

KEYNOTE SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE NGAMBELA OF BAROTSELAND MR. CLEMENT W. SINYINDA TO THE EXTRA ORDINARY PIZO OF THE BAROTSE NATIONAL COUNCIL HELD AT ST. LAWRENCE HALL IN LIMULUNGA ROYAL VILLAGE FROM 26th -27th MARCH 2012.

Your Royal Highnesses the resident Princesses and Princes from all District Kutas, here present
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Members of Parliament
Honourable Indunas from Namuso, all District Kutas and Lilalos
Guests representing various Government Institutions and Civil Society Organizations
Gallant men and women from the breadth and lengths of this beautiful land we've inherited from our forefathers
In short may I simply say all protocols observed

May I start by thanking His Majesty the Litunga Lubosi Imwiko II, the people of Barotseland, and Kuta for according me this rare and lofty opportunity to serve as the Ngambela at this very critical and crucial epoch in our history as Barotseland. The tasks ahead are huge and require almost super human strength and capabilities. My strength in this challenge is in Gods grace and with your support, I pledge to endeavour to be equal to the task.

I want to commend all of you that are here gathered from all over Barotseland and beyond, I realize you are here at a great personal cost and sacrifice. I also wish to recognize the great sacrifice made by many that may not be here in person but have contributed financially, materially and indeed through prayers to ensure that this historic Council goes ahead. This expression of personal sacrifice on your part and that of all those that have made it possible for you to be here is a demonstration of the fact that we all realize Barotseland is at the crossroads. Consequently, difficult choices have to be made and crucial decisions have to be reached. We are the ones to make the choices and decisions and this is the time to do so. We can no longer wait for other people or another time. To every generation is given a cause to either fulfill or betray. To our generation is given the awesome responsibility to resolve the Barotseland crisis, a consequence of an impasse and a resultant failure from the non implementation and unilateral abrogation of the Barotseland Agreement 1964. It is entirely up to us to either fulfill or betray this cause.

For a long time now, the BRE has been under immense pressure to call for the BNC. We were accused of Contradicting the position of people that we represent. The BRE was accused of mishandling the thorny issue of the BA '64. You are called for this moment to give us direction.

The ever loving God preserved this day for all of us to assemble here to congregate and find a way forward. To you all, I say, this is your historic moment.

I quote, Barrack Hussein Obama, President of the United States of America who said in a 5th February, 2008 speech:

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

And I wish to add that:

“change is a necessity when every other way becomes impossible”.

In our pursuit to resolve this matter, we passed through turbulent times. Throughout the period of 47 years, successive Zambian governments applied the undemocratic principle of **might is right**. We paid with our blood for simply requesting to consolidate our integration with Zambia. Intimidation became the order of the day.

Talking about state intimidation and brutality over the Barotseland question, I want to make it know to the Zambian Authority that we are well aware and alive to the fact that many of our nationals over the last half century have been brutalized, victimized and antagonized for simply holding the view that the Barotseland Agreement 1964 is a legitimate and honourable international treaty which must be respected. A number of people have been killed, maimed, tortured, imprisoned and heavily interrogated by Police due to their involvement in the matter of the Barotseland Agreement 1964.

Allow me to pause at this juncture as call upon this August gathering to take a moment of silence to remember and indeed honour those that have lost their lives, shed their blood and have been inconvenienced in one way or another simply because of their position on Barotseland as I call upon Induna Yutanga of Naliele to come forward and read out the names of those who have been known to have died, those that are missing and those that have been maimed on or after the January 14 Fracas

“Because of January 14 we will always remember that God hears our cries, He is touched by our tears, moved by our fears and pays attention to our prayers. The Lord has taken note of the blood that has been shed, the lives that have been lost and those that have been shattered by trauma for Barotseland. That blood has not been shed in vain; those lives have not been lost in vain; our lives are not disrupted, shattered and traumatized in vain.” Mungandi MM –January 14 Remembered

When I undertook to take up the position of Ngambela of Barotseland at such a volatile and precarious time as this one, it was with no illusion that it was ever going to be an easy assignment because I fully realize the challenges and almost insurmountable obstacles that are facing our people and our land. My ascendance to the position of Ngambela has been predominantly a faith venture from all angles you choose to look at it. It took a lot of faith on my part and a lot of faith on the part of Barotseland as a whole.

I have faith in our system of governance which has evolved over hundreds of years and has been called by one of our youths on a social network site as the most beautiful form of democracy. As you maybe aware our system of governance is an all embracing bottom-up type of governance system.

The Barotse system of Governance has several tiers from the Central Government to the village. The first of these tiers is the Namuso (Literally translated as the Mother of Government). This is

the Central Government of Barotseland with the Litunga as the Head of State and the Ngambela as Prime Minister. The Ngambela, who is also referred to as Sope or Minyolui (the latter literary meaning Owner of Barotseland)

The Second governance tier is the regional governments which include the Lwambi in charge of the southern part of Barotseland. It is headed by Litunga-La-Mboela, which means the Litunga of the South. Other regions are also headed by resident Princes or Princesses, Malena. The third tier consists of chiefdoms and or Administrative Areas. Barotseland is sub-divided into several Chiefdoms and or Administrative Areas each headed by a Chief or Sub Chief sometimes called silalo Indunas. The Administrative Areas are referred to as Lilalo. A Silalo (singular) has an Induna who is its political, administrative and judicial head. The last governance tier in Barotseland consists of villages (Minzi). Munzi (singular) has an Induna who is its political, administrative and judicial head.

What is of key interest is the fact that decision is arrived at using the bottom-up approach. Consequently this August gathering which is the apex of the governance system in terms of structures will consider decisions and resolutions that have been made at village level and escalated in stages to the Silalo, District and finally to this, the national level.

Following the 1947 Barotse Constitutional reforms at which point a Katengo Legislative Council was introduced, we undertook a democratic processes commensurate with systems applied in the developed world. Our next step as a government was to streamline our judicial system. All these efforts were terminated by Kenneth Kaunda in 1965. It is my wish and prayer that those dynamic democratic ideals are adopted and re-introduced today. I propose that we re-introduce the **checks and balances** model in the Barotse Royal Establishment governance system which was terminated prematurely.

I have faith in our capacity to be united and rally behind a genuine and legitimate cause. Our history has shown that whenever as a people we have allowed disunity to prevail among us, we have tended to take a downward curve. Yet as soon as we realize our need for unity we have risen from the ashes and taken an upward trend. The clear cases in point include:

- The Makololo invasion which happened when Barotseland was embroiled in civil strife between the north and the south over succession. The Makololo took advantage of the situation and invaded the land and ruled over our forefathers. Yet when unity became a requirement for our survival, we converged and prevailed.
- The dethroning of King Lubosi Lewanika which happened when the kuta was divided into factions for and against the reigning Litunga. After three years of chaos under the leadership of Litunga Tatila Akufuna, our forefathers reunited and restored King Lewanika's rule. Barotseland prospered thereafter.

- Our current quagmire is largely because of the disunity that existed at the time the wind of change against colonialism was sweeping across the continent. The Litunga and his Kuta were originally for the idea that Barotseland should proceed to independence in its own right as an entity, as was applicable with Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. whilst the Lozi young Turks, largely for personal reasons, vengeance and hunger for power opted to fight on the side of Northern Rhodesia. The Barotseland Agreement 1964 was therefore a compromise position between the two warring factions. Disunity which was a consequence of lack of vision on the part of the so called freedom fighters has brought us where we are today. **Signing an agreement with people who have no regard for the rule of law.**

I have faith in our capacity for coexistence amongst ourselves and with those that surround us. Barotseland has a history of inclusiveness and harmonious co existence. That is the only way we have been able to exist together with our diversities within the whole Barotseland equation and Commonwealth. The missionaries, the BSAC and emissaries of the British Crown found us at peace with each other. Differences were most of the times resolved peacefully. Our forefathers were able to negotiate coexistence with European Settlers and derived maximum benefits from the relationships.

I have faith in our peace loving nature and am confident that we shall forever remain committed to finding a peaceful settlement to the Barotseland Question. We are committed to non violent means of conflict resolution. Though our blood has been spilt we will spill no innocent blood, though we have been shot we will not throw even a pebble at our aggressors, though some among us have been killed we will endeavour to destroy no life, though we have been tortured and persecuted, we will treat all persons with human dignity. Yet our peaceful nature should not be mistaken for lack of courage or determination to have this impasse resolved.

Things will never be the same again after this watershed BNC. We have been insulted enough, ridiculed enough, teased enough, mocked enough, cheated enough, dribbled enough, used enough, hurt enough, misunderstood enough, marginalized enough, sidelined enough, victimized enough, neglected enough, tossed back and forth enough, subjugated enough, segregated enough, mistreated enough, and we must put an end to it. Now the Barotse people are saying: "Here we stand, we can do no other."

May I conclude by challenging all delegates here present to participate freely as we deliberate on the decisions and resolutions that have come from different corners and angles of our society and as we struggle to harmonize these different, diverse and at times competing views to come up with a cohesive and focused position to present to the world at large.

Tukongote wa mwana Nongolo, ising'i wa mwana Nalukapwa.