

The road he travelled shows us that in the end, as in the beginning, there truly is no road'

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I would especially like to observe the full protocols. Respect and honour to our distinguished guests who have allowed us to occupy their time in this exciting and urgent election season.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge our head of state, his excellency president Nangoloh Mbumba and madam Mbumba.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge representatives of diplomatic missions, government officials, family and friends.

'Let there be light.'

For light is an amazing thing – from it comes life and all there is to see, it illuminates areas of darkness physically and in all other spheres, including the sphere of knowledge.

As enlightening as the topic of light may be, it remains second in importance only to the word, for it was the word that verbalised the intention for light to vanquish darkness and ignorance.

In this line of reasoning, it is not unreasonable to arrive at the conclusion that it is the word which remains the true source of our collective illumination and enlightenment.

'Footprints of Hifikepunye Pohamba' is a constellation of words whose sole purpose is to illuminate the reader on the path travelled by Hifikepunye Pohamba.

In the spirit of the title, I have to acknowledge a fundamental truth for those picking up this book to cut and paste into their own personal journeys: traveller, there is no road.

There are no footpaths nor footprints.

As we glimpse at the road travelled by this celebrated traveller, we are reminded that from his shoes there was no one guiding him to make this decision or that decision.

There was no compass provided to him nor will one be provided to you on whatever journey you are on. The sum of the individual decisions taken between the space of the breaths that sustain us define our eventual destinies.

So says the words of fate.

Choices, decisions and their circumstances are a story of the power of will, and an observation of how individual choices can affect a time line.

I was pleased to note that the author took note to ensure that his fallen comrades were remembered and honoured for their historic contributions.

It is an example of the fact that a person's desires can be met halfway by others with similar desires, and this combined effort can change the course of history.

The word choice of history should not be lost on us, as this book is indeed a telling of his story. Although his story is a part of history, it remains his story and he has a right to tell it as he sees fit.

Should the reader have been searching for something else and left wanting by the end of the book, then we take this as evidence of the fact that there truly is a death of Namibian literature.

Hence, we encourage people to write more books to illuminate that which they would like to shed light on.

This work is by no means an attempt to tell or explain any detail or incident in particular but merely an expression of the narrative chosen to be told by the authors.

The editorial process of this project has been an extremely rewarding experience.

They say it's not work if you enjoy what you are doing; these past five years have truly been rewarding in surprising ways.

Dealing with the recollections of someone who lived such a rich life was akin to being a fly on the wall with a view of our collective triumphs and defeats. Many things remained on the editorial floor, for we had to be extremely cognisant of the power of the written word.

Telling the narrative of someone who has lived such a full life encompassing so many collective national memories, there was a high possibility that in many instances, some of the participants of the story may have already passed. There was the risk that this work may be perceived as the biased views of the last man standing.

I must say, I was impressed with the compassion the author demonstrated for his former comrades, regardless of how their relationships ended up.

The exercise of mercy after death is a character trait that truly is rare, and when one is granted the serenity to identify it, only then is one truly on the road to understanding the man that is Hifikepunye Pohamba.

As we celebrate his footprints, we get a glimpse into not only his story but we are also enriched with experiences ranging from 1935 to 2024, which represents 89 years of rich history.

Not only did he remind us about life in the contract labour system and other curiosities of that period but he dived deeper into his family's ancient memories passed from generation to generation. With this book we dive into intricate aspects of Oshikwanyama history and culture during the days before, when our Kings ruled under God alone.

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He set out with certain intentions. However, the unfolding of the plan took him from pillar to post. In all instances he could have given up and pitched his tent at the last obstacle, as many had done, however, he did not.

He made a decision to carry on, for his intention and focus were primarily on the liberation of this brave land.

Never did his intention and focus dwell on the material aspects that drive and enlarge many an ego. He did not make any sacrifices in the name of his ego nor fall for the trappings that had enticed others for his true self had won every debate he had with his conscience.

This book details the path of a principled man who held his principles as the highest guidance in the decisions he took.

All he has can be traced to his employment, for he held no other office except public office, and while in public office he focussed only on that, hence there has never been an opportunity to explain any unexplainable gains.

Traveller, there is no road.

No matter the diversity of instruction and the supplantation of the experiences of others, the truth remains that there truly is no road, for we make our paths as we go along

A light in a dark room is visible to more than those who are in its proximity, for a light bulb on a dark night can be seen from miles away. It can resonate with those with an affinity for light and irritate those with an affinity for darkness.

As a family, we would like to thank the public; the support our father receives from the community continuously defeats the law of averages, for on average, most comments relating to Hifikepunye Pohamba are consistently and generally positive.

Although there are those who exercise their right to think differently and express such differences, we appreciate those who express those differences in a productive and cogent way, for this serves the collective good, as debate does, indeed, expose doubt.

It is wonderful to live in a country where we can truly differ in an atmosphere that nourishes growth and reflection. Such discussions cannot

be one-way dialogues, for those are mere treadmill debates that lead nowhere very fast.

In this spirit it is important to give space for one to give their perspective on the choices they made with the power granted by the votes of the electorate. Fundamentally, although the writing of this book was a voluntary process, it undoubtedly symbiotically augments national values such as those of accountability, for our heads of state remain public servants who are accountable to us, the electorate.

As mentioned earlier, words are important. This book, in its alchemical nature, depicts the transmutation process of how a man's choices can transform him from lead into something more. However, ladies and gentlemen, let it be said that this is not a philosopher's stone, for once again, I remind you: traveller, there is no road.

Your values and your core moral beliefs continue to define you in your individual quests whatever they may be, for these immaterial things are the only instruments that have been passed down to you and these are truly the only things that you will pass on to your children.

All material things can disappear in the space of a single generation, however, values are instructions or manuals for how to live a good life and are passed down through instruction and observation of those living an exemplary life.

Hifikepunye Pohamba's footprints show that the path of integrity can be rewarding in ways that can't be measured. For what is the going rate of a good night's sleep?

Through multiple coincidences scattered through this book we are shown that the path of perseverance, forgiveness and humility can be rewarding. With a lack of coercion and intimidation, doors can be opened and solutions to problems can be found when we include opposing viewpoints.

This book highlights the value system of a man who presided over the largest decrease in HIV transmission rates since the pestilence began.

Those older than 30 remember how this disease was brought under manageable control in their lifetimes under the collective leadership of Pohamba and his team.

In terms of legacy, we are not here for odious comparisons. However, Hifikepunye Pohamba supported the first non Oshiwambo president and the first female nominee, not inclined to follow the chauvinism that ruled at that time.

Prediction of this current outcome in 2005 would have been a conjecture. These choices went against the grain, yet he and his team made these decisions because it was the right thing to do.

There are almost no glass ceilings left that create barriers between us as Namibians, for he has contributed to shattering them with the support, of course, from his team.

We hope our country will continue to nurture leadership that uses his examples as a guiding principle.

Economically, the level of per capita growth under the collective leadership of Hifikepunye Pohamba and his team will hopefully be surpassed soon, for under his presidency our nation made its first discovery of oil prior to the avalanche of discoveries that followed.

His time was truly a blessing that most Namibians have come to respect and appreciate as can be seen by this unexpected volume of attendees.

I didn't become the editor of this book by choice, nor was I asked. A series of coincidences, delays and misfortunes lead to our reliance on our own resources and individual capacities.

(HISTORY Improv)

At the end of the day, the evidence of work done leads to the eventuality that has now come to pass.

As a trustee of the Hifikepunye Pohamba Foundation, it truly is my pleasure to welcome you all as we officially open our first limited edition of signed copies, which we should all possess by now.

Without overstepping onto Tatekulu Amadthila's territory, forgive me as I invite you to have a glance at the table of contents.

If you follow with me, from the forward on page (ix) up to the index on page 419.

I would like to let you know that in between these pages, there will be some mistakes. There may be misplaced commas or a grammar mistake here and there.

Personally, it was an enjoyable learning curve, but honestly speaking, English is English and mistakes do happen.

Let it not be lost on us that either way, at the end of the day, English did come by boat.

Vaholiki!

We ask you to look over the forgivable mistakes and notify us should you find something requiring correction, for our aim is to be accurate without diluting the author's voice.

In the spirit of compassion and gratitude, we open ourselves up to scrutiny of our work. However, come rain or shine, we are of the firm belief that some stories are simply too good not to share.

Stories are meant to enlighten and chase away the darkness of ignorance, therefore, let there be light.

Kindly accept this book as a humble contribution to our collective story, an anchor in time, and a testament to the fact the Hifikepunye Pohamba and his team, did not waver when they were called to serve this nation.

With that said, ladies and gentlemen I welcome you to the launch event of the book titled:

'Footprints Of Hifikepunye Pohamba

Ondjiila eyi A enda'

– Speech by Tulongeni Pohamba at the launch of former president Pohamba's autobiography, 'Footprints Of Hifikepunye Pohamba – Ondjiila eyi A enda'