

- Hon. Deputy Minister of Land Reform,
 - Permanent Secretary
 - Directors and Deputy Directors
 - Development Partners
 - Members of Staff
 - Members of the Media
-

1. May I extend a warm welcome to all members of staff. It gives me distinct pleasure to welcome you to the beginning of a new working year of 2019. It is my solemn trust and belief that you all had a wonderful and restful festive season with your families and that you are now set and focused to face new challenges and work hard and surpass the achievements of last year.
2. Before I go any further I would like to thank the Permanent Secretary for the opening remarks, as well as organising this event. At the beginning of each year I make it a priority to engage with both staff and management to have an opportunity to express my appreciation personally for your commitment to the overall achievement of our set goals and mandate in the past year and to guide one another on our priority areas in the year ahead.
3. Over the past several years, we have been focusing our efforts on executing specific actions that will enable us to create a conducive environment for success. In 2015, we commenced with the **Year of Planning**, in 2016 we had the Year of **Implementation**, in 2017 we

had the Year of **Re-dedication**, the past year was the Year of **Reckoning** and now, as we ready ourselves for the year 2019, we do so knowing that it will be a year in which we, as politicians, will have to account to the electorate; who are the ultimate sovereigns who have ceded their rights to administer by bestowing that responsibility to us. Thus, 2019 is the **Year of Accountability**.

4. The journey we traversed in 2018 was not easy. It was a challenging year, which forced us to engage in serious self-reflection, and ultimately allowed us to take crucial decisions which will benefit our country in the medium to long-term. Given the economic challenges we endeavored to work more efficiently and effectively with limited resources.

5. Last year, as a Ministry and Government, we also took a major step forward towards resolving the single most contentious and emotive issue in Namibia - ***the question of Land***. The Ministry of Land Reform was mandated under the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP), to ensure that a Second National Land Conference was held. I am glad that the 2nd National Land Conference that was held on the 1st to the 5th of October 2018, under the auspices of the office of the Prime Minister was successful. On this note, I would like to appreciate all members of staff for your efforts and work ethic which contributed in making the conference a success. The Conference came out with 169 resolutions and these have since been developed into an Implementation Action Plan for further actualization by all affected Offices, Ministries and Agencies.

LAND ACQUISITION AND RESETTLEMENT

6. In the **2017/2018 Financial Year**, the Ministry in its efforts to ensure equitable distribution and access to land acquired **Sixteen (16) farms** measuring **320300.2438 hectares** at a total cost of **N\$ N\$164,684,654.60**. During this period **12 families** were **resettled**. This number falls short in comparison to the number of households that requires land for various purposes. Although several innovative approaches to acquire land under the current legal framework are being introduced to encourage the release of land onto the market, the amount of land that is eventually acquired still falls short of the current demand as reflected by the number of Applicants for advertised farms and this trend continue to have a negative impact on the overall performance of the Ministry. In this regard I am happy to report that the Land Conference deliberated on this matter and key resolutions to address this issue were adopted and will assist the Ministry to respond to this predicament.

7. Related to land acquisition is the continual challenge of the price at which agricultural land is offered to the Government. Efforts to motivate for additional funding under the Land Reform Programme especially for land purchase have been made and we will keep flagging the issue at appropriate forums.

POST SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

8. In the area of post settlement, the Ministry has been systematically working on a phased approach to rehabilitate the dilapidated farm infrastructure on some Resettlement farms and reduce the current backlog. To this end I am glad that the Ministry has now acquired new solar pumping systems to be installed on **170 water units** which shall benefit **132 farmers**. This responds is important to ensure that the farmers continue to produce and contribute to the country's GDP. I am positive that with continued financial support, extension services, training and related pre and post settlement support our resettled farmers will make a positive impact towards their own livelihoods and the Agricultural Sector in general.

Additionally, four farming units in the //Kharas region had been installed with solar and boreholes have been drilled at Farm Mbambi in the Omaheke region, Farm Wagnog and Wermer in Otjozondjupa, and Klein Otuwapa in Erongo Region. Farming units in Erongo Region, Kunene and Otjozondjupa have been fenced and the programme is on-going.

SECURITY OF TENURE

- 9 The registration of land rights in communal areas is still on-going. The issue of secure tenure is a real concern with most of our stakeholders and due to its importance the Ministry in collaboration with our

development partners namely the European Union, KfW and GIZ has been promoting the registration of existing customary land rights in all Regions. Although there are challenges with this process the Ministry is working with various partners focusing on the bulk of unregistered land holdings. The Ministry has also conducted several awareness campaigns in the print, radio and television media in an effort to highlight the importance of this process. It is hoped that community involvement initiatives will continue as they assist in information sharing.

10 During the **2017/2018 Financial Year**, a total of **1423 land rights** were registered, while **683 parcels** were mapped, and **3257 were entered in the database**, and **1292 village maps were displayed**, **1039 land rights recorded** and **1037 certificates were issued**.

11 In pursuit of secure tenure in respect to the resettlement project a total of **27, 99 Year Lease Agreements** were signed and issued to beneficiaries. Further to this, in the area of lease administration on both Resettlement farms and Communal area leaseholds, a total of **N\$ 49, 263.1** was collected under the resettlement leases, while **N\$ 170, 111.40** was collected under the communal area leaseholds.

PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNAL LAND DEVELOPMENT [PCLD]

12 The overall objective of the PCLD programme is to improve rural communities' land based livelihoods through the development of

communal lands and a better integration into the mainstream economy. The programme throughout its implementation phase has provided a basis for improved land inventory and administration. This is done through the participation of targeted communities in the planning of infrastructure investments thereby encouraging other players and private investments in communal areas for increased economic development.

- 13 During the period under review, the PCLD has inspected and handed over water infrastructure at Okongo west in Ohangwena Region to benefit the Onghalulu cooperative. In Zambezi region work on the drilling of 8 boreholes in Mayeyi communal area has commenced. In Omusati region, the Otjetjekua farm infrastructure stands at 95% completion, pending the installation of boreholes. While in Ongandjera West work on the infrastructure is at 98% pending the completion of a 19km fence. At the Amarika area work completion stands at 75% due to the pending pipeline testing, while construction of Okatumba Solar Station and construction of a 68km fence in that area has also been completed.
- 14 A total of **1, 528 farmers** were mentored collectively in the Omusati and Kavango region in areas of marketing, rangeland management, cooperative business possibility, vaccination, disease control, bull scheme, record keeping, dehorning, castration and lick feeding respectively. Whilst in Kavango west and Kavango East a total of **164 farmers** were trained in various production related practical courses

and **101 farmers** attended the farmers' information day. In Omusati **63 farmers** (Otjetjekua **34** and Amarika **29**) were trained in animal health, cleaning campaign, auction strategies and gardening.

VALUATION AND LAND TAX

15. During the period under review, the Ministry issued **1254 land tax assessments** on request as per the revised High Court Interdict of 21st May 2018 translating to **N\$16 593 798.00** land tax collection. During the 2017/2018 Financial Year, the Ministry could not issue general assessments using the 2012 Valuation Roll due to a pending review case of the approval process of the 2012 Valuation Roll scheduled for 19 February 2019. I need to mention that the pending review case is seriously hampering the smooth implementation of land tax on commercial agricultural land in Namibia. However the preparations of the **2017-2022 Valuation Roll** is in progress and will be defended in the Valuation Court during the year.
- 16 On a positive side, during the current Financial Year, the Constitutional Court challenges of the land tax was dismissed by the Supreme Court in June 2018. The Land Valuation and Taxation Regulations were amended and gazetted with the belief that emerging issues stemming from the court challenges experienced in the past will be addressed. The Ministry also managed to facilitate the amendment and gazetting of the **Property Valuers Profession Act, of 2012, Act 7 of 2012**. This amendment will pave the way for the finalization of the regulations and registration instruments for Property Valuers in the Country. Once all

this subordinate legislation is in place, the Namibian Council for Property Valuers Profession will be revived. It is also further noted that the work of the Directorate of Valuation and Estate Management has evolved beyond serving only the internal clients of the Ministry of Land Reform but also serving external clients that includes other Government Ministries, Offices and Agencies (OMAs).

DEEDS REGISTRY

- 17 In the Deeds Registry, I am encouraged by the progress made with regard to the registration of urban and commercial land. The implementation of the **Computerised Deeds Registration System** should be commended for assisting the Department in its efforts to bring efficiency in property registration.

SURVEY AND MAPPING

- 18 I am pleased to inform that in accordance with the African Union Border Programme on the delimitation and demarcation of the African boundaries and cross border cooperation, the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of Botswana signed a Boundary Treaty. This historic Treaty was signed on the 5th of February 2018, in Windhoek by His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia and the former President of the Republic of Botswana, Lieutenant-General Dr. Khama Ian Khama. The main purpose of the Treaty is to reaffirm the boundary between the contracting Parties and

regulates matters related to cross border cooperation, beaconing of the boundary and boundary maintenance among other things.

19 In the same year, digitization of analogue records of **49 townships** were completed. The revision of topographic datasets for Kavango East, Kavango West, parts of Otjozondjupa and Erongo Regions, as well as Installation of 10 continuously operating reference stations will be completed this financial year. This data will assist in various national planning and application programmes. I am informed that the Office of the Surveyor-General acquired an aerial Surveying and Mapping drone, which will modernize our processes of assessing and demarcating Resettlement Farms. In the next financial 2019/2020 it is envisaged that the Directorate will focus on the following areas:

- The expansion of a modern geodetic infrastructure.
- The installation of 20 continuously operating reference stations.
- Upgrading and implementing the digital cadastral information system.
- Populating the cadastral information systems with data.
- Boundary beacon inspection with Angola, Zambia and South Africa.
- Capacitate survey teams for geodetic control and cadastral surveys.
- Acquire Satellite images of Southern Namibia to initiate map revision processes of Hardap and Karas Regions
- Defense of Namibia's Continental Shelf Extension submission to the UN.

20 Today as we officially mark the start of the 2019/2020 working year let us pause and remind ourselves of the implications of the fact that we have been seized with the implementation of the Land Reform Programme for the past 28 years. We need to embrace and attune our Ministerial plans to real situations and information that we get from our stakeholders. Our planning should not be done in a vacuum devoid of consultations, it should respond to the National call for land and post settlement support which is becoming more vocal with each passing year. To inform our thinking we should attune our focus of deliverables with the 2018 2nd National Land Conference Resolutions. I cannot over emphasise the importance of actualizing the 2018 Resolutions into our work plans for implementation.

THE NEW PROCUREMENT ACT

21 As you are all aware the Ministry is now implementing the New Procurement System as indicated in the Procurement Act no. 15 of 2015. I am proud to state that despite initial challenges due to the introduction of a new system, the Ministry is ensuring compliancy to the new system. I would like to applaud the Permanent Secretary for putting in place the Procurement Committee and all other structures whom are very active in delivering in accordance to this Act. As a Ministry we have been working closely with the Procurement Unit in the Ministry of Finance and on three occasions they have assessed our processes and found them in compliance. Of course when there are new things, challenges are eminent, however we commend the transparency and promotion of integrity of the new procurement system.

22 Lastly, I would like to commend the Ministry for a job well done in the face of many challenges that include inadequate funding and critical staff in some Departments as these shortages put a lot of pressure on existing staff. Faced with increasing demands and equipped with limited resources, I urge you to continue to devise innovative ways to the current challenges at hand. Let us continue working closely as a team in the spirit of Harambee.

I thank you.