

Item 8

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Republic of Namibia



STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE ROYAL J. K. /UI/O/OO, MP

DEPUTY MINISTER: MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

16TH SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

UNITED NATIONS

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25 APRIL 2017

Your Excellency the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Your Excellencies
Dear Delegates

I bring warm greetings from the Republic of Namibia and indeed from the African Continent.

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

Madam Chair,

As we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the achievement thereof, Namibia would like to comment as follows:

- Namibia voted for and signed this Declaration in 2007 with other 143 member states of United Nations and had since attended almost all the sessions of the Forum and participated effectively.
- Namibia also participated in the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples in 2014.
- The International Day of the World's Indigenous People on the 09 August is also celebrated in Namibia every year
- In 2005, the government of the Republic of Namibia has established the San Development Programme for the San, Ovaherero and Ovambo communities as marginalised groups in the Office of the Prime Minister.
- The main objective of this Program is to integrate San, Ovaherero and Ovambo 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 we all as Namibians seeing ourselves as indigenous people of our country and the African Continent.

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- In 2015, this Program has been now relocated to the Presidency as a Division Marginalised Communities headed by Hon. Royal J.K /Ui/o/oo, Deputy Minister for Marginalised Communities. This was 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 Division Marginalised Communities is an essential government utility for the attainment of the National Development Plans, Vision 2030, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and contributes towards Government's constitutional duty to serve all its citizens equally.
 - To intergrate the marginalised communities, the government has identified and implemented Education, Land Resettlement, Livelihood Support, and the Special Feeding Programs as key development components to poverty eradication amongst these communities.
 - These Programs are implemented to make sure that young people from these communities are back and stays at school, and that communities are resettled properly and have equal access to land, and a special feeding program is implemented on a monthly basis to avoid any starvation and malnutrition amongst these communities.
 - These Programs also enjoyed throughout the years the continuous support and positive relations with local public and private stakeholders, and multilateral organisations such as the ILO, Spanish Corporation (AECID), and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA).
 - Namibian Government also invited the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples to visit Namibia and would like to thank him for his positive reporting on our achievements and his recommendations.
 - This year 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.

- We would like to acknowledge that we need to do more as a country for the marginalised communities but due to limited resources, we can only just implement actions within our means.
- We therefore, urge the United Nations and United Nations Agencies to continue and strengthen its support to member states in the implementation of its Programs.
- We also urge the United Nations system to continue with the implementation of equal representations of all indigenous peoples from different continents in its decision making process.
- In conclusion, as we are gathering here as peoples of the World, at the United Nations celebrating the tenth anniversary of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Republic of Namibia would once again affirm and commit itself to the implementation and ratification of all the United nations Declarations, Conventions, and Treaties as a Member state.

I Thank You

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA FOR THE MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

(a) EDUCATION SUPPORT

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

- It is delighting to mention that the Government through the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement has procured various farms for the resettlement of San Communities in Outjo Constituency (Kunene Region). These include farms namely: Seringkop, Koppies, Ballalaika, Mooiplaas, Toevlug, Nuchas, Werda, 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 x households San communities from 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 such Likwaterera (Kavango East Region), Oshandi (Ohangwena Region), and also in Omaheke Region.
- 20 x Project Houses for construction in Corridor 17 (Omaheke Region) has been launched.
- In Kunene Region (Epupa Constituency), the Ovatie and Ovatjimba communities have been resettled in three villages namely: Otjomuru, Otjikojo, and Ohaihuua.
- 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, access to water and housing, education and health facilities, supplies of farming materials and equipment's, and general provision of post resettlement support;

(c) LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

- 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.
- Due to extreme poverty amongst the marginalised communities, the Office continue to distribute the food rations amongst these communities under the Special 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 Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) currently launched an humanitarian, income generating and infrastructure development projects in Tsumkwe area (Otjozondjupa region) for the benefit of 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 requested 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 Namibians are treated equally before the laws and are allowed to practice their own culture without any discrimination.