

**Mose Penaani Tjitendero**  
**(1943 – April 26, 2006)**

The Hon. Dr. Mose P. Tjitendero. Mose, a former Member of Parliament of Namibia, died in hospital in his homeland on the morning of April 26, after a long illness. He was one of the CIE's most distinguished alumni.

Among his many accomplishments, Mose served as the first Speaker of Namibia's National Assembly between 1990 and 2004, and had been a member of the South West African Peoples' Organisation (Swapo) Central Committee since 1981. He formed part of the 'Tanganyika club' of activists in the 1960s, who worked to propel Swapo into an international movement. Mose also served as Vice President of the Executive Committee of the Inter Parliamentary Union of which Namibia is a member.



In the political arena in his native Namibia Mose was described in the 2004 'Guide to Namibian Politics' as "widely respected as an impartial chairperson of parliamentary proceedings and an advocate of popular participation in Namibia's democracy." Mose was also a well-known scholar and orator who inspired many while working tirelessly for the freedom independence and advancement of his country.

Dr Tjitendero was widely respected throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and played a key role in community building. He made a significant contribution to changing the region. He was the vision, inspiration and driving force for the establishment of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, a battle he fought for many years, persisting until he won the support of all SADC parliaments, for an initiative so new and yet so obvious that it is now taken for granted as an established player in the region. It was not always thus.

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**Excerpts from editorial** entitled “Namibia: Tjitendero a Visionary With Deep Commitment to His Region And People”

It is rare in our region or any other, to find a visionary endowed also with the practical skills of management, integrity and implementation.

One such rare person was the Hon Dr. Mose Penaani Tjitendero, who died in Windhoek on 26 April, aged 63, after a life dedicated to his country, his region and his family. Honoured as a hero in his own country, Namibia, where he will be given a state funeral and burial at Heroes Acre on 6 May, he also provided inspiration beyond his borders.

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He was the vision, inspiration and driving force for the establishment of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, a battle he fought over several years, persisting until he won the support of all SADC parliaments, for an initiative so new and yet so obvious that it is now taken for granted as an established player in the region. It was not always thus.

Most writers about Dr Tjitendero in recent days have concentrated on his considerable post-independence achievements. He contributed to drafting the Constitution for the Republic of Namibia as a member of the Constituent Assembly, and emerged as the first Speaker of parliament, a post he held for 15 years.

As Speaker, he built and reformed the parliamentary system, committee by committee, to make it a transparent and effective forum for legislation and debate on national and regional issues. He was an elected member of parliament since the pre-independence elections for Namibia's independence in 1990.

Little has been written, however, about his formation during the liberation struggle as a member of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), his commitment to the independence of Namibia, and his contribution as an educator, notably as Assistant Director of the UN Institute for Namibia (UNIN) in Lusaka, while in exile.

A key objective of his vision and his contribution to the region was in the broader role of the proposed development community for southern Africa. He said the signing of the SADC Treaty in Windhoek in August 1992 was "not simply a matter of transforming SADC from a loose regional grouping into a legal entity, but ushered in the spirit of the treaty establishing the African Economic Community adopted by the OAU Heads of State... in June 1991."

When SADC followed up with adoption of a community-building programme to widen its community beyond government, Mr Speaker was ready with his vision for a regional Parliamentary Forum to "familiarize the peoples of SADC countries with the aims and objectives of SADC."

*We need to bring SADC closer to the people. Our people, all our people, need to know, understand and popularise the aims and objectives of SADC. For example, what is this concept of development, and of a development community? We need to start from the beginning and systematically inculcate the values of SADC in the hearts and minds of our constituents.*

The late Dr. Tjitendero seldom worked alone, always with a team and in partnership, and he would expect therefore that others are ready to continue the work that he initiated, and in the same spirit.

From: *Southern African News Features* (Harare), 4 May 2006 at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200605040009.html>



Further comments on his passing are below

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I am writing to officially announce to you and the entire Center community that Dr. Mosé Tjitendero, G'77, passed away during the morning hours of yesterday April 26, 2006.

During his years in exile, Uncle Mosé made the Center his second home, much like many of us who came after him. I have no doubt that all of you around the world who knew him so well will be mourning with us this great fearless freedom fighter and a champion of the oppressed, and that you will miss sorely miss his positive disposition.

The Government will honor him with a state funeral but the funeral date hasn't been set yet. I am sorry to be writing this now as I needed composure to be able to make this announcement. *Your dearest brother in learning.* **Michael Tjivikua**

The President and Nation of Namibia decided that Mosé deserves a State funeral with full honours. The public State Memorial will be held on Friday the 5th in the Parliament Gardens. His funeral will be hosted by the government and will be held on Saturday, 6 May. He will be laid to rest in the Heroes Cemetery, where only 14 other national figures are buried. **Phil Christensen**

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