



Namibia

KEY FACTS

Joined Commonwealth:	1990
Population:	2,324,000 (2011)
GNI p.c.:	US\$4,700 (2011)
UN HDI 2011:	world ranking 120

Geography

Area:	824,269 sq km
Coastline:	1,570 km
Capital:	Windhoek

Namibia in south-west Africa is one of the driest and most sparsely populated countries on Earth. It is bounded by the South Atlantic Ocean on the west, Angola to the north, Botswana to the east and South Africa to the south. The Caprivi Strip, a narrow extension of land in the extreme north-east, connects it to Zambia.

Namibia comprises 13 regions (from south to north): Karas, Hardap, Khomas, Erongo, Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Kunene, Oshikoto, Okavango, Omusati, Oshana, Caprivi and Ohangwena.

Constitution

Status:	Republic with executive President
Legislature:	Parliament of Namibia
Independence:	21 March 1990

The constitution provides for a multiparty democracy in a unitary republic. The President is Head of State and Government and commander-in-chief of the defence force. Elected by direct universal adult suffrage at intervals of not more than five years, he or she must receive more than 50 per cent of the votes cast. The President appoints the government, the armed forces chief of staff and members of a Public Service Commission, but the National Assembly may revoke any appointment. He or she can only serve two successive directly elected five-year terms. The President may dissolve the National Assembly, and may also proclaim a state of national emergency and rule by decree, subject to the approval of the National Assembly.

Legislative power is vested in a National Assembly of 72 elected members, and up to six nominated but non-voting members, all members serving for a maximum of five years.



The National Assembly can remove the President from office by passing an impeachment motion with a two-thirds majority. The Prime Minister is leader of government business in parliament.

An upper house, the National Council, is provided for in the constitution and was formally convened in February 1993. It consists of two members from each of the 13 regions, elected by regional councils and serving for a term of six years. The National Council has limited powers to review legislation passed by the National Assembly and can block bills.

The constitution includes 25 entrenched clauses regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms. There is no death sentence nor detention without trial and the practice and ideology of apartheid is expressly forbidden. Private property rights are guaranteed. Amendments to the constitution can only be made by two-thirds majorities of both houses.

Judicial system

Supreme court:	Supreme Court
Ministry:	Justice

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary and includes 25 entrenched clauses regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms. There is no death sentence.



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Electoral Commission of Namibia

For fair and impartial elections



ECN Commissioners: (Standing, l to r) Commissioner Ulrich Freyer, Commissioner Barney Karuuombe and Commissioner Nespect Butty Salom (seated, l to r) Chairperson Adv. Notemba Tjipueja and Commissioner Albertina Nangolo

*Mr Moses Ndjarakana,
Director of Elections and
CEO of ECN*



Background

The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) was established by Electoral Act no. 24 of 1992 which empowers the Commission with the exclusive authority to direct, supervise and control, in a fair and impartial manner, all elections conducted in terms of the Act.

ECN is mandated to specifically:

- Supervise and control the registration of voters for the purposes of any election
- Supervise the preparation, publication and maintenance of a national and local authority voters' registers
- Supervise and control the registration of political parties
- Supervise, direct and control the conduct of elections
- Supervise, direct, control and promote voter education in regarding elections
- Perform any other functions conferred upon it by or under the provisions of this Act or any other law or are necessary or expedient for purposes of achieving the objects of this Act.

Vision

To be an excellent and independent election management institution committed to credible elections.

Mission

To promote and deliver free, fair and credible elections, managed in a transparent, innovative and participatory manner to the Namibians.

New Technologies for Elections

The Electoral Commission of Namibia is adopting the following systems:

- A Biometric Voter Registration will be employed during the 2013 General Registration of Voters. This system will improve the accuracy of the National Voters Register and improve the efficiency of the registration process.
- In the upcoming 2014 General Election, Namibia will be the first SADC nation to implement the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). The EVMs will replace the cumbersome process of conventional manual voting and thereby minimise challenges associated with the normal voting process.

Composition

ECN consists of a Chairperson and four Commissioners. The administrative work of the Electoral Commission of Namibia is the prerogative of the Electoral Commission Directorate. The Directorate is headed by the Director of Elections.

All correspondence or enquiries can be directed to the Director of Elections: Electoral Commission of Namibia, Private Bag 13352, Windhoek, Namibia • Tel +264 61 37 6202

The judicial system comprises the Supreme Court, presided over by a chief justice; the High Court, presided over by a judge President; and the lower and magistrates' courts. The Supreme Court serves as a constitutional court and a final court of appeal. Appeals from the lower courts come before the High Court in the first instance.

Judges are appointed by the President of the republic on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission.

Government and politics

Last elections:	November 2009 (presidential and legislative)
Next elections:	2014
Head of State:	President Hifikepunye Pohamba
Head of Government:	the President
Ruling party:	SWAPO

The elections in November/December 1999 produced a clear win for both the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and President Sam Nujoma. Nujoma secured close to 75 per cent of the votes cast in the presidential poll, while Ben Ulenga of the recently formed Congress of Democrats (CoD) took 11 per cent and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) candidate Kautuutire Kaura 10 per cent. In the parliamentary contest, SWAPO won 55 seats (76 per cent of the votes), the CoD seven (10 per cent) and the DTA seven (9.5 per cent).

In 2001 Nujoma announced he would not seek a fourth term of office and, at its 2004 congress, Hifikepunye Pohamba was chosen as the SWAPO candidate for the presidential election in November 2004.

Governance institutions

Electoral Commission of Namibia: www.ecn.na
 Parliament of Namibia: www.parliament.gov.na
 Superior Courts: www.superiorcourts.org.na
 Office of the Ombudsman: www.ombudsman.org.na
 Anti-Corruption Commission: www.accnamibia.org
 National Planning Commission: www.npc.gov.na
 Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development: www.mrlgh.gov.na
 Ministry of Finance: www.mof.gov.na
 Ministry of Trade and Industry: www.mti.gov.na
 Association for Local Authorities in Namibia: www.alan.org.na
 Bank of Namibia: www.bon.com.na
 Namibian Stock Exchange: www.nsx.com.na
 Standards Institution: www.nsi.com.na
 Communications Regulatory Authority: www.cran.na
 Electricity Control Board: www.ecb.org.na

The November 2004 presidential and legislative elections were won in landslide victories by Pohamba (76.4 per cent of votes) and SWAPO (55 of 72 seats and 75 per cent of the votes). Ulenga (CoD) received 7.3 per cent of the votes in the presidential election and Kaura (DTA) 5.1 per cent, while the CoD won five seats and DTA four.

Pohamba and SWAPO were again returned to government in November 2009 in another landslide. In the presidential poll Pohamba received 76.4 per cent of votes and his main challenger, Hidipo Hamutenya of the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), 11.1 per cent. In the legislative elections SWAPO won 54 seats (and 75.3 per cent of votes) and the RDP 8 seats (11.3 per cent).

Local government

Ministry:	Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development
Association:	Association for Local Authorities in Namibia; Association of Regional Councils

There are three spheres of government – national, regional and local – provided for by the Regional Councils Act 1992 and the Local Authorities Act 1992. Regional and local government are enshrined in Chapter 12 of the constitution.

Namibia comprises 13 regions, each with a regional council. The 52 unitary local authorities comprise 16 city councils, 17 town councils and 19 village councils. Local elections are held every five years.

The regional councils and local authorities have revenue-raising powers, as well as receiving transfers from the national government. Regional councils do not normally provide services; the local authorities are responsible for such services as waste management, water supply, sanitation and electricity supply.

National development plan

The National Planning Commission in the Office of the President was provided for by the constitution and established, in an Act of 1994, to be responsible for national development planning. The national Vision 2030 was launched by the President in June 2004. This Vision aspires to improve the quality of life of the Namibian people to the level of their counterparts in the developed world by 2030.

Further information

Government of Namibia: www.grnnet.gov.na
 Commonwealth Secretariat: www.thecommonwealth.org
 Commonwealth Governance: www.commonwealthgovernance.org