

**Speech by the Hon. Governor of Ohangwena
Region**

**On the Official Launch of the
Implementation Phase of the Communal
Land Support Project in Okongo
Constituency, Ohangwena Region.**

**Held on 18th April 2011 at Okongo Training
Centre at Okongo**

Hon. Constituency Councilors of Oshana region

Your Majesty, the Queen of Oukwayama Traditional Authority

Distinguished Senior Traditional Councilors

Chief Executive Officer, MCA Namibia

Respected Head men/women Representatives

Ministry of Lands and Resettlement Official Support Staff Members

Team leader and Communal Land Support team members

Line Ministries Officials and Agencies present here today

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to be among you this morning, as we embark upon a very important programme for land administration in the six (6) northern communal areas of Namibia, **the Communal Land Support program of the MCA-Namibia Compact**. The Compact has been designed over a long road of consultation and reflection on the challenges that limit economic growth for Namibia and for the Northern Communal Areas (NCA) in particular, as well as the opportunities that can be exploited within those challenges.

Specific opportunities identified are to accelerate economic growth for the NCAs during that process are livestock production, investments in tourism and value addition to indigenous products.

Embarking on realizing this overarching objective is by no means easy. It requires numerous interventions to address the many challenges that affect delivery and achievement of these goals.

The NCAs are characterized by open community access to grazing land, which, combined with increased human and animal populations have led to poor rangeland management, over-grazing, severe degradation of rangeland resources and inevitably, poor livestock nutrition and productivity. One of the causal factors in this equation is land management. In some cases, it has been reported that traditional authorities have allocated large tracts of land to powerful and wealthy individuals. In other cases, individuals have captured and fenced off land without the knowledge or the permission of the traditional authorities. The result is that over time, there has been a gradual shrinkage of commonage areas affecting negatively grazing and other forms of land utilization, which in turn has been detrimental to the livelihoods of poor households.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Illegal fencing is a problem we can no longer ignore. Capturing communal land at the expense of the landless masses will further disadvantage the poor. Government has designed programmes to encourage wealthy farmers in the communal areas to acquire land in the commercial areas or apply for designated agricultural purpose in the communal area and reduce pressure on villages so that livelihoods for

poor people can be improved. Handling illegal fences and ensuring compliance with the laws in place is a tough task but it is a task that has to be done. As an important cornerstone of good rangeland management, improving carrying capacity and indeed livestock productivity, good land management practices and systems in the communal areas have to be the norm rather than the exception. Similarly, all other investments require secure land tenure. This process begins with ascertaining ownership of land.

I understand that the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement began the process of registering land rights in the communal areas in 2003. To speed up the registration process the Communal Land Support program was initiated. The programme's aim is to support and enhance the capacity of Communal Land Boards and Traditional Authorities including village heads in the six regions of Oshana, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Omusati, Kavango and Kunene to adjudicate, allocate and administer formal land rights and resolve any land disputes that may arise. To date, the programme has successfully achieved the followings:

- 1) It has completed a **Capacity Assessment** of six (6) Communal Land Boards, Sixteen (16) Traditional Authorities and six (6) MLR regional staff achieved important milestone,
- 2) It has developed the **Communication Strategy** which will educate and give information to all the people living in the NCAs,

- 3) It has also developed the **Training Strategy** which will address the training of all headmen/women in the Registration Areas and,
- 4) It has developed the **Registration Strategy**, which will guide the registration process.

In addition, the project has extended its operations to all six (6) regions and opened offices in **Rundu, Outapi, Opuwo, Eenhana, Omuthiya** and **Oshakati** as of the 1st March 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Communal Land Boards and Traditional Authorities have a crucial role in the implementation of this program. A unique requirement in the Communal Land Support sub-activity is that all Land Board members and Traditional Authorities head men and head women must be trained to acquire relevant skills and knowledge pertaining to their responsibility in land administration. **Director of Ceremonies**, let me take this opportunity to urge all those involved to actively attend all training events and thereby improve their land administration and management skills pertaining to their respective mandate.

It is comforting to know that a number of policy issues affecting effective land administration have been identified for review. I am informed that during the preliminary consultations with the Communal

Land Boards and the Traditional Authorities, other policy issues also emerged.

I am also encouraged at the same time, knowing that pointing out the shortcomings and deficiencies of the land administration system creates a platform for dialogue and compliments efforts in facing the challenges at hand collectively.

GIZ International Services' is the selected contractor and its head office is situated just next door to the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement in Oshakati. I did mention the six (6) regions with six (6) sub-offices. The establishment of those offices should ensure accessibility to the program by all stakeholders. Let us make use of these offices any time to ask, to advice and to comment on any activities throughout the implementation of the program.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me now turn to the reason for today's event. Today we are gathering here to witness the historical launch of the implementation phase of the Communal Land Support in Ohangwena Region. This launch marks the official commencement of field activities of the CLS project to be rolled out from here to all the six (6) NCA Regions. I am well informed that, both the training of headman and women and registration of communal land right will commence here in Okongo Constituency starting today until **30th April 2011**. Therefore, let me encourage all leaders and the

community members to cooperate with the CLS project staffs for the project to yield desirable results.

With these words, I declare the **Communal Land Support project implementation phase** officially launched.

I thank you.