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## To Brad and Angelina, a girl, born in Namibia. What does life hold for the nation's children?

By Erica Gebhardt, in Otjiwarongo, Namibia

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To Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, a daughter, Shiloh. She will be a sister for the couple's adopted children from Cambodia and Ethiopia.

Her Biblical name means "the desired one" or "the peaceful one", and there can be little doubt Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt will want for nothing, having been born into a life of privilege and growing up in the love and care of Hollywood's golden couple, described by People magazine as "the world's most beautiful family".

She came into the world early yesterday in Namibia, where most of the two million people were born into poverty. Her mother, an ambassador for the UN refugee agency who has been widely praised for her commitment to Africa, decided to give birth in Namibia after discovering the beauty of the desert country during the filming of Beyond Borders.

To make sure that the people of Africa will really benefit, Jolie and Pitt have decided that the rumoured \$3m (£1.5m) they will charge for the first photograph of the baby, whose much-anticipated birth generated an international media frenzy, will be given to the UN.

Shiloh was born at the Welwitschia Clinic in Walvis Bay at 1.40am with all the trappings of modern science on hand. The 30-year-old mother and her baby are doing well. The parents retreated behind closed doors with the protection of Namibian authorities, and for hours it was not known whether the baby was delivered in a clinic or in the room of the hotel.

Just 200 miles up the road a few hours earlier, another happy event took place in a bare and anonymous ward of the state hospital of Otjiwarongo,

where Mbapewa Jononime gave birth to a baby girl. By yesterday afternoon, Mbapewa was back at her family's home with the baby she intends to call Caroline.

She, though, will experience a much less certain upbringing, and the tale of the two babies - both with Namibian citizenship - perhaps says something about the plight of Africa.

Mbapewa is 18. The baby's father, Carlos, whom she dated for two years at school, left to return to his native Angola before the child was born. The teenage mother has not heard from him since.

So bringing up baby will be a matter for Mbapewa and her extended family, crammed into a two-bedroom house in the ghetto on the outskirts of town, which she shares with her parents, her brother and her cousins. Apart from Mbapewa's father, nobody in the household has any work.

But Mbapewa is happy to be a mother, and intends to return to school in order to be able to get a job and look after her daughter. "I'm very proud," she says. "I want to support her on my own."

"I don't want her to make the mistakes I did," she added. What were those? "I made a lot. Like listening to my friends, going out and having fun. I want to be responsible under a man."

The birth of a baby in Namibia is cause not only for celebration but for ritual. Baby Caroline will be introduced to her ancestors at a special naming ceremony that usually takes place when the umbilical cord falls off, in about 10 days' time. Relatives and friends will gather round a sacred fire and pass the baby round, after smearing the men's hands with butter fat from a sacred cow. Anyone can name the baby, but he or she must promise a gift of a goat or a cow, so that the child starts out with something in the bank, in an Aids-ravaged country where only one person in six has a telephone and where life expectancy for a woman is 43.

For the Namibian daughter of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, that should not be a worry.

### **Worlds apart**

#### **\* POPULATION**

Namibia: 2 million

US: 298 million

#### **\* GDP**

Namibia: \$16.58bn

US: \$12.41 trillion

#### **\* GDP/HEAD**

Namibia: \$8,200

US: \$42,000

#### **\* INFANT MORTALITY**

Namibia: 48/1000

US: 6/1000

#### **\* LIFE EXPECTANCY**

Namibia: 43

US: 78

#### **\* HIV/AIDS**

Namibia: 21.3 per cent

US: 0.6 per cent

#### **\* TELEPHONE LINES**

Namibia: 127,900

US: 268,000,000

\* LITERACY (OVER AGE 15)

Namibia: 84 per cent

US: 99 per cent

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