

RUNDU MINISTER'S SPEECH

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MINISTRY'S REVIEW AND PLANNING WORKSHOP

Director of Ceremonies,

Honourable Dr. Samuel Mbambo, Governor of Kavango East Region,

Your Worship, the Mayor of Rundu Town, Mrs. Sirka Leevi,

Ms. Nashilongo Shivute, Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands Reform,

Ms. Esther Lusepani, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Land Reform and Resettlement

**Mrs. Prisca Mandimika, Special Advisor to the Minister of Lands and Resettlement,
Directors and Deputy Directors**

Members of the Media,

1. The following are the highlights and achievements made by all the Departments towards the realisation of the Ministry's mandate in the various areas of responsibility within the given legal framework during the 2014/2015 Financial Year.

2. Our mandate as a Ministry as read together with the **Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment Growth [TIPEG]** in terms of employment creation through fast-tracking the development of communal areas, has yielded results; the construction of Regional Offices in Opuwo is complete and the Office was officially inaugurated in October 2014. The Rundu Regional Office will be inaugurated during the course of this year, while the Katima Mulilo Regional Office construction is expected to start earnestly during the 2015/16 Financial Year.

LAND ACQUISITION AND RESETTLEMENT

3. In the **2014/2015 Financial Year**, the Ministry in its efforts to ensure equitable distribution and access to land acquired **Forty (31) 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. We commend the Department for this effort. Of note is the current work of the **Farm Price Negotiation Committee** which has since been formalized by the current amendment to the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act No. 6 of 1995 to grant land owners the opportunity to negotiate with Government on the purchase price of agricultural land. Although the work of this Committee experienced initial teething challenges due to perceptions its work has started to yield the expected results and is building on lasting engagements and trust between the

Ministry and the land owners. During this period **139 families** were resettled, with the majority comprising of **53 beneficiaries** from the **Youth category**.

4. The issue of the price at which agricultural land is offered to the Government remains a concern to all. 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.

I therefore direct that the Department of Land Reform Resettlement and Regional Programme Implementation [LRPPI] continue to on the current path to devise strategies which review and maps out the land acquisition process in the next Financial Year. As a Ministry our 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 of our country.

FINALISATION OF THE CRITERIA FOR EXPROPRIATION

5. The Ministry has developed expropriation criteria that would be used as one of the constitutionally provided methods of land acquisition. The criteria was shared with and endorsed by the National Land Reform Forum. The criteria would eventually form part of the Regulations of the Agricultural [Commercial] Land Reform Act, 1995 Act No.5 of 1995.

POST SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

6. In the area of post settlement support there is need to mobilize and seek sectoral and inter-ministerial support in order to respond to basic needs for water and related farm infrastructure for resettled farmers. As a Ministry we need to moot a comprehensive approach that will systematically address post settlement issues while continuously engaging our stakeholders at policy and budgetary levels. In this regard, I expect the relevant Department in close liaison with the Regional Deputy Directors to map out a clear strategy that covers all regions demonstrating the prioritizing of the farms to be worked on in terms of rehabilitation of water infrastructure. I am certain that as a Ministry if we get these planning issues and basic work sorted out most resettled farmers will be able to produce.

7. To support the programme of farm 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.

SECURITY OF TENURE

8. The registration of land rights in communal areas is still on-going following the indefinite extension in the Government Notice of 28 February 2014. The issue of secure tenure is a real concern to our stakeholders. The Communal

Land Support Project has been extensively engaged in this respect with positive results. Several 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.

INTEGRATED REGIONAL LAND USE PLANS

9. 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 all stakeholders are vigorously engaged to contribute towards the 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 pleased with the increased momentum to finalise the work

LAND TAX

In the interim, 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. However, due to the drought situation experienced in 2012/2013, the Ministry took note the call by His Excellency, the President to assist farmers and found it necessary to waive land tax for the year in order to provide relief to our commercial farmers.

10. In line with good land governance, my office will continue to engage the farming community through various platforms and in the presence of the Right Honorable Prime Minister, the farming community was also given an opportunity to engage Government at the highest level. As a Government our door is always open to all our stakeholders to discuss issues in a transparent manner and listen to each other.

DEEDS REGISTRY

11. 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 **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.

12. Meanwhile the **Sectional Titles Act** and its **Regulations** which were finalized earlier came into operation on the 15th of December 2014. It is important to ensure that there is an implementation plan and that all stakeholders are consulted. Although there are marked improvements in the operations of the Deeds Office there is need to improve on various processes to bring about

efficiency and to address the concerns that were raised in the World Bank Report on how to do business consistently.

13. I am glad that **the Deeds Bill** has passed through the Cabinet Committee on Legislation (CCL). I urge the Directorate to make sure that the bill is in Parliament before the end of this Financial Year. The Computerization of the Deeds Registry is still on-going and to this end I urge the Directorate to develop a Road Map to show the steps and resources required to digitalize that office. There is no doubt that a digitized property registration system will facilitate speedy registration and tracking of property lodged.

14. I am please though, to inform that, **34 216** deeds documents were digitized during 2014/2015. In terms of revenue collection a total of **N\$ 7,024,485.00** was collected at the Deeds Registry as State revenue and I comment the Registrar of Deeds and the staff in this respect. On a related note, we have also observed that at the end of each Financial Year there is always a rush at the Deeds office, our Stakeholders wish to see management response to the situation and make provisions for adequate staff component that is responsive to the demands of our client. Simultaneously I call on our clients who deal with property registration to avoid last time rush to the Deeds Office but to handle projects with the same speed right through the year to avoid the year end rush.

SURVEY AND MAPPING

15. 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.

The Establishment and Maintenance of the National Geodetic Network.

16. 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 **IGS-Station WIND** was upgraded on the 8th of November 2014, while the financial framework for the upgrade and maintenance of the Geodetic Infrastructure in Namibia was completed on the 4th of November 2014. 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 the Department has developed a human resources needs and budget for inclusion in the Namibia Scholarship Fund for the next ten years.

Mapping, development of national fundamental data sets

17. The Aerial Images for central Namibia were acquired and the production of orthophotos. 60% of Omaheke Region Topographic Datasets and maps were revised. 100% of the 1:1 million administrative map of Namibia that reflects new changes for example the amended constituencies and regions of Namibia by the delimitation commission in 2013 were revised. School Performance analysis using GIS Technology (Grade 12 results for schools in two regions, namely Khomas and Oshana) were also introduced. A Cartographic data set for Windhoek Tourist Map was also produced.

The Establishment of the Namibia Cadastral Land Information System.

18. The Cadastral Land Information System (LIS) is functional and an LIS maintenance and support Agreement was signed with ESRI-NeA. I am glad to inform 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. The Department of Survey and Mapping is collaborating with the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing to develop a data base with one Unique Parcel Identifier for local authority land parcels. It is hoped that this collaborative work will be extended to the Communal Land Registration System to facilitate the provision of a unified land numbering system in the country.

POLICY ISSUES

19. 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 our projects to

real situations and information that we get from the various communities. 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 a fantastic resource of various Reports and Studies carried out at our request, let us review and implement those recommendations.

20. 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 needs 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.

21. 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 demonstrates the Ministry's ability to listen and respond to the needs of our communities. It goes without saying that for us to succeed in our various

Directorates we have to coordinate and ensure the Ministry's mandate is addressed across Departments in one voice.

LEGAL ISSUES

22. The importance of finalizing the draft **Land Bill** is apparent to all in this Ministry. It is our shared vision and understanding that the Land Bill will contribute to an effective Land Reform Programme in our Country. This year it is also expected that the Deeds Registry Bill that has been under discussion for a long time now should be put through the paces in anticipation of being tabled in Parliament during the current sitting. I know I can count on your continued support during the process of getting these urgent amendments and bills enacted into legislation.

23. I implore the relevant Departments to focus on the Regulations to the **Flexible Land Tenure Act, the Sectional Titles Act and the Valuations Professional Act** in order to facilitate the implementation of these legislations. I am informed that plans are at an advanced stage for the implementation of the Property Valuers Professional Act through the registration of a Council to oversee the registration of Professional Valuers and the drafting of Valuation Standards in Namibia. This is commendable in light of the several challenges that have been experienced in this area.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

24. I also want to use this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, to appreciate the financial and technical support in land administration and management given to the Ministry by the Federal Republic

of Germany, through KfW and GIZ, Swedish Government through LAPCA and the European Union.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

25. Civil service is a privilege and we are here to serve the Nation. Let 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.