

- **Director of Ceremonies,**
 - **Honorable Mr. Bernadus Swartbooi, Deputy Minister of Land Reform**
 - **Honourable Dr. Samuel Mbambo, Governor of Kavango East Region,**
 - **Your Worship, the Mayor of Rundu Town, Mrs. Sirkka Leevi,**
 - **Dr. Shivute, Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands Reform,**
 - **Ms. Lusepani, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Land Reform**
 - **Ms. Mandimika, Special Advisor to the Minister of Lands**
 - **Directors, Deputy Directors, Chiefs**
 - **Development Partners**
 - **Members of the Media,**
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1. It gives me pleasure to officially open this important event, the Annual Planning Workshop my first since my appointment as Minister of Land Reform. First and foremost allow me this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Honourable Governor of Kavango East Region, and Her Worship the Mayor of Rundu town for gracing this event. Your presence is indeed appreciated and may I express my appreciation for the warm welcome to your beautiful town and region.

2. It is a requirement of Government that ministries develop annual plans to outline how they will implement the strategic objectives as set out in the Strategic Plans year on year. It is good to learn that, it is our corporate culture to meet at the beginning of each Financial Year to review the work of the previous year, assess how we responded to our mandate and to map out the road ahead.
3. A planning meeting of this nature is an important step in the process of critical introspection and soul searching that should be carried out throughout the entire Ministry. This planning session should, thus enable us to focus on how best we can position ourselves as a Ministry to deliver the expected results to the Nation. We should maintain a Ministry that is service-driven and responsive to the needs and priorities of those it intends to serve.
4. Our mandate as a Ministry compliments the overall Government policy in terms of poverty eradication, industrialization, Economic growth, and employment creation. This we can achieve through fast-tracking the development of communal areas, the construction of Regional Offices in Opuwo, Rundu and the Katima Mulilo Regional Offices. Opuwo was inaugurated last year, Rundu and Katima Mulilo offices are at an advanced stage.
5. **LAND ACQUISITION AND RESETTLEMENT** is a key Programme in the Ministry and is aimed at redressing the imbalances of the past. During the **2014/2015 Financial Year**, the Ministry in its efforts to ensure equitable distribution and access to land, acquired **Forty (40) farms** measuring

185,929.1375 hectares at a total cost of **Two Hundred and Twenty Seven Million, Seven Hundred and Sixty Eight Thousand, Eight Four and Seventy Six Cents (N\$ 227,768,084.76)**. This informs us that, the several innovative approaches to land acquisition that have been introduced under the current legal framework, to encourage the release of land onto the market are bearing positive results. One such effort is the formalization of the **Farm Price Negotiation Committee** through an amendment to the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act No. 6 of 1995 to allow sellers and the state the opportunity to negotiate the purchase price.

6. The **Lands Tribunal** was inaugurated last year and provide an avenue for recourse for those aggrieved by the price. The land prices study that was done has brought to fore essential factors that should assist Government to intervene at appropriate and strategic points. Further the recommendations of the concluded “**Study on Agricultural Land Prices in Namibia**” provides a basis for further action in this regard.
7. During the period under review **139 families** were resettled, with the number of them comprising **53 beneficiaries** from the **Youth category**.

In view of the **Cabinet resolutions on land reform** that provide, a road map for the implementation of land reform going forward direct that, the Annual Plans be reviewed to reflect the Cabinet directives to devise a strategy for land acquisition that is linked to the budget, and with regard to pricing to fast track the reorganization of the structure of the Price Negotiation Committee. We must work and fast track the process to legislate the valuation methods and we must implement the study to establish who needs land so that we target the

needs of the population. **Methods of land Acquisition** and the strategy must be extended to look an implement the constitutional provision to expropriate with just compensation. His Excellency the President in the State of the Nation reiterated that if the **laws are a constraint** let us amend them. Hence the legal team under the directive of the Attorney General has begun looking at the legal aspects that need to be revised in the effort to speed up Land Reform. To this end I call upon the Office of the Permanent Secretary to ensure the long awaited **criteria for expropriation** and the **Land Bill** as well as the **Deeds Bill** and the **Land Tax Regulation , Flexible Land Tenure Regulations** and any other legal instrument that is under review is submitted to the land reform legal team to review it. I would however wish for us to have a day or two to familiar use ourselves with all the outstanding amendments before we submit to the legal team.

8. **The work of the Ministry of Land Reform is based on administration of land rights.** In this regard it is important that **the legal framework** is attuned to our mandate. I direct the Office of the Permanent Secretary to arrange another retreat where we shall go through all the pending legal work so that I and the Deputy Minister can have an insight and give guidance where necessary.
9. The initiatives from the Ministry must communicate a common theme and must at all times be aligned to the national agenda that is poverty eradication, industrialization, economic growth and if there are obstacles within the laws let us use the beginning of the financial year to unlock them.

10. Through the Cabinet directives we are reminded as a Ministry that the land acquisition programme must **not go on in perpetuity**, it must be completed and to achieve this, we must have clear land acquisition targets that are informed by the different land needs. We have to put more effort and vigour in establishing **where land is** that can be brought in the land reform programme. Here I mean *land other than commercial farm that we have been purchase. This programme drains Government of resources as we can only buy few farms. If we proceed at the current prices we can only buy 40 farms with the 40 million allocated for land acquisition, because we pay on average 10 million Namibian Dollars per farm and this is not sustainable. That will benefit very few landless people. Given the above, we have to look at state land that we can develop together with the Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry to benefit more Namibians.*

11. In the area of resettlement there is need speed up the allocation of land to ensure water and related farm infrastructure for resettled farmers are still intact when farmers take up occupation. As a Ministry we need to systematically address **post settlement** issues while continuously engaging our stakeholders to ensure that functions that are not within our mandate are handed over and we focus on what we are good at. In this regard, I expect the **Ministry of Land Reform Regional offices to map out a clear strategy for each regions demonstrating the priorities of the and needs if each regions.** I need to see special attention given to farms already allocated and that an **annual plan is developed at regional level** that will provide clear deliverables and focused monitoring. Your plan will include water infrastructure to be worked and generally what farmers need to use the land

productively. Ensure the boundaries of farming units are properly demarcated. The plan must include **all other activities of the ministry in any region across departments**. I am certain that as a Ministry if we get these planning and land administration issues sorted out the resettled farmers will be able to use the land productively.

12. To support the programme of farm management and rehabilitation, there is need for a **data repository center to avail information on farms that have been allocated and serviced so that the budgetary allocations for this function can be stretched to cater to requests from all the Regions**. I am positive that with continued financial support, extension services, pre and post settlement training, mentorship and related post settlement support, our resettled farmers will make a positive impact to the Agricultural Sector and to the National Development Plan. We must however surrender functions that are not under our mandate as they may cause us to fail to deliver on our tasks.

13. The registration of land rights is a continuous process in any country. In Namibia we are tasked with the registration of all land. In communal land registration the minister granted an indefinite extension in the Government Notice of 28 February 2014. The ministry has engaged various approaches and with donor support we embarked on an intensive awareness campaigns in the print, radio and television media have been undertaken with success in an effort to highlight the importance of this process. To date **90138 communal land rights** have been verified and mapped and deeds entries captured in eleven Regions, while a total of **159 521 communal land rights** were mapped countrywide.

14. The production of the **Integrated Regional Land Use Plans** for all Regions should be prioritized and expedited. These Plans will facilitate the zoning of the country and the appropriate utilisation of land. It is important that the ministry engage all stakeholders to appreciate the importance of these Land Use Plans and to contribute towards the development of policy guidelines on the national Land Use agenda. The current planning of the use of land is very fragmented and it is through these plans that a coordinated approach to land use in Namibia will be driven. This item has been on our budget for the past twenty years and I am informed of the increased momentum to finalise the work.
15. One of the consensus resolutions of the 1991 land conference was to implement **a land tax on all commercial agricultural farms to benefit the land Reform** programme. To this end 257 million Namibian dollars have been collected. The introduction of the 2012 Valuation Roll saw massive opposition and a challenge in the high court that challenges the constitutionality of the Land tax.
16. We, as a Government, are aware of the effort by some Namibians to derail well intended programmes of the State such as land tax and the land reform programme in general. As a Government we will take note and we will do everything in our power to maintain the peace that we fought for so hard. To date the 2007 Valuation Roll has been used to collect land tax for the 2013/14 Financial Year, where N\$46 million is expected to be collected. I wish to thank the farmers for their contribution to the land Reform programme through the payment of tax.

17. In line with good land governance, my office will continued to engage the farming community through various platforms to address issues of common concern and together to look for ways to complete the Land Reform efficiently within the available resources.
18. **The Deeds Registry**, is our national land depository for land rights in Namibia. The Deeds Office continue to register the various rights over land and it is anticipated that with the amendments proposed in the Deeds Act we shall see an improvement in access and affordability in the property registration by all citizens.
19. I am encouraged by the progress made with regard to the registration of urban and commercial land. The implementation of the **Computerized Deeds Registration System** (CDRS) remains a concern and I urge the Directorate to develop a plan to get the process finalized. It is a very important project as it will bring about increased efficiency in property registration in Namibia. During the 2014/2015 Financial Year, a total of **29 555** transactions were registered. Although there are marked improvements in the operations of the Deeds Office there is need to improve on various processes to bring about efficiency. I would like to see a harmonise land registration that covers all land rights in Namibia as provided in the Land Bill.
20. I am happy that the **Sectional Titles Act** and its **Regulations** have been finalised. I am also aware that the **Deeds Bill** has passed through the Cabinet Committee on Legislation (CCL). I urge the Directorate to ensure that the Bill

incorporate the directive by the Cabinet through the land reform road map so that it is submitted to the Attorney General to align with Cabinet directives.

21. I am pleased to note that, **34 216** Deeds documents were digitized during 2014/2015 and an amount of **N\$ 7,024,485.00** was collected at the Deeds Registry as State revenue and I commend the Registrar of Deeds and the staff in this respect.

22. With Regards to Survey and Mapping. The amendment of the Namibian Constitution to replace the Namibia Delimitation Commission with the Namibia Boundary Delimitation and Demarcation Commission was gazetted on 13 October 2014. The Directorate has since completed the first draft of the Boundary Delimitation and Demarcation Bill and awaits management input. The demarcation, survey and computation of the coordinates of the rectilinear boundary between Namibia and Botswana has been completed. Namibia has submitted a draft Treaty to the counterpart in Botswana and the two countries have requested the AU Border Programme to provide technical support to draw up and finalize the Treaty.

23. The Establishment and Maintenance of the National Geodetic Network
The Observation and Computation of the Coordinates for Five
Continuously Operating Reference Stations and the First Order Geodetic
Network Beacons in Zone 1 to 5" is in progress. The financial framework has been submitted to the Ministry of Finance to give an indication of what will be required to roll out the geodetic network nationally. This roll out will require support and additional human resources. I learned the Department has

developed a human resources needs and training plan that includes a budget proposal for inclusion in the Namibia Scholarship Fund for the next ten years. I do however wish to see an improvement in the Registration of Namibian Surveyors.

24. Mapping, development of national fundamental data sets concerns the development of Aerial Images for central Namibia that were acquired as well as the production of orthophotos. It is pleasing to note that 60% of Omaheke Region Topographic Datasets and maps were revised. Also, the 1:1 million administrative map of Namibia that reflects the amended constituencies and regions of Namibia by the delimitation commission in 2013 were revised. We have completed School Performance analysis using GIS Technology showing Grade 12 results for schools in two regions, namely Khomas and Oshana. A Cartographic data set for Windhoek Tourist Map was also produced.

25. The Establishment of the Namibia Cadastral Land Information System (LIS) is functional. I am glad to report that a lot of work has gone into this process and the harmonization of the land information systems in the Ministry and Government in general. We are collaborating with the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development to develop a data base with one Unique Parcel Identifier for local authority land parcels. I wish to see that this collaborative work will be extended to the Communal Land Registration System NCLS to facilitate the provision of a unified land numbering system in the country. Numbering of land parcels in any country including Namibia is the responsibility of the Surveyor General and in an approach of coordinating our works and avoiding duplications, I urge the Permanent Secretary to ensure

that there is collaboration between the two Departments to Harmonise the LIS and the Northern Communal Lands Registration System –NCLS.

26. Today as we officially mark the start of the 2015/2016 working year. Let us remind ourselves of the fact that we are seized with the implementation of the Land Reform Programme and the need to embrace and attune all our projects to the realization of this national priority. Taking into account the situations and information that we get from the various communities on the ground, I will re-emphasise that 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. As a Ministry we have at our disposal a fantastic resource of various Reports and Studies carried out at our request, let us review and implement those recommendations. Amongst these documents I am told, is our famous PTT recommendations that has been the basis of our land reform programme since 2005, ten years henceforth is a good time to stop and review.

27. At the **2012 SWAPO Party National Congress**, the land issue was one of the most discussed and talked about subject. Resolutions pertaining to our sector were taken and these **Resolutions, read together with the goals of NDP4, the 1991 Land Conference Resolutions, the current legal and policy framework, should guide and hold each and every one of us accountable**. The common key message in these documents is the need to respond to the demands of all our stakeholders and to implement the planned development projects that are meant to enhance the livelihoods of our people in the shortest possible time and within the limited resources.

28. I would also like to commend the efforts by the Ministry towards the revision and strengthening of various policies notably the **Expropriation Criteria; the Guidelines on the Removal of Illegal Fences in Communal areas, the National Resettlement Policy and the draft Social Welfare Resettlement Criteria**. Although there is on-going work pertaining to policy clarification and adjustment in the various Directorates the revision of policies we can only succeed if we coordinate and ensure the Ministry's mandate is addressed across Departments in one voice.

29. I recognize that the land administration is an ongoing process and we have been engaged in setting up systems and procedures. We have succeeded because of the collaboration with various key stakeholders especially our **development partners** I therefore, want to use this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, to express our sincere appreciation for the financial and technical support given to the Ministry by the Federal Republic of Germany, through KfW and GIZ, Swedish Government through SIDA and the European Union.

30. **I wish to conclude by saying, to be in the Civil service is a privilege and we are here to serve the Nation.** Let each one of us demonstrate our commitment to service delivery by responding timely to queries. This also means recognizing that sometimes Government does not have all the answers and that as public officials we need to draw on what our people know. Let us continue consulting and involving our people in shaping the policies that affect their lives. I thank you for your hard work and dedication. I urge you to

work harder and pull along those who are not able. Let us together identify and remove the bottlenecks that hamper progress.

I wish you a good year and God's blessings.