



05 August 2016

**REGIONAL OUTREACH VISIT TO KUNENE AND OMUSATI REGIONS BY HON.
PROF. PETER H. KATJAVIVI, MP, SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi embarked on a series of Regional outreach visits. This visit to Kunene and Omusati Regions took place from 29 July to 03 August 2016. The outreach visits are an important component of the Parliament's oversight mandate to ensure accountability, transparency and good governance and had a specific emphasis on the impact of the prevailing drought on the rural communities in terms of access to potable water; equitable access to education and sustainable food security.

Speaker Katjavivi was accompanied by Members of Parliament; Hon. Mike Kavekatora and Hon. Emilia Nuyoma-Amupewa. The Speaker's delegation was also accompanied by H.E. Eduardo Carvalho, the Ambassador of Brazil in Namibia, and the Secretary-General of the Namibia Red Cross Society, Ms. Dorcas Kapembe-Haiduwa.

The Speaker opined that; *"in an era of scarce resources and competing developmental priorities, it has become imperative that government, non-governmental organisations and development partners are strategically aligned in their collaborative efforts to attain a sustainable livelihood for our people"*.

The delegation paid courtesy calls on the Governors of the two regions who briefed it about the current situation with emphasis on the developmental challenges that are now compounded by the persistent drought in the country.

While in the Kunene Region, the delegation visited the rural communities of Okorusave and Okapembambu as well as the Kunene Regional Hospital in Opuwo.

At Okapembambu School, the delegation learnt that some tents being used as classrooms and boarding units had been supplied by the Norwegian and Chinese agencies.

Hon. Angelika Muharukua, Governor of Kunene Region, particularly decried the lack of proper tarred roads even around the suburbs near Opuwo town centre. This hampers development and effective service delivery as it remains a challenge to reach remote parts of the region; whereas community members lamented their concern about limited access to health facilities because of the inaccessible roads.

On 1st August 2016, the Speaker arrived in Omusati Region from Kunene Region, with his delegation and paid a courtesy call on the Regional Governor, Hon. Erkki Erginus Endjala. The Governor highlighted particular concerns about the need for uninterrupted funding for especially water security projects, rural electrification projects, rural roads infrastructure, hospital and school staff capacity and infrastructural development.

The challenges observed are not only confined to one region but transcend regions and range from lack of suitable school infrastructure; especially hostel and teachers' accommodation and ablution facilities.

Hon. Katjavivi stressed that access to education, availability of potable water and food security remained key on the development agenda and were closely linked to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to end hunger and poverty by 2030. Hence, Namibia requires urgent and concerted efforts to address the needs of the affected communities.

He also stated that, *"it remains a cause of major concern that our children in the rural areas are still lagging far behind in respect of access to equitable education in comparison with their peers in the urban areas"*. Such a situation needs urgent remedial action in order to insure future human capital for development.

The Speaker's delegation had an opportunity to witness the abject poverty faced by some of the communities; a situation which presents unconducive conditions for teaching and learning in make-shift structures that expose both teachers and learners to extreme weather conditions, respiratory infections and snakes. What is alarming is that some schools have to interrupt their school calendar and close earlier when the school-feeding scheme food is depleted. Among the other

factors that compromise quality education is the long distances between schools that render children vulnerable to attacks from wild animals as well as potential sexual molestation

Furthermore, these rural schools also face a lack of basic teaching materials such as textbooks and other teaching aids besides the lack of electricity which does not allow for the inclusion of the ICT component in learning.

Despite the challenges observed, it was also encouraging to note that the Red Cross Society of Namibia had done remarkably well in the regions, in providing water infrastructure to the Okapembambu village and has active volunteers in the communities of Onawa, Oikokola and Odimbwa who are providing assistance to vulnerable households; especially alleviating the plight of senior citizens who needs care and protection.

The Speaker reassured the communities that their concerns would be reported to the relevant stakeholders for appropriate action. These endeavours are all aimed at complementing the government's development initiatives.

In conclusion, the Speaker had this to say; *“our outreach visit connected us with those who have devoted and dedicated their service to some of our remotest and most vulnerable sectors of our society in some of the most difficult terrains on the landscape of our nation. The devotion and perseverance of these ‘angles of hope’, with passion, really touched our hearts”.*