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REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY HON. ROYAL JK /UI/O/OO

**DEPUTY MINISTER: MARGINALIZED
COMMUNITIES**

**15TH SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON
INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

10 MAY 2016

NEW YORK
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Your Excellency Mr. Alvaro Esteban Pop, Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentleman,

Namibia would like to congratulate The Chair for your election as the Chairperson of this Forum.

On the implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the mandates areas being of health, education, human rights, economic and social development, environment and culture, Namibia would like to comment as follows:

- Namibia voted way back for this Declaration in 2007 with other 143 members states of United Nations and had since attended almost all the sessions of the Forum and participated effectively.
- In 2005, the government of the Republic of Namibia established the San Development Programme in the Office of the Prime Minister
- In 2009, the Special Programme was transformed into a Directorate San Development Programme within the Office of the Prime Minister
- Currently in 2015, the Division Marginalised Communities has been relocated to the Presidency headed by Hon. Royal J.K Ui/o/oo, Deputy Minister for Marginalised Communities. This is the first time in the history of our country that a Deputy Minister from the marginalised communities has been appointed by H.E Dr Hage G Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia to head this Division
- The main objective of this Division is to integrate San, Ovatie and Ovatjimba communities into the mainstream of the economy and they are referred to as the Marginalised Communities in our Country and not Indigenous Peoples

like in other part of the World. The reason being, that in Namibia, we all see ourselves as indigenous people of our country and the African Continent.

- The Division for Marginalised Communities is an essential government utility for the attainment of the National Development Plans, Namibia's Vision 2030 and the United Nations' Agenda 2030 in Namibia's stride towards its constitutional duty to serve all its citizens equally.
- As part of the implementation of this Programme; Education, Resettlement and Livelihood Support programs were identified as key development components to poverty eradication amongst these communities. Hence, the government has prioritised them as key areas towards addressing the socio-economic situation of the marginalised communities in a spirit of Harambee Prosperity Plan.
- The Programme has also enjoyed, throughout the years, the continuous support and positive relations with local public and private stakeholders, and multilateral organisations such as the ILO and the Spanish Corporation (AECID).

PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES

(a) EDUCATION SUPPORT

The high illiteracy rate amongst marginalized communities are receiving attention to ensure that learners and students from these communities are having access to education like all Namibians. The division coordinates amongst others the identification of beneficiaries for education support, facilitate enrolment of students in tertiary institutions and render financial and transportation support to learners and students. The Office also coordinates projects for construction of permanent building for schools, early childhood centres, and teachers houses at various settlements. The estimated budget used for this education support program constitutes 60% of the total allocated budget to Division for Marginalized Communities during 2015/2016.

(b) RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION

Access to land plays a vital role in the development of these communities in Namibia, therefore, the provision of land to the landless is regarded as an important development aspect.

- I am pleased to inform that the Government, through the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement has procured various farms for the resettlement of San Communities in Kunene Region, where more than 800 households have been resettled.
- In addition, Farm Ondera in Oshikoto Region has also been purchased for the resettlement of approximately 350 households for San communities from the Oshivelo resettlement area.
- The government has also resettled more than 278 households San community in Otjozondjupa region at Farm Uitkomst. These total to more than 65000 hectares of resettlement areas for these communities so far.
- During this period, the government has also resettled San communities in communal areas in Kavango East Region, Ohangwena Region and in Omaheke Region.
- * At all the resettlement farms and village- post resettlement support continues to be availed to the communities. These includes, Agronomic and Horticultural projects, distribution of live stocks, access to water and housing, education and health facilities, supplies of farming materials and equipment, and general provision of post resettlement support;

(c) LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

- Due to extreme poverty amongst the marginalised communities, the Office has continuous to distribute the food rations amongst these communities under the San Feeding Programme on a monthly basis.

- Income generation projects have been implemented in almost all resettlement farms and villages such as garden projects, wood projects, etc...
- The provision of coffins to these communities has been identified by the government to make sure that communities are receiving dignified burials and an amount for the provisioning of coffins is not less than N\$ 80 000 per month.
- The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) currently also launched its humanitarian, income generating and infrastructure development projects in Tsumkwe Constituency (Otjozondjupa Region) to benefit the San Communities.

In conclusion it is worth to mention that all these projects and activities are not implemented without any challenges such as minimal budget allocation and manpower provision due to limited resources. Therefore, the Government of Namibia is requesting all other stakeholders to assist where possible to uplift the living standard of these communities.

Lastly, the Constitution of Namibia provides for the Bill of Rights and all Namibian are treated equally before the laws and are allowed to practice their own culture without any discrimination.

I thank you.