



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the
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STATEMENT BY MR. ROYAL /UI/O/OO, DEPUTY
MINISTER FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES,
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
AT THE 18TH SESSION OF THE UN PERMANENT
FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES ON ITEM 9:
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: GENERATION,
TRANSMISSION AND PROTECTION

23 April 2019

**check against delivery*

Chairperson,

1. The situation of marginalized communities in Namibia has been a challenging one to address. Developmental interventions have at times been rendered ineffective by several factors such as inappropriateness of interventions that have created structural dependency; segregation and isolation of marginalized communities; tensions with other communities; alcohol abuse and other social problems; remote and nomadic lifestyles; neglect to build social institutions and leadership structures of marginalized communities; lack of supplementary support and inadequate extension services; low-levels of

education among marginalized communities; lack of culture to keep and accumulate assets, and lack of dedicated strategies that defines integration and mainstreaming, which results in an ad-hoc approach to the plight of marginalized communities. Data on marginalized communities is especially difficult to obtain, as by law data collection by ethnicity is prohibited and some marginalized communities are sub-groups within a larger ethnic group.

Chairperson,

2. Namibia is however very committed to improving the lives of those left furthest behind, including many in the Marginalized communities. Alongside our commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Namibia continues to provide various social and economic services to our marginalized communities. Namibia also continues to celebrate the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on the 09 August which affords the marginalized communities the opportunity to come together around the country.

3. In 2005, the Government of Namibia established the San Development Programmed for the San, Ovatie and Ovatjimba communities as Marginalized groups in the Office of the Prime Minister. The main objective of this Program is to integrate San, Ovatie and Ovatjimba communities into the mainstream of the economy and society by providing access to services they would not otherwise have due to the virtue of living in remote areas.

Chairperson,

4. To integrate Marginalized communities, the Government has identified and implemented Education, Land Resettlement, Livelihood Support, and the Special San Feeding Programs as key development components to poverty eradication amongst these communities.
5. Access to education remains our highest priority with regards to providing services to indigenous peoples. Within my department, at least 60% of the budget goes to educational activities, including for paying for student fees, monthly allowances for student has increase this year from N\$1000 to N\$1500 and also give grade 10-12 N\$ 500 every month for them to buy cosmetics. We have provide all students with accommodation that are at tertiary intuition and we do back to school campaign every year at primary school where by we deliver motivational speeches and give the kids school stationary.
6. With access to educations, we know that many indigenous communities are in vulnerable positions because oftentimes, their native languages are not used as a medium of instruction or first language. Namibia is therefore currently working on making different San languages, including Hailom, !Kung, Jul'hoansi, ≠Aulleisi and !Xoo part of the curriculum in schools starting from primary school, in fact, some are been taught at tertiary intuitions now . This is important for several reasons, least of all that it enables children from these marginalized communities to hold onto their mother tongue in increasingly mono and bilingual societies.

Chairperson,

7. Access to land also plays a vital role in the development of these communities in Namibia, the provision of land to the landless is regarded as an important development aspect and the government continues its program of resettling marginalized peoples on different farms that the government acquires.
8. 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 livestock's, access to water and housing, education and health facilities, supplies of farming materials and equipment's, and general provision of post resettlement support;

Chairperson,

9. In 2017, the government together with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs held a consultative conference in Namibia on the drafting of a White Paper Policy on Indigenous Peoples. Namibia, through the office of Marginalized communities, has conducted numerous consultative meetings with marginalized communities and various stakeholders during 2018 on the drafting of the White Paper on the Rights of Indigenous/Marginalized Communities in Namibia, and this process have been successfully concluded. We forwarded final draft to the Ministry of Justice for their final input so that this document can be finalized for Cabinet approval during the course of this year.

10. We would like to acknowledge that we need to do more as a country for the marginalized communities but due to limited resources, we can only implement actions within our means. We therefore, urge the United Nations through its agencies to continue and strengthen its support to member states in the implementation of their programs. We also call upon the international community to support the efforts of governments as they strive to improve the lives of marginalized communities.

I thank you,