



National Council

**REPORT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL STANDING
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES ON THE OVERSIGHT VISIT TO THE
HARDAP, KHOMAS, //KHARAS, OSHANA, OMUSATI,
OHANGWENA AND OSHIKOTO REGIONS TO ASSESS THE
SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE RESETTLEMENT
PROGRAMME AND IDENTIFY MITIGATING MEASURES
FOR FLOOD PRONE AREAS FROM 11TH TO 28TH SEPTEMBER,
2023 BY HONOURABLE MELANIA NDJAGO,
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AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES**

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ha Hectare

LRAC Land Reform Advisory Commission

MAWLR Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

RCC Road Contractor Company

UAE United Arab Emirates

1. Introduction

The National Council derives its oversight powers from Article 41 and Article 74 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. One of the functions of oversight listed in the Oversight and Accountability Model is to ensure that policies announced by government and authorized by Parliament are actually delivered. This function includes monitoring the achievement of goals set by legislation and the government's own programmes and projects.

In terms of Rule 151 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the National Council (as amended), the functions of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources are to deal with questions falling within the ambit of Offices, Ministries, Agencies and Public Enterprises dealing with agriculture, land, water, environment, forestry, tourism, mines, energy, and marine-resources. In the execution of this function, the Standing Committee is mandated to, amongst others:

- (a) To promote adequate food security;
- (b) To inquire into matters that may affect the natural resources;
- (c) To promote sustainable utilisation of natural resources;
- (d) To promote the protection and conservation of the environment;
- (e) To promote a fair distribution of farming land and productive utilisation thereof;

2. Objectives

The purpose of the oversight visit was for the Committee to inquire into, and report to the National Council as guided by the following Terms of Reference:

- a) Assess the status of communities living in flood prone areas in the Oshana, Omusati, Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions;
- b) Assess the preservation of flood water harvesting;
- c) Determine the conveyance of flood water through canals for local use and irrigation to address food security;



- d) Determine activities being undertaken at the Kalahari Research Station; and
- e) Assess the implementation of the Resettlement Policy and Post Resettlement Support provided to farmers.

3. Composition of the Standing Committee

The oversight visit was undertaken by the following Members of the Committee and Secretariat:

- a) Hon. Melania Ndjago, Chairperson of the Committee and leader of the delegation
- b) Hon. Elder Filipe, Vice Chairperson of the Committee
- c) Hon. Richard Gaoseb
- d) Hon. Paulus Mbangu
- e) Hon. Nicodemus J. Motinga
- f) Hon. Willem Labuschagne
- g) Hon. Kennedy J. Haoseb

Secretariat

- h) Ms. Pamela Mate
- i) Mr. Brian Riruako
- j) Mr. Peter Tjiramba
- k) Ms. Elizabeth Andreas

4. Courtesy Call on Regional Governors

The Committee paid courtesy visits to the Political Leadership in all targeted regions, namely; Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto, Hardap, //Kharas and Khomas regions. The aim of the meetings was to brief the leadership of respective regions about the purpose and importance of the oversight visit. The Regional Governors whom the Committee met expressed their appreciation for the activity as it was relevant in addressing the challenges faced in the regions.



During the courtesy call on the Governor of the Oshikoto Region, Honourable Penda Ya Ndakolo, the Committee was informed that the region received minimal flooding the past year, with constituencies such as Omuntele receiving a sizeable volume of water from Ohangwena and Oshana regions, albeit not concerning. However, the Oshikoto Governor indicated that the water flow from the two regions remains stationary for some time, causing some establishments to close down until it subsides. This impacts service delivery and thus underscores the need for proper drainage systems across the floodplains but due to a lack of funds, this is yet to be realised.

At the Committee's courtesy call in the Hardap region, Governor, Honourable Salomon April identified water scarcity as a challenge in the region, despite some areas being blessed with aquifers such as the one in the Stampriet area. The Governor did however caution that the ongoing drought could lead to severe losses if not properly addressed. With respect to the state of resettled farmers, it was noted that farmers are struggling to maintain boreholes which they heavily rely on for water supply and the need to adequately fund agriculture was reiterated.

5. Consultative Meetings with Regional Councils, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform Regional Directorates and Communities in Flood Prone Areas

5.1 Meeting with the Oshana Regional Council and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

The Committee met with the Oshana Regional Council and an official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform in the Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination. The Chairperson of the Oshana Regional Council informed the Committee that inhabitants of the region face numerous challenges during the rainy season. It was stated that the region suffers greatly during the rainy season, as some roads are washed away, leading to the closing down of school because learners are not able to access the facilities and members of the community not being able to access basic services such as health centres. It was also narrated that at times, the Ministry of Defence assists with transport to get learners to schools.

The official from Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform informed the Committee that the heavy rains received in the south-eastern parts of Angola and north-eastern parts of



Namibia in the Cuvelai catchment area during the second week of January 2023, resulted in floods in Oshana Region. It was further indicated during the meeting that:

- a) Rain water often evaporates after flooding due to a lack of catchment facilities such as earth dams;
- b) There was insufficient crop harvest due to below average rainfall received, thus threatening food security and animal grazing areas;
- c) Low water pressure results in water supply by the ministry not reaching intended farmers; and
- d) Drought relieve food only reaches limited households and the majority of needy families are left out.

The Committee was further informed that the Oshana Regional Council has called on bidders to build eight (8) earth dams for catchment purposes, in order to store rain water for the consumption of livestock as well as enable farmers to pump water for irrigation purposes. These funds were availed from the Disaster Risk Management in the Office of the Prime Minister.

5.2 Meeting with Community Members Living in Flood Prone Areas of Oshana Region

The Committee held a meeting with community members in flood prone areas in Oshana. The Chairperson of the Committee briefed the meeting on the purpose of oversight visit. The headman of the community informed the Committee of challenges they face during the rainy season with regards to flooding and assistance given to them. The Community members also informed the Committee that flood water destroys their fields and as a result, they do not yield sufficient harvest to feed their families. According to them, the drought relief food they get from the Regional Council is not sufficient. Another challenge brought about by the flood water is that their children do not go to school for up to four (4) months, resulting in them losing out on schoolwork. Communities are sharing water with wild animals from the Etosha National Park as a result of the damaged fence. Consequently, wild animals prey on their livestock and the lives of the herders and shepherds charged with looking after the animals is also at risk from these marauding wild animals such as lions. The community members called on government to upgrade the fence of the national park to one that is strong enough to keep wild animals from escaping the park.




5.3 Meeting with Omusati Regional Council and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

In the meeting with officials from the Omusati Regional Council and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform officials in the Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination, the Committee was informed by the Chairperson of the Regional Council that the region was hit hard by floods in 2016, resulting in the closure of certain schools. Taking initiative, the community has been trying to build roads for the school learners to access school premises but are challenged with lack of funds to complete the project. In order to address the shortage of water in the region, the Regional Council attempted to construct earth dams, but again, have been challenged with lack of sufficient funding to do so. Water supply was observed in a few localized points of the piped scheme in the Omusati Region. Leakages were incurred through damage to the infrastructure and there has been delays in repairing the damage mainly because the flooded areas were accessible. An important issue, however, is the repeated damage to the open canal from Angola to Oshakati, which is the main bulk water supply carrier in the Cuvelai, resulting in additional purification costs, possible increased health risks and major emergency repairs after the rainy season.

In recent years the region has been prone to recurrent droughts, floods, veld fires as well as the outbreak of human and animal diseases. The Cuvelai ecological area of the Region is characterized by thousands of shallow drainage channels locally known as oshanas. Flooding of the oshanas in the Cuvelai normally occurs after heavy rains or good rainfalls in the highlands of neighbouring Angola. As a result, the Region faces small scale floods yearly, which sometimes results in damage of varying magnitudes. However, during 2008 and 2009, unprecedented floods were experienced, affecting above 166 000 people across the region and causing extensive damage to socio-economic infrastructure. According to recent experiences, the highest flood risk areas are Outapi, Anamulenge, Okalongo, Etayi, Ogongo, Oshikuku, Elim and Otamanzi. Due to the high impact and extensive nature of damage, floods are the highest priority for contingency planning for the Regional Council.

The Regional Council further informed the Committee that they received One Hundred Thousand (N\$ 100 000) to build an earth dam, an amount that is not enough to complete such a project. The Omusati Regional Council, together with the Oshana and Ohangwena Regional Councils obtained best practices on how best to harvest flood water for irrigation and where in the process of starting the project when the Covid 19 pandemic hit. All funds were redirected


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to the pandemic and the project has since stalled. The officials highlighted to the Committee that floods hamper government services as communities are unable to access schools, health facilities and other services. They further expressed that natural hazards, especially floods, are a serious threat to the social, economic and political aspects of the country and can hinder development and growth of a nation.

5.4 Meeting with Community Members Living in Flood Prone Areas of Omusati Region

The community headman informed the Committee that majority of people living in the flood-affected area is directly dependent on subsistence agriculture (livestock rearing), forestry, eco-tourism and fishing. However, due to the effects of worsening climatic conditions on long-term agricultural productivity, the adaptive capacities of farmers are compromised. Land degradation, soil erosion, bush encroachment and deforestation is becoming progressively worse in most parts where the community resides, but is more acute in the flood-affected areas. This has led to vegetation degradation and loss of soil fertility which affects agricultural productivity. Climate change is expected to only exacerbate this trend.

The community members told the Committee that the Regional Council and government must invest in adaptation infrastructure in order for communities to reduce the risks and impact of floods. Flood adaptation infrastructure are projects constructed in flood-prone areas aimed at mitigating the impact of floods.

In the second meeting of the Committee with community members in the flood prone areas of the Omusati Region, it was reiterated that schools and health facilities often get flooded during the rainy season, impacting education and service delivery. To address this, the community called for the construction of a bridge for learners and the community at large. They further called for the upgrading of the road from Okanumetu to the Angolan border. Additionally, they also requested the rehabilitation of earth dams and traditional wells to enable community members to irrigate their fields. Finally, they identified the need for a borehole to access portable drinking water.

5.5 Meeting with Ohangwena Regional Council and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

The Chairperson of the Ohangwena Regional Council informed the Committee that the torrential downpours that occur in northern Namibia have caused severe flooding, which exacerbates the already challenging living conditions of many vulnerable families in flood-prone areas. Many who reside in the flood plains already face the triple threat of poverty and high unemployment. In the Ohangwena Region, the effect of the floods lasts for several months. According to statistics from the Ohangwena Regional Council, over 1 300 families are affected by the floods, of which 14 households and 116 people were relocated to higher grounds.

The Regional Council highlighted to the Committee that some areas are inaccessible and have become like islands while some villages are no longer accessible by road, such as Onghala and Oimbadalunga. Resultantly, some community members are unable to receive medical treatment or access medical facilities. The Outreach Team of the Ministry of Health and Social Services is also challenged in reaching the affected communities. The region has activated its Disaster Risk Management Unit, which provides assistance to those affected, but some community members are resistant to move to higher grounds fearing their belongings will be stolen or vandalized.

5.6 Meeting with Community Members in Flood Prone Areas of Ohangwena Region

Community Members the Committee met indicated that as early as January of 2023, the western part of the Ohangwena Region was hard hit by floods. About 2 529 households comprising 18 000 people were severely affected as they could not get any harvest and are in dire need of food and animal grazing. The community members also raised the following concerns during the meeting:

- a) Water pumps were stolen which resulted in a low harvest due to inadequate water supply;
- b) Despite identifying a water aquifer, financial constraints did not allow for the drilling of boreholes to a depth of up to 300 meters. Current boreholes are not sustainable in the long run as they are not deep enough;

- c) Drought relieve programme is not fair and does not correlate to the number of inhabitants who should benefit, as about 48 households needed food aid at the time of the Committee's visit; and
- d) About 41 identified access roads could not be constructed despite Roads Authority said to have received funds for these projects.

6. Consultative Meetings with Hardap and //Kharas Regional Councils, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform Regional Directorates and Site Visits to Resettlement Farms

6.1 Meeting with Hardap Regional Council and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

During the Committee's engagements, it transpired that there is a lack of proper training and capacity building for resettled farmers to sustain and maintain themselves. Approximately, 15% of communal farmers do not have access to fodder and seeds and there is an urgent need to initiate a drip irrigation in the region for farmers that are involved on small or large scale crop farming. Government is thus urged to consider putting incentives in place for farmers to be assisted financially by commercial banks to restock after severe droughts.

The Chief Regional Officer gave a brief on the resettlement programme and indicated that there is a support programme by the Regional Council. At the time of the visit by the Committee to the region, the indication was that there are 94 resettlement farms and, three (3) of those farms were bought in recent times and are still vacant. In total there are approximately 360 resettled farmers in the region. It was further reported that 17 farms were transferred from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism and are yet to be demarcated into farming units.

The following challenges were highlighted during the meeting:

- a) Water scarcity, as the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform officials in the Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination is struggling to provide adequate support during times when below average rain was received;
- b) Theft of solar panels that power boreholes;
- c) Vandalism of farm infrastructure while allocation is being wait to new occupants;

- d) Unproductive farming units; and
- e) Conflicts over water when it comes to contributions towards diesel for the water pumps.

6.2 Meeting with Resettled Farmers of Farm Neue-Haribes

The resettled farmers on Farm Neue-Haribese informed the Committee that they were relocated there from Namaseb in the Rehoboth district in 2010. Sadly, they lost a number of livestock during the move and no relocation assistance was provided to them. However, upon arrival at the resettlement farm, they received solar systems at two of the three units on the farm.

The farmers highlighted the following challenges:

- a) Allotment letters are not forthcoming, this makes it difficult for them to access finance facilities as the farm is allocated to a group of people and not individuals;
- b) Drought and veld fires;
- c) Water shortages, as the single water point available cannot cater for both people and animals; and
- d) Infrastructure repair is now their responsibility.

6.3 Meeting with Resettled Farmers of Farm Voightsgrund

The Committee was informed that the farm is occupied by individual resettled farmers, comprising two beneficiaries' resettled on portions one (Unit A) and two (Unit B) respectively. It was further indicated that Unit B has since become one of the resettlement programme's greatest success stories. The beneficiary of this portion was resettled in July, 2015, with:

- a) 700 chickens;
- b) 120 Goats;
- c) 230 Sheep; and
- d) 50 Cattle.

Currently, the beneficiary produces eggs and supplies residents of Mariental and Keetmanshoop as well as a hotel in Maltahöhe on a daily basis. The farm produces around 450

eggs daily for the market, does own packaging on the farm and uses own transport to reach the market. It was also indicated that during severe drought, the owner of this portion of the resettlement farm undertakes a de-stocking exercise by selling off some of the livestock. The beneficiary employs three permanent workers on the farm.

6.4 Meeting with Resettled Farmers of Farm Listhof

The Committee visited Farm Listhof to familiarize itself with the state of its infrastructure which was acquired in 2018 and registered in 2019. The farm, measuring over 7000 hectares (ha) is vacant as no one has been resettled there since it was bought. The delay in the resettlement process is dependent on a response from the Regional Land Advisory Board which must determine if it will be utilized for the expansion of the village of Kalkrand or be allocated for resettlement. It was observed during the visit that the farm house and adjacent housing units are dilapidated and would need intensive rehabilitation.

6.5 Meeting with Resettled Farmers of Farm Westfallen

The Committee met with resettled farmers of Farm Westfallen and was informed that the farm was divided into portions consisting of eight (8) units, (A-H). The farm was bought in 1996 and beneficiaries were resettled in 1999 and 2000 respectively. It was indicated that Unit A is solely for group resettlement for purposes of crop production; measuring a size of over 1000 ha. Units B to H are demarcated for all individuals not involved in the Unit A project.

Beneficiaries informed the committee that they first came on the farm as project members in 2000 and they were six (6) at the time.

A number of challenges were highlighted by the beneficiaries:

- 1) Mushrooming of individuals who were not initially resettled there with livestock disrupted their project activities;
- 2) Resettlement Committee added three (3) individuals outside proper structures, who were not part of the initial project members; and
- 3) Some houses are without electricity posing a challenge to inhabitants.

6.6 Meeting with Resettled Farmers of Farm Bernafay

The Committee visited the farm and met with beneficiaries. Acquisition of the farm was in 1995 and measures around 3729 ha, consisting of fifteen (15) units of which 14 were allocated for individual farming and one (1) for a horticultural project. Resettled farmers raised a concern that they are yet to be provided with allotment letters, but it was explained by an official from the Ministry's Regional Resettlement Office that allotment letters are yet to be issued since farm demarcation was still under way. Another concern aired by the beneficiaries was that after harvest, their crops are rotting in storage due to a lack of transport to the market. The beneficiaries also complained that they bought 361 sheep through the micro-financing scheme of the Regional Council but 40 of the sheep were removed by the former Constituency Councilor from the farm without any explanation. Sheep given to them was to benefit them to sustain themselves and the farm infrastructure such as boreholes. The remaining sheep were also sold but the beneficiaries did not get anything from such sale. Other challenges raised by the beneficiaries were:

- a) Although there is sufficient water for irrigation, the water infrastructure is broken due to rusting of pipes
- b) Cumbersome procurement processes leading to a delay in service delivery from line ministries; and
- c) Dilapidated boundary fences that needs urgent rehabilitation.

6.7 Visit to Kalahari Research Centre

As part of its terms of reference, the Committee also visited Kalahari Research Station. The farm management and the Chief Agricultural Technician gave a brief presentation about activities on the farm. It is measures 10150 ha consisting of 153 camps and is equipped with a jackal proof fence stretching over 82 kilometers. Production started in 1959 with cattle and in 1960 white karakul sheep were added. Annual revenue from livestock sales amounts to up to N\$ 300 000. With all these successes, some challenges were reported by the farm management such as:

- a) Budget constraints that hampers recruitment to fill 16 vacant position on the establishment;

- b) Shortage of vaccines and other materials due to cumbersome procurement processes;
- c) Inability to find a market to sell livestock due to prolonged approval time frame for selected animals for auction at head office, which leads to animals being oversize or over age by time of approval;
- d) Lack of good planning for operations since budget is controlled centrally in Windhoek;
- e) Cars service delayed up to five (5) years;
- f) Minimal rainfall received, only 60mm received in 2023 compared to average annual rainfall of 160 to 250mm; and
- g) Aged farm infrastructure, including employee's accommodation.


6.8 Meeting with //Kharas Regional Council and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

During its meeting with officials from the //Kharas Regional Council and officials from Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform Directorate of Resettlement and Regional Programme Implementation, the Committee was informed that a total of 94 farms were acquired in the //Kharas region for resettlement purposes. The farms were demarcated in units, translating into 185 farming units. It was further indicated that of the 185, 104 farming unit beneficiaries signed lease agreements, while 81 were yet to sign lease agreements due to the tardiness of the process. The Committee was also informed that the implementation of the Land Conference resolutions was slow but efforts are being made in a quest to implement it.

6.9 Meeting with Resettled Farmers of Farm Leeukop

The farm was acquired in 2010 and was divided into two units: Unit A and B, with a combined size measuring 10774 ha for livestock farming. Unit A measures 5200 ha and has 14 internal camps and three (3) boreholes of which only one (1) is functional. The following challenges were raised by the beneficiary of Unit A:

- a) Water which only concentrated around the homestead is salty and not fit for human consumption; and
- b) Fences are down/dilapidated.



The beneficiary of Unit B, measuring 5574 ha was allotted the unit in 2019. They indicated that the only borehole on the unit is not sufficient to serve 10 internal camps. It was further indicated that the bordering and internal fences are down and despite their own efforts to rehabilitate the fences, some external assistance is needed to address this.

6.10 Meeting with Resettled Farmers of Areas Adjacent to Bethanie

The Committee met with these farmers at Bethanie to familiarize itself with pre and post resettlement challenges experienced by the beneficiaries, some of which are:

- a) Lack of water as they thus rely on adjacent farms for water supply;
- b) Boreholes not functional because all cylinders fell into casing;
- c) Theft of solar panels and pumps; and
- d) Lack of transport to get aid in form of tanks and other utilities from government.

6.11 Meeting with the Community of Dordabis Settlement

Dordabis is 95 kilometers east of Windhoek, situated in Khomas Rural Constituency. With an estimated population of about two thousand (2000), the residents of this communal area live on approximately 10 hectares (ha) of land which is owned by the Government. The Committee uncovered that at the inception of the settlement, indigenous were not allowed to live there freely nor where they allowed to erect any structure. Amongst the first to establish a house in the area did so in 1968. This was largely done by community members who worked in road construction and the then Department of Water Affairs and much later, around the 1970s, entities like Telecom Namibia and Roads Authority had a number of employees in the area. Later, around 1996, the community started expanding and establishing itself by erecting shacks and to date, the settlement is overcrowded.

The population of Dordabis has increased steadily over the years and to date, the community is still not resettled on a larger piece of land and are squeezed together on the 10 ha, a situation which is dire for all who live there. Community Members the Committee engaged informed the Committee that while this is their situation, there is vacant land in nearby commercial farms in the vicinity that goes unoccupied for long periods of time and only used as reserve areas.



The Committee also learned that it is mainly foreigners who buy land in the Dordabis area while the community who have lived there for years do not have land.

The community expressed their dissatisfaction with how the issue of resettlement is being handled by the Government, particularly by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MWLR) and how their plea has fallen on deaf ears after several petitions were submitted to the Ministry from 1993 already when the settlement was officially proclaimed. They claim that several government departments have visited them to enquire about their plight but to date, nothing has been done. The community, who have lived in the area as far back as 1964, had great expectations since Namibia's independence that they would one day be resettled in the area or have the resettlement area extended several ha to accommodate the growing population and agricultural needs. They focus largely on agricultural activities such as small livestock farming and a small community garden. However, this has been a challenge to successfully carry out on the small piece of land on which they live.

Residents at the settlement indicated to the Committee that due to shortage of land, many live in a one-room shack, together with their children and grandchildren. This compromises their basic human dignity as there is little to no privacy. On the new Resettlement Criteria that was proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MWLR), the community flagged that these proposed criteria would only further complicate and reduce their chances of ever being resettled as the new requirements are more stringent and limiting. In summary, the community reiterated that on several occasions, they have expressed their confinement on the piece of land they call home. They said that the land they have is not sufficient, and government is well aware of this. Their clarion call is for government to resettle them on bigger land that would allow them to farm productively. Currently, there is about nine (9) ha of unoccupied land in Dordabis.

Further worsening the situation in which the community lives are the mines which were operating in the area three (3) years ago. This, according to the community, caused serious health concerns due to air pollution, particularly the thick dust that was a result of the mining activities. Moreover, it is believed that the mining companies operating in the area are looking to expand through acquiring more land in Dordabis, which begs the question, where will residents go?

With respect to government support programmes on the settlement, inhabitants informed the Committee during the community meeting that government has done some good work in the

areas, with several government projects including; gardening, brick laying and plastering, poultry farming, sewing, saloons, and bakery amongst a few others having been availed to them. However, some of these projects are no longer in operation due to several factors, chief amongst them the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and the lack of sufficient land.

Further worsening their plight, the community of Dordabis informed the Committee that they bury their loved ones in a graveyard located within the private property of the farm bordering the settlement. Part of this piece of land, before it was sold, was where many grew up and where their great grandparents are laid to rest, but now, they need permission to visit the graves and even hold funerals there. At times, they are charged up to N\$600 by the owner of the property to access this land. They further narrated that it is disheartening, after losing a loved one, you are required to first clean the graveyard before you bury your relative.

Community Members who travelled from Farm Versaille No.67 present at the meeting in Dordabis informed the Committee that Twenty-Six (26) households are resettled on the Six Thousand (6000) ha farm. The farm is thus overcrowded as there is mass illegal land grabbing, resulting in overgrazing and land degradation. Hence, they call on government to address this crisis.

Furthermore, they have a challenge of water distribution. The Government provided the farm with solar powered boreholes but due to overcrowding, the distribution is not sufficient to all the residents. They further stated that there was no access to vaccination support services from the Government and as a result, their livestock are dying. The condition of the road is also another challenge that they hope will be addressed by government.

The Committee visited a family of Fourteen (14) living in a corridor after they were evicted from Farm Anstatt No. 250 since the 10th December 2023. The farm is about 30 kilometers from Dordabis. One of the evicted, a thirty-two (32) year-old mother of five informed the Committee that they had been living on the farm before the lease holder who is resettled on the farm, rented it out to a lessee who chased them off the land. The evicted family stated that they have One Hundred and Fourteen (114) Goats, Five (5) Sheep, Fifteen (15) Donkeys and Fifteen (15) Horses. Without access to grazing land, water and shelter, the family live in a makeshift tent along the road and they, together with their livestock, get water from neighbouring Naudabis Farm. The evicted family is from the area as both the man who was evicted and his father in law are employed at a commercial farm in the vicinity.

7. Other Agricultural Projects Visited by the Standing Committee

7.1 Desert Fruit Date Farm

The farm was started in 2005 and the current owner from the Netherlands took over in 2015. There are currently 20 000 trees planted on the farm of which 15 000 are in full production. Harvesting is done of a variety of 4 different date types of dates. The farm employs 165 waged workers, 20 salaried workers as well as 500 seasonal workers respectively and boasts a housing provision for about 600 employees. There is also a fully-fledged clinic with two certified nurses and a crèche for young children. During the Committee's visit to the date plantations, the farm manager highlighted the following challenges:

- a) Lack of local expertise, hence the heavy reliance on foreign expertise which comes at a hefty cost;
- b) Weather challenges;
- c) Lack of adequate water resources;
- d) Theft and illegal harvesting of wood;
- e) Currently experienced a net loss and yet to break-even; and
- f) Very far from the markets which is as far as China.
- g) Illegal fishing in the Orange River

7.2 !Aimab Super Farm

The Committee visited !Aimab Super Farm to familiarize itself with its operations. The farm, which specializes in dairy, was established in 2009 on a 280 ha piece of land. The foreman of the farm indicated that the farm employs about 106 people and is stocked with 2000 cows of which 1100 are milked daily; producing 36000 litres of milk daily. The milk is transported to Windhoek for processing at its plant. Fodder is imported from South Africa and but produces own feed on a smaller scale. The farm sources its water from the Hardap Dam which is its main source of water supply

7.3 Farm Komsberg

The Committee met with Farm Komsberg manager who indicated that the farm was acquired in 2015 for food security and the owner, Mr.Ali Albwardy, is from United Arab Emirates (UAE). The farm employs 164 permanent employees, with salaries ranging between N\$15 000 to 4 000 per month. There is provision for housing for 120 permanent, as well as 400 seasonal employees. The Committee also visited the various plantations on the farm.

The size of the farm is 23 000 ha, with grape vines planted on 128 ha, citrus trees on 100 ha and a blueberry plantation is on a 25 ha of land. Further indication was given by the manager that they need to increase that to 400 ha due to huge demand for blueberries world-wide. Irrigation infrastructure consists of 12 pumps installed on a 2 000 ha irrigation area, sourcing water to the tune of about 800 000 cubic meters per month from Namwater.

The farm managers highlighted some challenges as follows:

- a) Theft, snarling and illegal hunting is rife;
- b) Illegal harvesting of reeds and wood;
- c) Loitering;
- d) Inadequate water resources;
- e) Access to the international market a challenge;
- f) Mushrooming of strangers on the farm; and

7.4 Farms Vergenoeg and Brakwater

The Committee was informed that the farm belongs to the //Kharas Regional Council and it was earmarked for leasing purposes. It measures over 11 000 ha and was acquired in 2011 and leasing commenced in 2013, with plenty of game such as Oryx, Eland and Giraffe. Infrastructure includes a water purification system valued at N\$ 1.5 million. The system however needs tanks to function optimally. If fully converted to a game farm for tourism purposes, the farm will create an estimated 30 permanent jobs.

Farm Brakwater was acquired in 2006 and is 5124 ha in size. It is for small stock farming and due to acidic nature of water crop farming is not possible. The farm is sub-divided into three



units (A, B and C). Unit A, which measures 1794 ha, does not have a borehole and relies on pipelines from Unit B. Occupants of Unit C, measuring 1691 ha, indicated that the internal stock proof border fence is dilapidated and they have been on the land without a lease agreement in place.

8. Engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

Upon concluding the oversight visit, the Committee held an engagement with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to brief the line Ministry on the aims and objectives of the oversight visit and raise pressing issues of what was uncovered during the exercise.

8.1 The Land Reform Programme

According to the Ministry, the Land Reform Programme is built on three pillars, namely;

- a) The *Redistributive Land Reform Process* which involves the acquisition of land by the Government according to the willing buyer-willing seller principle. It aims improve the access to land by previously disadvantaged Namibians;
- b) The *Affirmative Action Loan Scheme* which is administered by the Agricultural Bank of Namibia; and
- c) *Tenure Reforms* which is administered through the development of unutilised or underutilised non-freehold land and registration of land rights in the communal areas.

8.2 Overview of the Resettlement Programme

The Ministry informed the Committee that the resettlement programme is guided by some provisions of the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act No. 6 of 1995, the National Land Policy of 1998 and the National Resettlement Policy of 2022 which was revised in 2023. These legal instruments provide policy frameworks for the acquisition and distribution of land under the National Resettlement Programme. In order to promote the decentralized allocation of commercial agricultural land, the Government has established Regional Resettlement Committees and entrusted them with the task to scrutinize and evaluate applications for submission to the Land Reform Advisory Commission (LRAC).

The Ministry highlighted successes of the Resettlement Programme since the inception of the Land Reform Programme in 1990 as follows; to date, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform acquired a total of 590 farms at an overall cost of N\$2,5 Billion with a collective size of 3.5 Million ha.

In 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform targeted to acquire 5 Million ha. So far, only 67% or 3.5 Million ha have been acquired. There is a deficit of 1.5 Million ha to achieve this goal, and the target could not be achieved due to lack of funds. A total of 5490 beneficiaries of previously disadvantaged Namibians were resettled of which 2 146 are male, 1 468 are female and 31 are juristic entities. The remaining 1845 previously disadvantaged Namibians could not be recorded as these are group resettlements and San Development Projects under the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare.

Resettlement Per Region

No	Regions	No of beneficiaries resettled
1	Erongo	193
2	Hardap	405
3	Kharas	186
4	Khomas	213
5	Kunene	628
6	Omaheke	2008
7	Oshikoto	1306
8	Otjozondjupa	551
Total		5490

8.3 Criteria

Resettlement take place in terms of the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act No. 6 of 1995. The Act outlines the general eligibility criteria of resettlement beneficiaries, by stating that those who should benefit from this programme are Namibians citizens who do not own agricultural land or adequate land. It further elaborates that such citizens are those that have

been disadvantaged either socially, economically or educationally by the past colonial discriminatory laws and practices.

The revised Policy provides for three resettlement Models which are, High Economic Value Model; Moderate Economic Value Model and the Low Economic Value Model. The Ministry informed the Committee that they were aware of the concerns raised after widespread consultations, and as such, the resettlement criteria was being revised to be aligned to the new Resettlement Policy 2023- 2033 and the 2018 Land Conference Resolutions.

The Committee shared with the Ministry the views expressed by communities with respect to the proposed revised criteria for resettlement which was approved by Cabinet in May 2023. Officials from the Ministry informed the Committee about the general eligibility criteria of potential beneficiaries. However, the Committee expressed that the development of new criteria still needed further consultation and reworking to ensure that it fully benefits the previously disadvantaged. Some of the criteria that raised concern is the access to capital and ownership of resources. Other criteria for resettlement are:

1. A person should be 18 years old;
2. Willingness and preparedness to hold land under leasehold and adhere to the conditions thereof, however, leasehold land and rights may be transferred into freehold rights after successful probation period;
3. Readiness to relocate and willingness and preparedness to relinquish any agricultural land rights held elsewhere based on the principal of fair and equitable land distribution;
4. Depending on the resettlement model advanced for the land on offer, beneficiaries should have some background on the land use activity for which the resettlement is based; and
5. To conform to the provisions of the Act, the acquired farm for resettlement purposes is first demarcated into farming units if necessary and an allotment plan is prepared accordingly. Once an allotment plan has been approved by the Minister, the resettlement unit is allocated to a successful candidate.

Further to the above criteria, a point scoring criteria is also used by the Regional Resettlement Committees. They are as follow:

1. Agricultural background
2. Experience in Agricultural activities



3. Age
4. Gender of the applicant
5. Generational farm workers
6. Literacy
7. Number of large livestock units or small stock units
8. Applications from Communal areas

As for the criteria listed above, literacy and number of livestock were also flagged as a restrictive measure that would see many excluded from the programme.

The Ministry highlighted the major challenges of the resettlement programme, chief amongst which are the mismatch of the policy and criteria for the allocation of acquired land, poor agricultural productivity on allocated land, weak pre and post settlement support due to lack of funds, lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of the resettlement process, poor stakeholder involvement and coordination, subleasing of resettlement farms and inheritance of resettlement farms-disputes among families. In addition, it was uncovered that the Sub-Division for Water Infrastructure Development on resettlement farms was created within the Department of Water Affairs to expedite any matters from this sector.

8.4 Pre and Post Settlement Support Provided to farmers

The Committee learned that the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform and Agribank provide numerous compulsory training and continues mentoring support programmes to resettled farmers. These include the development of water and fencing infrastructure, post settlement support funds and a development budget for group resettlement projects.

For the development of water and fencing infrastructure, the Ministry budgets around N\$ 40 Million annually for this project and for post settlement support funds, resettled farmers receive up to N\$200,000.00 per farmer from Agribank and the line Ministry. Finally, under the development budget for group resettlement projects, the Ministry allocates about N\$3 Million annually to assist farmers.



8.5 Flood Water Harvesting

The Ministry informed the Committee that it is taking a proactive approach by excavating and constructing earth dams in various regions as well as re-shaping the canals and water flow channels to harvest water. The excavated dams are aimed to harvest and store rainwater, which will then be used for agricultural purposes. It will further reduce evaporation of the surface water and serve as a flood reduction mechanism.

To harvest and restore rainwater, the Ministry has transferred a total of N\$17.5 Million to Regional Councils for the excavation of earth dams in their respective regions, Ohangwena received N\$2.5 Million and Oshana N\$15 Million during the 2022/2023 Financial Year. During the 2023/2024 Financial Year, the Ministry planned to excavate 129 earth dams across the country, however due to delays in the procurement process, it is anticipated that these planned earth dams will only be completed during the next financial year 2024/2025.

Despite the challenges encountered during the procurement of equipment required for excavation of these earth dams, four (4) earth dams were excavated in Oshana Region, three (3) earth dams are under excavation in Hardap, Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions while five (5) earth dams in Hardap, Kavango West and //Kharas regions have already been awarded to contractors. According to the Ministry, work should be completed during the 2024/2025 Financial Year.

It was also brought to the Committee's attention that the Ministry is in the process of entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Road Contractor Company (RCC), to excavate and rehabilitate the earth dams in all regions.

8.6 Conveyance of Flood Water for Local Use and Irrigation to Address Food Security

The Committee learned that the Ministry plans to excavate and reshape seven (7) canals countrywide during the 2024/2025 Financial Year, namely: Etaka Canal, Oshigambo Canal, Mpungu –Nzinze Canal, Ndonga Linena-Ncaute Canal, Bukalo Canal, Driehoek and Oshakati Inakulu Yomadhiya Canal. The Ministry further acknowledged the need to boost food production to ensure food security in the country, thus the Ministry has started with the piloting of drilling and installation of boreholes for Small-Scale Irrigation initiatives in some regions. To date, the Ministry has drilled ten (10) boreholes for Small-Scale irrigation purposes in six

(6) regions, namely: Ohangwena 2, Oshikoto 2, Kavango West 2, Kavango East 2, Zambezi 1 and Omusati 1. The initiative will provide some relief in addressing the shortage of food currently experienced in the country. It will also promote employment to the unemployed agricultural graduates and upon realization of its success, the Ministry will roll it to all regions.

9. Other Matters Outside the Terms of Reference

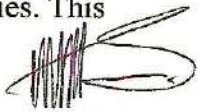
At Dordabis, government provides services such as water, electricity, a clinic and police station. The clinic however, is very small and is unable to meet the needs of all residents, hence, they are asking that it be upgraded. The only primary school, shop and fuel station in the area are privately owned by a farm owner on the same piece of land. According to community members, a meeting that took place in 2018 resolved for a secondary school to be built at Dordabis at the tune of Thirty-Five Million (N\$ 35 000 000). To date however, the school is yet to be build. Because of the absence of a secondary school, the community informed the Committee that many of their children drop out of school after Grade 7 as they are unable to continue in places such as Windhoek, at schools closest to home mainly due to financial constraints. The Committee thus implores on the relevant Standing Committees of this House whose functions fall within the ambit of education and health, that is the Standing Committee on Education, Science, ICT and Youth Development and the Standing Committee on Health, Social Welfare and Labour Affairs to enquire into these matters to ensure that attention is given for the upgrade of the clinic and ambulance services at Dordabis as well as the construction of a Secondary School at the settlement to allow the learners in that area to complete their secondary education.

10. Lessons Learned Findings

Taking into consideration the engagements and information gathered from the oversight visit, and notwithstanding the challenges and successes outlined in the report, the Committee learned the following key lessons:

- a) The Ministry provides Pre and Post Settlement Support to farmers. However, these funds are not enough to meet the needs of the farmers, many of whom are placed on farms that are dilapidated and in need of extensive renovations and repairs. In addition, there is also poor stakeholder involvement and coordination to make the programme a success.

- b) As per the Resettlement Programme, the line Ministry should support resettled farmers for a period of up to five years. Currently, this is not happening due to a lack of human resources and thus, resettlement farmers do not receive adequate support to enable them to farm productively.
- c) The Committee also found that there is a lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of the resettlement process. This leads to the government buying a farm that stands unoccupied for five years before a beneficiary is allocated the farm. In addition, there is also a data and information gap in the overall resettlement programme, resulting in mismatch of mitigating measures by the line Ministry. For example, the Ministry has limited oversight over resettlement farms under sub-lease and those being encroached by unauthorised persons.
- d) Despite great efforts and successes, there remains critical challenges in the resettlement programme that have hampered the overall success of the programme. The Committee identified the scoring system of the resettlement criteria as a major concern in that it does not accurately project the most suitable and capable beneficiaries of the programme. This, the Committee found, is due to the fact that the criteria can be manipulated easily and therefore, needs to be reviewed to ensure that selected beneficiaries are those who are truly able to farm productively.
- e) Further to point (d) above, the Ministry must devise ways to identify and resettle those communal farmers with a high number of livestock and other projects to ensure that they continue to farm productively and improve the productivity of farmland and the overall agricultural market. This will improve the current poor agricultural productivity on allocated land.
- f) Another challenge the Committee uncovered is the duration of the leasehold, which is 99 years. This, the Committee feels limits the true ownership of land by the previously disadvantaged.
- g) One of the main objectives of the Resettlement Programme was to address landlessness amongst generational farm workers and the previously disadvantaged. However, generational farm workers remain negatively affected when government purchase farms for resettlement. In addition, the broad category of previously disadvantaged may have some adverse effect on the resettlement programme as it has made it more competitive for the most vulnerable to be resettled.
- h) There is a challenge with the extended unoccupancy of resettlement farms from the period when they are acquired by government to when they are awarded to the beneficiaries. This results in the dilapidation and theft of infrastructure.



- i) Although some successes were recorded, a significant number of resettlement farms are not as productive as they should be due to various reasons, including water scarcity, lack of support, lack of capacity and encroachment by others. Productivity of the agricultural sector has decreased over the years. Around the year 2002, there was an estimated two million small stock livestock in the market, to date, this amount has reduced to 740 000, a decrease which has negatively affected the economy.
- j) The lack of sufficient earth dams affects the inhabitants living in flood prone areas and funds must be allocated to address the matter.
- k) The harvesting of flood water will address water scarcity and improve the agricultural sector.

11. Conclusion

The oversight visit enabled the Standing Committee to gain a wide understanding of the resettlement programme and challenges faced by resettlement farmers and others who so desperately seek to be resettled on a piece of land they can call home and farm on productively. The Engagements with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform also highlighted the water management programmes of the Ministry and progress made on that front, although much more still needs to be done to mitigate the impact of life-threatening factors such as food insecurity as a result of the ongoing drought. Equally, the success stories of farmers in the country remain a ray of hope that with enough dedication and determination from the farmers and support and guidance from the Ministry, a lot can be achieved.

It is evident that government has done and continues to do a lot in both sectors of land and water management, however, adequate resources are required to address the shortfalls. With respect to the Dordabis matter, it is the prayer of this Committee that urgent attention is given to address the over crowdedness in the settlement. More official visits to the area will not solve the matter and the community need relief in order to restore their dignity and live productively.

12. Recommendations

Taking into account what was uncovered in the course of the oversight visit, the Committee hereby recommends that:



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- a) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform provide adequate training and financial support to resettled farmers;
- b) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to develop a proper monitoring and evaluation system to track all developments in the resettlement programme;
- c) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to review the resettlement criteria used for point scoring to ensure that it is able to effectively determine the suitable and deserving candidates to benefit from the programme;
- d) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform reviews the duration of 99 years for the leasehold of resettlement farms to any period when a lessee is able to purchase the land to increase the ownership of land by the previously disadvantaged;
- e) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to, in reasonable time, furnish individual resettled farmers with allotment letters to enable them to access financial facilities;
- f) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to limit the time it takes for a farm to be allocated and to ensure the upkeep and protection of farm infrastructure to avoid theft, vandalism and other damage caused by prolonged unoccupancy of farms yet to be allocated as;
- g) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform curb the uncontrolled and illegal occupation of resettlement farms as this disrupts the success of projects earmarked for particular farms;
- h) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to provide the necessary support and funding to the Kalahari Research Centre to enable it operate optimally and ensure the filling of 16 vacant positions on the establishment;
- i) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform and Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprise to address the delay in the procurement of vaccines and other vital materials due to the cumbersome procurement process that results in the shortage of vaccines and other supplies at the Kalahari Research Centre;
- j) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform address the lengthy approval period for selected livestock due for auction as this results in the inability of farmers to find a market for their livestock due to changes in weight and age;
- k) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to acquire land around Dordabis in order to expand the settlement as a matter of urgency;
- l) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform urgently address the plight of the evicted family at Farm Anstatt in the Dordabis and other vulnerable families in similar

situation by availing a resettlement farm for them to occupy through funds from the development budget for group resettlement projects;

- m) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform build sufficient earth dams for catchment purposes, in order for rain and flood water to be used for agricultural purposes;
- n) The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform Government invest in flood adaptation infrastructure in order to mitigate the impact of floods on communities in flood-prone areas. This includes the construction of drainage systems and quality roads fit for flood prone areas that will allow community members to access basic services such as schools and clinics even during the rainy season;
- o) The National Council Standing Committee on Education, Science, ICT and Youth Development to enquire on the progress towards the construction of a Secondary School at Dordabis;
- p) The National Council Standing Committee on Health, Social Welfare and Labour Affairs to enquire on the progress towards the renovation and acquisition of the clinic and ambulance at Dordabis respectively.

13. Adoption of Report

This report was adopted by the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources at its meeting of 29 July 2024 in the Secretary's Boardroom, National Council Administration Building.



Honourable Melania Ndjago

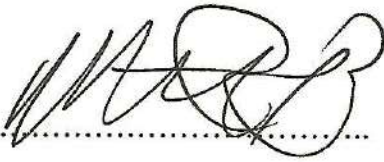
Date: 29/07/2024

Chairperson: Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources

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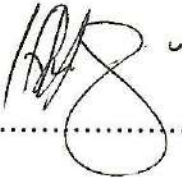
Date.....

Hon. Elder Filipe, Vice Chairperson of the Committee

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Date 30-07-2024

Hon. Richard !Gaoseb, Committee Member

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Date 29/07/2024

Hon. Paulus Mbangu, Committee Member

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Date.....

Hon. Nicodemus J. Motinga, Committee Member

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Date 29/07/2024

Hon. Willem Labuschagne, Committee Member

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Date 29/07/24

Hon. Kennedy J. Haoseb, Committee Member

