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# **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NAMIBIA**

## **The 1998 Local Government Elections**

**Kapena L Tjihero, Doufi Namalambo and Dianne Hubbard**

**LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE**  
**October 1998**

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### INTRODUCTION

This paper is a follow-up to a previous research report by the Gender Research Project of the Legal Assistance Centre. The first report examined the results of Namibia's first local government elections, which incorporated an affirmative action provision for women. This report is an analysis of the second local government elections, which applied even stronger affirmative action requirements.

The Namibian Constitution makes provision for affirmative action by authorising Parliament to enact laws "*providing directly or indirectly for the advancement of persons within Namibia who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices*". It points to the need for affirmative action for women in particular, noting that "*women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and that they need to be encouraged and enabled to play a full, equal and effective role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation*".<sup>1</sup>

The first local government elections took place in 1992. These elections were subject to an affirmative action provision for women which ensured that women were included on all party lists. In 1993, the Legal Assistance Centre published a report analysing the election results in light of interviews with various candidates, party officials, and electoral officers, in an effort to determine the impact of the affirmative action provision.<sup>2</sup>

This study concluded that the affirmative action provision made a difference in the 1992 elections. Even though there were other factors that influenced the participation of women at the local level, it is clear that some party lists were revised to include women purely because of the affirmative action provision. The study also indicated that most parties tended to apply affirmative action in its proper spirit, going beyond what the letter of the law required by including even more women candidates than the law mandated.

It was anticipated that the second local government elections would be held on a constituency basis, with local authorities being divided into wards and voters casting their ballots for individual candidates rather than for political parties. Under this system, affirmative action for women would no longer apply. However, Parliament amended the Local Authorities Act in 1997, to make the party list system applicable to the second local government elections. This amendment also strengthened the affirmative action provision for women, by increasing the minimum number of women who must be placed on each party list.

<sup>1</sup> Article 23.

<sup>2</sup> This study was published as Legal Assistance Centre, *Affirmative Action for Women in Local Government in Namibia* (June 1993).

The second local government elections were originally set for 2 December 1997, but were postponed to 16 February 1998 after a technical defect relating to the time period for filing party lists was discovered.

This study attempts to analyse the impact of the affirmative action requirements on the second election, and to compare the performance of women in the 1998 local elections against the outcome of the previous local election. As in the case of the previous study, the present report is based on statistical analysis supplemented by information from Parliamentary debates and on interviews with party officials, members of community associations, candidates and officials from the Electoral Commission.<sup>3</sup>

The Legal Assistance Centre intends to complete its series of studies of affirmative action for women in local government with a report on the third local government elections (which will probably take place in 2003), to compare how women fare under the ward system without affirmative action. The overall objective of this series of reports is to shed some light on the practical effectiveness of affirmative action for women.

## THE LEGAL BACKGROUND

### The proposed amendments

The original affirmative action provision embodied in the Local Authorities Act 6 of 1992 stipulated that party lists had to include at least two women in respect of local authority councils of 10 or fewer members, and at least three women for councils with 11 or more members. (Parties were required to supply a full slate of candidates, even if their chances of winning more than one or two seats were highly improbable.)<sup>4</sup>

In March 1997, the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing proposed amendments to the Local Authorities Act which would extend the party list system to the second local elections and strengthen the affirmative action provision for women in respect of these elections by increasing the minimum number of women required on each party list. The proposal was to raise the minimum from two or three women, depending on the size of the council, to three and five women respectively.

The proposed amendments also altered the number of council members in the different categories of local councils. Municipal councils, originally composed of 7-12 members, were to be increased to 7-15 members. Town councils remained the same, at 7-12 members. Village councils were to remain at 7 members each for the second local government elections, but were to be decreased to 5 members with effect from the third local government elections.

The proposed amendments also made some changes to the procedure for the delimitation of wards by the Delimitation Commission, giving the President a new power to refer matters relating to the delimitation of wards back to the Commission for reconsideration.

<sup>3</sup> Information from interviews with members of political parties and associations is not attributed by name, as all of these interviews were conducted on a confidential basis. Transcripts of the interviews are on file at the Legal Assistance Centre. A list of persons interviewed is included as an appendix to this report.

<sup>4</sup> Section 68(1), Electoral Act 24 of 1994.

## Debates in the National Assembly

### INTRODUCTION OF BILL

At the time the bill was introduced, the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing, Dr Iyambo, stated that one of the “*main reasons*” for the proposed amendments was that “*government is concerned about the level of women representation in all levels of decision-making*”. The second reason cited was the opinion of the Association of Local Authorities that local authorities were in general “*not prepared for the implementation of the ward system*”. The third motivation was the desire to change the Delimitation Commission from an executive body to an advisory body.<sup>5</sup>

In support of its assertions that Namibia was not ready for the ward system, SWAPO pointed to the continuing racial fragmentation of most local authorities. It noted that residential areas tend to be predominately occupied by particular tribal or racial groups as a continuing legacy of the old apartheid policies, and asserted that a ward system under such conditions would perpetuate racial and ethnic division.<sup>6</sup> SWAPO argued that the temporary continuation of the party list system at the local level would be the best way to encourage “*unity in diversity*”.<sup>7</sup>

The opposition parties opposed the amendments, arguing that the real reason behind them was SWAPO’s calculation that it would lose local representation under a ward system.<sup>8</sup> SWAPO refuted this, pointing to their majority showing under both the party list system which applies to the National Assembly elections and the constituency system which applies to regional council elections.<sup>9</sup>

SWAPO members suggested that the DTA was intent on perpetuating the old apartheid system of divide and rule.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the DTA was sceptical that residential integration would improve dramatically between the second and third local elections.<sup>11</sup>

Many members of the various opposition parties argued that personal accountability of a councillor to a constituency is particularly important in local government, where the issues tend to be local service ones which are outside the main political arena.<sup>12</sup> The Prime Minister, speaking for SWAPO, countered these concerns by noting that the party list system did not preclude the assignment of local councillors to particular areas, in the same way that SWAPO representatives in the National Assembly, who take office on a party list basis, are assigned to particular regions.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 4 March 1997 at 25-26; 25 March 1997 at 59.

<sup>6</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 11 March 1997 at 99-ff; 17 March 1997 at 270.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the speech of the Prime Minister, Debates of the National Assembly, 14 March 1997 at 213.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Debates of the National Assembly, 11 March 1997 at 118; 12 March 1997 at 131, 139; 19 March 1997 at 334.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Debates of the National Assembly, 14 March 1997 at 215, 217-218, 225, 226; 19 March at 345-346. According to the SWAPO Minister of Justice, “Even a chicken on the street knows that SWAPO can win any election under any arrangements in this country with minimal effort.” Debates of the National Assembly, 19 March 1997 at 344.

Interestingly, a subsequent analysis by a lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Sciences at the University of Namibia asserts that the party list system actually operates to assist the smaller opposition parties, because of the mathematics of calculating how votes translate into seats. Christiaan Keulder, “*The Electoral System and its Impact on the Outcome of the 1998 Local Authority Elections: A Briefing Paper*” (undated).

On the other hand, another analysis of the local elections asserts that “a simple arithmetic calculation” showed that opposition parties would probably win more seats under the wards system. Iina Soiri, “*Why the Local Authority Elections in Namibia Were Postponed*”, University of Helsinki, Institute of Development Studies, Working Paper 1/98, 1998 at 7.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Debates of the National Assembly, 18 March 1997 at 298.

<sup>11</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 11 March 1997 at 108.

<sup>12</sup> For example, one DTA member argued, “Let our people not be politicised in all levels of governance.” Debates of the National Assembly, 17 March 1997 at 264. See also, for example, Debates of the National Assembly, 11 March 1997 at 90-91, 105, 118; 12 March 1997 at 131, 139, 145, 150.

<sup>13</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 14 March 1997 at 212.

The opposition parties also argued that SWAPO underestimated the electorate by asserting that people were not yet ready to participate in a ward system. For example, UDF representative Mr Biwa stated that “to say that Namibians are not ready for the ward system is tantamount to suggesting that Namibians are not ready for freedom”.<sup>14</sup>

Speaking for the DTA, Mr Muyongo stated:

*Mr Speaker, regarding the argument that Namibian people are not ready to vote according to the ward system, I believe this is a gross insult to our black citizens. In especially the northern areas, the recognition of border and boundaries without benefit of roads and other conventional markers has been part of our people's tradition and culture for hundreds of years. In the past, and still today, ordinary people, those people our majority party [is] now insultingly claiming that they are too uninformed – or stupid – to understand the system perfectly, recognised exactly where the boundaries of every headman and tribal chief's territory were to be found. Why should they suddenly be unable to understand where the wards' boundaries have been demarcated? ... [I]t should also be pointed out that during the 1992 elections, people throughout the country, including these people the majority party now claim to be incompetent in this regard, managed to vote in constituencies as well as on the party lists all on the same day and without too many serious hitches ... How is it possible that they have managed to forget this skill within the space of a mere five years?*<sup>15</sup>

The SWAPO Minister of Justice, Mr Tjiriange, emphasised in response to such concerns that the bill was not intended to do away with the ward system, but only to defer it until wards could be introduced “more systematically and in an environment conducive to their success”.

*We are only trying to be realistic by saying let us prepare our people more adequately before we introduce this entirely new concept of wards ... Indeed ... it would have been the very same members of the opposition who would have been the loudest to criticise the Government if the delimitation of local authority areas into wards were not properly done. It should not be forgotten that delimitation of wards is not a simple process, particularly in a democratic and transparent society like ours. All the queries and complaints must be looked into and investigated so that at the end of the day a particular delimitation of a ward will be fully accepted by all the inhabitants of such a ward.*<sup>16</sup>

## DISCUSSION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The specific issue of affirmative action for women also drew hot debate, primarily around the sincerity of SWAPO's stated concern for women.<sup>17</sup> One DTA member, Mr Junius, launched a stinging attack on the affirmative action aspect of the bill, dismissing it as “window dressing” and arguing that women should and would be nominated on merit. He even went so far as to suggest that using women in such a way constitutes “political rape”.<sup>18</sup>

*There is no such thing that the rights of women or men are to be represented in a town council. It is all about the effective running of a town and nothing else ... [O]ne cannot but see this amendment bill as a very obvious, but a very clumsy effort to impress the women of this country in an attempt to catch their votes ... If we had only equality in mind, why do we not see a 50 per*

<sup>14</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 130. See also, for example, 24 March at 36.

<sup>15</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 25 March 1997 at 39-41. In this speech, the DTA also objected to the fact that the proposed amendments would give the President the power to refer any matter back to the Delimitation Commission for its reconsideration. The DTA asserted that this power could be abused by SWAPO to rig wards to its advantage.

<sup>16</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 19 March 1997 at 344-345.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Debates of the National Assembly, 19 March 1997 at 334.

<sup>18</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 140-141.

*cent representation being proposed in the amendment? Why should the female representation then be only one third of the male representation? Is it to show to the women of this country that they are still subordinate to men in this country? Why are we pretending to be honest while we are actually lying to ourselves?*<sup>19</sup>

Similar sentiments were expressed by another DTA member, Mr Stuart.<sup>20</sup> A third DTA member, Mr Moongo, stated that true affirmative action would mean that women were involved at all levels – national, regional and local – as well as in party leadership positions.<sup>21</sup> Another DTA member, Mr Gende, argued that *“from now on everything we are to do, should be done on an equal basis. Therefore, DTA is adamant that if this election could be done on a ward system, we will field more women than SWAPO, because we have committed ourselves to the elimination of gender disparity in this country once and for all.”*<sup>22</sup>

A female DTA member, Mrs Siska, stated:

*There is no need for women to rely on a party list system to occupy any position in the three levels of government, because women, like men, are capable of fighting an election and they occupy any position without any help from men, which is a proof of women being capable of running a campaign on their own. If through this amendment, the Government wants to put more women into decision-making positions, then they should effect changes by putting more women in Cabinet, in Parliament, local councils and parliamentary delegations on overseas trips.*<sup>23</sup>

Speaking for the UDF, Mr Biwa commented that SWAPO's stated concern about gender equality was

*... a blatant attempt to take women for a ride ... If we men would give them all support, full support and sincere support, I am sure women are able to climb the societal ladder in their own rights. But if we are insincere towards them and towards their cause and ... try to keep them at the mercy of political parties and political interest, they will never be victorious within the time that is so vitally in the interest of society.*<sup>24</sup>

The sole Member of Parliament representing MAG, Mr Pretorius, made the following comments:

*Affirmative action never had the intention of eliminating discrimination by implementing another form of discrimination. The main purpose of affirmative action is to create the same starting blocks and let merit and input play a role. In other word, equal opportunities ... [I]f I was a woman I would regard this amendment Bill as window-dressing, as a slap in my face, because I would know that I would always have to carry the stigma, the label around my neck that I did not make it on my own merit, but that I was made an affirmative action candidate by law ... [W]e do not need a party list system to boost our women. We will do them a favour by allowing them to win their colours in a ward system themselves ...*<sup>25</sup>

Quoting a proverb of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, Mr Pretorius noted that *“It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice.”* He went on to make proposals intended to demonstrate the inappropriateness of affirmative action for women: If groups which are under-

<sup>19</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 142.

<sup>20</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 11 March 1997 at 114: “If it was really the case that SWAPO is worried about the rights of women as candidates, and wishes to entrench these rights in the law, the party should be honest with women. We conduct elections in an absolutely democratic free way, then the women must receive 50 per cent representation ... and not a mere 30 per cent as proposed in this amendment. Because we are equal, because we are preaching equality.”

<sup>21</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 145.

<sup>22</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 17 March 1997 at 263.

<sup>23</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 18 March 1997 at 294.

<sup>24</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 131.

<sup>25</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 148.

represented in the political arena are to get legal assistance, then why not implement a quota system for the San? And why not require by law that only women candidates may be nominated for President?<sup>26</sup>

Several SWAPO members defended the affirmative action provision. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Dr L. Amathila, and Mrs Schoombe both pointed out that other democratic countries employ such methods to raise the level of political representation by women.<sup>27</sup> Mrs Schoombe pointed to international and regional commitments to the promotion of women's participation in decision-making roles, and supported the suggestion that the law should go even farther and require that party lists be 50% women. (When a DTA member then challenged her by asking if she would support an amendment stating that if the President is male, then the Prime Minister must be female, she replied that she supports the participation of women at all levels.)<sup>28</sup>

Dr Amathila (who was responsible for the original affirmative action provision in the Local Authorities Act when she was Minister of Local and Regional Government and Housing) pointed out that although women have achieved formal equality in the sense of having the vote, they have not yet achieved substantive equality in terms of power, still numbering only a small minority of the members of Parliament for example.<sup>29</sup>

Dr Amathila also drew a connection between the need for affirmative action and the high level of violence against women, suggesting that women's ability to engage in campaign activities was restricted by the danger of going house to house to solicit votes.<sup>30</sup> This assertion was derided by the DTA's Mr Muyongo:

*Must this country's women now be kept behind bars to protect them from the criminals in the society? Why does Dr Amathila believe that the female political candidates will be particularly vulnerable to attacks by criminals and not the thousands of women who move about our country freely at all times of the day and night?*<sup>31</sup>

Dr Amathila defended the fact that the proposed amendments set the minimum number of women at only about 30% of each party list, on the grounds that women in Namibia were disadvantaged by inferior education. She also emphasised that the proposed amendment would not stop any party from going beyond the minimum requirements.<sup>32</sup> She asserted that women would not fare well under the ward system, because "nobody is going to vote for a woman", arguing that the need for affirmative action for women had not yet passed.<sup>33</sup>

Dr Amathila continued:

*Involving women in the political process is in the interest of society as a whole. Because women's values and women's sense of justice become integrated into the political life of our nation. Therefore, I call upon women, all women sitting here, to identify capable women in their areas, in their parties, and to encourage them to stand as candidates. Women must also lobby their political leaders within their parties to put these women on their lists ... I will conclude by saying that it is not that we women are weak, but we need to be encouraged and*

<sup>26</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 149-151.

<sup>27</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 140, 152.

<sup>28</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 12 March 1997 at 153-154.

<sup>29</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 17 March 1997 at 266-ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 25 March 1997 at 39.

<sup>32</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 17 March 1997 at 268. The fact that most local authorities are composed of 7 members makes it obviously impossible to impose an exact gender balance in most cases. The amended affirmative action provision mandates 3 women on party lists of 7 members, which is equal to about 43%.

<sup>33</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 17 March 1997 at 269.

*the Constitution has made provision in Article 10 that women must be given extra, extra, extra encouragement, and that is what we are doing.*<sup>34</sup>

Similar sentiments were put forward on behalf of SWAPO by the Minister of Justice, Mr Tjiriange, who stated:

*Let us face it, affirmative action is not only and necessarily a question of numbers, although that is evident thereof. But most importantly affirmative action, in particular gender equality, requires societal and mental transformation. Our society must, where necessary, be assisted to undergo such transformation ... The party list system will assist greatly at this formative stage of our society to cement and strengthen the roots of equality, gender in particular, and a non-divided society.*<sup>35</sup>

He also suggested that the party list approach allowed parties to ensure the representation of other significant segments of society, such as the youth, the elders, former combatants, and other special interest groups.<sup>36</sup>

The Director-General of the Department of Women Affairs, Mrs Nandi-Ndaitwah, noted at the end of the debate that the bill was in line with demands from the women of Namibia during the process of preparing for the Fourth World Conference on Women, that the “quota system” continue to apply to local government. She also noted that such a quota system was internationally accepted as “a temporary measure to speed up the process of integrating women at all levels of decision-making”.<sup>37</sup>

Minister of Health and Social Services. Dr Amathila, then appealed to those present to take affirmative action seriously in the next National Assembly elections as well:

*I call upon each and every woman and man in this House to make sure that, when ... elections come next time in December next year, we put women up front and not numbers 72 and 80 and somewhere at the end! I call upon our party to take the lead, that every second person on the list must be a woman. I also appeal to the opposition, I know they are going to do it, to at least put ten women up front in their own party, so that we can have women, because we are shamelessly late, we are very, very much behind although we started democracy in southern Africa, but we are only 16,7% when we need to reach the threshold of 30%.*<sup>38</sup>

The Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Mrs Ithana, joined in this call for parties to take the lead in creating the enabling environment for gender equality.<sup>39</sup>

## ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS AND PASSAGE OF THE BILL

One DTA member, Mr Staby, accepted that there were several genuine reasons for postponing the switch to the ward system – including the need for more voter education, correction of inaccuracies in the voters roll, specific preparation for the ward system, the need to work out a mechanism to ensure gender balance under the ward system, and fine-tuning of the Electoral Act. He proposed as an alternative to the proposed amendments, that the second local government elections simply be postponed for a year or so and then take place under the ward system as planned.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 17 March 1997 at 269-270.

<sup>35</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 19 March 1997 at 345.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

<sup>37</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 1 April 1997 at 200-201.

<sup>38</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 1 April 1997 at 202.

<sup>39</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 1 April 1997 at 204-205.

<sup>40</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 24 March 1997 at 12-15.

Mr Muyongo of the DTA suggested that the amendment bill be referred to committee for public hearings.<sup>41</sup> On behalf of the UDF, Mr Gurirab suggested that a consultative conference be convened for purposes of soliciting public input on the bill.<sup>42</sup>

Speaking for SWAPO, the Minister of Local and Regional Government and Housing opposed any substantial postponement of the local elections to avoid having it too close in time to the regional or presidential elections.<sup>43</sup>

The House rejected the formal DTA proposal to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Governmental Affairs, by a vote of 40:17.<sup>44</sup>

The next stage in the parliamentary process was the committee stage, during which proposed bills are considered clause by clause. At the beginning of this process, the DTA, UDF and MAG members of the House left in protest, with the single representative of the DCN (Mr Katjioungua) being the only member of an opposition party remaining in the chamber.<sup>45</sup> Mr Katjioungua then objected to the bill clause by clause, but to no avail.<sup>46</sup> The bill was passed over his sole opposition.

## Debates in the National Council

The tenor of the ensuing debate in the National Council was much the same as that in the National Assembly, albeit much briefer. As in the National Assembly, attention focused primarily on the retention of the party list system rather than on affirmative action, with SWAPO members arguing that introducing the ward system would perpetuate the racial division of communities and the opposition arguing that SWAPO's real motive was the belief that it would fare better under a party list system.

There were only a few references to the affirmative action component of the amendment bill in the National Council debate. One SWAPO member, Mr ya Kasita, stated:

*I must also put it to this august House that the amendment should be seen in the light of national building, national reconciliation and an effort to balance gender issues. There is nothing wrong to include women on the party list, but it is wrong and unacceptable to have wards that would at the end of the day be determined by groups of the rich, and other wards for the have nots.*<sup>47</sup>

Mr Sizimbo, a DTA member, countered as follows:

*Honourable Chairman, one of the reasons given by SWAPO for introducing the amendment was that the party list gave women a chance to participate in the election. This argument does not hold any water because right in front there is a lady who was not elected on a party list [referring to the fact that the members of the National Council, which include one woman, are regional councillors who are elected on a constituency basis]. It so happens that she is SWAPO. I cannot understand why the women in towns and cities should only be elected on a party list and not in the ward system. I need somebody to convince me that all SWAPO women only want to become councillors and not presidents of this country ... If we are really concerned about our women being involved in the running of this country, why not give them a chance to try their luck in the presidential elections.*<sup>48</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 25 March 1997 at 51.

<sup>42</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 27 March 1997 at 55.

<sup>43</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 25 March 1997 at 60.

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*

<sup>45</sup> Debates of the National Assembly, 1 April 1997 at 197-ff.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

<sup>47</sup> Debates of the National Council, 12 May 1997 at 68.

<sup>48</sup> Debates of the National Council, 12 May 1997 at 110.

Another opposition member, Mr Kaatura, similarly stated that *"the excuse of the ruling party that they are trying to accommodate more women and training the people on ward system does not hold water, because you can elect also women in any ward if she is capable enough to lead its community."*<sup>49</sup>

The National Council passed the amendment bill by a vote of 10:6, without further reference to its affirmative action provision.<sup>50</sup>

## The amended affirmative action provision

The exact wording of the strengthened affirmative action provision is as follows, with reference to local elections held on the party list system:

*... each party list shall contain as candidates for such elections –*

- (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 council or town council consisting of 11 or more members, the names of at least five female persons.*<sup>51</sup>

## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 1992 LOCAL ELECTIONS

Before moving to a detailed discussion of the 1998 local government elections, the key findings concerning the 1992 local elections will be reviewed here for purposes of comparison.

The analysis of the 1992 local government elections concluded that the affirmative action provision made a significant impact, even though there were also other factors that encouraged the participation of women at the local level.

A total of 6 political parties and 3 community associations participated in the first local elections.<sup>52</sup>

TABLE 1: 1992 – PARTICIPANTS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

Parties	Associations
DTA	Local Community Association Mariental
NPF	Swakopmund Residents Association
SWANU	Local Community Association (Windhoek)
SWAPO	
UDF	
WRP	

The local elections took place simultaneously with the first regional elections from 30 November to 2 December 1992. The local elections initially involved 53 local authorities: 15 municipalities, 12 towns and 26 villages. However, councillors took seats in only 51 local authorities. There were no nominations in respect of two local authorities (Summerdown and Wlotzkasbaken) which were subsequently de-proclaimed. There was no need for voting in three local authorities (Aris, Kappsfarm and Omitara) where only one party put forward candidates but the party lists for these locations have been included in the calculations.

<sup>49</sup> Debates of the National Council, 15 May 1997 at 181.

<sup>50</sup> Debates of the National Council, 19 May 1997 at 221.

<sup>51</sup> Local Authorities Amendments Act 3 of 1997 (Government Gazette 1584).

<sup>52</sup> Persons not familiar with Namibian politics may be interested to know the full names of the parties: DCN = Democratic Coalition of Namibia; DTA = Democratic Turnhalle Alliance; SWANU = South West Africa National Union; SWAPO = South West Africa People's Organisation; UDF = United Democratic Front; WRP = Worker's Revolutionary Party.

The 13 regional elections which took place at the same time were held on a constituency basis, and were subject to no affirmative action requirements.

Overall, the 1992 party lists included more female candidates than the law required, with women accounting for 382 out of 1 006 local candidates (38%). Female candidates were fairly evenly spread through municipalities, towns and villages, with a slightly higher proportion of women candidates at the village level in the DTA and UDF. The highest percentages of women candidates occurred in parties and organisations which contested only one local authority (in each case a municipality) – the WRP, which fielded candidates only in Windhoek, and the three community associations which were active in Windhoek, Swakopmund and Mariental.

TABLE 2: 1992 – WOMEN CANDIDATES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CANDIDATES  
(C = Total candidates, W = Women)

	Associations		DTA		NPF		SWANU		SWAPO		UDF		WRP		Totals	
	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W
Municipalities	27	12	111	38	7	3	47	19	110	35	103	34	12	6	417	147
Towns	0	0	84	27	7	2	28	12	84	34	21	8	0	0	224	83
Villages	0	0	161	75	0	0	14	5	155	55	35	16	0	0	365	151
Totals	27	12	356	140	14	5	89	36	439	124	159	58	12	6	1006	381

Women were rarely found at the top of the lists (only 8,4% of all women candidates were in position 1) but neither were they relegated to the bottom of the lists in most cases. Overall, women were fairly evenly distributed between the top, middle and bottom positions on the lists: 35% of all women candidates were in the top three positions, while 28% were in positions 4 and 5 and 38% were at the bottom of the lists, in position 6 or lower.

TABLE 3: 1992 – POSITION OF WOMEN CANDIDATES ON PARTY LISTS

Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5	Position 6	Position 7	Position 7+
32	48	53	54	50	69	58	18
8,38%	12,57%	13,86%	14,14%	13,09%	18,06%	15,18%	4,71%

A total of 130 852 votes were cast in 1992, constituting some 83,5% of the 156 663 registered voters. Of these, 128 973 votes were counted (82%), while 1 879 ballots were rejected as spoilt (1,5%).

TABLE 4: 1992 – VOTES CAST

Registered voters	Votes cast	Votes rejected
156 663	128 983	1 879
100,0%	82,33%	1,46%

Women filled 31,5% of all local authority seats (114 out of 362). Women councillors were in the minority in almost every local authority, holding a majority of seats in only four local councils – Kalkrand, Koës, Warmbad and Witvlei.

TABLE 5: 1992 – PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN CANDIDATES

Total number of candidates	Women candidates	Percentage	Total number of councillors	Women councillors	Percentage
1 006	382	38,0%	362	114	31,5%

In the regional elections, where no affirmative action for women applied, women were far less well-represented. Of the 195 regional candidates, only 12 (6%) were women, and women were elected to only 3 of the 95 regional council seats (3%). The absence of affirmative action may not have been the only reason for the striking contrast with the performance of women at the local level, however. Information from interviews indicated that regional councils are perceived as serious political bodies

which are unsuitable for women, whereas local authorities are involved with social and community issues rather than "politics".

In general, the affirmative action provision applied during the 1992 local elections appears to have been effective in giving women opportunities to gain experience and display their capabilities at the local level.

## THE 1994 WALVIS BAY ELECTIONS

The study of the 1992 local elections excluded Walvis Bay, which is currently Namibia's second largest municipality, because South Africa and Namibia were still locked in negotiations over the control of Walvis Bay at that stage. Although Walvis Bay is geographically part of Namibia, the South African government persisted in claiming sovereignty over it at the time of Namibia's independence.

Walvis Bay is home to a major port, as well as being a key base for Namibia's fishing industry. The colonial history of Walvis Bay differs from that of the rest of Namibia, as it was the only portion of present-day Namibia to have been claimed as a British colony. This background provided an excuse for the previous South African regime to assert the right to retain this strategic port, in the face of objections from the United Nations. The issue remained unresolved at the time of Namibia's independence, even though the Namibian Constitution explicitly identifies Walvis Bay as part of its international territory.<sup>53</sup>

After independence, negotiations about the reintegration of Walvis Bay into Namibia were carried forward by a Joint Administration Authority convened in November 1992. These efforts were assisted by the changing political climate in South Africa, and the enclave of Walvis Bay was officially re-incorporated into the Republic of Namibia with effect from 1 March 1994.<sup>54</sup>

Following the resolution of the territorial dispute, the date for the first local elections for Walvis Bay was set as 15-16 August 1994 and the council size was set at 10 seats.<sup>55</sup> Three political parties and one association took part in this election – DTA, SWAPO, UDF and the Joint Walvis Bay Residents Association. A total of 7 943 registered voters cast their ballots, with 7 830 votes being counted and 113 ballot papers being rejected as spoilt.

TABLE 6: WALVIS BAY 1994 – PARTICIPANTS

Parties	Associations
DTA	Joint Walvis Bay Residents Association
SWAPO	
UDF	

In this election, there were 18 women amongst a total of 40 candidates. The Joint Walvis Bay Residents Association put forward a majority of women (7 out of 10 candidates), but with only 2 women amongst the top 5 positions on the list, at positions 3 and 4. SWAPO had 4 women on its list, with 2 women amongst its top five candidates, including a woman at the top of the list (followed by men in positions

<sup>53</sup> For a useful account of Walvis Bay's legal history, see L Berat, *Walvis Bay: Decolonization and International Law* (1990) and *S v Redondo* 1992 NR 133 (SC) at 143. On the position of the United Nations, see for example United Nations Security Council Resolution 432 of 27 July 1978, declaring that the territorial integrity of Namibia must be assured through the reintegration of Walvis Bay.

The Namibian Constitution specifically states that the national territory of Namibia "shall consist of the whole of the territory recognised by the international community through the organs of the United Nations as Namibia, including the enclave, harbour and port of Walvis Bay, as well as the off-shore islands of Namibia ..." (Article 1).

<sup>54</sup> Walvis Bay and Off-Shore Islands Act 1 of 1994.

<sup>55</sup> See Proclamation 16 of 1994 (Government Gazette 873), as amended by Proclamation 17 of 1994 (Government Gazette 893).

2 and 3). The UDF also had 4 women on its list, also with 2 women amongst its top five candidates, but with men in the top two positions on the list; alternating men and women candidates thereafter. The DTA put forward 3 women. It placed a woman at the head of the list, but put the other two women amongst the bottom five candidates. Thus, all the parties exceeded the minimum requirement that there be 2 women amongst the 10 candidates on the list, but the placement of the women candidates strongly affected their chances of actually taking a seat. Both the DTA and SWAPO placed women at the top of their party lists, thus making it highly likely that at least one woman would actually represent each of these parties on the council.

TABLE 7: WALVIS BAY 1994 – WOMEN'S POSITION ON PARTY LISTS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DTA	X						X			X
JWBRA			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
SWAPO	X				X	X		X	X	
UDF			X		X		X			

Only two of the female contenders won seats on the council. SWAPO took 8 seats (with 4 of these councillors being women), while the DTA took 2 seats (filled by one man and one woman). Women thus account for 5 of the 10 council members, thus constituting the ideal 50%.

TABLE 8: WALVIS BAY 1994 – PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN CANDIDATES

Total number of candidates	Women candidates	Percentage	Total number of councillors	Women councillors	Percentage
40	18	45.0%	10	5	50.0%

If the Walvis Bay results are added to the results in the 1992 elections, then women accounted for a total of 40 out of 1 046 candidates (38%), and a total of 119 out of 372 seats (32%) in 52 local authorities.

TABLE 9: PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN CANDIDATES IN ALL FIRST LOCAL ELECTIONS

Total number of candidates	Women candidates	Percentage	Total number of councillors	Women councillors	Percentage
1 046	400	38.0%	372	119	32.0%

No other local authority elections were held prior to the second local elections in 1998.<sup>56</sup> According to the Electoral Commission, the normal procedure is that local elections must take place every five years, regardless of the fact that new local authorities may be declared in the meantime. Walvis Bay was treated as a special case because it was a long-established municipality which needed continuity of governance after its reintegration into Namibia.

## THE 1998 LOCAL ELECTIONS

### Local authorities

There was a total of 45 local authorities participating in the 1998 local elections: 17 municipalities, 13 towns and 15 villages. This is fewer than in the first elections, which ultimately involved 52 local authorities: 16 municipalities (including Walvis Bay), 12 towns and 24 villages.

<sup>56</sup> The first local government election was postponed in respect of Aroab, being held only in 1993. According to the Director of Elections, this postponement was necessary because the election officer for Aroab was injured in a car accident. The statistics in respect of Aroab have been included in the overall analysis of the 1992 elections.

**TABLE 10: LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NUMBER OF COUNCIL SEATS IN FIRST AND SECOND LOCAL ELECTIONS**  
(with changes indicated in bold)

Municipalities		Towns		Villages	
1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998
Gobabis (7)	Gobabis (7)	Arandis (7)	Arandis (7)	Aranos (7)	Aranos (7)
Grootfontein (7)	Grootfontein (7)	<b>Henties Bay (7)</b>	<b>Eenhana (7)</b>	<b>Ariamsvlei (7)</b>	Aroab (7)
–	<b>Henties Bay (7)</b>	Katima Mulilo (7)	Katima Mulilo (7)	Aris (7)	Berseba (7)
Karasburg (7)	Karasburg (7)	Khorixas (7)	Khorixas (7)	Aroab (7)	Betanie (7)
Karibib (7)	Karibib (7)	Lüderitz (7)	Lüderitz (7)	<b>Aus (7)</b>	Gibeon (7)
Keetmanshoop (7)	Keetmanshoop (7)	Okakarara (7)	Okakarara (7)	Berseba (7)	Gochas (7)
Mariental (7)	Mariental (7)	Ondangwa (7)	Ondangwa (7)	Bethanie (7)	Kalkrand (7)
Okahandja (7)	Okahandja (7)	Ongwediva (7)	Ongwediva (7)	Gibeon (7)	Kamanjab (7)
Omaruru (7)	Omaruru (7)	Opuwo (7)	Opuwo (7)	Gochas (7)	Koës (7)
Otavi (7)	Otavi (7)	Oshakati (7)	Oshakati (7)	Grünau (7)	Leonardville (7)
Otiwarongo (7)	Otiwarongo (7)	Rehoboth (7)	Rehoboth (7)	Kalkrand (7)	Maltahöhe (7)
Outjo (7)	Outjo (7)	Rundu (7)	Rundu (7)	<b>Kalkveld (7)</b>	Stampriet (7)
Swakopmund (7)	Swakopmund (10)		<b>Uutapi (7)</b>	Kamanjab (7)	Tses (7)
Tsumeb (7)	Tsumeb (7)			<b>Kappsfarm (7)</b>	Uis (7)
Usakos (7)	Usakos (7)			Koës (7)	Witvlei (7)
Walvis Bay 1994 (10)	Walvis Bay (10)			Leonardville (7)	
Windhoek (12)	Windhoek (15)			Maltahöhe (7)	
				Noordoewer (7)	
				Omitara (7)	
				Stampriet (7)	
				Tses (7)	
				Uis (7)	
				Warmbad (7)	
				Witvlei (7)	
16	17	12	13	24	15

Some villages were deproclaimed after their populations did not prove large enough to support the designation, while two new towns were proclaimed in the wake of local development. The only new municipality since the first local elections (aside from Walvis Bay) is Henties Bay, which was upgraded from a town to a municipality in 1997. The total number of towns and municipalities increased by only one in each category, while there was a substantial decrease in the number of villages (9 fewer in 1998 than in 1992).

All 45 local authority councils involved in the 1998 elections consisted of 7 seats, with three exceptions: the council for Windhoek was set at 15 seats, and those for Swakopmund and Walvis Bay at 10 seats.

## Election postponement

The second local government elections were initially scheduled for 2 December 1997. The deadline for the submission of party lists to electoral officials was 11h00 on 24 October 1997. In Rundu, SWAPO failed to submit its party list in time, meaning that all of the seats would automatically go to the DTA as the only party which registered a party list prior to the deadline. This was considered to be a significant blow to SWAPO, which was holding 5 out of 7 council seats prior to the election and had been steadily building its support in the Okavango region.

Other local authorities also experienced some problems in respect of party lists. SWAPO was late to submit its party list in respect of Leonardville, while the DTA did not turn up at all, with the overall result being that no party submitted any candidates for this local authority. However, the Electoral Act allows for the process to be repeated in such an event, and when registration was re-opened for Leonardville a week later, both SWAPO and the DTA submitted candidate lists well before the second deadline.

In Gibeon, the problem was not too few parties, but too many, when two different factions of the DTA arrived with different party lists. However, the party's head office clarified the confusion, confirming that the group which arrived first should be the one to register its candidates.

In Windhoek, the DCN failed to submit its list of candidates on time. The DCN, which planned to stand in only a limited number of locations, had expected Windhoek to be one of its strategically targeted areas.

In Ondangwa, the DTA claimed that they had attempted to register prior to the deadline during a 15-minute period when there was no returning officer present to accept their list. As a result of this complaint, they were allowed to register after the 11h00 deadline.<sup>57</sup>

The situation in Rundu drew particular attention, with over 2 000 SWAPO supporters joining in a demonstration to demand that SWAPO be allowed to stand in the town.<sup>58</sup> SWAPO launched a formal appeal against the Electoral Commission's decision to bar the party from participating in the Rundu election, basing its challenge on the constitutional right to vote. However, the matter was settled out of court when technical faults in the registration process were discovered.

The Electoral Act states that parties must be allowed a minimum of 15 days and a maximum of 20 days to submit their party lists, counting from the date of the Presidential Proclamation announcing the deadlines. In terms of the conventions of counting dates for legal purposes, the date on which the Proclamation is issued should not have been counted. Lawyers also argued that the day on which the deadline was set at 11h00 should not be counted, since this was not a full working day. As a result, the Directorate of Elections accepted that the 15-day minimum time period was not satisfied.<sup>59</sup>

In the wake of this development, the Electoral Commission recommended a postponement of the elections to 17 February 1998. Voter registration was re-opened, and new deadlines were set for the submission of party lists. Amendments to the Local Authorities Act were enacted to extend the terms of office of incumbents until after the postponed elections, and the terms of office of the Director of Elections and the Electoral Commission were extended accordingly.<sup>60</sup>

As a result of the postponement, 11 590 additional voters registered and 4 additional groups submitted party lists – 1 political party (SWANU) and 3 residents associations (based in Okahandja, Windhoek and Otavi).<sup>61</sup> The DCN also took advantage of the extended opportunity to submit a party list for Windhoek.

Some opposition parties, including the DTA, felt that the postponement was detrimental to their support, as they had strategised for a "peak" of support in December and then lost momentum after the holidays. SWAPO party officials interviewed expressed varying opinions on the postponement, with some saying that it provided more time for local mobilisation of SWAPO supporters and others saying that it benefited the opposition by allowing more time for new associations to establish themselves. The period of the postponement (2 December 1997 to 17 February 1998) covers the main holiday season in Namibia, meaning that there were few additional political activities during the extended period. One

<sup>57</sup> *The Namibian*, 27 October 1997; 31 October 1997; 3 November 1997.

<sup>58</sup> *The Namibian*, 3 November 1997.

<sup>59</sup> Proclamation 19 of 1997 was dated 10 October 1997, while the deadline for submitting party lists was set at 11h00 on 24 October 1997. This time period equals 15 days only if both the day of issue and the final day are counted.

A second defect was subsequently pointed out by the DTA. The Electoral Commission failed to enforce the requirement of the Electoral Act that parties submit the residential addresses of each candidate on their party lists. *The Namibian*, 21 November 1997.

<sup>60</sup> The events surrounding the postponement are discussed more fully in Jina Soiri, "Why the Local Authority Elections in Namibia Were Postponed", University of Helsinki, Institute of Development Studies, Working Paper 1/98, 1998.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Mr AN Elago, Deputy Director of Elections.

commentator suggests that the court case may have awakened the interest of some voters who would otherwise have not paid much attention to the forthcoming elections.<sup>62</sup>

## Political parties and associations

A total of 6 political parties and 8 associations participated in the elections, for a total of 14 contenders.

Five of the six political parties which participated in the 1998 elections were the same as those which contested the 1992 elections. The NPF alliance, which contested the first local government elections, took part in the 1998 elections under the DCN.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the overall changes in party participation were minimal.

The most striking difference between the two elections is the increase in the participation of local associations, up from 3 in the 1992 elections to 8 in 1998. Residents associations fielded candidates in Keetmanshoop, Gobabis, Okahandja, Omaruru, Otavi, Rehoboth, Swakopmund and Windhoek.

TABLE 11: 1998 – PARTICIPANTS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

Parties	Associations
DCN	Concerned Peoples Organisation of Keetmanshoop
DTA	Gobabis Residents Association
SWANU	Okahandja Ratepayers Association
SWAPO	Omaruru Residents Association
UDF	Otavi Residents Association
WRP	Rehoboth Ratepayers Association
	Swakopmund Residents Association
	Local Community Association (Windhoek)

This increase in associations can arguably be seen as a reflection of the de-politicisation of local politics which arose as a point of debate during the parliamentary discussion of the proposed amendments to the Local Authorities Act. However, those interviewed had different interpretations of this development.

The residents associations themselves asserted that they were offering an alternative to party politics that is particularly appropriate in the local context. They believed that their members would be more directly accountable to the community rather than being guided by party loyalty.

Many of those who were prominent in residents associations were formerly members of other political parties, mainly the DTA. A SWAPO official asserted that the associations were formed by “*people who have problems in political parties*” and were essentially political parties in disguise. The DTA also accused the associations of being platforms for individualists who have failed to pursue their selfish interests through their original parties.<sup>64</sup>

One DTA official thought that the residents associations were dangerously ethnic – appealing only to Basters in Rehoboth and only to whites elsewhere. Another observer pointed out that the radio and television advertisements of the residents associations were broadcast primarily in Afrikaans, which is still associated with the pre-independence administration despite being a widely used common language.<sup>65</sup>

Some people perceived the residents associations as being a positive development because they departed from the centralised decision-making style of the established parties.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Soiri at 21.

<sup>63</sup> Democratic Coalition of Namibia.

<sup>64</sup> Soiri at 13.

<sup>65</sup> Soiri at 13.

<sup>66</sup> See Soiri at 13.

The associations pointed out that they were disadvantaged in comparison to political parties because they did not get any funding from government, whereas political parties are funded for national elections on the basis of their representation in Parliament.

Both SWAPO and DTA officials believed that the associations would take votes primarily from the opposition parties rather than from SWAPO. (In fact, as will be seen below, both SWAPO and the DTA lost seats in some areas because of the participation of the associations.)

## Distribution of party participation

The only parties which participated in the local elections on a national basis were the DTA and SWAPO. The UDF fielded candidates in about half of the local authority areas (22 out of 45). The DCN and SWANU registered in only a few locations – the DCN in Opuwo, Outjo, Okakarara and Windhoek, and SWANU in Okakarara, Opuwo and Windhoek. The WRP and all eight local associations fielded candidates in only a single local authority.

TABLE 12: PARTICIPATION OF PARTIES AND ASSOCIATIONS IN FIRST AND SECOND LOCAL ELECTIONS

	Municipalities		Towns		Villages		Totals	
	1992*	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998
DCN / NPF	1	2	1	2	0	0	2	4
DTA	16	17	12	13	23	15	50	45
SWANU	6	1	4	2	2	0	12	3
SWAPO	16	17	12	13	22	15	49	45
UDF	14	16	3	2	5	4	21	22
WRP	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Associations	4	7	0	1	0	0	3	8

\* Including Walvis Bay

Thus, the majority of local contests were either two-way contests between the DTA and SWAPO, or three-way contests between the DTA, SWAPO and the UDF. Windhoek, Namibia's capital and largest local authority, was unique in having seven contending groups – all six political parties as well as a residents association. (See Table 13.)

## Party lists

All of the political parties seemed to perceive tensions between the desire to encourage affirmative action and the desire to allow unrestricted democratic selection of candidates for party lists at the local level.

The SWAPO party congress held in 1997 gave strong support to the advancement of women candidates. At the opening of the congress, held in May 1997, President Sam Nujoma gave strong personal support to this issue. *"I propose SWAPO take a decision to have 50 per cent women representation on all SWAPO lists for municipal and regional elections"*, the President stated. *"We cannot allow more than 50 per cent of the population not to be properly represented at all decision-making levels, managerial and political, if we want to develop our country economically and socially"*.<sup>67</sup>

The SWAPO Congress elected a Central Committee with only 7 women out of 58 members.<sup>68</sup> However it passed a resolution calling for women to make up 30 per cent of candidates for the Central Committee at future congresses and 50 per cent of candidates for future national elections.<sup>69</sup> According to a high-

<sup>67</sup> *The Namibian*, 29 May 1997.

<sup>68</sup> *The Namibian*, 2 June 1997.

<sup>69</sup> *The Namibian*, 2 June 1997.

TABLE 13: PARTICIPATION OF PARTIES AND ASSOCIATIONS IN SECOND LOCAL ELECTIONS

Place	DCN	DTA	SWANU	SWAPO	UDF	WRP	Associations
<b>(A) Municipalities</b>							
Gobabis		X		X	X		X
Grootfontein		X		X	X		
Henties Bay		X		X	X		
Karasburg		X		X			
Karibib		X		X	X		
Keetmanshoop		X		X	X		X
Mariental		X		X	X		
Okahandja		X		X	X		X
Omaruru		X		X	X		X
Otavi		X		X	X		X
Otjiwarongo		X		X	X		
Outjo	X	X		X	X		
Swakopmund		X		X	X		X
Tsumeb		X		X	X		
Usakos		X		X	X		
Walvis Bay		X		X	X		
Windhoek	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	2	17	1	17	16	1	7
<b>(B) Towns</b>							
Arandis		X		X	X		
Eenhana		X		X			
Katimamulilo		X		X			
Khorixas		X		X	X		
Lüderitz		X		X			
Okakarara	X	X	X	X			
Ondangwa		X		X			
Ongwediva		X		X			
Opuwo	X	X	X	X			
Oshakati		X		X			
Rehoboth		X		X			X
Rundu		X		X			
Uutapi		X		X			
Total	2	13	2	13	2	0	1
<b>(C) Villages</b>							
Aranos		X		X			
Aroab		X		X			
Berseba		X		X			
Betanie		X		X			
Gibeon		X		X			
Gochas		X		X			
Kalkrand		X		X			
Kamanjab		X		X	X		
Koes		X		X			
Leonardville		X		X			
Maltahöhe		X		X			
Stampriet		X		X			
Tses		X		X	X		
Uis		X		X	X		
Witvlei		X		X	X		
Total	0	15	0	15	4	0	0

ranking SWAPO official, SWAPO also decided to utilise "zebra"-style lists for the local elections, in which candidates alternate between male and female (e.g. woman-man-woman-man).

Candidates for SWAPO party lists were selected at the local level. According to SWAPO representatives who were interviewed, section leaders in individual local authorities nominated candidates and sent these names to the branches. Branches then elected candidates and forwarded them to the district (local authority) level, where another election amongst the party leadership narrowed the list to the appropriate number of candidates. The candidates were placed on the lists in the order of the number of votes they received in this internal election. The national party headquarters then checked to see if

all the candidates satisfied the internal requirement of 5 years of party membership, and to check for sufficient gender balance. Party officials reported that there was opposition in a few communities to the inclusion of women, while some areas submitted party lists with a majority of women.

The situation was similar in respect of the DTA. According to DTA representatives interviewed, the DTA head office directed the local party committees which were responsible for nominating the candidates to make sure that at least 50% of the candidates on the list were women. (Seeing as how most local authorities involved 7 candidates and cannot be split "50-50", the DTA specified that although the law prescribed 3 women, there should be an effort to nominate 4.) There was also a directive that party lists should be "zebra"-style insofar as possible, to make sure that women were evenly spread across the list. Candidates were then selected through a nomination process which took place at the local level.

The UDF had a similar approach, although it utilised a less formal affirmative action policy. Candidates were selected and placed on the lists by local communities, but the head office sometimes suggested adding more women, or inquired as to why women were concentrated at the bottom of some lists.

The DCN also left the nomination process entirely to local party members, with the national leadership intervening only if the legal requirements for affirmative action were not being complied with – and in most cases the original local lists were either fully in compliance with the minimum numbers of women, or "very close". The national leadership also encouraged the placement of women in top positions, pointing out to local members that it would not look good to slight women on party lists in a climate where women's political participation is being widely encouraged. So local party members were encouraged to make sure that the top two positions on the list were divided between one woman and one man.

The WRP followed a slightly different approach. As a smaller party which fielded candidates in only one local authority, it utilised a more informal nomination process based on discussion and consensus.

There are some signs that the process did not follow the internally prescribed procedures in all cases. For example, cases were reported where both SWAPO and the DTA altered the original lists submitted by the local branches, apparently for political reasons.<sup>70</sup>

The residents associations generally selected candidates by allowing their members to vote at public meetings, with the positions on the lists being determined by the outcome of this internal election. For example, the Swakopmund Residents Association reported that they ended up with an equal number of men and women candidates "not by planning, but by accident". The Local Community Association in Windhoek also reported that it was "coincidental" that they ended up with a majority of women on their list.

## Women candidates

A total of 462 women were put forward, out of 978 candidates. This is equal to 47%, which represents a significant improvement over the 38% figure for the first local authority elections. It is also striking that virtually every party came close to the ideal of 50% representation of women on its party list, with SWANU slightly exceeding 50%. (See Table 14.)

Almost 38% of the party lists exceeded the minimum requirements for female candidates (47 out of 125 party lists). About 30% (38 out of 125) of the lists contained a majority of female candidates, while three lists (2,4%) were divided exactly half and half between women and men (a feat which was

<sup>70</sup> See Soiri at 8. citing *New Era*, 7-9 November 1997 at page 2 and interviews with local DTA councillors.

possible only in Walvis Bay and Swakopmund which were the only local authorities with an even number of seats). The most striking predominance of women on party lists occurred in Windhoek, where 4 out of the 7 parties and associations which participated in this local election put forward party lists containing a majority of women.

TABLE 14: 1998 – WOMEN CANDIDATES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CANDIDATES

Political Party	FIRST LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS			SECOND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS		
	Candidates	Total women	Percentage	Candidates	Total women	Percentage
DCN	–	–	–	36	16	44,4
DTA	356	140	39,3	329	156	47,4
NPF	14	5	35,7	–	–	–
SWANU	89	36	40,5	29	15	51,7
SWAPO	439	124	35,5	329	155	47,1
UDF	159	58	36,5	168	80	47,6
WRP	12	6	50,0	15	7	46,7
Associations	27	12	44,4	72	33	45,8
Totals	1 006	381	37,9	978	462	47,2

The Director of Elections stated that there were “several” cases in which party lists were submitted with only two women candidates instead of the minimum of three required by law for most of the local authorities, meaning that they had to be returned to the parties for correction.<sup>71</sup> But there were no reports of any major difficulties in securing compliance with the affirmative action requirements.

Less encouraging was the placement of women on the party lists. This is a crucial factor, since it is rare for a party to win enough votes to be able to seat its entire slate of candidates. The table below compares the percentages of women in specific positions on party lists in the first and second local government elections.

TABLE 15: 1992 (INCLUDING WALVIS BAY) – POSITION OF WOMEN CANDIDATES ON PARTY LISTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7+
34	48	55	55	52	71	61	24
8.5%	12.0%	13.8%	13.8%	13.0%	17.8%	15.3%	6.0%

TABLE 16: 1998 – POSITION OF WOMEN CANDIDATES ON PARTY LISTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7+
36	54	63	72	55	81	65	36
7.8%	11.7%	13.6%	15.6%	11.9%	17.5%	14.1%	7.8%

Despite the stated commitments of the major parties to give special attention to the placement of women candidates, the proportion of women candidates at positions 1 and 2 was actually *smaller* in the second local elections than in the first, with an increase in the proportion of women at position 4 and at the bottom of the larger lists.

The following table shows the position of women on party lists for each political party. SWAPO's highest percentages of women were in positions 6 and 4 (about 17% of its women in each of these positions), followed by an equal percentage of women at positions 2 and 7 (14%). The DTA also had the highest percentages of women in positions 4 (19%) and 6 (17%), with 15% at position 3 and 14% at position 5. However, SWAPO did better than the DTA at putting women near the top of the list – with almost 24% of its women candidates at either position 1 or 2, compared to only about 17% for the DTA. The UDF's highest concentration of women was in position 6, where 25% of all of its female candidates were placed.

<sup>71</sup> *The Namibian*, 20 November 1997.

TABLE 17: 1998 – PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN CANDIDATES IN EACH POSITION BY PARTY  
(C = Total Candidates; W = Women)

Party	C	W	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%	6	%	7	%	7+	%
DCN	36	16	2	12,5	2	12,5	1	6,3	3	18,8	1	6,3	1	6,3	3	18,8	3	18,8
DTA	329	156	10	6,4	16	10,3	24	15,4	30	19,2	22	14,1	27	17,3	21	13,5	6	3,9
SWANU	29	15	2	13,3	1	6,7	3	20,0	1	6,7	2	13,3	1	6,7	1	6,7	4	26,7
SWAPO	329	155	15	9,7	22	14,2	20	12,9	26	16,8	16	10,3	27	17,4	22	14,2	7	4,5
UDF	168	80	4	5,0	9	11,3	10	12,5	10	12,5	10	12,5	20	25,0	12	15,0	5	6,3
WRP	15	7	1	14,3	0	0,0	1	14,3	1	14,3	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	14,3	3	42,9
Assoc.	72	33	2	6,1	4	12,1	4	12,1	1	3,0	4	12,1	5	15,2	5	15,2	8	24,2

Both SWAPO and the DTA had stated commitments to the “zebra” concept of alternating male and female candidates. These were not strictly followed in practice, however. Interviews with party officials indicate that this failure can be attributed in part to the desire not to intervene in local decision-making processes. SWAPO submitted complete “zebra” lists in 9 out of the 45 locations contested, as well as 10 other lists which substantially followed the “zebra” format – which can be expressed as a 42% adherence to the “zebra”-list goal. In contrast, DTA submitted only 2 complete “zebra” lists out of its 45, and 7 other lists which substantially followed the zebra format, for a rating of only 20%. It appears that neither party insisted that local party structures follow the stated goal of the head offices on this point, although SWAPO was far more successful than the DTA in putting its “zebra”-list policy into practice.

TABLE 18: ZEBRA-LIST PRESENTATION BY SWAPO

Complete zebra lists	Zebra first 6 names	Zebra first 5 names
Henties Bay	Walvis Bay	Gobabis
Outjo	Gibeon	Karasburg
Tsumeb		Berseba
Eenhana		Stampriet
Rundu		Tses
Aranos		Uis
Bethanie		
Leonardville		
Witvlei		
Total 9	2	6

NOTE: The 10-person list for Swakopmund was zebra-style for the first 7 names, and the 7-person Oshakati list for positions 2-7.

TABLE 19: ZEBRA-LIST PRESENTATION BY DTA

Complete zebra lists	Zebra first 6 names	Zebra first 5 names
Eenhana	Koës	Lüderitz
Leonardville		
Total 2	1	1

NOTE: The 7-person lists for Tsumeb, Oshakati and Ongwediva were zebra-style for positions 2-7, Ondangwa positions 2-5 and Gochas positions 3-7.

A comparison of DTA and SWAPO results shows how a greater adherence to the “zebra”-style approach might have helped women. There were 7 councils where no women took seats amongst the DTA representatives, with 5 of these involving at least 2 seats (Maltahöhe, Mariental, Otjiwarongo, Katima Mulilo and Okahandja). In contrast, there was only 1 council on which SWAPO won more than 1 seat without placing a woman (Koës).

## Voter turn-out

The turn-out for the 1998 elections was much lower than that in 1992, with only about 33% of registered voters taking part, as compared to 82% of registered voters in 1992.

There were 156 795 registered voters for the 1992 local election. However, the number of registered voters in those locations where elections actually took place was 156 663. A total of 128 983 persons cast their ballots (82,3% of the registered voters), of which 1 879 (1,5%) were rejected.<sup>72</sup>

The 1994 local elections in Walvis Bay followed a similar pattern, with a total of 9 666 registered voters and 7 943 votes cast (82,2%), of which 113 (1,2%) were rejected.

Thus, for all of the first local elections taken together, there was a total of 166 329 registered voters in the constituencies where elections took place. A total of 136 926 (82,3%) of these registered voters cast their ballots, of which a total of 1 992 (1,2%) were rejected.

In 1998, the total number of registered voters in local authority constituencies where elections took place was 188 302. A total of 63 545 votes were cast (34%), of which 657 (1%) were rejected.

TABLE 20: COMPARISON OF VOTER PARTICIPATION

	Registered voters	Votes cast	%	Votes rejected	%	Votes counted	%
1992	156 663	128 983	82,0	1 879	1,5	127 104	98,5
1994 (Walvis Bay)	9 666	7 943	82,0	113	1,4	7 830	98,6
1998	188 302	63 545	34,0	657	1,0	62 888	99,0

The number of registered voters increased by only 21 923 between the first local elections (including Walvis Bay) and the second local elections. This can be partly accounted for by the fact that local elections took place in fewer areas in 1998. However, most of the local authorities that were deproclaimed were villages with relatively small voter populations. (The number of registered voters in 1994 in the local authorities that were deproclaimed prior to the 1998 elections totalled 2 178.)

Many observers believe that the level of apathy is higher than the percentages indicate, asserting that young people who have turned 18 since the previous elections did not even bother to register. However, a rough extrapolation based on the census figures suggests that some 25 000 to 30 000 new voters could have been expected to register to vote in local elections by 1998.<sup>73</sup> And, in fact, there were an additional 31 639 registered voters in 1998 over those who registered for local elections in 1992. This is not a conclusive calculation by any means, but the registration figures are not blatantly inconsistent with the expected increases from new voters.

But there was a significant decrease in the proportion of registered voters who cast their votes in 1998, from 82% to 34%. This also represents a sharp decrease in the actual number of votes cast – 136 916 in the first elections (including Walvis Bay) as compared to 63 545 in the second local elections in 1998. In other words, there were fewer than half the number of ballots cast in the second elections than in the first.

The low turn-out was not a surprise. Party officials interviewed prior to the election spoke about the apathy of the electorate, and political meetings and rallies were poorly attended in many locations, in comparison with previous years.

<sup>72</sup> These figures are based on the figures in Government Gazettes 547 and 601, after allowing for corrections made by the Electoral Commission. See the previous LAC report on affirmative action at page 9, note 30.

<sup>73</sup> The 1991 Census reports that there were 139 627 persons aged 15-19, and 160 151 aged 10-14 throughout the country at that date. Although these categories do not provide a perfect fit with voting age, one can roughly estimate that there were some 140 000 persons who reached the age of 18 between the first and second elections – not all of whom would live in local authority areas. Looking at all adults who were of voting age as of 1991, we can see that about 25% of these registered to vote in local authorities where elections were held in 1992. If the same percentage is applicable to those young people who reached 18 by 1998, one could expect about 35 000 new voters to register. Allowing for the fact that there were fewer local elections in 1998, and for the fact that there are fewer youngsters in urban areas than in rural ones, one can with some safety assume that 25 000 to 30 000 young people might have been expected to register to vote between 1992 and 1998.

Several SWAPO party officials expressed the view that the youth have become discouraged because of social problems such as unemployment and the lack of effective action by youth organisations.

A DTA party official had the theory that there was a political message behind some of the abstinence, in the sense that some disaffected SWAPO and DTA supporters chose not to vote rather than to change their allegiances. A former DTA parliamentarian, Mr Erik-Hans Staby, offered another theory, suggesting that the vast differences in support between the parties, such as the DTA and SWAPO, was responsible. He explained that a SWAPO member would not bother to vote because of the certainty that SWAPO had a sufficiently big edge over the opposition to be ensured of a majority anyhow. On the other hand, a DTA member may have seen the party as lagging too far behind to be worth a vote.<sup>74</sup>

UDF leader Justus Garoeb blamed the low turn-out on the slow process of taking democracy to the people, the government's failure to raise the general standard of living, and the decision to have the election on a party list system rather than a ward system.<sup>75</sup>

Other reasons put forward for voter apathy include the frustration stemming from political promises that are not kept, and the increasing gap between the expectations of the electorate and the realities of daily life. One resident of northern Namibia told a journalist that voting was not worth the effort because *"you just elect somebody to power so that they can feed themselves and their families"*.<sup>76</sup>

Several of those interviewed thought that the introduction of the ward system might awaken more political interest, because it will make counsellors more directly accountable to their constituencies. A few interviewees thought that people who had been looking forward to the introduction of the ward system for the second local elections may have decided not to vote when this expectation was disappointed.

A representative of a residents association suggested that decentralisation might awaken more political interest in regional and local politics in future, as these councils get more powers.

Another possible explanation for the low number of voters is confusion about the registration and voting procedure. Voters who were registered for the 1992 local elections did not have to re-register unless they had changed their place of residence. There was a substantial amount of public confusion about this point, however, despite the use of radio, video and print media for educational purposes. One source of the misunderstanding may have been the extension of the party list system to the second election. If the ward system had applied, as originally planned, there would have been a total re-registration of all voters in local authorities in order to match voters with the new wards. Party officials also complained that the voter registration points were not well-advertised in some locations.

There was also some confusion regarding the registration cards which had to be presented at the polling place. The regional and local cards were identical in appearance, which may have made it difficult for illiterate voters to tell them apart. Several political parties complained about this. Unfortunately, it is not possible to gauge the impact of this problem, as no statistics were collected on the number of otherwise eligible voters who were turned away because they had brought the wrong card.

The Director of Elections, Gerhard Töttemeyer, also suggested that some problems may have stemmed from the fact that an estimated 20% of voters had moved from one town to another since the first elections took place, but had failed to change their addresses as required.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Interview in *New Era*, 29 September to 2 October 1997.

<sup>75</sup> Interview in *The Namibian*, 19 February 1997.

<sup>76</sup> Interview in *The Namibian*, 17 February 1998.

<sup>77</sup> *The Namibian*, 18 February 1998.

## Election results

SWAPO won majorities in 25 councils, the DTA in 9, the UDF in 1 (Uis), and residents associations in 2 (ousting SWAPO in Otavi and the DTA in Rehoboth). There were 8 split councils in which no party controls a majority of the seats – Gobabis, Kamanjab, Keetmanshoop, Khorixas, Omaruru, Outjo, Usakos, and Witvlei.

As a point of comparison, the first local elections (including Walvis Bay) resulted in SWAPO majorities in 31 councils, the DTA in 9, and the UDF in 2 (Khorixas and Uis). If the three local authorities for which only one party nominated candidates are taken into account, SWAPO controlled 33 councils, the DTA 11 and the UDF 2. There were 6 split councils (Karasburg, Keetmanshoop, Outjo, Tses, Usakos and Witvlei). (See Tables 21 and 22 on the following pages.)

The comparative levels of SWAPO and DTA support remained fairly constant. Of the 9 local authorities which were deproclaimed after the 1992 elections, 4 had been controlled by the DTA and 5 by SWAPO.

SWAPO lost control of both Henties Bay and Opuwo to the DTA. It lost one seat in Ongwediva to the DTA, nevertheless retaining a strong 6-seat majority. It also lost one seat to the DTA in Stampriet but retained control of the council. In Tses, it lost one seat to the DTA, which was enough to give the DTA control of this previously-split council.

SWAPO suffered heavier losses due to the influence of new participants, however, even though the DTA also lost ground to newcomers. SWAPO lost control of Gobabis, where the Gobabis Residents Association appears to have taken enough support away from both SWAPO and the DTA to win three seats. In Omaruru, support for the UDF and the Omaruru Residents Association was sufficient to cause SWAPO to lose control of the council (while also taking one seat away from the DTA). Similarly, in Otavi, SWAPO and the DTA both lost two seats because of support that went to the Otavi Residents Association, which took control of the council from SWAPO. In Rehoboth, the Rehoboth Ratepayers Association took two seats away from SWAPO in addition to winning two seats and control of the council from the DTA. SWAPO also lost control of Kamanjab where the UDF won 3 seats and produced a split council.

On the plus side, SWAPO wrested control of Katima Mulilo from the DTA. SWAPO support also strengthened in Koës, Leonardville, Rundu and Tsumeb, taking additional seats from the DTA in all of these areas – as well as in Karabib, where it took one seat from the UDF. SWAPO furthermore won control of two towns which were proclaimed after the first elections (Eenhana and Uutapi).

The DTA lost control of Rehoboth to the Rehoboth Ratepayers Association, and saw Katima Mulilo swing over to SWAPO. It retained control of Kalkrand over SWAPO by only 2 votes. It also lost seats to SWAPO in Koës, Leonardville, Rundu and Tsumeb, to the UDF in Usakos, Omaruru and Witvlei, and to residents associations in Omaruru and Otavi. The DTA also lost support in Windhoek, where its seats decreased by one whilst the council size increased from 12 to 15.

On the other hand, the DTA took control of two areas previously controlled by SWAPO (Henties Bay and Opuwo) and two previously split councils (Karasburg and Tses). It took seats from SWAPO in Ongwediva, Stampriet and Tses.

The UDF maintained its majority in Uis and won enough seats to take Kamanjab out of SWAPO control, whilst losing control of Khorixas because of an increase in SWAPO support.

The DCN took only one seat in Opuwo and one in Outjo, apparently taking support away from SWAPO in Opuwo and from the UDF in Outjo.

SWANU did not win any seats in the 3 local authority areas where it participated.

TABLE 21: 1992 – ELECTION RESULTS

(Bold text indicates localities excluded in the 1998 local elections; bold figures indicate domination of a party in the relevant town council.)

	Total registered voters	Total votes cast	Spoilt ballots	DTA	SWAPO	SWANU	UDF	NPF	WRP	Assoc.
Arandis	1 433	1 246	5	52(0)	<b>1 053(6)</b>	14(0)	122(1)	–	–	–
Aranos	1 191	1 050	24	<b>811(4)</b>	415(3)	–	–	–	–	–
Ariamsvlei	144	122	4	48(3)	<b>70(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Aus	337	300	14	130(3)	<b>170(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Berseba	667	599	10	234(3)	<b>355(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Bethanie	776	776	22	327(3)	<b>427(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Gibeon	1 511	1 192	14	483(3)	<b>635(4)</b>	–	60(0)	–	–	–
Gobabis	2 909	2 703	32	1 178(3)	<b>1 398(4)</b>	51(0)	44(0)	–	–	–
Gochas	440	412	14	153(3)	<b>245(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Grootfontein	4 917	4 386	46	1 392(2)	<b>2 732(5)</b>	–	216(0)	–	–	–
Grünau	191	191	4	92(3)	<b>95(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Henties Bay	1 079	668	1	302(3)	<b>365(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Kalkfeld	504	391	12	<b>2 45(4)</b>	91(2)	–	43(1)	–	–	–
Kalkrand	502	456	15	<b>293(5)</b>	148(2)	–	–	–	–	–
Kamanjab	299	192	12	52(2)	<b>128(5)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Karasburg	1 699	1 585	30	629(3)	757(3)	–	169(1)	–	–	–
Karibib	2 423	1 470	26	222(1)	<b>919(4)</b>	–	303(2)	–	–	–
Katima Mulilo	2 395	1 880	11	<b>964(4)</b>	854(3)	–	19(0)	32(0)	–	–
Keetmanshoop	5 921	5 212	52	2 276(3)	2 423(3)	169(0)	292(1)	–	–	–
Khorixas	3 079	2 307	19	349(1)	547(2)	–	<b>1 392(4)</b>	–	–	–
Koës	485	402	5	268(5)	89(1)	40(1)	–	–	–	–
Leonardville	414	270	1	63(2)	206(5)	–	–	–	–	–
Lüderitz	3 732	3 329	44	659(1)	<b>2 626(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Maltahöhe	987	888	18	168(1)	<b>702(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Mariental	3 446	3 040	53	1 181(3)	<b>1 579(4)</b>	–	129(0)	–	–	LCAM-98(0)
Noordoewer	257	192	8	30(1)	<b>154(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Okahandja	3 852	3 559	48	1 207(3)	<b>1 954(4)</b>	–	301(0)	49(0)	–	–
Okakarara	1 667	1 317	12	<b>949(5)</b>	295(2)	61(0)	–	–	–	–
Omaruru	3 002	1 652	23	668(3)	<b>9 61(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Ondangwa	1 349	1 158	17	179(1)	<b>962(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Ongwediva	2 052	1 868	15	97(0)	<b>1 756(7)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Opuwo	1 506	1 416	100	575(3)	<b>703(4)</b>	38(0)	–	–	–	–
Oshakati	5 906	4 870	31	372(1)	<b>4 467(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Otavi	1 990	1 750	57	400(2)	<b>1 140(5)</b>	–	153(0)	–	–	–
Otiwarongo	5 770	5 059	54	1 549(2)	<b>2 466(4)</b>	102(0)	888(1)	–	–	–
Outjo	1 792	1 615	24	423(2)	752(3)	–	416(2)	–	–	–
Rehoboth	6 807	4 918	106	<b>2 702(4)</b>	1 817(3)	293(0)	–	–	–	–
Rundu	6 594	5 747	159	1 354(2)	<b>4 234(5)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Stampriet	355	334	17	95(2)	<b>222(5)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Swakopmund	10 334	6 904	90	1 750(2)	<b>4 079(4)</b>	388(0)	–	–	–	SRA-597(1)
Tses	402	349	14	158(3)	148(3)	–	29(1)	–	–	–
Tsumeb	6 966	6 050	108	1 196(2)	<b>4 367(5)</b>	38(0)	341(0)	–	–	–
Uis	830	531	6	46(1)	77(1)	–	402(5)	–	–	–
Usakos	1 912	1 261	18	307(2)	529(3)	–	407(2)	–	–	–
Witvlei	280	236	1	96(3)	112(3)	–	27(1)	–	–	–
Warmbad	32	32	0	<b>19(4)</b>	13(3)	–	–	–	–	–
Windhoek	50 941	42 566	490	15420(4)	<b>23 316(7)</b>	684(0)	1 720(1)	–	115(0)	LCA-821(0)
Aris	0	0	0	Unco(7)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kappsfarm	57	0	0	Unco(7)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Omitara	73	0	0	–	Unco(7)	–	–	–	–	–
Walvis Bay '94	9 666	7 943	113	1 157(2)	<b>6 072(8)</b>	–	305(0)	–	–	YWRA-296(0)
Aroab	583	518	3	<b>315(4)</b>	183(3)	17(0)	–	–	–	–

NOTE: "Unco" refers to uncontested elections, where only one party submitted a list of candidates.

TABLE 22: 1998 – ELECTION RESULTS

(Bold text indicates localities excluded in the 1992 local elections; bold figures indicate domination of a party in the relevant town council.)

	Total registered voters	Total votes cast	Spoiled ballots	DTA	SWAPO	DCN	UDF	SWANU	WRP	Assoc.
Arandis	1 532	548	3	18(0)	<b>443(6)</b>	–	84(1)	–	–	–
Aranos	1 325	553	8	<b>283(4)</b>	262(3)	–	–	–	–	–
Aroab	701	358	10	<b>211(4)</b>	137(3)	–	–	–	–	–
Berseba	759	359	4	138(3)	<b>217(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Bethanie	978	299	1	111(3)	<b>187(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Eenhana	622	337	0	10(0)	<b>327(7)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Gibeon	1 639	522	10	219(3)	<b>293(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Gobabis	4 557	2 015	19	364(1)	925(3)	–	52(0)	–	–	GRA-655(3)
Gochas	513	252	3	118(3)	<b>131(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Grootfontein	5 252	1 357	13	389(2)	<b>870(5)</b>	–	85(0)	–	–	–
Henties Bay	1 506	1 058	12	<b>565(4)</b>	346(2)	–	135(1)	–	–	–
Kalkrand	615	271	7	<b>133(4)</b>	131(3)	–	–	–	–	–
Kamanjab	440	239	0	67(2)	70(2)	–	102(3)	–	–	–
Karasburg	2 018	548	6	<b>284(4)</b>	258(3)	–	–	–	–	–
Karibib	2 212	708	1	96(1)	<b>460(5)</b>	–	151(1)	–	–	–
Katima Mulilo	5 090	2 215	23	766(2)	<b>1 426(5)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Keetmanshoop	6 918	1 645	16	668(3)	718(3)	–	92(0)	–	–	CPOK-151(1)
Khorixas	3 505	1 404	15	187(1)	406(3)	–	796(3)	–	–	–
Koës	433	302	9	<b>173(4)</b>	120(3)	–	–	–	–	–
Leonardville	405	227	6	41(1)	<b>180(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Lüderitz	4 416	1 680	21	1 323(1)	<b>336(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Maltahöhe	1 034	357	11	100(2)	<b>246(5)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Mariental	3 758	1 381	13	524(3)	<b>796(4)</b>	–	48(0)	–	–	–
Okahandja	4 875	1 656	19	436(2)	<b>817(4)</b>	–	105(0)	–	–	ORPA-279(1)
Okakarara	2 138	947	5	<b>739(6)</b>	1 67(1)	26(0)	–	10(0)	–	–
Omaruru	2 636	1 025	3	280(2)	310(2)	–	326(2)	–	–	ORA-106(1)
Ondangwa	2 814	886	15	98(1)	<b>773(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Ongwediva	3 035	876	12	1 07(1)	<b>757(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Opuwo	1 993	723	4	<b>369(4)</b>	260(2)	69(1)	–	21(0)	–	–
Oshakati	6 795	1 565	20	241(1)	<b>1 304(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Otavi	2 178	891	6	70(0)	<b>339(3)</b>	–	23(0)	–	–	ORA-453(4)
Otiwarongo	6 127	1 752	15	472(2)	<b>983(4)</b>	–	282(1)	–	–	–
Outjo	2 497	1 007	5	305(2)	419(3)	79(1)	199(1)	–	–	–
Rehoboth	9 166	3 343	71	783(2)	730(1)	–	–	–	–	RPA-1759(4)
Rundu	7 564	2 059	16	367(1)	<b>1 676(6)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Stampriet	451	215	8	77(3)	<b>130(4)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Swakopmund	9 061	3 784	51	644(2)	<b>2 152(6)</b>	–	383(1)	–	–	SRA-554(1)
Tses	593	245	1	<b>148(4)</b>	70(2)	–	26(1)	–	–	–
Tsumeb	?	1 772	18	243(1)	<b>1 391(6)</b>	–	120(0)	–	–	–
Uis	763	341	1	62(1)	59(1)	–	219(5)	–	–	–
Usakos	1 653	619	5	102(1)	273(3)	–	239(3)	–	–	–
Uutapi	370	154	1	3(0)	<b>150(7)</b>	–	–	–	–	–
Walvis Bay	10099	4 095	37	631(2)	<b>3 264(8)</b>	–	<b>163(0)</b>	–	–	–
Windhoek	55625	16743	127	2 996(3)	<b>11586(11)</b>	158(0)	492(0)	111(0)	63(0)	LCA-1210(1)
Witvlei	383	212	6	65(2)	<b>72(3)</b>	–	69(2)	–	–	–

Every residents association that participated in the elections won at least one seat. Nationwide, residents associations won 16 out of 328 seats (about 5%), and 5 167 out of 62 888 votes counted (just over 8%). They appear to have drawn support from both SWAPO and the DTA, although SWAPO suffered more heavily, losing control of three councils because of the influence of residents associations as compared to the loss of one council on this basis by the DTA.

TABLE 23: 1998 – PARTY SUPPORT

	Total votes		Total votes		Total seats		Total seats	
	1992	%	1998	%	1992	%	1998	%
<b>(A) Parties and associations</b>								
SWAPO	73 736	58,0	36 967	58,8	196	55,4	187	57,0
DTA	42 278	33,3	16 026	25,5	134	37,9	98	29,9
UDF	7 473	5,9	4 191	6,7	22	6,2	25	7,6
DCN	–	–	332	0,5	–	–	2	0,6
SWANU	1 895	1,5	142	0,2	1	0,28	0	0,0
WRP	115	0,09	63	0,1	0	0,00	0	0,0
NPF	81	0,06	–	–	0	–	–	–
Associations	1 614	1,27	5 167	11,84	1	0,28	16	4,8
Total	127 094	100	62 888	100	354	100	328	100
<b>(B) Votes received by individual associations</b>								
CPO-Keetmanshoop	–	–	151	2,4	–	–	1	0,3
GRA-Gobabis	–	–	655	1,04	–	–	3	0,9
LCA-Windhoek	821	0,7	1 210	1,9	0	–	1	0,3
ORPA-Okahandja	–	–	279	0,4	–	–	1	0,3
ORA-Omaruru	–	–	106	1,7	–	–	1	0,3
ORA-Otavi	–	–	453	0,7	–	–	4	1,2
RRPA-Rehoboth	–	–	1 759	2,8	–	–	4	1,2
SRA-Swakopmund	597	0,5	554	0,9	1	0,28	1	0,3
LCA-Mariental	98	0,07	–	–	0	0,00	–	–
Total	1 614	1,27	5 167	11,84	1	0,28	16	4,8

Source: Government Gazettes

The impact of the residents associations is most visible if their performance in individual areas is considered. For example, the Otavi Residents Association won four seats, compared to SWAPO's three. The Rehoboth Ratepayers Association won four seats, compared to two for the DTA and one for SWAPO. The Gobabis Resident's Association won three seats, compared to three for SWAPO and one for the DTA. The Concerned People's Organisation Keetmanshoop and the Omaruru Residents Association each hold a crucial seat on their respective councils, with the remaining six seats being shared equally between SWAPO and the DTA in each case. The Swakopmund Residents Association received a smaller number of votes than in 1992, but managed to retain their single seat on the council. In Windhoek, the Local Community Association won one seat on the council, even though it only decided to participate in the election at a very late stage.<sup>78</sup>

## Performance of women candidates

A total of 136 women were among the 329 persons who actually took seats in the 1998 local elections, which constitutes about 41,3% as compared to the showing of 32% in the first local elections (including Walvis Bay).<sup>79</sup> (See Table 24.)

SWAPO seated the highest percentage of women (47,3%), followed by the DTA at 35,7% and the UDF at 32%. Despite the strong performance of the residents associations in gaining seats, they did not succeed in placing many women on local councils. Of the 16 seats won nationwide by residents associations, only 4 (25%) of them were filled by women.

There are now 11 local authorities in which women hold a majority of the seats: Aroab, Berseba, Eenhana, Gibeon, Gochas, Henties Bay, Lüderitz, Ongwediva, Stampriet, Tses and Windhoek. Women comprise half of the Walvis Bay Council of 10 seats. This is an improvement over the results of the

<sup>78</sup> *The Namibian*, 18 February 1998.

<sup>79</sup> A report in *The Namibian* of 19 February states that women won 131 seats. The figures in this study, based on the official statistics published in the Government Gazettes, show women winning 136 seats.

first local elections, where women took a majority of seats in only 4 local authorities: Kalkrand, Koës, Warmbad and Witvlei.

TABLE 24: 1998 – WOMEN ON LOCAL COUNCILS BY PARTY

Party	Total councillors	Women councillors	%
<i>[A] First local authority elections (including Walvis Bay)</i>			
DTA	140	44	31.4
NPF	0	0	0.0
SWANU	1	1	100.0
SWAPO	207	71	34.3
UDF	23	3	13.0
WRP	0	0	0.0
Associations	1	0	0.0
Total	370	119	32.2
<i>[B] Second local authority elections</i>			
DCN	2	0	0.0
DTA	98	35	35.7
SWAPO	188	89	47.3
UDF	25	8	32.0
Associations	16	4	25.0
Total	329	136	41.3

TABLE 25: 1998 – LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH A MAJORITY OF WOMEN COUNCILLORS

Place	Total seats	Number of women	Party represented	%
Gochas	7	6	DTA (2), SWAPO (4)	86
Berseba	7	5	DTA (3), SWAPO (2)	71
Gibeon	7	5	DTA (3), SWAPO (2)	71
Tses	7	4	DTA (2), SWAPO (1), UDF (1)	57
Aroab	7	4	DTA (2), SWAPO (2)	57
Eenhana	7	4	SWAPO (4)	57
Henties Bay	7	4	DTA (2), SWAPO (1), UDF (1)	57
Lüderitz	7	4	SWAPO (4)	57
Ongwediva	7	4	SWAPO (4)	57
Stampriet	7	4	DTA (2), SWAPO (2)	57
Windhoek	15	9	DTA (2), SWAPO (6), LCA (1)	60

There is no local authority council without any women amongst its members. The lowest level of female representation is in Karabib and Otjiwarongo, where only 1 out of the 7 council members is a woman. There are six councils with only 2 women amongst their 7 members: Kalkrand, Mariental, Opuwo, Katima Mulilo, Koës and Okakarara. (Interestingly, 2 of these local authorities with particularly low female representation, Kalkrand and Koës, had female majorities prior to the second election.)

These results show a healthy mix. For example, female representation is strong in some small villages as well as in Namibia's two largest municipalities. Local authorities dominated by women can be found in the north, south, east and west. And two of the places with the strongest female presence in 1992 are amongst the weakest for women in 1998. The outcomes seem to be based more on the luck of the draw (the combination of the number of votes for a particular party and the position of women on that party list) than on any patterns tied to party or location.

When the results are analysed by region, there is also a fairly random spread of results. Women are particularly well-represented on councils in Ohangwena, Khomas, Hardap and Karas. The numbers of women councillors are comparatively low in Oshana, Caprivi, Otjozondjupa and Omaheke. The performance of women in the other five regions is closer to the national average.

TABLE 26: 1998 – WOMEN ON LOCAL COUNCILS BY REGION  
(S = Number of seats; W = Number of women)

Region	DCN			DTA			SWAPO			UDF			Associations			Total		
	S	W	%	S	W	%	S	W	%	S	W	%	S	W	%	S	W	%
Ohangwena	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	7	4	57,1	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	7	4	57,1
Omusati	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	7	3	42,9	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	7	3	42,9
Oshana	0	0	0,0	3	0	0,0	18	10	55,6	7	2	28,6	0	0	0,0	28	12	42,9
Kunene	2	0	0,0	9	2	22,2	10	3	30,0	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	21	5	23,8
Oshikoto	0	0	0,0	1	0	0,0	6	3	50,0	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	7	3	42,9
Okavango	0	0	0,0	1	0	0,0	6	3	50,0	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	7	3	42,9
Caprivi	0	0	0,0	2	0	0,0	5	2	40,0	0	0	0,0	0	0	0,0	7	2	28,6
Otjozondjupa	0	0	0,0	12	2	16,7	17	6	35,3	1	0	0,0	5	1	20,0	35	9	25,7
Omaheke	0	0	0,0	4	0	0,0	12	5	41,7	2	0	0,0	3	1	33,3	21	6	28,6
Erongo	0	0	0,0	13	4	30,8	33	14	42,4	14	4	28,6	2	1	50,0	62	23	37,1
Khomas	0	0	0,0	3	2	66,7	11	6	54,5	0	0	0,0	1	1	100,0	15	9	60,0
Hardap	0	0	0,0	24	12	50,0	28	15	53,6	0	0	0,0	4	1	25,0	56	28	50,0
Karas	0	0	0,0	26	13	50,0	28	15	53,6	1	1	100,0	1	0	0,0	56	29	51,8
Total	2	0	0,0	98	35	35,7	188	89	47,3	25	8	32,0	16	4	25,0	329	136	41,0

There were 11 councils in which women who served as councillors after the first elections took seats again as a result of the second elections, with a total of 18 women entering their second term of office. This is a low proportion, constituting only some 13% of the total number of women councillors. Thus, the affirmative action provisions have not served to help individual women get political experience – although it is possible that women who were local authority councillors in the past have moved on to other posts where their political experience is relevant.

TABLE 27: 1998 – LOCAL AUTHORITIES WHERE WOMEN ARE IN SECOND TERM OF OFFICE

Place	Type of council	Number of women re-elected
Arandis	Town	2
Khorixas	Town	1
Maltahöhe	Village	3
Okakarara	Town	1
Ondangwa	Town	2
Ongwediva	Town	2
Otiwarongo	Municipality	1
Outjo	Municipality	1
Tsumeb	Municipality	1
Witvlei	Village	1
Windhoek	Municipality	3
Total 11	11	18

## WOMEN IN OTHER KEY GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

The number of women in local authority councils continues to outweigh women's participation in other key government posts by far. As the following table shows, women have not made many strides in penetrating Parliament, Cabinet or the judiciary. However, since the first elections, a woman has been appointed to the prominent post of "Ombudsman". It is also noteworthy that the Executive Committee of the Association for Local Authorities of Namibia, which previously had one woman amongst its five members, now has a majority of 3 women including a female president.<sup>80</sup> (See Table 28.)

The second regional elections were still to come as this report was being finalised. So the percentage of women in regional councils at the time of writing remained at 3 women out of 95 regional council

<sup>80</sup> See *The Namibian*, 8 May 1998.

seats (3%), with only 1 woman on the 26-member National Council which is drawn from the regional councils (4% female representation).

TABLE 28: WOMEN IN KEY GOVERNMENT POSTS

Year	Ministers	Deputy ministers	National Council	National Assembly	Judiciary
1995	2 out of 20 – 10,0%	3 out of 20 – 15,0%	1 out of 26 – 3,9%	15 out of 78 – 19,2%	0 out of 7 – 0,0%
1998	3 out of 20 – 15,0%	2 out of 20 – 10,0%	1 out of 26 – 3,9%	15 out of 76 – 19,0%	1 out of 10 – 10,0%

\* Two ministerial seats are currently vacant.

\* List of sources: *Namibian Parliamentary Directory 1996/97*; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Information from the High Court.

The interviews conducted for the present study indicate a higher level of awareness of the need to include women in decision-making posts. "Gender balance" appears to be well on the way to being accepted as a goal in its own right. Nevertheless, Namibia is making slow progress in increasing the numbers of women in key government posts at national and regional levels.

Women are beginning to recognise the need to mobilise to strengthen their position as women. For example, in 1996, women in Parliament united across party lines to form the Women's Caucus, which aims to increase women's influence in Parliament.<sup>81</sup> In 1998, about 100 women gathered under the banner of the Namibia Elected Women Forum to develop strategies for increasing the numbers of women on regional councils in the forthcoming elections.<sup>82</sup> Women are thus recognising the need to take positive steps to increase their presence and power in national and regional politics.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Some people interviewed thought that affirmative action in local government was still necessary for the second local elections. For example, one prominent SWAPO official expressed the opinion that women would not have fared well under the ward system, because of continuing male domination in public life, particularly in the rural areas. A woman on the SWAPO party list for Windhoek stated that the people still need education on the capacities of women, because women are not confident in themselves, and because men do not recognise women's abilities.

A woman candidate for the UDF thought that affirmative action was important as a way to help break through current stereotypes about men and women, but that women in the younger generations would have an easier time following in the footsteps of women leaders. On the other hand, she was also concerned that women were sometimes put on party lists simply as names and numbers, "just there on the paper", without a genuine acknowledgement of the skills and opinions of the individual women in question.

A DTA official stated that the affirmative action provision was no longer necessary, claiming that the DTA would have made 50% of its candidates women in any event. The DTA also took the stance, inside and outside of Parliament, that if there was affirmative action it should be 50-50, and at all levels, not just at the local level.

One member of the Swakopmund Residents Association noted that "*people are becoming more aware of women and of what they can do*", pointing out that the group's local nomination process produced a list of half men and half women naturally, without the application of any rules regarding affirmative action. Another complained that gender balance should not be forced upon parties by law, since there may be only a few women who are interested or experienced and a number of capable men.

<sup>81</sup> See the *Namibian Parliamentary Directory 1996/97* published by New Namibia Books at 93.

<sup>82</sup> *The Namibian*, 19 June 1998.

One female candidate for a residents association stated that she viewed affirmative action as an insult. *"I want to be elected on merits for my experience and for my knowledge and for what I can do",* she said, *"I don't want to be on the list because I'm a woman."* In contrast, a woman who serves as Deputy Mayor of Walvis Bay said, *"I am sure that affirmative action was instrumental in my becoming deputy mayor. I don't feel apologetic about that. The only thing to be sorry for would be if I hadn't done justice to the opportunity I was given."*<sup>83</sup>

Thus, disagreement centres primarily on whether women are able to make their way into local government without the assistance of affirmative action provisions, or whether discrimination against women is so persistent that they will continue to be overlooked in the absence of such requirements.

## "DE-POLITICISATION" OF LOCAL POLITICS

One analysis of the election based on extensive interviews with party officials noted that most of the candidates nominated for SWAPO party lists were people who were known as long-term SWAPO members, rather than people with a proven record in local affairs. In fact, one of SWAPO's internal criteria for local candidates was that they must have been party members for at least 5 years. Thus, it had been asserted that the local government elections were mechanisms for cementing support for the party rather than key platforms for local issues.<sup>84</sup>

This sentiment was also encapsulated in the statement of a high-ranking SWAPO party official that candidates are accountable to the party first and to the electorate second. A similar view was put forward by a prominent DTA official, who felt that DTA councillors were more loyal to the party than to the people they actually represented, and by a UDF candidate, who similarly emphasised party loyalty. Voters were likely to have more information about the party than the candidates in any event, as few political parties published photographs or profiles of the individuals on their party lists (possibly because of cost constraints). Some persons interviewed speculated that many people have no idea who is actually representing the party they voted for on the local authority council.

Representatives of residents associations perceived their groups as being less "political" and more directly accountable to the electorate, although political party representatives did not tend to share this view. The impact of groups which are not political parties is likely to continue to be significant at the local level, in view of their increased participation and positive performance in 1998.

Several persons interviewed thought that local government should be less politicised. As one DTA official put it, *"it's a pity that municipal elections have become political elections, because really municipal affairs are things that you and me feel on our bodies. It's about water and electricity, it's about good lighting in streets, it's about the roads that must be cleaned ... it's not political things."*

The introduction of the ward system for the next local elections may the effect of focusing attention away from the political parties or local organisations towards the personal responsibility of individual candidates. It is also possible that the current moves towards government decentralisation may affect perceptions of local government.

Since women are still under-represented in party political structures, the "de-politicisation" of local government might facilitate their continued presence on local authority councils in the next local elections. Such a development might also encourage those who believe that women are not suited for "politics" to support women at the local level under the ward system.

<sup>83</sup> *The Namibian*, 8 May 1998.

<sup>84</sup> Iina Soiri, *"Why the Local Authority Elections in Namibia Were Postponed"*, University of Helsinki, Institute of Development Studies, Working Paper 1/98, 1998 at 7-8.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

**Extension of party list system:** The second local government elections were originally intended to take place in terms of a ward system, without any affirmative action for women. But the party list system was extended to the second local elections by an amendment which also strengthened affirmative action for women in respect of these elections. In terms of the amended provision, party lists for councils with 10 or fewer members must include at least 3 women, while lists for larger councils must include 5 women.

**Parliamentary debate on affirmative action:** There was considerable opposition to the extension of the affirmative action provision in Parliament, on the grounds that women would be elected on merit under the ward system. SWAPO members asserted that continued affirmative action was necessary to cement the concept of gender equality, while opposition members argued that the strengthened affirmative action provision was merely “window dressing” for a bill primarily motivated by SWAPO’s belief that it would win more support under a party list system.

**Number of local authorities:** The 1998 local elections involved 45 local authorities: 17 municipalities, 13 towns and 15 villages. This is fewer than in the first local elections, which ultimately involved 52 local authorities: 16 municipalities (including Walvis Bay), 12 towns and 24 villages.

**Number of seats:** All 45 local authority councils involved in the 1998 elections consisted of 7 seats, with three exceptions: Windhoek – 15 seats, Swakopmund – 10 seats, and Walvis Bay – 10 seats.

**Postponement of elections:** The second local government elections were initially scheduled for 2 December 1997. Technical flaws were discovered in the process for submitting party lists after SWAPO challenged the Electoral Commission’s decision not to accept its list of candidates for Rundu after the official deadline had passed. As a result, the second local elections were postponed to 17 February 1998. The extra time period led to the registration of 11 590 additional voters and 4 additional political parties/associations. Opinions concerning the impact of the postponement on the performance of particular parties were mixed.

**Contenders:** A total of 6 political parties and 8 associations participated in the 1998 elections, for a total of 14 contenders. In comparison, the first local elections (including Walvis Bay) involved 6 political parties and 4 associations, for a total of 10 contenders. The increase in participation by associations can arguably be seen as a reflection of the “de-politicisation” of local politics.

**Distribution of party participation:** The only parties that participated in the local elections on a national basis were the DTA and SWAPO. The UDF fielded candidates in about half of the local authority areas (22 out of 45). The DCN and SWANU registered in only a few locations, and the WRP and all eight local associations fielded candidates in only a single local authority. Thus, the majority of local contests were either two-way contests between the DTA and SWAPO, or three-way contests between the DTA, SWAPO and the UDF.

**Preparation of party lists:** All of the political parties seemed to perceive tensions between the desire to encourage affirmative action and the desire to allow unrestricted democratic selection of candidates for party lists at the local level. Efforts to allow local supporters to choose candidates for the party lists mitigated against the systematic inclusion of women candidates.

**Number of women candidates on party lists:** A total of 462 women were put forward, out of 978 candidates. This is equal to 47%, which represents a significant improvement over the 38% figure for the first local authority elections. It is also striking that virtually every party came close to the ideal of 50% representation of women on its party list, with SWANU slightly exceeding 50%. Only a few

party lists had to be returned to parties for failure to comply with the strengthened affirmative action provision, and no major difficulties with compliance were reported.

**Position of women candidates on party lists:** Despite the stated commitments of the major parties to give special attention to the placement of women candidates, the proportion of women at positions 1 and 2 was actually smaller than in the first local elections, with an increase in the proportion of women at position 4 and at the bottom of the smaller lists.

**"Zebra" lists:** Both SWAPO and the DTA made a public commitment to "zebra" lists of alternating male and female candidates. About 42% of SWAPO's party lists substantially followed the "zebra" format, as compared to a compliance rating of about 20% for the DTA. It appears that neither party insisted that local party structures follow the stated goal of the head offices on this point, although SWAPO was far more successful than the DTA in putting its "zebra"-list policy into practice. A comparison of DTA and SWAPO results shows how a greater adherence to the "zebra"-style approach might have helped women. There were 7 councils where no women took seats amongst the DTA representatives, with 5 of these involving at least 2 seats (Maltahöhe, Mariental, Otjiwarongo, Katima Mulilo and Okahandja). In contrast, there was only 1 council on which SWAPO won more than 1 seat without placing a woman (Koës).

**Voter turn-out:** The turn-out for the 1998 elections was much lower than that in 1992, with only about 33% of registered voters taking part, as compared to 82% of registered voters in 1992. Reasons put forward for the low turn-out included disillusionment stemming from persistent social problems such as unemployment and dissatisfaction with both major political parties and their leaders. Some voters may have been turned away because of confusion concerning the virtually identical local and regional voter registration cards, or because of their failure to re-register after moving from one local authority to another, although no statistics were kept on these problems. Some people suggested that the postponement of the ward system might have been a factor, speculating that more direct accountability of councillors to voters will re-awaken political interest. Increased powers for local councils following on the expected de-centralisation of government may also inspire greater interest in future.

**Election results:** SWAPO won majorities in 25 councils, the DTA in 9, the UDF in 1, and residents associations in 2. There were 8 split councils in which no party controls a majority of the seats. As a point of comparison, after the first local elections (including Walvis Bay), SWAPO controlled 33 councils, the DTA 11 and the UDF 2. There were 6 split councils. Keeping in mind the fact that 9 local authorities were de-proclaimed after the first elections (4 of which were controlled by the DTA and 5 by SWAPO), the comparative levels of SWAPO and DTA support remained fairly constant.

**Impact of residents associations:** Every residents association that participated in the elections won at least one seat. Nationwide, residents associations won 16 out of 328 seats (about 5%), and 5 167 out of 62 888 votes counted (just over 8%). They appear to have drawn support from both SWAPO and the DTA, although SWAPO suffered more heavily, losing control of three councils because of the influence of residents associations as compared to the loss of one council on this basis by the DTA.

**Performance of women candidates:** A total of 136 women were amongst the 329 persons who actually took seats in the 1998 local elections, which constitutes about 41,3% as compared to the showing of 32% in the first local elections (including Walvis Bay). SWAPO seated the highest percentage of women (47,3%), followed by the DTA at 35,7% and the UDF at 32%. Despite the strong performance of the residents associations in gaining seats, they did not succeed in placing many women on local councils. Of the 16 seats won nationwide by residents associations, only 4 (25%) of them were filled by women.

**Women on local authority councils:** There are now 11 local authorities in which women hold a majority of seats, as compared to only 4 after the first elections. There is no local authority council without any women amongst its members. There are 2 councils with only 1 woman out of 7 members,

and 2 councils with only 2 women out of 7 members. The performance of women does not seem to fall into any patterns on the basis of region or on the basis of the size of the local authority.

**Women re-elected:** A total of only 18 women on 11 councils are serving their second term of office. This is a low proportion, constituting only some 13% of the total number of women councillors. Thus, the affirmative action provisions have not served to help individual women get political experience – although it is possible that women who were local authority councillors in the past have moved on to other posts where their political experience is relevant.

**Comparison with women in other key government positions:** The number of women in local authority councils continues to outweigh women's participation in other key government posts by far. The percentage of women in regional councils (where second elections have not yet been held) remains at 3 women out of 95 regional council seats (3%), and women have not made many strides in penetrating Parliament, Cabinet or the judiciary.

**Attitudes about affirmative action:** Interviews conducted for this study indicate that the goal of achieving gender balance in political bodies is widely accepted and acknowledged. Disagreement centres primarily on whether or not women are able to make their way into local government without the assistance of affirmative action provisions.

**"De-politicisation" of local politics:** It is difficult to assess voter attitudes about women at the local level, since campaigns centred around political groups rather than individual candidates – a factor which may change in future with the introduction of the ward system. The future decentralisation of government may also contribute to changing attitudes about local politics. The impact of local associations is likely to continue to be significant at the local level, in view of their increased participation and positive performance in 1998. These developments may help women to increase their involvement outside of male-dominated political party structures, and may encourage those who believe that women are not suited for "politics" to support women at the local level under the ward system.

## APPENDIX

### People interviewed during the survey

DCN	Mr M Katjuongua
DTA	Mr N Smit
SWAPO	Mr Naholo, Mr Kapia, Ms H Ilonga
UDF	Ms Gissela, Mr Liebenberg
WRP	Ms E Beukes, Mr Beukes
GRA – Gobabis	Mr Brandt
KRA – Keetmanshoop	Dr Van Wyk, Ms Daniëls
LCA – Windhoek	Ms H Rose-Junius, Mr S Eimbeck
SRA – Swakopmund	Ms Geduld, Mr Aston, Ms P Hamman
Election Directorate	Mr G Totemeyer, Mr N Elago

