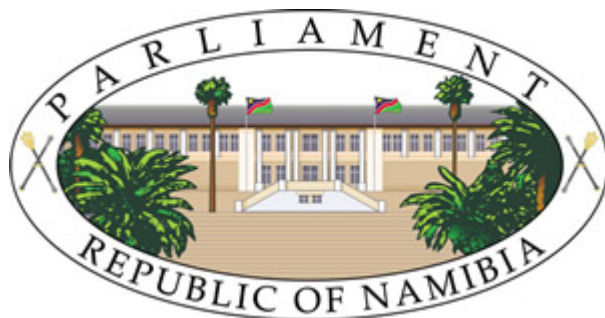


# REPORT



**ON THE DEPUTY SPEAKER'S  
OUTREACH  
PROGRAMME  
TO THE OMAHEKE REGION  
26 MAY – 1 JUNE 2009**

**“Enhancing Public Participation in the Legislative Process”**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary	5
2.	Introduction	7
3.	Geopolitical Information on the Omaheke Region	8
4.	<b>Highlights from Interactions with Political Leadership of the Region</b>	9
	Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration	9
	Ministry of Information Communication Technology/NBC	9
	Ministry of Mines and Energy	9
	Ministry of Regional & Local Government, Housing & Rural Development	10
	Ministry of Works and Transport	10
5.	<b>Highlights from Interactions with various Communities</b>	10
5.1	<u>Gobabis Constituency</u>	10
	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	10
	Ministry of Education	11
	Ministry of Health and Social Services	11
	Ministry of Lands and Resettlement	11
	National Assembly	11
	Ministry of Regional & Local Government, Housing & Rural Development	12
	Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture	12
5.2	<u>Aminuis Constituency</u>	12
	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	12
	Ministry of Health and Social Services	12
	Ministry of Mines and Energy	13
	Ministry of Works and Transport	13

5.3 <u>Kalahari Constituency</u>	13
Ministry of Education	13
Ministry of Health and Social Services	14
Ministry of Regional & Local Government Housing & Rural Development	14
5.4 <u>Otjombinde Constituency</u>	14
5.5 <u>Tallismanus / Rietfontein</u>	14
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	14
Ministry of Environment and Tourism	14
Ministry of Finance/Development Bank of Namibia	15
Ministry of Health and Social Services	15
Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration	15
Ministry of Information and Communication Technology	15
Ministry of Justice	16
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	16
National Assembly	16
Ministry of Regional & Local Government, Housing & Rural Development	16
Ministry of Works and Transport	16
5.6 <u>Eiseb Block</u>	17
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	17
Ministry of Education	17
Ministry of Health and Social Services	17
Ministry of Home Affairs and immigration	17
Ministry of Information and Communication Technology	17
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	18
Ministry of Safety and Security	18
Ministry of Regional & Local Government, Housing & Rural Development	18

5.7 <u>Epukiro Constituency</u>	18
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	18
Ministry of Education	19
Ministry of Health and Social Services	19
Ministry of Lands and Resettlement	19
Office of the President	20
Ministry of Regional & Local Government, Housing & Rural Development	20
Ministry of Safety and Security	20
Ministry of Works and Transport	20
Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture	20
5.8 <u>Otjinene Constituency</u>	21
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	21
Ministry of Finance/Development Bank of Namibia	21
Ministry Health and Social Services	21
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	21
Ministry of Works and Transport/Omaheke Regional Council	22
5.9 <u>Steinhausen Constituency</u>	22
Ministry of Education	22
Electoral Commission of Namibia	22
National Planning Commission	22
Ministry of Regional & Local Government, Housing & Rural Development	23
Ministry of Works and Transport	23
Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture	23
<b>6. General Concerns</b>	23
Ministry of Justice	24
Ministry of Lands and Resettlement	24
National Assembly	24
Office of the Prime Minister	25

	Ministry of Safety and Security	25
	Ministry of Works and Transport	25
<b>7.</b>	Issues cross cutting all O/M/A's	25
<b>8.</b>	Recommendations	26
<b>9.</b>	Acknowledgements	27
<b>10.</b>	Statistical estimates on attendance of community meetings	29
<b>11.</b>	Delegation List	30

# 1. Executive Summary

The Parliament (Legislative Branch of Government of the Republic of Namibia) was established in terms of Article 44 of the Constitution, and has a statutory duty for the formulation of Laws and Rules according to which the Nation is governed. The Legislative Authority is tasked to make and promulgate laws, and has an oversight responsibility on the Executive to ensure service delivery.

This report presents the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Doreen Sioka and her parliamentary delegation's Outreach Program to the Omaheke Region during the Parliamentary recess in May 2009. Seven constituencies were visited with the aim to introduce Parliament and to meet the local, regional, traditional, church and community leaders and also to engage communities on service delivery. These constituencies are

- Gobabis Constituency,
- Aminius Constituency,
- Kalahari Constituency,
- Otjombinde Constituency, (Talismanus and Eiseb Block)
- Epukiro Constituency,
- Otjinene Constituency, and
- Steinhausen Constituency

These visits have brought Parliament, especially the National Assembly, to the doorsteps of communities for meaningful interchange on issues of national importance. Lawmakers benefited greatly from the open exchanges with the electorate, sharing the pain and burdens of the communities in the quest of improving the quality of life of our citizens.

The Deputy Speaker, in the colourful power-point presentation, outlined five key points on the topic, "Enhancing Public Participation in the Legislative Process." These were:

- Objectives of the Parliamentary Outreach Program,
- What is Parliament?

- Structure and Functions of Parliament,
- The Role of the Electorate, and
- How to get access to Parliament

Learners of the schools in the settlements, villages and towns visited were introduced to internet on the Parliament's ITC bus, especially on the Parliament website. It is sad to note that many learners saw a computer for the first time during these visits.

The meetings with both politicians and communities raised a variety of issues, challenges and problems our citizens are faced with. This report has been formatted as such that these issues, challenges and problems raised with group and categorised for each settlement, village or town visited according to the line Ministries. It is important to note that various Offices, Ministries and Agencies (OMA's) were represented by staff members who accompanied the delegation and these officials given the opportunity to respond to some of the issues raised on the spot.

Some of the major issues, challenges and problems faced by the communities are (i) the lack of national documents in especially Eiseb Block, (ii) the stalled implementation of rural electrification program, (iii) sitting allowances for members of the constituency and village development committees, (iv) lack of office space and staff accommodation, (v) lack of medical ambulances and mortuaries, problems related to (vi) land resettlement and (vii) rural water supply.

This visit has again highlighted the need for more regular outreach programs to all regions simply because the electorate needs to be education on the separation of powers amongst the Legislature, Executive and the Judiciary, and also because it creates a national platform for elected representatives to have meaningful dialogue irrespective of political affiliation.

## 2. Introduction

The Parliamentary Outreach Program was initiated by the First Speaker of the National Assembly, late Dr. Mosé Tjitendero way back in the 90's with the view of taking Parliament closer to the people to in order to:

- 2.1 Create a platform of exchange between the Regional Governors, Regional Councilors, Community and Traditional Leaders as well as Spiritual Leaders and the Legislatures;
- 2.2 Engage community in meaningful exchange with Parliamentarians on legislative and oversight issues;
- 2.3 Improve the communication between citizenry and their elected representatives; and
- 2.4 Consult the citizenry on service delivery by the government Offices/Ministries/Agencies part of its oversight function.

Against this background, Hon. Mrs. Doreen Sioka, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, accompanied by Hon. Mrs. Alexia Manombe-Ncube, Hon. Mr. Asser Mbai and Hon. Dr. Moses Amweelo visited some of the settlements, villages and towns in the Omaheke Region from the 26 May – 1 June 2009 to interact with the citizenry.

The parliamentary delegation made use of two strategies to interact. Firstly the delegation met with local and regional elected leaders and secondly with the community members in open meetings. The community meetings were divided in three main sections namely:

- 2.5 The welcoming remarks by the Regional Councilor or his representative
- 2.6 The introductory remarks by the Head of the delegation,
- 2.7 The presentation on "*Introduction to Parliament*, and
- 2.8 The interaction between the community members and Parliamentarians.

The parliamentary delegation was accompanied by the representatives from the Ministries of Health and Social Services, Agriculture, Water and Forestry and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Other Ministries did not delegate staff members as per the invitation from the National Assembly.

On the issue of the separation of powers, it was stated clearly at the commencement of each community meeting that the delegation represented the legislature and its Constitutional mandate. Yet, most questions and responses were primarily on service delivery by Government and the various Ministerial representatives were of great help to the outreach program. In cases where responses could not be given immediately, the assurance was given that all OMA's will be made aware of concerns and issues through the tabling of the outreach report in the National Assembly. It must be noted that issues and concerns that could be resolved and/or addressed at constituency level are not included in this report. However, some common concerns are captured under the heading of General Issues and Comments in this report.

### **3. Geopolitical Information on the Omaheke Region**

3.1 The Omaheke is one of the Namibia's 13 political regions and is located in the eastern part of the country and covers total land surface area of 84,612 km<sup>2</sup>. The region borders the Otjozondjupa Region to the north and north-west and western to the south-western regional boundary is shared with the Khomas Region, while the Hardap Region adjoins its southern border. To the east, Omaheke is bounded by the international border between Namibia and Botswana.

3.2 Most of the Omaheke land area is taken up by privately owned freehold farming lands and traditional villages in communal farming areas. Gobabis is the only town with municipality status and serves as the Regional Capital and seat of the Omaheke Regional Council.

3.3 Before the 1992 Regional Council and Local Authority elections, the Omaheke Region was divided in six constituencies, namely Aminius, Gobabis, Kalahari, Otjinene, Otjombinde and Steinhausen. The Otjinene Constituency was later subdivided into the constituencies of Epikiro and Otjinene, which brings to the total number of constituencies in the region to seven.

3.4 The size of the population size of around 68.039 (2001 Population and Housing Census) was reported in Omaheke in 2001. Of these, 35.554 (52.25 per cent) were males, and 32.484 (47.75 per cent) were females (2001 Population and Housing Census).

3.5 The three main languages spoken in Omaheke are Otjiherero, Damara>Nama and Afrikaans. However, San, Setswana and Oshiwambo are also frequently spoken languages in this region.

## **4. Highlights from Interactions with Political Leadership of the Region**

### **Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration**

The political leadership raised the lack of national documents in this region, especially in Eiseb Block (where mostly citizens repatriated from Botswana are resident). To this end, the citizens are denied social and other related benefits, employment opportunities, and are even unable to proof their citizenship. Previous visits by officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration did not have the required positive results and the overwhelming majority of the people are still without national documents.

### **Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC)**

The radio remains the most important tool for communication in this vast region, and the concern was expressed that radio reception and transmission is very poor in some of the areas in the region. Consequently, it is difficult for communities to be informed about important national and societal activities taking place across the country and even in their constituencies..

### **Ministry of Mines and Energy**

The political leadership is concerned about the slow pace at which rural electrification is implemented and even stalled in constituencies in which the infrastructure lies idle for

many years. It is unclear to local and regional leaders where the problem lies and that costly infrastructure is soon to fall in the hands of vandals.

### **Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development**

The introduction of the Constituency Development Committees and Regional Development Constituencies are steps in the right direction, but concerns were raised about the lack of incentives for volunteers serving in these important developmental tools. Many of the persons serving on these committees, in addition to regional and heads of line Ministries, are either unemployed or employed outside the Public Service and are required to travel to these meetings at own expenses. Thus, there is a need to provide incentives to persons serving on these structures in order to guarantee development in all regions.

### **Ministry of Works and Transport**

The policy of decentralization is appreciated in all regions, but creates the challenge of both office-space for the various OMA's and accommodation for personnel to fill the newly created positions. This is especially worsened in situations where unoccupied government houses are alienated by sale to civil servant instead of being allocated to OMA's for office use.

## **5. Highlights from Interactions with the various Communities**

### **5.1 Gobabis Constituency**

#### **Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry**

The Omaheke Region is known as 'cattle country' due to large number of cattle to be found in this area. Yet, there is no agricultural training facility in the entire region to improve the quality of farming. The issue of redline was highlighted as a source of frustration to farmers and the community wanted to know what Parliament is doing to amend the existing laws and policies which limit the export of their agricultural products.

### **Ministry of Education**

The Omaheke Region has only one senior secondary school and none of these schools offer HIGCE, making it impossible for learners from this region to fully benefit from tertiary institution abroad.

### **Ministry of Health and Social Services**

The populace is concerned about the high number of baby dumping cases that occurred in the country, and suggested to Government for abortion to be legalized.

### **Ministry of Lands and Resettlement**

The Government's farming land resettlement program was discussed and the people expressed concerns to the criteria used in allocating land to people without cattle and also as to why the process is so delayed that it takes very long to advertise and resettle landless people after farms are purchased. Also raised was the concern on the lack of mechanism to monitor whether resettled farmers are using the land productively and sustainably. The cost of living is sky rocketing and the pinch is felt mostly by senior citizens in proclaimed areas who are unable to pay for local authority levies. Thus, it was also suggested that Government considers resettling senior citizens, who are unable to afford municipality services, be given preference for resettlement at these farms process.

Many of the commercial farmers register their farms as Close Corporations or as Conservancies in order to counter act the requirements of the Agricultural Commercial Land Act, Act No.6 of 1995 and to raise the prices of land to unaffordable levels. The Government is requested to revisit the recommendations of the 1991 Land Conference in order to address the land question seriously as a matter of urgency. Also, the meeting urged the Government to benchmarks or put ceiling on farm prices in order to make land affordable to all Namibians with farming interest.

### **National Assembly**

The meeting expressed concern on Members of Parliament who do not actively participate in the deliberations of the National Assembly, that some Members do not

articulate the needs of the populace and that all political parties in Parliament are to do something about this concern.

#### **Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development**

The need to table the Electoral Amendment Bill as the matter of urgency before the 2009 General and Presidential Elections was raised.

#### **Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sports and Culture**

There are no leisure facilities activities for the youth and young adults in Gobabis and the Omaheke Region at large. Many school leavers are found in alcohol and drug abuse as they are idle and walking around aimlessly in the streets. Due to abject poverty parents are unable to extra-curriculum activities to learners and the people thus called upon the line Ministry to set up a Multipurpose Youth Resource Center at least in Gobabis.

### **5.2 Aminuis Constituency**

#### **Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry**

The inhabitants are mostly farmers and drought faces them periodically. The first concern expressed was on the lack of agricultural subsidies during drought. The second concern dealt with the delay finding an amicable solution on the export of cattle to South Africa and also the low price offered when exporting especially sheep to South Africa.

#### **Ministry of Health and Social Services**

The meeting questioned why a medical ambulance is not stationed at Aminius as in order to alleviate transporting cost and mileage of the ambulance based in Gababis. The reply of the representative from the Ministry of Health and Social Services was that an all-terrain vehicles (4x4) is being converted and that Aminius clinic is to be provided soon with one of these vehicles. The need for a construction of a mortuary for Aminius Constituency was also expressed. The reply of the representative from the Ministry of Health and Social Services was that approval was granted by head office and that the

construction of the mortuary will commence once funds are released and the tender put out.

#### **Ministry of Mines and Energy**

The lines of the Electricity main grid runs across this constituency, yet no single village in Aminius constituency is connected and do not benefit from the rural electrification program.

#### **Ministry of Works and Transport**

The people reported that the gravel roads in their area are in a very bad state and needs to be rehabilitated and perhaps upgraded in the process. The community proposed that the Ministry should at least consider tarring the main road between Gobabis to Aminius.

### **5.3 Kalahari Constituency**

#### **Ministry of Education**

The overwhelming majority of the learners in this area are from destitute communities and/or orphans and vulnerable children whose parents and/or guardians are unable to afford lowest of school and hostel facilities. To this end, a concern was raised why the Ministry of Education cannot take over the community hostel in this Constituency. It was reported that the school have to use limited school development fund and is spent on transporting ill learners to and from nearest medical clinic. The community also requested the reintroduction of hardship allowances for rural schools in order to attract qualified teachers to rural areas. The lack of special education school for learners was also lamented for learners who not perform in the mainstream of education. Currently there are only two special schools in Omaheke Region which is regarded inadequate to cater for all the learners with special education needs in the region. The allocation criteria for government study loans were also raised since deserving students are ignored by those in charge.

### **Ministry of Health and Social Services**

The community reported that there is a need to construct a medical clinic at Chaka and to provide it with an ambulance, because the distance to the nearest health centre or clinic is far away. The representative of the Ministry of Health and Social Social advised that the community can file a request via their councilor to the Regional Governor.

### **Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development**

The meeting expressed a concern on the void created in the constituency when a regional councilor is elected to national institutions such as the National Council and is also appointed as Deputy Minister. The focus and energy of such councilors are no longer primarily on the constituency, but on their Windhoek-based offices. This also applies to Councilors elected as regional Governors and whose platforms are expanded with additional responsibilities as well. The line Ministry was therefore requested to look into this matter and how best this can be addressed to fill the vacuum of responsibilities created by the above-stated scenarios.

## **5.4 Otjombinde Constituency**

The delegation visited two places in this Constituency, namely Tallismanus / Rietfontein and Eiseb Block, covered underneath under 5.5. and 5.6.

## **5.5 Tallismanus / Rietfontein**

### **Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry**

The community complained about the scarcity of underground water in the area and requested the Ministry to lay pipes from places where there are strong boreholes in order to transport water from the areas where there is sufficient water to where it is needed.

### **Ministry of Environment and Tourism**

The community reported that a community camping site has been developed in the Constituency and requested the assistance from the Ministry and Namibia Community Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA) to upgrade this camping site to include a guest house.

### **Ministry of Finance/Development Bank of Namibia**

The funding policy and requirement of the Development Bank of Namibia is not clear to all people and the community wanted representatives from the Development Bank of Namibia to visit rural areas and explain how assistance and loans can be accessed.

### **Ministry of Health and Social Services**

The community requested the Ministry to allocate a modern ambulance to their constituency since their off-road vehicle is not equipped as an ambulance. The Regional Health Director responded by saying that ambulances are not allocated to clinic, but that the community can submit a written request to upgrade the status of their medical clinic to a health centre. The community also informed the delegation that there is a need to construct a health clinic at a place called Helena (place situated  $\pm 60$  km south of Tallismanus/Rietfontein and  $\pm 180$  km from Gobabis) where a big number of the San Community is residing.

### **Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration**

The community wanted to know when the Ministry will recognize or legalize traditional marriages and also issue certificates.

### **Ministry of Information and Communication Technology**

The community complained about the absence of mobile phone networks in the area. Tallismanus/ Rietfontein is the only area in the constituency with network coverage is and therefore requested the line Ministry to ensure that mobile phone networks are improved and expanded in the whole of Otjombinde Constituency. A concern was also raised that Namibian Broadcasting Corporation's (NBC) allocates "unequal airtime and coverage" to political parties and some members further alleged that NBC favours the ruling party (SWAPO) at the expense of opposition parties.

### **Ministry of Justice**

The community expressed concern that bail is granted easily to persons committing serious crimes and calls on the Government and lawmakers to review relevant laws and statutes.

### **Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare**

The community requested the Ministry to regulate the salaries of the security guards because most of them are being paid wages far below the breadline.

### **National Assembly**

It was reported that the communities need to consult regularly when laws are made or amended and that the Parliamentary Standing Committees must reach out to rural areas because public hearings are held only in urban centers such as Gobabis. The people elect their representatives to air the voices in Parliament, but it is now noted for some time that Motions tabled by opposition MP's are not considered and debated seriously. The issue of Genocide Motion was raised and the community would like to know what is the latest development regarding this Motion.

### **Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development**

Some community members wanted to know why they cannot be allowed to purchase uncompleted Build Together Programme houses from the owners who want to sell them to settle their loans.

### **Ministry of Works and Transport**

The community complained about the poor road conditions in the area and requested Government to consider tarring the gravel road between Gobabis and Otjombinde, Paradys and up to the Botswana/Namibia border.

## 5.6 Eiseb Block 10

### **Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry**

The community has requested the Ministry to assist them with tractors for ploughing purposes. A concern was raised about the shortage of veterinarian inspectors in the area to assist the community with their cattle.

### **Ministry of Education**

The community requested the Ministry to build a school hostel at Eiseb Block for the ±300 learners enrolled at the local school since many of these learners have to walk long distances to school.

### **Ministry of Health and Social Services**

The community requested the Ministry to construct a mortuary at Eiseb Block since the settlement is far away from Gobabis. Furthermore, the meeting also urged Government to build a maternity ward at the local clinic. The Regional Health Director advised the community to submit a written request to his Ministry via the Office of the Regional Councilor. Since Eiseb Block doesn't have reliable electricity supply, the line Ministry also intends putting up mortuary at Epukiro, which is centrally located in the Constituency.

### **Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration**

A concern was raised to establish a satellite office for the Ministry at Eiseb Block to make it easier for the residents to obtain national documents. It is costly for people to travel to Gobabis to obtain these documents since most of them are unemployed.

### **Ministry of Information and Communication Technology**

It was reported that radio broadcast is sometimes off air for more than 30 days and on other days the reception is very poor. The Ministry and NBC were requested to look into this matter as a matter of urgency since radio is the only means of communication in the area.

### **Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare**

The concern was raised that there is only a one pay point for old age pension pay outs in this constituency. As a result, senior citizens are required to walk long distances and the Ministry is asked to consider increasing the number of pay points. This is worsened by the fact that paymasters are always in a hurry in order to meet deadlines of the following pay points and many pensioners miss payment. This is further worsened when NBC Radio is off air and there is no way to inform and alert senior citizens on time. Finally, the Government was requested to consider increasing the old age pension amount.

### **Ministry of Safety and Security**

A concern was raised about the absence of a police station at Eiseb Block. The community reported that the police sometimes take up to a week to come from Gobabis or Epukiro and by the time they arrive at the settlement, the suspects have already disappeared. It was reported that there used to be a satellite police station at Eiseb Block but was closed down at the time the community was repatriated and resettled at Eiseb Block.

### **Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development**

The community wants Eiseb Block to be proclaimed as a formal settlement in order to benefit from government projects and programs. The community also requested the Ministry to construct a community hall at Eiseb Block for gatherings and meetings because they are currently conducting meetings under trees.

## **5.7 Epukiro Constituency**

### **Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry**

A concern was raised regarding many of the trees along the Epukiro (Pos 3) – Gobabis main road which are obstructing the vision of drivers and thus is dangerous and can cause accidents. The community requested the Ministry to help with debushing and to consider availing grants for communal farmers to acquire live stock for production.

### **Ministry of Education**

Concerns were raised about the exorbitant levies and enrolment prices that the institutions of higher learning such as Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Namibia are charging students. It was argued that some parents are paying tuition fees for their children and dependants and will not be able in the future to afford these exorbitant fees as they are increasing annually. It was, therefore, proposed that the Ministry intervenes to ensure that tertiary education remains affordable. It was also reported that there is no vocational training institution in Omaheke Region and requested the line Ministry to establish such a center in the region.

### **Ministry of Health and Social Services**

It was reported that there is a need for a mortuary and an ambulance to be used by Epukiro (Pos 3) and its surrounding areas. At present, the mortal remains are taken to Gobabis hospital which is far away distance. The same applies to medical ambulances for patients to be transferred to Gobabis (which is  $\pm 130$  km from Epukiro Pos 8). The meeting was informed by the representative from the Ministry of Health and Social Services that medical ambulances are allocated only to health centers and not clinics.

### **Ministry of Lands and Resettlement**

Concerns were also raised on the resettlement program, which to the opinion of some community members, does not reach the targeted beneficiaries (the landless Namibians). To this end, people have to privately acquire land through commercial loans and this is become out of the reach for the ordinary farmer. Therefore, it is imperative that the Ministry considered looking at other alternatives to speed up the resettlement process. On the same score, the community also expressed their dismay that people from other regions are resettled in the already crowded Omaheke farming land and as such local people with the same need for resettlement are overlooked and excluded from his process. Finally, the community expressed disapproval of the fencing off of grazing land in communal areas and wanted to know when the Ministry is going to act against people guilty of this unacceptable practice.

### **Office of the President**

The appointment of Cabinet is understood to be the prerogative of the President. Yet the people expressed a concern that some of the Ministers and Deputy Ministers are appointed to portfolios for which they do not have the training, education, skills or even interest. This may be a contributing factor to poor performance by some politicians and the community calls upon the President to make informed appointments in the interest of the nation.

### **Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development**

It was reported that the some recognized traditional authorities in the region find it very difficult to execute their duties due to the lack of resources. The ministry was, therefore, called upon to increase their financial and material support to traditional authorities.

### **Ministry of Safety and Security**

The shortage of police vehicles was highlighted as a contributing factor that police are unable to effectively combat crime and speedily attend to complaints of especially stock theft. The latter is a major source of concern since the Omaheke is a farming area. The Ministry was, therefore, requested to consider purchasing especially off-road police vehicles for the area.

### **Ministry of Works and Transport**

The community reported that they need a Postal Office in the Constituency as this will also help pensioners to receive pension payouts at the Post Office. Many pensioners do not have vehicles and can't make it on time to the mobile paymasters.

### **Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture**

Concerns were raised on the underutilization of the buildings and other infrastructure at Plessis Farm, which was purchased and renovated, but remains an white elephant in the region. The facilities were intended for and can be used as a skills development and vocational training centre. The line Ministries are called upon to act speedily to make this centre operational before vandals will size the place.

## 5.8 Otjinene Constituency

### **Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry**

It was reported that boreholes are being drilled by Government without any signs of finding underground water. In cases where no water is found, the community suggested water is made available from other strong boreholes in the area or from the Otjozondjupa water carrier through a pipeline. Also, the community requested the Ministry to help them find good markets for selling their livestock, because current system of selling livestock amongst themselves does not yield any positive result. The ministry was also requested to consider taking back the function of maintenance of water points as most of the pensioners cannot afford to maintain water points every time these are out of order.

### **Ministry of Finance/Development Bank of Namibia**

A concern was raised that the Development Bank of Namibia focused mainly on urban areas and the community request the Bank to also reach out to rural areas because people in rural also have viable projects they want to embark on but lack necessary funding and advice.

### **Ministry of Health and Social Services**

The community is requesting the Ministry to construct a medical clinic between Eiseb Block and Otjinene on the main road since there are close to thirty villages with many people residing on the Eiseb Block - Otjinene main road. The regional health director advised the community to submit a written request via their Councilor to the Regional Governor.

### **Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare**

A concern was raised about the absence of a pension office at Otjinene and the Ministry was requested to consider opening such an office. It was also reported that paymasters are always in hurry and are not willing to wait for pensioners that might be on their way even if they are alerted. A concern was also raised by pensioners questioning why they receive double pay-outs during November and that the next pay-out is only at the end of January!

The pensioners requested that this system be changed so that they can receive their grants each and every month including December. They argued that when they receive double pay-outs in November they spent all money and left with nothing for the festive season.

#### **Ministry of Works and Transport /Omaheke Regional Council**

A concern was raised about the accumulating municipal debts on houses owned by the Ministries and the Regional Council at Otjinene. The affected residents requested the two institutions to consider writing off the old debts.

### **5.9 Steinhausen Constituency**

#### **Ministry of Education**

The community expressed the need for the construction of a state school at Plessis Farm since the two schools operating there are semi-state school and private. The parents are unable to afford the fees asked by these schools.

#### **Electoral Commission of Namibia**

It was reported that the Voter Education Officers in Gobabis are unable to reach out to all areas in the Constituency due to lack of transport and are currently focusing only on urban centers. Therefore, the Electoral Commission of Namibia was requested to consider providing vehicles for these officers to reach out to all areas in the Constituency and the Region since many of the people are illiterate.

#### **National Planning Commission**

The community alleged that they lack knowledge about the Namibia-German Special Initiative Program and requested the relevant authorities to visit and explain to them the entire program. It was also reported that the Steinhausen constituency did not benefit much from this initiative. Hon. Kilus Nguvauva, the Regional Councilor, informed the meeting that Steinhausen was better off, compared to other constituencies in the region since one of their proposals for assistance with cattle at Skoonheid farm was approved and implemented. He also informed the meeting that five other proposals have been

forwarded to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from the constituency for assistance from the German-Namibia initiative and that some of these project proposals may be consider during second phase of this program.

#### **Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development**

A concern was raised on the void created when regional councilors become national leaders with their election to the National Council and in some instances are appointed deputy ministers. These additional responsibilities, in their opinion, make it impossible for him/her to perform his/her constituency duties efficiently and effectively. The line Ministry was, therefore, requested to look into this matter and how best this can be addressed to fill the vacuum of leadership created by this situation.

#### **Ministry of Works and Transport**

The community requested the Ministry to consider tarring the road from Drimiopsis to Steinhausen and beyond in various phases since this road serves the commercial farmers in Omaheke and Otjozondjupa Regions.

#### **Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture**

A concern was raised about the buildings that stand unoccupied at Plessis Farm, which were donated to this Ministry and was supposed to have been converted into a skills development and vocational training centre. It was also reported that the Permanent Secretary visited the place some years ago but that nothing has come of this visit. (The same concern was also raised by members of the Otjinene constituency - on page 20 of this report).

### **6. General Concerns**

Underneath are concerns which were raised in almost all of the community meetings and these concerns are thus outline in this section as “general concerns” for the attention of the relevant line OMA’s.

### **Ministry of Justice**

On stock theft, the communities felt that the current twenty maximum sentence (penalty) does not scare off perpetrators and the Ministry was requested to consider other alternatives to punish offenders found guilty in courts of law. The communities also felt that the fast and easy manner in which perpetrators are granted bail is very painful to them, since suspects are back in society whilst the injustice is still fresh in the minds of the people.

### **Ministry of Lands and Resettlement**

The communities expressed their disapproval that politicians and senior government officials, who can afford to purchase farms through commercial and/or agricultural banks, are resettled at government farms at the expense of poor people. The communities also stated the current land policies and laws favours the status quo and called for a review of all legislation dealing with land issue. On the issue of communal homesteads, the communities also expressed their dissatisfaction with the ongoing allocation of 20 hectares of land. The chairperson of the Regional Communal Land Board, Mr. Kauandara explained that the 20 hectares are meant for only the homestead, crawl and garden, and that it does not include grazing land.

### **National Assembly**

A concern was raised about absenteeism of Members of Parliament during the sittings of especially the National Assembly and that the House has to be adjourned periodically due to the lack of quorum. The Hon. Deputy Speaker, Hon. Mrs. Sioka explained that sometimes it is not absenteeism one can blame on laziness, but many a times Members of Parliament are assigned to other duties outside the capital or the country and that this is not deliberate. On the issue of some Members sleeping during the sessions and even at important occasions like the State of the Nation Address, the Hon. Speaker responded that sometimes the media takes pictures when MP's are meditating or just closing their eyes, and that this has unnecessarily created a bad perception with the people. Another concern raised was about some overlapping legislations and that there is a greater need to harmonize these legislations and speed up the amendment of such laws.

### **Office of the Prime Minister**

Several concerns were raised on the long, cumbersome and sometimes bureaucratic process of service delivery in the public service. It was suggested that government must constantly look at ways in which service delivery can be improved in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of public servants.

### **Ministry of Safety and Security**

The communities lamented about the slow responses of law enforcement agencies such as the police in the region. The usual apology of not having official transport has become unacceptable since many police vehicles are parked at shebeens or residence of some members of the Force. There was a general outcry about the constant increase in stock theft cases in the region and the Ministry was requested to do everything in its power to arrest the culprits and ensure justice.

### **Ministry of Works and Transport**

The communities felt most of the roads in the region are in a bad condition and suggested that the Ministry considers tarring, albeit in phases most of the main and/or proclaimed roads in the region because even emergency vehicles find it hard to reach destinations especially during the rainy season.

## **7. Issues cross cutting all the Offices/Ministries/Agencies**

### **Unemployment**

Concerns were raised about the high unemployment rate amongst the youth and young adults of the region, and the communities call upon government and the private sector to create job opportunities in the region.

### **Misuse of government vehicles**

Concerns were raised about the misuse of government vehicles and different O/M/A's were requested to put mechanism in place to curb the misuse and abuse of vehicles.

### **Mushrooming of illegal shebeens**

The mushrooming of illegal shebeens in all the constituencies of the region was raised. This shebeens lead to a lot of social ills, contributing to increase in crime, alcohol, drugs and other substance abuse, etcetera. It was also reported that children spent most of their time at this shebeens, getting involved in negative activities and thus the communities called upon Government to enforce the laws on shebeens to the letter.

### **Lack of discipline amongst children/youth**

It was reported that most of the children and youth in this region have become disrespectful to elders and this was blamed on the bad influence of television and the western culture. The various line Ministries and OMA's dealing with children, youth and young adults were called upon to come up with new programs to positively influence the young generation.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 All OMA's of the Government of the Republic of Namibia are requested to delegate representatives to accompany Parliamentary Outreach Delegations on these visits, since the communities do benefit tremendously when a representative is at hand to give first hand information.
- 8.2 Political office-bearers are requested to ensure that their administrative personnel attend to the issues, problems and challenges raised in this report. For instance, it is sad when nationals are unable to access national documents such as ID's, and therefore are excluded from the constitutional rights and privileges enjoyed by citizens in our country
- 8.3 Local, regional and national leaders are requested to create more consultative platforms with the electorate in their constituencies, where the latter can raise pressings issues, problems and challenges, and the leaders can inform the communities not only on past and present programs and projects, but also on future programs and projects envisaged for their constituencies.

8.4 The Parliamentary standing committees are encouraged to take Public Hearings beyond urban centers to also include rural constituencies and their voices of the people from all strata of the society.

8.5 The National Assembly (Parliament) must develop radio programs to inform the nation at large about parliamentary activities. The overwhelming majority of our people are resident in rural areas, and the radio language services of the Namibian Broadcasting Service are the only source of information since NBC TV is not transmitted to all corners of our country.

## 9. Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Parliamentary delegation, I would like to so express my sincere appreciation to the political leadership of the Omaheke Region under the able leadership of Hon. Governor Laura Mcleod-Katjirua for their availability to provide guidance and assistance to the delegation. A word of appreciation also goes to His Worship the Mayor of Gobabis Cllr. Platini Katjaoha and to the Councilors of all seven Constituencies in the Omaheke Region namely, Hon. Kilus Nguvauva, Hon. Stefanus Mogotsi, Hon. Brave Tjivera, Hon. Erwin Uanguta, Hon. Matti Ndjoze and Hon. Nguvitjita Toromba. We also want to thank the officials of the various Constituency Offices and the Omaheke Regional Council, who assisted the delegation with logistical arrangements in the region for the sterling cooperation. We also want to thank all traditional, community and spiritual leaders for their attendance, guidance and participation. A special word of appreciation goes to the Members of Parliament who accompanied me on these travels.

It is needless to say that our Parliamentary delegation is indebted to officials from the Ministries of Health and Social Service (Omaheke Regional Health Directorate), Agriculture, Water and Forestry, (Omaheke Regional Office), Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (Head Office) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (Omaheke Region). We thank them for being part of us on the road show, having accompanied us to all community meetings and assisting us in giving instant replies on the spot to some of the issues and concerns raised in these meetings.

Last but not least, I want to thank our parliamentary staff for their dedication and commitment to the Outreach Program and for arranging all logistical and administrative duties related to this outreach activity.

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HONOURABLE DOREEN SIOKA, MP

**DEPUTY SPEAKER**

23 JUNE 2009

## **10. Statistical Estimates of Attendance of Community Meetings**

Gobabis		± 200 people
Amunius		± 100 people
Kalahari		± 75 people
Otjombinde	Tallismanus/Rietfontein	± 300 people
	Eiseb Block	± 60 people
Epukiro		± 100 people
Otjinene		± 70 people
Steinhausen		± 100 people

## 11. Delegation List

### **Parliamentarians**

Hon. Mrs. Doreen Sioka, Deputy Speaker and Leader of the Delegation

Hon. Dr. Moses Amweelo

Hon. Mr. Asser Mbai

Hon. Mrs. Alexia Ncube-Manombe

### Staff Members

Rev. Willem Simon Hanse, Special Assistant to the Speaker

Mr. Simon /Uirab, Senior Parliamentary Clerk

Ms. N S Kaukungua, Chief Information Officer

Mr. Sem Mubukwanu, Assistant Parliamentary Clerk

Mr. Arthus Platt, System Administrator

Mr. Vaapi Kaenda, Computer Technician

Mr. M Muundjo, Information Officer

Mr. J P Frederick, System Controller

Mr. Ian van Wyk, System Controller

Ms. C Groenewaldt, Private Secretary, General Secretary

Ms. Emily Nghidipo, Senior Typist

Mr. Dudley van Wyk, Transport Clerk