenced by each person’s personal experiences. According to the author’s impression from numerous anecdotal conversations, many Namibians (irrespective of their colour) tend to be outspokenly critical. White Namibians often express severe concern about the high crime rate and complain about incompetent and inefficient government institutions and corruption in state-owned enterprises. Black Namibians – including SWAPO party members – usually agree with these views and additionally stress the problems of a desolate school system and the lack of job opportunities and perspectives for their children.

Foreigners, especially tourists, are often surprised by such complaints, because from a (superficial) tourist perspective the country seems to be doing well. Not just Windhoek, but also other towns appear clean and well-managed. However, the foreigners’ perception tends to be biased because most tourists never set foot in one of the informal settlements on the city outskirts, nor do they see the severe poverty of the communal areas, where the majority of the black population lives. Hence, most foreigners do not experience a reality of life that differs strongly from the expensive lodges or upscale residential areas of Windhoek or Swakopmund.

The study, on which this and the subsequent paper are based, aims at a holistic and balanced assessment of Namibia’s performance, looking at the political, economic, social and socio-economic development of the country since 1990. Of course, this is not the first appraisal looking at Namibia’s development. The present assessment was able to

2007; idem, “The Culture of Politics”, in: Henning Melber, (ed.), *Namibia: A Decade of Independence 1990 – 2000*, Windhoek, NEPRU, 2000: 165-190.

⁸ Frequently referred to as ‘parastatals’.

⁹ Henning Melber, Melber, Henning, “Namibia: a trust betrayed – again?”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 38 (127), 2011: 103-111 (105).

¹⁰ Ibid.: 105.

¹¹ Melber, “Licht und Schatten”: 6.

¹² Ibid.: 6f.; idem, “Namibia: a trust”.

build on comprehensive information compiled by similar studies, which reviewed different periods and / or focused on certain selected topics and sectors.

In 2000, the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU) compiled “Namibia: A Decade of Independence, 1990 – 2000”, an edited collection of papers which analysed the achievements during the first decade of independence, dealing with various development sectors in separate papers.¹³ In 2007, the Nordiska Afrika Institutet published another edited collection under the title “Transitions in Namibia: Which Changes for Whom?”¹⁴ And, of course, Robin Sherbourne’s “Guide to the Namibian Economy 2010” must be mentioned as the standard work on Namibia’s economic development.¹⁵ Finally, “The Long Aftermath of War – Reconciliation and Transition in Namibia” provides valuable background information on a wide range of historical, sociological and political topics.¹⁶ In particular the articles by Heribert Weiland, William Lindeke and Justine Hunter give worthwhile insights into various important and sensitive issues of Namibia’s young history.¹⁷

The present article differs from the aforementioned studies in several ways. Firstly, it looks at the entire period since independence (albeit with a focus on the second decade) and it aims at a holistic assessment, which consolidates the findings for different development sectors and aspects into an overall country performance appraisal. A second difference is the geographical perspective. Besides analysing individual development aspects on their own, the study also looks at the spatial context and spatial interconnections. Finally, Namibia’s performance has been set in a regional context by comparing Namibia’s progress with developments in neighbouring countries.

The paper starts with a review of Namibia’s initial position at the time of independence and during the first years thereafter. This is followed by a brief discussion of the study methodology and a summary of the development assistance the country has received over the last 20 years. In its second half, the paper assesses Namibia’s overall performance as compared to the achievements of African countries in general and Namibia’s neighbours Angola, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in

¹³ Henning Melber, (ed.), *Namibia: A Decade of Independence, 1990 – 2000*, Windhoek, NEPRU, 2000.

¹⁴ Melber (ed.), *Transitions*.

¹⁵ Sherbourne, *Guide*.

¹⁶ André du Pisani, Reinhard Kössler, and William. A. Lindeke, (eds), *The Long Aftermath of War – Reconciliation and Transition in Namibia*, Freiburg, Arnold Bergstraesser Institut, 2010.

¹⁷ Justine Hunter, “Dealing with the past in Namibia: Getting the balance right between justice and sustainable peace?”, in: André du Pisani, Reinhard Kössler and William. A. Lindeke, (eds.), *The Long Aftermath of War – Reconciliation and Transition in Namibia*, Freiburg, Arnold Bergstraesser Institut, 2010: 403-434; William A. Lindeke, “Transformation, hegenomy, and reconciliation in the education and security sectors in Namibia’s transition from prolonged collective violence”, in: André du Pisani, Reinhard Kössler and William. A. Lindeke, (eds.), *The Long Aftermath of War – Reconciliation and Transition in Namibia*, Freiburg, Arnold Bergstraesser Institut, 2010: 63-102; Heribert Weiland, “Namibia 1989 – 1994: Hopes for a peaceful and democratic development – Namibia’s opinions and attitudes”, in: André du Pisani, Reinhard Kössler and William. A. Lindeke, (eds.), *The Long Aftermath of War – Reconciliation and Transition in Namibia*, Freiburg, Arnold Bergstraesser Institut, 2010: 41-62.

particular. This section is mainly based on an evaluation of the 'good governance' appraisal data provided annually by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.¹⁸ The paper concludes with a summary of interim results, which forms the starting point of a more detailed sector-by-sector analysis the results of which will be presented in the follow-up article.

Methodic considerations: how to assess a country's performance?

Assessing the 'performance' of a country is neither easy nor methodologically straightforward. Statistical 'country data' are, of course, available from numerous public databases. Widely-used indicators, such as life expectancy, literacy rate, HIV/Aids infection, infant mortality, gross domestic product (GDP), export / import figures, inflation rate etc. can be extracted from national and international databases such as World Bank, CIA World Factbook, UNDP, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation or, in the case of Namibia, also from the Central Bureau of Statistics of the National Planning Commission (CBS-NPC).¹⁹ Other valuable country data are available from the surveys on "National Public Attitude on Democracy and Governance in Africa" which is regularly conducted by the Afrobarometer Project.²⁰

Key development indicators, such as the UNDP Human-Development Index (HDI) or the Human Poverty Index (HPI) combine data from different sectors into aggregated 'development indicators'.²¹ However, though in general quite useful, such aggregated data may conceal enormous differences between the underlying sub-factors. Overall country rankings like those compiled by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's 'good governance assessment' of all African countries can be misleading too as a top rank in an Africa-wide comparison does not necessarily indicate a good performance in absolute terms.²² A 'top rank' in a certain appraisal category may well be merely the result of being the 'one-eyed among the blind'.

¹⁸ Mo Ibrahim Foundation, "The Ibrahim Index 2010", <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/section/the-ibrahim-index>.

¹⁹ World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/>); Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "The World Factbook: Namibia", <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/wa.html>; UNDP Human Development Report (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/>), Mo Ibrahim Foundation, "Ibrahim Index", Central Bureau of Statistics of the National Planning Commission, Government of Namibia (<http://www.npc.gov.na/cbs/index.htm>).

²⁰ For a summary of Namibia-relevant information see Afrobarometer, "Summary of Results, Round 4 Afrobarometer Survey in Namibia", AfroBarometer, 2009, http://www.afrobarometer.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=21&Itemid=48. For Namibia, this quite detailed survey is based on a representative sample of 1200 interviews. The '1st Round' survey (12 countries) was carried out between July 1999 and June 2001, the latest '4th Round' survey (20 countries) was conducted between March 2008 and June 2009. At present (March 2012), the 5th Round survey is in progress, cp. Afrobarometer, <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>.

²¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Human Development Report 2009 Namibia", http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_NAM.html.

²² Mo Ibrahim Foundation, "2010 Ibrahim Index of African Governance. Summary (Revised Edition)", http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/media/get/20101108_eng-summary-iiag2010-rev-web-2.pdf.

Then there is also the benchmark problem. Should the performance be measured against the situation 20 years ago, in a sort of retrospective appraisal? Or should the developments be assessed 'forward-looking', i.e. against national development goals, such as Namibia's Vision 2030 or international benchmarks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?²³ Finally, there is the problem of assessing 'soft' development aspects which cannot be 'measured' objectively. The development of an effective civil society, the strength of the 'national identity', freedom of speech and freedom of the press are all important appraisal factors, but it is hardly possible to define objective benchmarks. As a consequence, such factors are often difficult to compare, not only between two points in time, but also geographically, i.e. against other countries in the region or in Africa in general.

Hence, in this paper, differing methodical approaches and tools will be used for different development aspects. 'Hard' (statistical) data for social and economic indicators were extracted from various online databases. These data can usually be compared easily against those of Namibia's neighbours.²⁴ The 'soft' development aspects mentioned had to be evaluated on the basis of more qualitative information, mainly extracted from numerous scientific and newspaper articles, internet sources, and occasionally complemented by anecdotal reports.²⁵ A considerable disadvantage of such 'soft' information is that its use for comparing Namibia with neighbouring countries is quite limited. Another important source of information, in particular for the three maps compiled for this paper, was a Geographic Information System (GIS) database which contains numerous datasets from various GIS-databases in Namibia and from online sources.²⁶

Namibia's point of departure

For a fair appraisal of Namibia's performance, its situation at independence in March 1990 and during the first years thereafter must be considered and analysed from different angles: geographically, historically, politically, economically and from the social and socio-economic perspective. Geographically, Namibia has a number of striking

²³ Government of Namibia (GoN), *Namibia Vision 2030. Rahmenrichtlinie für langfristige, nationale Entwicklung. Zusammenfassung (Deutsch)*, Windhoek, Government of Namibia, Office of the President, 2004; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Millenium Development Goals: What are the Millenium Development Goals?", <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>.

²⁴ In most cases the data presented in the following could not be extracted directly, but were compiled from 'raw data' in several processing steps.

²⁵ According to the author's experience, 'anecdotal evidence' – though frequently considered as 'unscientific' – has often proved to be at least as informative, reliable and useful as statistical data.

²⁶ Main data sources were various Namibian Ministries, the Department of Land Management of the Polytechnic of Namibia and GeoCarta, a commercial GIS service provider based in Windhoek. Please note that many of these datasets had been copied repeatedly and, therefore, the genuine source of the datasets, their topicality and quality is often somewhat ambiguous. Some data were also extracted from the Digital Atlas of Namibia, see Ministry of Environment and University of Cologne, "Digital Atlas of Namibia", http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/e/e1/download/atlas_namibia/index_e.htm.

advantages²⁷ which are illustrated by Map 1, Map 2, and Map 3. Unlike many other African countries, Namibia's economic activity is not confined to one hub; there are three main economic centres in the country (see Map 2). Looking at Namibia from an economic geography perspective, several development axes can be identified clearly. A first axis runs north – south from the main population centre in the northern regions via Tsumeb, Otjiwarongo, Okahandja, Windhoek, Rehoboth, Mariental, and Keetmanshoop to the South African border. A second axis connects the Swakopmund / Walvis Bay area via Okahandja with the capital and, through a north-easterly running main road via Omaruru, Otjiwarongo, Grootfontein, Rundu and the Trans-Caprivi Highway with the Caprivi Strip and the neighbouring countries Zambia and Zimbabwe (see Map 1 and 2). A third major traffic axis runs from Windhoek eastwards connecting the capital with Botswana's capital Gaborone and South Africa's industrial centre Johannesburg.

Hence, from a geographical, economical and logistic perspective, Namibia's capital Windhoek is very favourably located right at the centre of the country and well-connected to the major economic centres of Namibia's neighbours. With 1,572 km coastline Namibia has extensive access to international waters and thereby to the rich fishing grounds of the Benguela Current.²⁸ According to the Law of Sea, Namibia is entitled to exploit mineral, gas and (as yet unconfirmed) potential oil resources within its Exclusive Economic Zone.²⁹ These resources include among others: offshore diamond deposits near Oranjemund, the Kudu Gas Field³⁰ northwest of it, phosphate deposits³¹ and, possibly, considerable offshore oil resources³² along Namibia's long coastline. These valuable offshore resources are complemented by considerable onshore resources, such as (again) diamonds, gold, copper, zinc, tin and, in particular, extensive uranium deposits in the 'uranium triangle' between Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Henties Bay on the coast and Arandis about 65 km further inland (see Map 3).

The extraordinary beauty of Namibia's landscapes in general and numerous spectacular natural attractions are important geographical assets which offer enormous potential for tourism. The Etosha Park is one of the most famous nature reserves in Africa, the Fish River Canyon is one of world's biggest canyons, and the Namib is the oldest desert on

²⁷ Regarding Namibia's geographical advantages and assets see also Sherbourne, *Guide*: 8.

²⁸ CIA, "The World Factbook: Namibia".

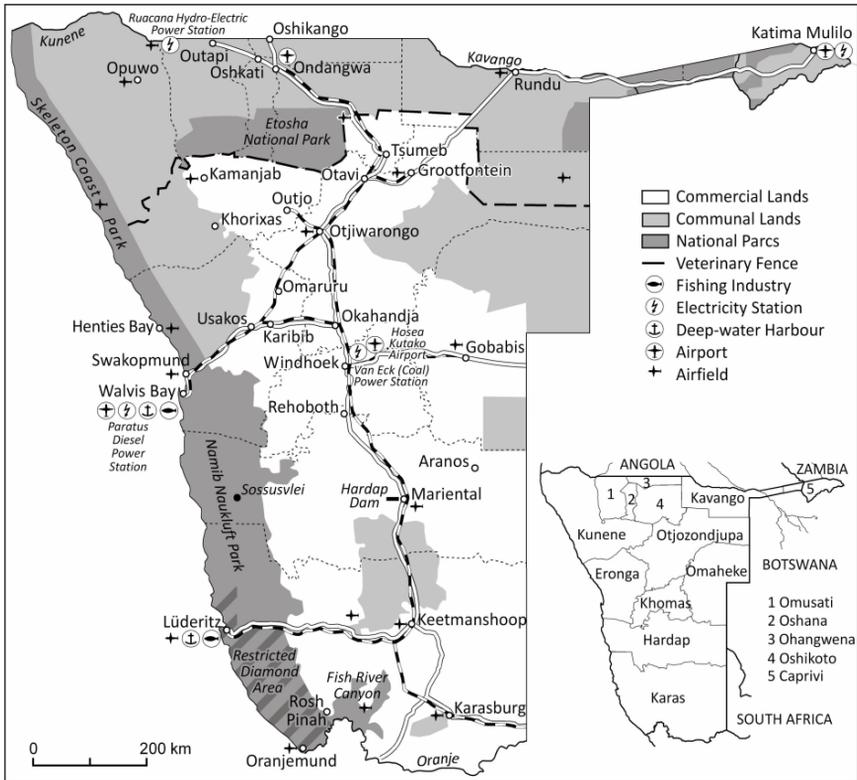
²⁹ The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of a country includes the sea zone 200 nautical miles (370 km) seawards. In the case of Namibia, the EEZ covers an area of 574,748 sqkm, for details see Wikipedia, Keyword "Exclusive Economic Zone", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exclusive_Economic_Zone#Definition.

³⁰ Cf. Nampower, "Kudu Gas Field", <http://www.nampower.com.na/pages/kudugas1.asp>.

³¹ Seafloor phosphate resources were detected just recently, first exports are expected for 2013, for details see Eberhard Hofmann, "Bodenschätze aus dem Atlantik", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26.05.2011; Stefan Fischer, "Verhandlungen über Exploration laufen", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 03.02.2011.

³² Promising offshore prospecting is ongoing, but no deposits could be confirmed yet, see Anonymous, "A Barrel Full of Information for Oil Industry Professionals: Namibia Oil and Gas Profile", <http://abarrelfull.wikidot.com/namibia-oil-and-gas-profile>

Map 1: Present situation



Sources:

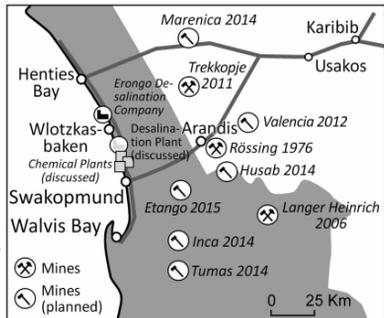
Base map data: Information extracted from selected data sets of different Namibian GIS-databases and from the Digital Atlas of Namibia (University of Cologne & Ministry of Environment (2002))

Project information: Various internet sources and newspaper reports

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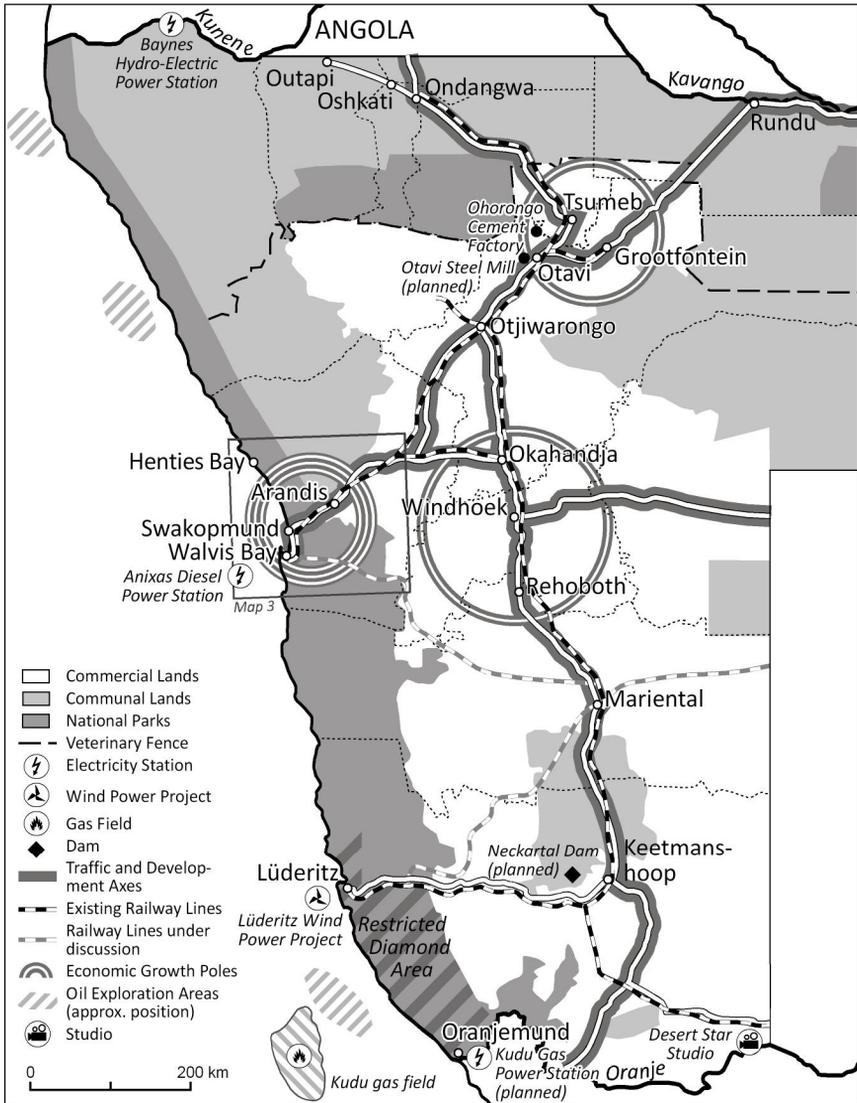
Map 3: Projects at and near the coast



Map 1 shows the present situation: the three main land categories, the 13 administrative regions, and selected important infrastructure.

Map 3 illustrates the approximate location of the existing and planned uranium mines in the area and one suggested location for the chemical plant presently under discussion. The indicated locations of the planned mines are approximate only, based on fairly unspecific location data extracted from various newspaper reports and internet sources.

Map 2: Economic growth poles, main traffic axes, ongoing / planned / discussed projects



Map 2 shows schematically the geographic distribution of Namibia's major economic growth poles and its main traffic and development axes as well as economically important ongoing and planned projects and projects currently under discussion. Extent and location of the oil exploration areas are indicated approximately only, due to lack of more accurate data.

the planet, hosting the world's highest dunes. 114,500 sqkm (14%) of Namibia's was placed under protection a long time ago by the establishment of extensive national parks which attract large numbers of well-paying tourists from both the Southern African

region as well as from overseas.³³ The rest of the country is divided in commercial farmland (469,100 sqkm or 57%) and so-called 'communal lands' with mainly subsistence farming (218,300 sqkm or 26.5%).³⁴

From an infrastructure perspective, Namibia was (and still is) well-developed when compared to other African countries. When the country gained independence it had an extensive, well-maintained road-network, a railway system, one international and various regional airports as well as a deep-water harbour in Lüderitz. On top of all these assets, in 1994 Namibia received a further infrastructure asset as a 'delayed birthday present' from its neighbour. South Africa handed over its enclave Walvis Bay which thereby became part of the Namibian territory.³⁵ All of a sudden and at no cost, Namibia came to possess a well-developed deep-water harbour which was not only better equipped than Lüderitz but also much more favourably located.

Being situated in a geologically and climatologically stable region, Namibia is affected little by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or hurricanes which regularly plague many other tropical / sub-tropical countries. Except for its arid climate which limits the country's agricultural potential and for occasional flooding in parts of Northern Namibia, the country has little reason to complain about its geographical setting. Namibia's advantages in 1990 also included political, socio-economic and economic aspects. Namibia was and is bordered by friendly countries.³⁶ With no external 'enemy' at its boundaries, no major armed forces are required, which frees considerable funds from the state budget for more productive use.³⁷

On the domestic side, the long struggle for independence had united the (black) Namibians and promoted the nation-building process. Namibia (like South Africa) proudly calls itself a 'rainbow nation', referring to the fact that its population is composed of numerous ethnic groups. Unlike in many other African countries, the majority of Namibia's citizens see themselves first as Namibians and only thereafter as members of

³³ As most recent amendments, the former Diamond Area (21,600 sqkm, 2.5% of the territory) between Lüderitz and Oranjemund and the Dorob National Park between Walvis Bay and the Ugab River were added. The Dorob National Park closed the gap between the Skeleton Coast Park and the Namib Naukluft Park. The new Sperrgebiet National Park extends the protected areas from the southern border of the Namib Naukluft Park down to the Oranje River. As a result, Namibia now has at its disposal the largest spatially coherent nature reserve in Africa, stretching an impressive 1,570 km from Angola to South Africa (see Map 1 and Dirk Heinrich, "Gesamte Küste ein Naturschutzgebiet", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20.01.2011).

³⁴ Cf. Legal Assistance Centre, *Our Land We Farm. An Analysis of the Namibian Commercial Agricultural Land Reform Process*, Windhoek, Legal Assistance Centre, 2005: 7.

³⁵ On 28.02.1994, just before the African National Congress (ANC) took over power in South Africa, the South African Government handed over its deep-water harbour Walvis Bay. For details see Eberhard Hofmann, "Ohne Schuss gab es einen Territorialzuwachs", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19.03.2010: 19.

³⁶ There had been minor border disputes with Botswana and South Africa, but these have never lead to an escalation to open conflict, see also William J.R. Alexander, "Science, History and the Kasikili Island Dispute", *South African Journal of Science*, 95 (8), 1999: 321-25.

³⁷ The military expenditure dropped from 8.4% of the GDP in 1990 to 3.3% in 2009, cf. World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators", <http://data.worldbank.org/country/namibia>.

their respective ethnic group.³⁸ Another advantage for the young country was the clear dominance of one political party and the resulting political stability at this phase of transition. Up to present, the role of SWAPO as the all-dominating political party in Namibia has never been seriously challenged by the (weak and fragmented) opposition.³⁹

On the economic side the situation was relatively comfortable, too. The country started off with much higher incomes than the average sub-Saharan country and almost zero public debt.⁴⁰ According to Hansohm's study on economic development in Namibia, in 1994 the average income in Namibia exceeded the average income in the Southern African region by the factor of four and the total government debts (external and domestic combined) were running at just over N\$ 500 million (about € 50 million at the present rate of exchange).⁴¹ Moreover, with the substantial deposits of diamonds and uranium mentioned earlier and additional resources of gold, silver, copper and other minerals, the country possessed valuable export assets.

Namibian politicians sometimes claim Namibia's low population density as a major development constraint.⁴² In the author's opinion, however, the low population density can rather be considered as a comparative advantage. With the second lowest population density in the world on the one side and a huge territory on the other, there are still vast areas of land available which can be put to more productive use.⁴³

However, it must also be stated clearly that in 1990 Namibia was not an 'Island of the Blissful' either. Like any young African country at the dawn of independence, Namibia faced some severe development constraints, too. The list includes a disastrous

³⁸ This mindset of feeling as 'one country, one nation' is also reflected by the most recent Afrobarometer survey. A surprisingly high 24% of the population meanwhile feel 'only Namibian', 11% feel 'more Namibian than ethnic' and an additional 45% feel at least 'equally Namibian and ethnic', see Q83 in Afrobarometer, "Summary of Results, Round 4 Afrobarometer Survey in Namibia", 52. This identification with the new state of Namibia was definitely promoted by the decision to make English the (official) 'language of national unity', compare Hans-Volker Gretschel, "Education in Namibia", in: Ingolf Diener and Olivier Graefe, (eds.), *Contemporary Namibia: The First Landmarks of a Post-Apartheid Society*, Windhoek, Gamsberg Macmillan, 2001, quoted in Lindeke, "Transformation": 71.

³⁹ SWAPO won the first elections in 1989 with 57.3% of the votes. In the four subsequent elections, SWAPO even managed to extended its share of votes to between 74% and 76%, cf. Thomas Christiansen, "Namibia", in: Wolfgang Gieler, (ed.), *Afrika-Lexikon*, Frankfurt et al., Lang, 2010: 328-337.

⁴⁰ Cf. Dirk Hansohm, "Alternative Paths of Economic Development in Namibia", in: Ben Fuller and Isolde Prommer, (eds.), *Population-Development-Environment in Namibia. Background Readings*, Laxenburg, IIASA, 2000: 165-183.

⁴¹ Ibid.: 167 and 77 (Fig. 12). Note: The exchange rate of the Namibian Dollar is pegged 1:1 to the South African Rand. The exchange rate varies considerably and fluctuated substantially in the 1990s. The current rate of exchange (November 2011) between the Euro and the Namibian Dollar is about €1:N\$10.8. Over the last years, the exchange rate fluctuated between 1:7.4 and 1:13, but most of the times hovered around 1:10.

⁴² 1.7 p./sqkm in 1990, 2.5 p./sqkm in 2008, see World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators".

⁴³ Satellite images and aerial photos show that large areas in the northern parts of Namibia are hardly being used at present, especially in Kavango, Oshikoto and Otjozonzupa.

education system and the resulting poor literacy rate, the above-mentioned problem of integrating the returning expatriates (in particular the former PLAN fighters) into a society in transition, and extreme income and land ownership inequalities, to name but a few of the colonial legacies. With a Gini-Index of 74.3% in 1993, Namibia was the country with the world's most unequal income distribution.⁴⁴ Namibia additionally inherited the burden of a strongly skewed land ownership distribution. About 6,000 large 'freehold title' farms (farms with an area > 3,000 ha) in the commercial lands were owned by only 4,200 (almost exclusively white) farmers. At the same time, about 1,000,000 black Namibians⁴⁵, representing 70% of the population at that time, had to make a living from small-scale subsistence farming on the (much smaller) communal lands.⁴⁶

The extreme poverty of large sections of the population, a rudimentary health system and high unemployment rates posed additional challenges for the young country.⁴⁷ And finally the HIV/Aids pandemic was just taking off in the early 1990s, showing its terrible impact with some delay from the end of the decade. The HIV/Aids prevalence grew quickly from 1.2% (age group 15 to 49) in 1990, to 6,8% in 1995, before reaching its peak at about 15% in 2002/2003.⁴⁸

Contrasting Namibia's development advantages with its development constraints leads to the conclusion that Namibia definitely did face a number of (especially social and socio-economic) obstacles and challenges, but also started off from a rather comfortable initial position with regard to its natural resources, the economic status of the country and the political situation. Compared to most other African countries (at the time of independence), Namibia definitely had substantial advantages.

External support

Before assessing Namibia's development since 1990, one also needs to look at the extensive aid which Namibia received in the form of financial and technical cooperation assistance. Upon independence, Namibia quickly became the 'darling' of the international

⁴⁴ Data extracted from World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators". The Gini-Index quantifies inequality in the income distribution of a country. According to more recent figures from 2011, Namibia's Gini-Index still reigns supreme with a Gini-value of 70.0, followed by South Africa (65.0). Germany is listed on place 124 with a value of 27.0 and Sweden is presently the 'most equal' society with a Gini-value of just 23.0, see Stern, "Blick in die Welt", Stern, 05.05.2011.

⁴⁵ Own estimation, based on the total population figure, which in 1990 totalled about 1.42 million, cf. World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators".

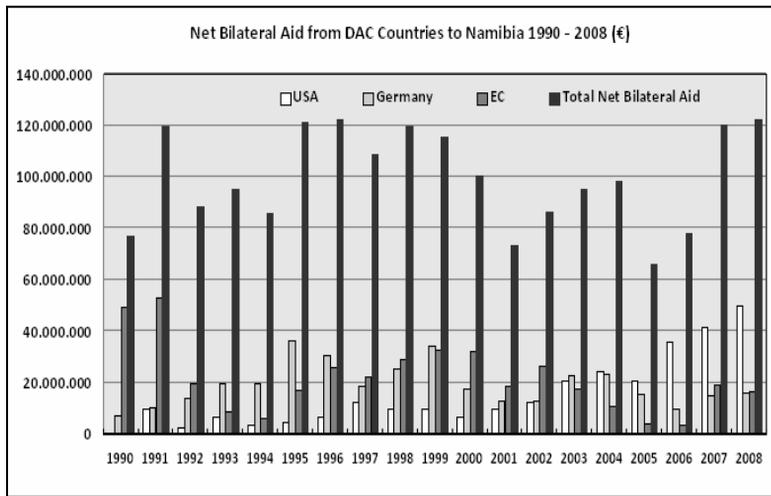
⁴⁶ For more information compare Legal Assistance Centre, *Our Land*, and also Republic of Namibia, The Permanent Technical Team (PTT) on Land Reform, "Background Research and Findings of the PTT Studies", Windhoek, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, 2004.

⁴⁷ According to the World Bank, in 1993 62% of the population had to make a living from less than 2 \$ US per day (2005 corresponding prices), see World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators".

⁴⁸ UNAIDS, "Country Data for Namibia", <http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/namibia/>. See also World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators".

donor community. According to Hoffmann, the numerous donor countries provided more funding than the young country could absorb.⁴⁹ Over the last 20 years, a substantial amount of foreign funding helped the Namibian Government to establish and improve the country's administrative, political and social structures. This external support contributed considerably to the upgrading of Namibia's infrastructure, economy, as well as to its health and education system.

Figure 1: Net Bilateral Aid to Namibia (1990 – 2008) from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Countries



Source: Own compilation, based on data from the World Bank Development Indicator database⁵⁰, converted from US \$ to Euro (exchange rate 1.42, Nov. 2011)

Figure 1 illustrates the total net bilateral aid for Namibia from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries.⁵¹ It also shows separately the financial contributions of the two biggest donor countries Germany and USA, as well as those of the European Commission for the period 1990 to 2008.⁵² According to these World Bank data, Namibia received an average funding of about € 95.4 million per year. The total

⁴⁹ Eberhard Hofmann, "Namibias Spagat: Ein afrikanisches Land hebt sich vom Rest ab", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19.03.2010: 3f.

⁵⁰ World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators".

⁵¹ OECD is the acronym for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. DAC members are the OECD countries Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and – as transnational body – the Commission of the European Community.

⁵² 2009 and 2010 figures were not yet available from the World Bank Development Indicator database.

amount for these 19 years adds up to € 1.81 billion. Of this amount, Germany contributed € 351.7 million (19.4%), the U.S. € 284.1 (15.7%) and the European Commission € 360.4 million (19.9%).⁵³ These figures do not include funding from non-bilateral donors, such as the World Bank and various UN organisations, nor does it include funding from non-DAC countries (such as China). Likewise, these figures do not cover funding from private and semi-private NGOs and church-related organisations either.

With the population having grown from 1.41 million in 1990 to 2.23 million in 2008, this corresponds to an average funding of € 56.8 per capita / year.⁵⁴ During this period, the support varied between € 33 per capita / year in 2003 and € 82 in 1991, as illustrated by Figure 2 (2nd column). The funding from UN organizations accounts for an additional € 102 million.⁵⁵ Figure 2 illustrates the overall per capita support since 1990. Over the years, the total per capita support varied between € 42 in 2002 and € 87 in 1991, resulting in an average of € 64 per capita / year. The diagram also shows that bilateral aid from DAC countries accounts for the bulk of the total support to Namibia.

After a slight decrease in donor support between 2001 and 2006, the allocated funds increased again in 2007 and 2008 and even more so in 2009 and 2010. The most recent increase – not reflected by Figure 2 – is to an extent caused by the latest extension of the German funding, but mainly due to the fact that Namibia was selected as beneficiary of the American Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) programme (details below). According to information from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the total volume of all German funding approved for Namibia up to the end of 2009 adds up to more than € 600 million. For the 2009 / 2010 period, additional grants and subsidised loans of € 116.5 had been earmarked. With a per capita support of € 15.8 in 2010, Namibia was (and still is) the top recipient of German bi-lateral aid.⁵⁶ At the end of 2010, a new cooperation package was signed, totalling another € 108 million.⁵⁷

On top of this substantial support, since 2009 the so-called American Millennium Challenge Account Compact has been providing Namibia with (additional) development grants totalling US\$ 304.5 million (about € 214.3 million) which must be invested

⁵³ In addition to shouldering the biggest share of the EC funding, Germany has also provided roughly one third of the net bilateral aid to Namibia. The exceptionally high German contribution is rooted in the 'special relationship' of the two countries, i.e. Namibia's history as a former German colony.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

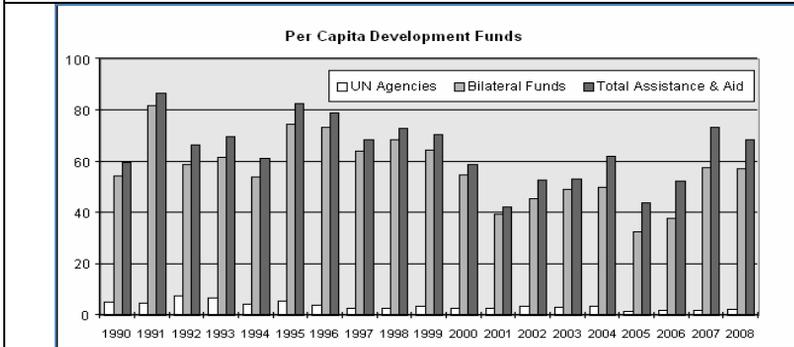
⁵⁵ Figures again converted from the original World Bank data in "current US\$" based on an exchange rate of 1.42 (exchange rate in November 2011).

⁵⁶ Auswärtiges Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, "Länder, Reise, Sicherheit: Namibia - Beziehungen zu Deutschland", http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_E69D0235BC8B6C6B0D9043FDB443AAF8/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/Namibia/Bilateral_node.html.

⁵⁷ Deutsch-Namibische Gesellschaft, "Deutsche Botschaft: 20 Jahre Seite an Seite", *Namibia Magazin*, 4, 2010: 13.

during a five-year period (September 2009 – August 2014).⁵⁸ Based on the population figure currently estimated at about 2.23 million, this translates into (additional) € 96.1 per capita for this five-year period or € 19.2 per capita and year.

Figure 2: Per Capita Development Assistance & Aid to Namibia (1990 – 2008) in € / year



Source: Own compilation, based on data from the World Bank Development Indicators database,⁵⁹ converted from 'current US \$' to Euro, based on an exchange rate of 1 : 1.42 (Nov. 2011). Note: 'Bilateral Funds' correspond to the DAC country contributions shown in Fig. 1. Figures for 'Total Assistance & Aid' partly include some miscellaneous funding additional to the bilateral and UN funds.

A complete grand total of aid funds from all sources cannot be provided accurately, as additional assistance from other countries is not accounted for by the data illustrated in Figure 2. However, the data summarised in this chapter indicate clearly that the aid which Namibia received during the two decades of independence easily exceeds € 2 billion. This corresponds to roughly € 900 for each of the current 2.23 million inhabitants.

Overall regional comparison

From the essence of the two preceding chapters, there are two key conclusions. Firstly, at independence, Namibia faced serious development constraints in some fields which, however, were counter-balanced by a rather favourable point of departure in various other fields. Secondly, the country was (and still is) supported heavily by the international donor community.

Having reviewed the situation in the country in the early 1990s, one can now look at Namibia's achievements. Before going into a more detailed analysis of the development achievements in individual sectors, Namibia's 'overall performance' will be compared

⁵⁸ For more details on this programme see MCA-Namibia, "MCA-Namibia: Reducing poverty through economic growth", MCA-Namibia, http://www.mcanamibia.org/ab_aboutus.php.

⁵⁹ World Bank, "Worldbank Development Indicators".

with those of its peer group, i.e. other African countries in general and selected southern African countries in particular.⁶⁰

Probably the most comprehensive, most complete and best-consolidated data source for such a regional comparison is the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which (since 2000) has been published yearly by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.⁶¹ The Ibrahim Index evaluates the 'good governance' performance of all 53 African countries and aggregates the scores into a country ranking.⁶² This ranking is based on a total of 88 indicators whose values are compiled from expert assessment and / or from data extracted from the databases of various international organisations (e.g. World Bank, African Development Bank, The Economist Intelligence Unit, various UN Organizations etc.).⁶³

On the first aggregation level, the 88 individual proxy scores are aggregated into 'summary scores' for 13 sub-categories. On the next higher aggregation level, an aggregation of two, three or four of these 13 sub-categories into scores for the following four major categories is carried out: 'Safety and Rule of Law', 'Participation and Human Rights', 'Sustainable Economic Opportunity' and 'Human Development'. Finally, the scores for these four main categories are aggregated one more time to calculate the 'Overall Score' for each country. This overall score is then used to compile a 'Good Governance Country Ranking' for all African countries. Additionally, the most recent results are compared with rankings in the preceding year. Statistically significant 'moves up' or 'moves down' in the ranking are used as indicators to assess the performance trend.

According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of Good Governance, Namibia has performed quite well. Table 1 illustrates that Namibia has been ranking sixth in Africa ever since this index was published for the first time in 2000. The table also shows that two of Namibia's direct neighbours (Botswana and South Africa respectively) are ranked slightly higher. On the other hand, the other three neighbouring countries selected for the regional comparison show a performance clearly inferior to that of Namibia, with Zambia being positioned somewhere in the middle and Angola and Zimbabwe close to the lower end of the list.

⁶⁰ The results of this sector-by-sector analysis will be presented in Part 2 of this study, which is earmarked for publication in a subsequent issue of this journal.

⁶¹ Mo Ibrahim Foundation, <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en>.

⁶² With South-Sudan having become an independent country in 2011, this figure has meanwhile changed to 54 countries.

⁶³ The 88 indicators are basically proxies for specific good governance evaluation aspects. The values for each indicator are normalised to 'scores' between 0 and 100. The error margin (at 90% confidence level) varies from country to country. According to a graph in the 2010 result summary (see Mo Ibrahim Foundation, "2010 Ibrahim Index"), the margin of error for the 2010 Namibia figures is in the order of +/- 6 score units. The data used as proxies usually refer to the last two years. Hence, the 2010 index values are based on proxy data for 2008 and 2009. A detailed explanation of the methodology and the data sources used is given in the 2010 Summary Report (ibid.: 14-46).

Table 1: Mo Ibrahim Index of Good Governance: Overall Country Ranks and Scores 2000 – 2009

2000 / 2001	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003	2003 / 2004	2004 / 2005	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	2007 / 2008	2008 / 2009
Mauritius 78	Mauritius 78	Mauritius 78	Mauritius 78	Mauritius 79	Mauritius 79	Mauritius 80	Mauritius 82	Mauritius 83
Botswana 75	Botswana 75	Botswana 75	Seychelles 74	Seychelles 76	Seychelles 77	Seychelles 78	Seychelles 77	Seychelles 79
Seychelles 74	Seychelles 74	Seychelles 74	Botswana 74	Botswana 75	Botswana 76	Botswana 76	Botswana 76	Botswana 76
South Africa 72	South Africa 72	South Africa 72	Cape Verde 71	Cape Verde 73	South Africa 73	Cape Verde 74	Botswana 76	Cape Verde 75
Cape Verde 72	Cape Verde 71	Cape Verde 72	South Africa 71	South Africa 71	Cape Verde 72	South Africa 73	South Africa 73	South Africa 71
Kenia 67	Kenia 67	Kenia 67	Kenia 68	Kenia 66	Kenia 68	Kenia 69	Kenia 69	Kenia 67
Ghana 61	Ghana 62	Tunisia 62	Tunisia 62	Tunisia 63	Tunisia 64	Tunisia 63	Ghana 63	Ghana 65
...
Morocco 53	Algeria 53	Egypt 54	Mozambique 54	Benin 54	Gambia 53	Zambia 54	Madagascar 55	Zambia 55
Mozambique 53	Mozambique 54	Mozambique 54	Benin 53	Mozambique 53	Algeria 53	Algeria 54	Zambia 55	Gambia 53
Gambia 52	Tanzania 52	Tanzania 52	Kenya 52	Kenya 52	Uganda 53	Gambia 53	Gambia 53	Mali 53
Kenya 50	Kenya 52	Kenya 52	Tanzania 51	Libya 52	Gambia 52	Libya 53	Libya 53	Mozambique 52
Malawi 50	Zambia 50	Mali 51	Zambia 51	Lilya 51	Libya 52	Mali 52	Burkina Faso 53	Burkina Faso 52
Zambia 49	Malawi 50	Zambia 50	Lilya 50	Zambia 51	Zambia 52	Mali 52	Uganda 52	Malawi 52
...
Sierra Leone 37	Zimbabwe 37	Cote d'Ivoire 37	Congo 37	Congo 39	Guinea-Bissau 39	Guinea-Bissau 40	Guinea-Bissau 40	Congo 42
Eritrea 37	Eritrea 37	Eritrea 37	Eritrea 37	Eritrea 39	Togo 37	Togo 38	Togo 40	Angola 39
Burundi 37	Cote d'Ivoire 37	Guinea-Bissau 37	Guinea-Bissau 36	Togo 36	Guinea 37	Guinea 38	Angola 37	Guinea-Bissau 39
Zimbabwe 36	Burundi 36	Burundi 36	Zimbabwe 35	Cote d'Ivoire 36	Eritrea 35	Eritrea 35	Cote d'Ivoire 37	Cote d'Ivoire 37
Congo 35	Congo 34	Zimbabwe 36	Cote d'Ivoire 35	Zimbabwe 33	Liberia 35	Cote d'Ivoire 35	Guinea 35	Guinea 36
Sudan 33	Sudan 32	Uhad 33	Uhad 32	Sudan 33	Cote d'Ivoire 35	Equat. Guinea 34	Equat. Guinea 35	Equat. Guinea 35
Equat. Guinea 31	Equat. Guinea 32	Uhad 32	Equat. Guinea 32	Sudan 33	Equat. Guinea 32	Equat. Guinea 33	Centr. Afr. Rep. 34	Equat. Guinea 33
Uhad 31	Uhad 31	Sudan 32	Sudan 31	Equat. Guinea 32	Zimbabwe 32	Zimbabwe 32	Eritrea 33	Centr. Afr. Rep. 33
Centr. Afr. Rep. 29	Centr. Afr. Rep. 29	Centr. Afr. Rep. 28	Angola 29	Angola 31	Angola 32	Angola 32	Congo DR 33	Zimbabwe 33
Liberia 27	Congo DR 26	Angola 27	Liberia 28	Angola 32	Congo DR 31	Congo DR 32	Zimbabwe 32	Eritrea 32
Congo DR 26	Liberia 26	Congo DR 26	Congo DR 27	Congo DR 29	Centr. Afr. Rep. 29	Centr. Afr. Rep. 31	Sudan 31	Congo DR 31
Angola 23	Angola 25	Liberia 25	Centr. Afr. Rep. 26	Centr. Afr. Rep. 29	Uhad 29	Uhad 29	Chad 28	Uhad 29
Somalia 10	Somalia 10	Somalia 11	Somalia 11	Somalia 11	Somalia 10	Somalia 8	Somalia 7	Somalia 8

Source: Data extracted from the Mo Ibrahim Index Database for 2010. The data have been re-arranged and reformatted; the score values have been rounded to full figures. The far left column reflects the respective overall country ranks (from 1 – 53), the figures behind the country names indicate the overall country score (from 1 – 100).

In contrast to Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, whose rankings have remained more or less the same over the last ten years, Zambia and Angola have climbed up the ranking significantly, while Zimbabwe's position has deteriorated dramatically, putting the country almost at the end of the list. Namibia's overall 'score' ranges between 66 in 2004/05 and 69 in 2006/07. Keeping in mind a margin of error of +/- 6 score units, the score level of Namibia has basically not changed over the last ten years.

Table 1 thus illustrates clearly that Namibia was and is 'No. 3' in its Southern African peer group, trailing behind South Africa as 'No. 2' by about four score units and Botswana as the 'No. 1' in Southern Africa by eight score units. On the lower end of the list, there is a considerable gap of 16 score units to Zambia as the next best of its neighbouring countries and an even larger gap of 30 – 40 score units when compared with Angola and Zimbabwe.

Table 2: Mo Ibrahim Index: Overall and Sub-Category Country Ranks 2000 – 2009

	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
BOTSWANA									
Overall	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	3
Safety and Rule of Law	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
Participation and Human Rights	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	4	4
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Human Development	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	5
SOUTH AFRICA									
Overall	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5
Safety and Rule of Law	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7
Participation and Human Rights	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	3	3
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	5	7
Human Development	5	5	5	5	8	7	7	6	6
NAMIBIA									
Overall	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Safety and Rule of Law	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Participation and Human Rights	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	6	8
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	6	5	8	8	10	6	7	7	8
Human Development	11	11	12	12	13	11	11	11	14
ZAMBIA									
Overall	22	21	22	21	22	22	17	18	17
Safety and Rule of Law	16	17	19	18	19	18	17	11	14
Participation and Human Rights	24	22	20	21	22	18	15	17	16
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	25	26	27	26	25	26	22	25	26
Human Development	25	25	24	28	28	26	26	21	21
ZIMBABWE									
Overall	44	41	45	44	45	47	48	50	49
Safety and Rule of Law	46	44	46	47	49	49	49	51	50
Participation and Human Rights	36	32	39	42	42	44	46	46	44
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	50	51	50	51	51	52	52	52	52
Human Development	16	16	17	18	19	21	25	28	28
ANGOLA									
Overall	52	52	50	49	50	49	49	43	42
Safety and Rule of Law	51	51	48	46	46	45	46	45	42
Participation and Human Rights	46	47	46	43	44	42	42	31	27
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	49	49	48	47	45	42	44	42	41
Human Development	52	51	51	51	51	51	52	49	49

Source: Data extracted from the Mo Ibrahim Index Database for 2010. The figures indicate the country position for the respective category, values potentially ranging from 1 (best in Africa) to 53 (worst).

Table 3: Mo Ibrahim Index Values for Namibia 2000 – 2009: Selected Categories and their sublevels

	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
OVERALL	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
SAFETY AND RULE OF LAW	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Personal Safety	25	26	27	21	21	21	12	11	8
Safety of the Person	44	44	44	44	44	44	23	24	5
Violent Crime	15	15	15	15	15	15	17	21	20
Rule of Law	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	4	5
Strength of Judicial Process	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Judicial Independence	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Accountability and Corruption	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
Transparency and Corruption	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6
Corruption in Govern. and Public Officials	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Corruption and Bureaucracy	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1
PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	6	8
Participation	6	6	5	4	8	4	5	8	14
Free and Fair Elections	3	3	3	3	3	10	10	11	11
Rights	6	4	7	6	8	4	4	5	4
Human Rights	13	13	13	13	13	13	12	13	11
Freedom of Expression	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
Press Freedom	6	12	11	9	8	5	8	6	6
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY	6	5	8	8	9	6	7	7	8
Public Management	9	9	13	18	20	10	9	8	6
Quality of Budget Management	6	6	6	6	6	7	10	1	1
Currency Inside Banks	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3
Management of Public Debt	11	11	11	11	11	5	3	3	2
Bureaucracy and Red Tape	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Infrastructure	9	9	7	7	6	6	5	3	4
Quality of Physical Infrastructure	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	11	11	12	12	13	11	11	11	14
Health and Welfare	14	17	15	14	16	14	15	13	14
Incidence of TB	51	51	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Child Mortality	10	10	9	9	10	10	10	10	10
Welfare Regime	2	2	2	2	2	6	6	6	5
Social Protection and Labour	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5
Antiretroviral Treatm. Provision	.	.	.	.	3	2	3	1	.
Antiretroviral Treatm. Prov. for Pregn. Women	.	.	.	.	7	4	4	4	2
Access to Improved Sanitation	28	28	28	28	28	28	27	27	27
Open Defecation Sanitation	42	42	42	42	42	41	41	41	40
Education	8	8	8	9	12	11	11	13	13
Education Provision and Quality	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	6	10
Ratio of Pupils to Teachers in Primary School	11	11	12	13	15	13	13	12	12
Primary School Completion Rate	4	4	6	8	11	10	11	11	15
Progression to Secondary School	5	8	6	9	12	15	15	16	16
Tertiary Enrolment Rates	9	10	11	10	10	11	12	12	11

Source: Data extracted from the Mo Ibrahim Index Database for 2010. The figures indicate the country position for the respective category / sub-category / sub-sub-category, with the values potentially ranging from 1 (best in Africa) to 53 (worst).

Table 2 shows the country performance disaggregated by the four main categories described above. These data show that the performance of Botswana and South Africa is relatively homogeneous. Both countries score high in all four categories, with rankings ranging from 2 to 7 for Botswana and 1 to 7 for South Africa.

Namibia, on the other hand, scores high in 'Safety and Rule of Law' and in 'Participation and Human Rights' but significantly lower in 'Human Development'.⁶⁴ To investigate this uneven performance, a closer look at the underlying sub-categories and proxy data is required, as illustrated by Table 3. This table shows (currently for Namibia only) a breakdown of these sub-categories into their sub-sub-categories and some (selected) proxy data.⁶⁵

The figures in Table 3 reveal that Namibia's quite impressive rank (4) in the sub-category 'Safety and Rule of Law' is the result of averaging excellent values in 'Rule of Law' and 'Accountability and Corruption' with a rather low value in the category 'Personal Safety'. It should also be remembered that the positions shown are 'relative' rankings only, which do not necessarily indicate an excellent 'objective' performance in that field.⁶⁶ However, whatever the shortcomings of this evaluation system may be, one can conclude from these figures that Namibia does not perform badly, at least in direct comparison with neighbouring countries. Being the overall 'No. 3' in Southern Africa and holding over ten years a solid 'No. 6' out of 53 countries in Africa is an impressive achievement and a reasonably good track record.

Interim result

Some interim conclusions can now be summarised. At independence Namibia possessed a solid infrastructure base, but lagged in terms of human development. The new government took over a well-organised country with plenty of exportable raw material resources and vast, beautiful, well-conserved landscapes with great potential for tourism. The country had a much higher than average per capita income and almost zero internal / external debts. Moreover, upon independence the international donor community started to pour millions of (US) dollars into the country and has continued to do so ever since.

On the other hand, Namibia inherited several severe development problems and constraints, such as a desolate education and health system, the world's greatest inequality in income distribution, and a strongly skewed land ownership distribution to name but a few. Large parts of the population lived (and, unfortunately still live) below the poverty line. Finally, as an additional burden, the HIV/Aids pandemic began to show its terrible impact just a few years after the country had become independent. The task

⁶⁴ Namibia's development deficits in the field of human development will be discussed in more detail in the follow-up.

⁶⁵ Please note that due to the limited space Table 3 can only illustrate a sample of the 88 proxy data used to calculate the scores. In most cases, the sub-sub-category scores presented are based on more proxies than those shown in the table.

⁶⁶ As an example, being ranked 'No. 1' in Africa in the category 'Strength of Judicial Process' apparently indicates an excellent, efficient judicial system. This, however, does not correspond to the (objective) reality in Namibia. Hence, at least in this case, being 'No. 1' merely means that the judicial systems of all other African states perform even poorer than that of Namibia.

of meeting this challenge was completely beyond the utterly inadequate health and social welfare system.

Considering this history and these basic conditions, the results of the regional comparison are surprisingly good and quite encouraging. Despite all development constraints, the regional country comparison clearly shows Namibia's strong overall performance. The country has established itself as a solid 'No. 6' in Africa and, behind its direct neighbours Botswana and South Africa, as 'No. 3' in Southern Africa. This constitutes an admirable track record by any standards. Part 2 of this paper, which will be published in a subsequent journal issue, will reveal in more detail how Namibia has performed in different sectors such as politics, civil society, economy, and social and socio-economic development.

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