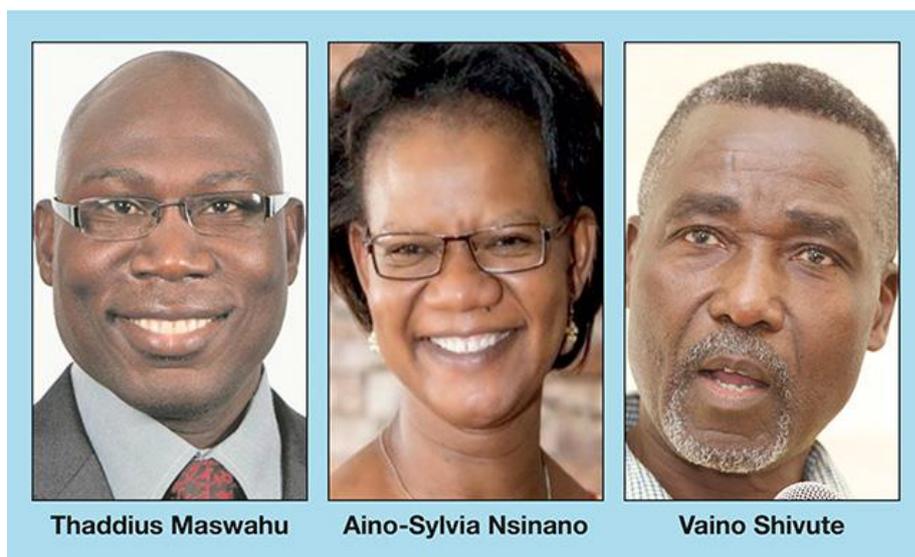


NamWater director claims victimisation

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by Shinovene Immanuel



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A MEMBER of the national water company NamWater's board claims she has been bullied, intimidated, victimised and threatened by the parastatal's management and board for over two years.

Aino-Sylvia Nsinano, who doubles up as NamWater's senior finance manager and board director, wrote a damning letter to NamWater's board chairperson Thaddius Maswahu on 20 September 2018.

Nsinano represents NamWater workers on the board.

"I have been bullied, intimidated, victimised and threatened for over two years now, both by management as well as in board meetings," she said, adding that she had asked Maswahu to investigate her concerns, but nothing was done.

The director claimed that she was on several occasions offered positions to distract her from applying for other senior jobs at the parastatal.

"You [Maswahu] offered me the position of chief: business unit central, in exchange for the withdrawal of my application for chief strategist," she stated.

Nsinano alleged that Maswahu made this offer for her to stop competing with another person at the parastatal for the same position.

She said she was later offered the position of chief financial officer at NamWater, but there was a catch.

Nsinano would have had to give up that position, to the same official whom she was told not to compete against for the chief strategy officer's position.

She said she was threatened with disciplinary action after she refused to give up her board position, and claimed that she reported this incident to the board, but no action was likewise taken.

She also blasted the board for being selfish.

"The board has to date had over 30 paid activities. Yet, considering the state the organisation is currently in, I still wonder almost halfway through our term what significant resolution/decision or change the board has brought about from those over 30 paid activities," she said.

Nsinano added: "Yet, most of this time is spent focusing on driving the interests of others or self. We take decisions, which after a few months, we simply choose to amend to suit our interests".

She said she advised the company on several issues, including the proposed structure, salary scales for job gradings, board fees, recruitment and recruitment policy violations, but all these have never been considered or followed up.

"Take note again that I am a duly appointed director, and am also equally liable for every decision of the board as any of the other directors on this board. I have an equal duty of care towards this organisation, probably more than any other director, and am also fully accountable to the shareholder/appointing authority as any other director on this board," Nsinano added.

She also complained of being sidelined.

"The board has deliberately used all efforts to exclude me from duly contributing to discussions of the board, and chose rather to frustrate and intimidate me because I am an employee of the organisation," Nsinano said.

The national water agency has kept a low profile over the years.

However, the departure of NamWater's chief executive Vaino Shivute, who has managed the utility company for 16 years as chief executive, could trigger a power struggle at the parastatal.

Shivute's term ends in December this year.

Nsinano declined to comment when approached, saying she does not discuss confidential matters in the media.

Maswahu confirmed receiving the letter, but denied offering Nsinano any positions.

“My brother, I do not get involved in operational matters,” he said, adding that the board is only responsible for overseeing the chief executive.

Maswahu also rejected suggestions that Nsinano is being charged because she refused to accept position offers from her bosses, adding that the board will decide whether Nsinano's letter will be answered.

NamWater spokesperson Johannes Shigweda dismissed Nsinano's claims of exclusion from board meetings.

“Regarding exclusion from meetings and discussions, it is one thing being invited to attend meetings, and another to refuse to attend. In the latter case, there is evident reluctance by the incumbent to attend meetings scheduled,” he said.

Shigweda claimed that Nsinano is facing a disciplinary hearing for incorrect payments made while she was on leave.

He said a consultation process was followed during the regrading process.