



A Right of Reply: Paulus Ngalangi on Fishcor and Fishrot

Photo: Paulus Ngalangi

IN RESPONSE to the article, "N\$17.5m paid to Namandje's firm 'for Govt objectives'" by Eliaser Ndeyanale in The Namibian on 15 March 2023 referencing my affidavit, and other articles by Shinovene Immanuel and other journalists, I feel compelled to address the inaccuracies.

Over the past four years, media houses, particularly The Namibian, have consistently attempted to link me to the alleged Fishrot corruption scandal, while reporting a host of false information about me.

I aim to provide factual clarification on specific points:

1. Payment to Namandje's Law Firm: Contrary to the article's implications, I had no involvement in the N\$15 million payment in December 2015 which was executed verbally by the group CEO to the financial accountant and authorised by them. I authorised the N\$2,5 million payment in August 2017 following written instruction from the group CEO, Mike Nghipunya. My affidavit submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission on 27 December 2019 details the authorisation for each payment. Importantly, I never authorise payments based on verbal instructions.

2. Employment History: I was employed by Seaflower Whitefish Corporation Limited as Group General Manager of Finance managing Fishcor's subsidiaries and not by Fishcor as reported. This is indicated in my 27 December 2019 affidavit, but it was overlooked.

The distinction between Fishcor and its subsidiaries is crucial. Fishcor operates solely as a fishing right holder, receiving quotas allocated by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. The company has no fixed assets and it does not harvest fish from the ocean for production, distribution and selling. The entire operational and economic activities of the group take place in the subsidiaries. This fact is disclosed in the published annual reports.

Only the group CEO was employed by Fishcor, while the rest of the employees by the subsidiaries. The management team, excluding the group CEO, featured in each annual report was exclusively responsible and accountable for the subsidiaries.

Their employment contracts were specifically tied to the operations of these subsidiaries, their roles did not extend to the broader oversight of Fishcor. The contracts provided the group CEO with authority to deploy staff to perform lawful functions different from the job descriptions that fall within areas of competence in the group.

Therefore, staff employed in the subsidiaries only assisted the group CEO at Fishcor at an administration level. For example, generating sales invoices and making payments, particularly in relation to governmental objectives fishing quotas transactions after Fishcor became a designated entity in November 2015, under section 3(3) of the Marine Resources Act to monetise marine resources on behalf of the State.

The group CEO, as the only employee of Fishcor, was solely responsible for the management of these fishing quotas. The income and expenditure of these transactions were recorded in a control account, they did not form part of Fishcor's financial statements.

3. **Fishrot:** For The Namibian to conclude that I was in charge of Fishcor's finances during the events that resulted in the scandal is inaccurate and defamatory. While the revenue of the Fishcor group is exclusively sourced from its subsidiaries, Fishcor the company, was responsible for handling governmental objectives fishing quotas which are unrelated to the core operations of the group. I was not an employee of Fishcor, and consequently, I had no involvement in overseeing or controlling these transactions. These governmental objectives transactions are the focal point of the alleged Fishrot corruption scandal at Fishcor. I emphatically deny any involvement in the alleged scandal. I had no part in the events that led to these allegations.

I am a qualified chartered accountant, despite The Namibian consistently referring to me only as an "accountant". The erroneous information reported by The Namibian, whether intentional or not, has inflicted significant damage to both my personal and professional reputation, denting my prospects of employment in the corporate sector. As the saying goes, perceptions become beliefs.

– Paulus Ngalangi, CA (NAM)

Editor's Note:

The Namibian is committed to fair reporting and has offered Mr Ngalangi this opportunity to provide his side of the story, despite him having declined to do so in the past.

Mr. Ngalangi claims that he was not employed by Fishcor. However, the Fishcor financial reports listed him as their group finance general manager.

We welcome and accept Mr Ngalangi's correction of the 15 March 2023 article that he only executed N\$2,5 million of the N\$17,5 million payment made to Sisa Namandje & Co. We apologise and regret that error.

Conciliated by,



John B. Nakuta
Media Ombudsman | Namibia
