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## **SCHLAGA'S REMARKS EXPOSE GERMANY'S INSINCERITY**

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I was extremely concerned by the out of context boasting of His Excellency Christian Schlaga, the ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Namibia regarding the so-called highest per capita income aid to Namibia.

In my opinion, these boastful remarks were extremely insensitive and were crude to the extent that they may have bordered on being insulting.

In my view they also do not fall far off the now infamous Clare Short remarks to Zimbabweans with regard to Britains obligation to land reform in Zimbabwe. At best, these views represent a total lack of sincerity on the part of the German government in respect of the ongoing negotiations between our two governments and at worst the remarks reveal a continued arrogance in European foreign policy towards Africa in general.

In a recent meeting of European ambassadors with His Excellency Dr Hage Geingob, the President of the Republic of Namibia, and several Namibian cabinet ministers, the German ambassador said that Germany paid more per capita to Namibia in development aid compared to any other African country. This was in response to the Presidents question to European ambassadors as to what Europe had done and is doing to help Namibia address the legacy of structural injustice of poverty that has its roots in the colonial past of the country.

Schlagas remarks were an ill-fated attempt at intellectual shrewdness but can in the final analysis only be seen as being disrespectful towards the Namibian people, as represented by their ultimate sovereign, the President.

In making the remarks, Schlaga conveniently forgets that Germany was responsible but never formally acknowledged and apologised for the 1st genocide of the 20th Century committed by his country from 1904 to 1908 against the people of Namibia, in order to extend lebensraum for Germans.

He, more than the other European ambassadors, has been part of negotiations between Germany and Namibia over the past two years. These negotiations led by Mr Ruprecht Polenz, the German special envoy and his Namibian counterpart, Dr. Zed Ngavirue, are intended to help the two countries come to a closure on that dark colonial chapter through:

1. The formal recognition by the Federal Republic of Germany of the genocide committed in its name against the people of Namibia, which it has to date not done.
2. The tendering of an official apology by the Federal Republic of Germany for the harm caused to Namibians through that act committed in the name of Germany.
3. The atonement by the Federal Republic of Germany for the untold harm done to the people of the Republic of Namibia. And finally,
4. The acceptance by the people of Namibia of the apology and the atonement tendered by the Federal Republic of Germany to close the painful chapter and open the way for a special partnership between Namibia and Germany.

I wish to point out to Schlaga that as Theo-Ben Gurirab, former Namibian prime minister and at the time, president of the UN General Assembly, noted at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001, in the light of Germanys refusal to acknowledge the genocide committed against Namibians, Germany is the only country in the world that committed two genocides and endless war crimes in the past century against so many nations, and that had the world drawn the appropriate lessons from the 1st genocide of the 20th Century committed between 1904-1908 against Namibians, the Jews and the world would have been spared the butchery that ensued later under the Hitler regime.

We know from many published accounts that the atonement of billions USD, covering various categories such as reparations, loans, gifts, technical services, trained personnel and even military aid since 1950 contributed by Germany to the state of Israel, has helped Israel to industrialise and lift the Jewish people out of the state of poverty they found themselves in, after the end of the 2nd World War.

No representative of the Federal Republic of Germany ever attempted to justify atonement payments to the state of Israel. Why does Germany do so in the instance of Namibia? Does Germany offer aid to Israel to make up for the losses suffered by the Jews on the basis of per capita the highest development aid as compared to other countries in the Middle East? Why then does Ambassador Schlaga want to make us believe this strange logic? The inferences one draws from these example when juxtaposed against our own struggle for reparations, are disturbing to say the least. It can only be construed as to mean that for Ambassador Schlaga, African lives and losses are worth less than the lives and losses of Jews. That is perhaps why no compelling moral obligation exists for Germany to atone for crimes of genocide against Africans. We find this not only insulting to the people of Namibia but a great affront to all of Africa. The Namibian peoples conciliatory stance should not be continuously abused.

I for these reasons call on the Federal Republic of Germany to call the German ambassador to order. I also call on all of Namibias youth to work hard so as to ensure that Germany urgently meets its compelling moral obligation towards Namibians and African people by recognizing, apologizing and atoning for the horrible first genocide of the 20th century committed in the name

of Germany against the people of Namibia between 1904 and 1908.

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