

Report of the



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HABITAT ON THE PROGRESS MADE ON RURAL
WATER SUPPLY AND LAND SERVICING

TO

OSHIKOTO, OSHANA, OHANGWENA, OMUSATI, KUNENE, KAVANGO EAST,
KAVANGO WEST, ZAMBEZI, OTJOZONDJUPA, OMAHEKE, HARDAP AND //KARAS

REGIONS

FROM:

02 - 28 JULY 2017



Otjingambu water reservoir in Kunene in a dilapidated state

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This report was adopted by the Standing Committee on Habitat on 27 November 2017 at 16H00.at its meeting held in the Blue Room, National Council Building.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Council Standing Committee on Habitat acknowledges that this report would not have come to completion without the contributions that were made by all stakeholders at the regions that were visited. The Committee is deeply thankful to the following stakeholders who made some room available out of their busy schedule to share their much needed contribution with the Committee: Regional Councils, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, NAMWATER and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development.

TERMS OF REFERENCES

The National Council established a Committee on Habitat in terms of Article 74(2) of the Namibian Constitution. Also, the National Council Standing Rules and Orders provide for the establishment of standing/select committees to assist the House in performing its review functions.

Each Standing Committee has its functions defined by the Standing Rules and Orders, and therefore, a Standing Committee is at liberty to initiate an inquiry or a visit in fulfilment of its functions.

The National Council Standing Committee on Habitat as part of its mandate has an oversight function to deal with matters pertaining to the livelihood of the Namibian citizens in that it seeks to address the issues of human settlement in the country.

The Habitat Committee has the mandate to:

- 1) establish networks for the exchange of information with the Ministry of Urban and Rural development, the National Habitat Committee of Namibia, to encourage Government in the housing delivery process and to exchange information with all relevant stakeholders in the housing delivery sectors of Namibia.
- 2) promote legislation for sustainable human settlements, safe environment, potable water, good sewerage systems and encourage adequate shelter for all.
- 3) hold public consultations, seminars and workshops in which Governmental authorities and private institutions may participate to know and analyse the problems and needs of sustainable human development, urban development, housing, environmental protection among others, in order to gather proposals and consensus for their solution.

Therefore, the Standing Committee sought to meet with regional councils, local authorities in order to be informed about achievements and challenges that were encountered on land servicing projects. The information received would then be followed by visits to sites where land had been serviced for residential purposes. Still, the Committee sought to meet with those charged with the provision of water to all remote areas to be informed on the success stories and challenges. Again the presentations would be followed by visits to sites where water infrastructure had been installed for the purpose of providing potable water.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The government had seen that urbanisation was taking place at an accelerated pace and these urban bound movements saw the need of housing and other services such as water and sanitation in urban centres rise.

Informal settlements had flared up at many urban areas across the country and these areas had presented different challenges to local authorities. They needed potable water, proper sewerage systems and serviced land. Land conflicts between new comers and local authorities had erupted. There was, therefore, a need to accelerate the land delivery process, especially for those in informal settlements, to curtail the looming land confrontations in urban centres.

Land delivery constraints are attributed to the rising population numbers in urban areas, exorbitant land servicing costs, unaffordability of serviced land, lack of technical know-how within local authorities and income generating projects, belated decisions stalled by bureaucracy in service provision coupled with workmanship that is below standard.

The movement of people to towns is blamed on lack of services such as potable water and proper housing in these remote areas. Efforts to supply remote areas with potable water, and even sanitation facilities, are therefore underway across the country.

The efforts of supplying services to those in informal settlements are underway, although the delivery is at a ‘snail’ pace. The nation should, however, understand that the challenge of addressing the needs of those in these mushrooming shacks is exacerbated by the fact that these are people who hardly earn a salary but expect the provision of services that are payable.

Financial resources are in short supply and, indeed, quite inadequate, but if available, necessary services should be provided to the whole nation. The commitment made by the leadership of different regions is a good gesture that should assure citizenry that the availability of financial resources will see these services delivered without fail or favour. Despite all the incapacitating challenges, the twelve regions and, in unison, the rest across the country, have engaged in a variety of projects to address, though at a reduced rate, the need for serviced land.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

En Masse: In one group; all together;

Excursion: A short journey; or an outing;

Leeway: A margin of freedom;

Precursor: One that preceded another. In the report at hand, an explanation that gives a hint of what to expect in the write up.

Saline: Containing salt

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The regional investigative outings provide an opportunity to learn and ascertain oneself on the successes and failures on the projects rolled out by Government, as so informed by Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) in the selected regions.

The National Council Standing Committee on Habitat undertook a regional excursion to investigate on the progress so far made on the Rural Water Supply (pipelines, boreholes and Water Point Committees) and on land servicing initiatives. The Committee undertook on-site inspections as one of its annual plan activities and this engagement was meant to implement scorecard 2017/2018, as so guided by MTEF/HPP in the selected regions: Zambezi, Kavango East, Kavango West, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Oshana, Omusati, Kunene, Otjozondjupa, Omaheke, Hardap and //Kharas.

The visit had to ascertain whether or not the following aspects were in place:

- Reliable water supply infrastructure for both human and livestock;
- Boreholes were drilled, stored and operational;
- Communities and emerging farmers had access to potable water;
- Land servicing projects for beneficiaries were sped up.

Though the engagement coincided with the consultations that were underway in preparation for the upcoming land conference, Honourable Governors still availed space and time to welcome the Committee and even made their contribution towards the key drivers around which the visit revolved. The Committee managed to meet Chief Regional Officers and their entourage, Chief Executive Officers of Town Councils and Village Councils, staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, staff from the Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination, staff from NAMWATER and those from the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain facts and opinions, meetings were held with all stakeholders at each and every host region. The pencil and paper technique was used to capture all deliberations that were in alignment with the purpose of the visit.

3.0 PRESENTATION APPROACH

The presentation of the deliberations and findings is broken in two main phases and in relation to the key drivers of Rural Water Supply and Land Servicing. The findings that were gathered during courtesy calls to Honourable Governors are presented as such and then followed by findings obtained from meetings with the actual stakeholders.

FINDINGS: RURAL WATER SUPPLY INITIATIVES

4.0 Honourable Governors

- 4.1 During the visits, the Standing Committee paid courtesy calls at Honourable Regional Governors and these accorded an opportunity to these Honourable regional leaders to express themselves on issues pertaining to land servicing, and rural water supply. The respected regional leaders further related to other sources of water such as rain and floods.

Commonalities

- 4.2 Most Honourable Governors spoke about the good rains which resulted in good harvests, and then water for animals. The regions such as the Zambezi, Oshana, Ohangwena and the Oshikoto were particularly grateful with the bumper harvests that had been received in their regions.
- 4.3 The rains that fell in the Oshikoto, Oshana, Ohangwena and Omusati regions was so high that it excited ideas of constructing earth dams to harvest the “water falls” and the floods thereof.

Boreholes and the Saline Factor

- 4.4 The drilling of boreholes in most parts of the northern regions was seen as a sheer waste of time and resources. This owed to the fact that much of the underground water was tainted with high levels of alkaline.
- 4.5 The chalky substance (saline) was of dire concern particularly in the east of Ohangwena, Oshikoto, a greater part of the Omusati, Oshana, some parts of the Kunene, “saline block” of the //Kharas Region and the Muyako Settlement in the Zambezi Region.

Budget Cuts

- 4.6 The unfortunate reality of budget cuts that had befallen our country and its impact on many regional developmental initiatives was a concern to which all Honourable Governors in the regions that were visited alluded.

5.0 THE CHIEF REGIONAL OFFICERS

The meetings with Chief Regional Officers (henceforth CRO) always involved Traditional Authority representatives, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, the Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination, and members of Water Point Committees.

Rural Water Supply through Boreholes and pipelines

- 5.1 Boreholes were the main source of water in many parts of the country, especially in remote areas. The practice was quite common in the west of Ohangwena, Kunene, Kavango West, and Kavango East, some parts of the Omusati, Otjozondjupa, Hardap and //Kharas.
- 5.2 The level of potable water coverage was, however, on the increase in the Zambezi where NAMWATER pipelines supplied water to either parts of the region. This meant that many people along the Katima/Kongola pipeline and Katima/Ngoma pipeline had access to potable water.
- 5.3 Also, in the Otjozondjupa Region many settlements, especially private ones, were supplied by pipelines.
- 5.4 In the Zambezi Region, however, there was a single case of a borehole with saline water at Muyako. The Muyako borehole had been supplying saline water to more than 3000 people for a very long time.
- 5.5 Nevertheless, it was deduced that many of the boreholes in Kavango West, Kavango East and the Zambezi Region produced water that was suitable for both animal and human consumption.

The Supply of Water to Riverine Areas

- 5.6 The supply of water to the Zambezi and Kavango Regions by NAMWATER was frequented by 'cut-offs'. In the Zambezi Region, 'cut offs' were quite prevalent even if many of the residents ensured that their water bills were timeously paid off.
- 5.7 The 'cut-offs' in the Zambezi owed to the fact that water was supplied by a power-driven infrastructure, and, therefore, the sporadic supply of power to the region had a negative bearing on the performance of NAMWATER infrastructure.
- 5.8 The Zambezi region had no "power supply 'stand-by' system", and this meant that power failure automatically resulted into water supply failure.
- 5.9 The supply of water to the riverine Kavango East Region by NAMWATER was also inadequate. The supply of water was quite sporadic, and this owed to the fact that the water infrastructure lacked enough pressure to 'drive' water to all parts where pipelines reached.

Boreholes with Saline Water

- 5.10 The high alkaline levels rendered much of the water in many parts of the northern regions undrinkable. The high alkaline levels represented a dark spot in all water provision efforts through boreholes in regions such as the Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Oshana, Omusati, Kunene, small part of the Zambezi and some parts of the //Karas Region.
- 5.11 In the Oshikoto Region, cases of undrinkable water were much common in areas such as Nahale ya Mpingana and Enkodi, while similar cases were common in Oshikunde,

Omudongilo, and Epembe in the Ohangwena Region. Also, undrinkable underground water due to salinity levels was quite common with the “saline block”, an area known as the “salt block”, in the //Kharas Region.

- 5.12 In the Omusati Region, on the other hand, the drilling of boreholes was only feasible in the areas such as Ruacana, Okahao, Onesi and Tsandi.
- 5.13 The ‘saline water’ situation was made worse by the fact that the underground water in most areas of these regions could only be accessed from one hundred to three hundred meters underground surface.
- 5.14 Lack of potable water saw residents resort to traditional wells and drank water with this chalky substance, which was a result of high pH levels in the underground soil. Many in the regions still chose to consume water imbedded with a substance that was likely to cause health issues in the long run.
- 5.15 Therefore, though the boreholes were the cheapest methods of providing water to communities, geo-scientific analysis in the regions such as the Oshana concluded that underground water in much of the regions there was saline, and, therefore, not best for consumption for both animals and humans.
- 5.16 Another challenge as regards borehole drilling endeavours by consultants, was that efforts ended up even in further dry land. These unsuccessful drilling activities were quite common in the regions such as Omaheke, //Kharas and Hardap.
- 5.17 The residents in these regions felt that traditional devices for ‘siting’ could be another alternative to overcome unsuccessful drilling of boreholes.

Boreholes under the South African funds

- 5.18 The drilling of boreholes under the South African sponsorship to assist with drought relief were underway in regions such as Kunene, Omusati, Kavango West, Kavango East, the Zambezi and the Omaheke Regions. In Kunene for instance, 21 of the boreholes had been submitted for drilling under South African grant, and 20 of the boreholes had been successfully drilled. The Office of the Prime Minister had also indicated that it would oversee the drilling of twelve boreholes in Opuwo. The process through which the delivery of boreholes was being carried out was seen to be very slow in the regions the drilling is taking place.

More Challenges Encountered in Supplying Water

- 5.19 Despite the alkalinity issues that were referred to above, the regions still encountered other challenges such as ‘sabotaging mentality’ and ‘budget cuts’. The sabotaging mentality of certain residents in the Oshikoto, Oshana and Omusati Regions had left some parts of the canal destroyed.

- 5.20 Budget cuts had put an end to a number of activities that were crucial to the provision of water to remote areas, especially through boreholes. Reparations to the boreholes could not be performed in most regions due to lack of spare parts, vehicles, and even staff.
- 5.21 Most boreholes in the Kunene region needed urgent repair, especially the boreholes of Otjingambu (*see cover page picture*) in Ohungumure, Okarukoro borehole in Okarukoro, and the Omumbonde borehole.
- 5.22 Most solar-driven boreholes did not work and residents lacked the technical skills necessary to repair them. Faults with solar panels were particularly observed in Kavango East, Kavango West, the Zambezi, Otjozondjupa, the Hardap and Kunene Regions.
- 5.23 The Katjinakatji borehole in Kavango West, Wazanga borehole in Kavango East and Muyako borehole in the Zambezi Region had failed to provide water to the inhabitants as the water pressure had gone drastically low.
- 5.24 The situation was worse in Kalkveld of the Otjozondjupa Region where boreholes were expected to dry up if there was still no rain by October 2017. The boreholes there needed rehabilitation and the pipes had to be revamped, as they were too obsolete and needed to be replaced.
- 5.25 The unavailability of vehicle negatively impacted on the endeavour in the sense that in some regions, for example, the Ohangwena, Omusati, Kunene and “saline block” in the //Kharas, vehicles were used to transport water to some areas. Many of these tankers had since broken down and providing water to those remote areas had become a challenge.
- 5.26 The Ohangwena region, in particular, had since submitted a request for new tankers with the Office of the Prime Minister. The situation in the region had become so dire that water rations were then provided to residents on borrowed military tankers.
- 5.27 In the //Kharas Region, likewise, the unavailability of vehicles negatively impacted on the provision of water to the “saline block”, the area also known in local currency as the “salt block”.

Water Management a Challenge on its Own

- 5.28 The management of water still had challenges that needed collective effort in trying to overcome them. Regions had more water points that were managed in conjunction with Water Point Committees. The members of these WPC were trained by the line Ministry, but were expected to render services on a voluntary basis.
- 5.29 The duties of WPC entailed collecting money from residents, keeping and taking these sums of money to either the bank or NAMWATER, manning or guarding the infrastructure, servicing the pump machines, and even remaining in liaison with the Department of Rural Water Supply.

- 5.30 The WPC members of different water points were subjected to all security issues as they had to collect and keep large sums of money. Members spent much time and much effort on all these initiatives and they now felt that the whole exercise had to be incentivised.
- 5.31 Lack of proper recognition to WPC had seen other members abandon their roles, and this had put pressure on the line ministry to train new members on a yearly basis. The lack of recognition of WPC had equally taken away the power to compel residents to make their contribution towards water bills.
- 5.32 Cases of WPC members abandoning their duties due to lack of incentives were quite common in the Omusati Region where the Department of Rural Water Supply had even taken the roles of these committees.
- 5.33 The feelings of hostility and resentment towards WPC members were on the increase, and quite intense specifically along the Omaalala / Ondangwa pipeline and the Okaloko Onkwimbwimbwi pipeline.
- 5.34 In the //Kharas Region, members of WPC committees had vacated water points and left to other places in search of jobs. The demand of water exceeded delivery at some water points in the //Kharas Region.
- 5.35 The Zambezi region had few cases of communal water point ‘wars’ on pipelines, and this was because many residents along Katima/Ngoma and the Katima/Nkongola pipelines opted for private off-takes. The committees that were still active remained in those places that relied on boreholes for water, and these simply collected donations that were not meant to be paid to NAMWATER, but rather into communal accounts.
- 5.36 However, the debts at the Katima/Kongola pipeline had accumulated to N\$1 million and part of the debt included those who vacated communal water points for private off-takes.

Huge Debts to NAMWATER

- 5.37 The debts accumulated with NAMWATER had also hindered the supply of water to certain communities that accessed water through pipelines. Some of the debts were historical and were accumulated way before independence.
- 5.38 The current debts emanated from a number of issues and those included the following:
 - The reluctance of water point users to pay up for their bills;
 - Water Point Committees that abandoned their duties;
 - The failure of public entities such as schools and clinics to pay for bills;
 - When debtors were connected to the newly declared town, such as those of Oniipa.
- 5.39 The huge debts equally saw water supply to the San people in the Otjozondjupa region, except for those who are in Tsukwe, cut off. The water points used by San people had

accumulated debts and an appeal with the Office of the Prime Minister had since been made to address the water plight of the San people.

Challenges Associated with Water Infrastructure

- 5.40 The water pipes themselves were another source of extra water management challenges. Many of the pipes were installed way before independence and were therefore quite leaky as they were now out-dated, or outmoded. Emphasis on obsolete pipes was given in Keetmanshoop where the majority of the pipes were installed in the 1970s.

The Budget Cuts versus Water Supply Projects

- 5.41 The budget cuts were the reason why many on-going capital projects, as far as water provision was concerned, had been abandoned. The following is the list of projects that had been suspended due to lack of funds:

- The King Kauluma Pipeline project in Oshikoto;
- Omuntele Pump Station in the Oshikoto;
- The Itapa / Ikehelingo pipeline in the Omusati;
- The Katima / Ngoma pipeline in the Zambezi;
- The envisioned Ruacana Project, only the design is completed, and it is divided into the Oshipo / Omakange (phase 1) and the Omakange / Opuwo (phase 2).

6.0 WATER SUPPLY TO TOWNS

- 6.1 The supply of water to towns around the country was carried out by NAMWATER, which drew water from sources such as rivers and dams. Most of the far northern towns that were visited drew water from rivers that were shared with other countries such as Angola, Zambia and Botswana. On the other hand, the central and southern towns that were visited relied on water drawn from dams or underground aquifers.
- 6.2 The drawn water was then subjected to the water treatment activities and distribution efforts by NAMWATER. There were extra water infrastructure such as towers and reservoirs that helped with the storage, and management of the steady supply of this essential commodity to different parts of towns.

Challenges with NAMWATER Efforts

- 6.3 The supply of water to towns such as Rundu was not enough to cater for all residents at the town, and this left many wondering how that could be possible to a riverine area.
- 6.4 People in the remote areas of the Oshana and Ohangwena regions wished for pipes to be extended even to remote areas as the borehole option was not viable due to salinity levels of the underground water. For instance, the Iindangungu pipeline in Ohangwena lacked the

necessary pressure to be able to supply water to the last water point, and they were not certain whether, or not, NAMWATER was going to increase water pressure.

- 6.5 Concerns at the town of Katima Mulilo were caused by the fact that the supply of water was quite intermittent and residents braced for a day or two without water on a weekly basis. NAMWATER clarified that the region had no ‘power supply stand-by system’, and this meant that power failure automatically resulted in water supply failure.

The Outdated Infrastructure

- 6.6 Most towns raised worries that the NAMWATER pipes were out-dated and too leaky. Many of those pipes were installed in the pre-independence era and their ‘sieve-like’ state meant that they also contributed to the ever accumulating NAMWATER bills. In Keetmanshoop, the porous pipes accounted for 20% water loss every month, which amounted to N\$600 000 per month.
- 6.7 Again, the arrival of new locations to each town put different pressure on the existing water infrastructure and, therefore, the demand for additional water infrastructure became a reality with every locality added.
- 6.8 The majority of the pipes were of the old-fashioned asbestos and needed to be replaced with the ones in common currency. The removal of those asbestos pipes was considered important as research had proven that they were linked to cases of diseases such as Alzheimer.

The Revolving NAMWATER Debt

- 6.9 Different local authorities felt that they would remain indebted to NAMWATER if the water issue was not discussed at the national level to determine how this revolving debt could be avoided. The wholesale dependency on the parastatal had created a vicious debt cycle no town shall be able to escape.
- 6.10 Riverine towns like Katima Mulilo and Rundu were heavily indebted to NAMWATER despite their obvious huge reservoirs of water. The different Local Authorities felt the nation needed a legal framework that would permit towns that so wish to supplement the water from NAMWATER.

7.0 FINDINGS: LAND SERVICING

Honourable Governor

- 7.1 While the findings in most regions of northern Namibia were dominated by water related issues, the findings from Honourable Governors from central to southern Namibia were dominated by land and land servicing concerns.

- 7.2 The findings from the offices of the Honourable Governors of the different regions correlated well with the findings that were harvested from the actual interactions with different Town Councils and Village Councils.
- 7.3 One of the reasons that hindered the land servicing initiatives at certain regions in central and southern Namibia was that most towns were surrounded by commercial farms. Towns in these regions could, therefore, not expand to accommodate the ever increasing number of new arrivals.
- 7.4 The impact of commercial farms was vehemently observed in the Omaheke, Hardap, Otjozondjupa and //Kharas regions. For instance, seventy five percent of the Hardap region's land was commercial, 15% was for national parks while only 10% was communal.
- 7.5 The arrival of ex-farm workers to towns was fuelled by the increase in the minimum wage that saw many of them laid off by farm owners. The situation had seen farm workers flock to towns at an alarming rate.

Burden of New Entrants to Town

- 7.6 The new entrants to urban areas meant that local authorities were put under pressure to provide shelter to them. In the Hardap Region, for instance, new entrants from commercial farms could not be pushed back into the rural areas as then that would require government to negotiate for more land.
- 7.7 The town of Mariental, for instance, has even failed to expand as private land was just in the periphery. Most of the ex-farm workers who were seen out by their former bosses settled in the periphery of Mariental, and in most cases, it was on private land. It is important to indicate that the constituencies such as Aranos, Rehoboth Rural and Mariental Rural were 100% commercial. This simply meant that those who wanted to engage in ploughing activities in the area could only do so on private land.

Land Servicing at Visited Urban Centres

- 7.8 There were swatches of land earmarked for servicing at most of the visited towns, and all these preparations were in reaction to the Government's request for more land to be serviced.

Activities Stalled by Budget Cuts

- 7.9 The initiative of land servicing and the completion of certain housing projects were severely affected by the lack of funds in which our nation found itself. It was the absence of funds that brought to a halt the Build Together project in Aroab, a Village Council in the //Kharas Region.
- 7.10 Also, the Mass Housing Project in Keetmanshoop was delayed by budget cuts. In Omuthiya of the Oshikoto Region, land servicing activities were slowed down, as from the

2016/2017 financial year, due to budget cuts that drove the money received for such endeavours to levels below expectations. In Gobabis, some areas had been reserved for the Mass Housing project but that had since been shelved due to budget cuts.

- 7.11 In like manner, the servicing of 250 plots for low cost housing in Eenhana could not be completed, and the town pondered diverting money earmarked for certain services to the completion of the project. The situation at Outapi Town Council was such that Extension 15 could not be fully serviced with sewerage and electricity, except for streets, due to these cuts. In Opuwo of the Kunene Region, it was observed that Mass Housing contractors had since downed tools due to non-payment emanating from budget cuts. This provision of land was a reaction to the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) which is meant to embrace the needs of all Namibian without fail or favour.
- 7.12 Furthermore, in Nkurenkuru, the budget cuts ensured that swatches of plots at Kahenge remain partially serviced with water, roads and sewer but no electricity, while the majority were not serviced at all. The earmarked and much awaited project of a State Hospital could not be realised at the new region due to these financial slashes. Still at the town of Nkurenkuru, the budget cuts meant that the dream of completing 200 houses under the Shack Dwellers Federation could not be realised.
- 7.13 In Kavango East Region, the project of formalising informal settlements had slowed down, and despite the availability of land at the town of Rundu, nothing could be done due to budget cuts.
- 7.14 The Katima Mulilo Town Council needed more money to complete outstanding projects. The town wished to service Extension 7 and Extension 8, and also expand the dumping site that could no longer accommodate the load of garbage in relation to current statistics of the town inhabitants.

Housing Projects Completed or near Completion

- 7.15 Despite obvious challenges, local authorities had engaged in housing and land servicing initiatives that had been completed, or neared completion. The Katima Mulilo Town Council had contracted a private partner to develop and build houses at Kashiku near Cowboy. The construction of houses and land servicing initiatives were concurrently under way, and affordability of houses was ensured during the presentation of the bidding contractors.
- 7.16 The town of Otjiwarongo benefitted from the Mass Land Servicing programme. It then advocated for partnership with private partners, as the Municipality felt it was the main viable option it could embark upon to provide land to the multitude. The construction of houses had since started and the progress was very good.
- 7.17 At the town of Gobabis, land servicing initiatives were concerned with the formalisation process of Freedom Square, the area which contained 1000 plots.

- 7.18 In Mariental, 180 Mass Housing houses had been built, and a total number of 397 plots had been serviced in the informal settlement. Still in Mariental, it was learnt that a total number of 440 plots had been serviced in the previous 3 years.
- 7.19 The Aroab Village Council presented that more than 100 plots had been serviced and given away. The process of surveying other 100 plots were under way at the Village, and consultations had already been done.
- 7.20 Furthermore, in Keetmanshoop 210 plots had been serviced, and it was also observed that 40 houses had been completed at the compound of Ungoshi and were just waiting for official handover.
- 7.21 The Omuthiya Town Council approached the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN) where an amount of N\$14 million was borrowed and earmarked to be paid back from the proceeds harvested from the land sells. This amount had since been invested in the land servicing initiatives at the town.
- 7.22 The town of Eenhana had entered into contract with some Private Partners, and a small portion had been given to a developer for low cost housing.
- 7.23 At the town of Outapi, land servicing activities had been done, which included land serviced for the construction of an infrastructure that had to be used by Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

The Need for Land vis-à-vis Application for Land

- 7.24 Land was still a needed entity in Namibia as the lists of applicants in most regions that were visited showed. For instance, the Committee was informed of long lists of applicants at the towns of Eenhana, Keetmanshoop, Katima Mulilo, Rundu, Mariental and Gobabis.
- 7.25 The need for land had seen land conflicts erupt at certain towns in Namibia. Residents swooped on certain territories and local authorities had to engage into relentless negotiation endeavours to convince ‘grabbers’ to vacate land.
- 7.26 For instance, the migration of new comers to the town of Eenhana was rated at 1250 persons per month. These new comers would settle on the land that had already been vacated by others. The town of Eenhana would then contend with the challenge of providing sanitation facilities. The Town Council had constructed make-shift toilets, called ‘pit droppings’ in local ‘currency’, to curtail dependency on the nearby bushes.
- 7.27 In Mariental and Gobabis, ex-farm workers had occupied some swatches of land at the peripheries of the towns. Some of these land seekers, especially in Mariental, occupied private land. The town had limited spaces in which it could expand and, therefore, much of the land in its periphery belonged to commercial farms.

- 7.28 The growth of informal settlements were also on the rise in Otjiwarongo. An influx of new entrants, mostly from the Kunene, swooped on the town and occupied land that was not serviced. The town had no choice but to provide communal taps to these new arrivals.
- 7.29 Furthermore, the absence of serviced land was the reason cited to have fuelled land swoops at the town of Katima Mulilo. Residents occupied the territory earmarked for servicing by a private partner and negotiations to vacate the area were underway at the time of the visit.
- 7.30 The towns where new entrants were on the increase found it difficult to chase them away. They therefore spotted ‘Reception Centres’ where these people could be momentarily settled while awaiting for a place to be referred to. It is situations like these that brought the Ekokola Extension 1 of Eenhana Town Council into existence.
- 7.31 Land conflicts still erupted between Town Councils and Traditional Authorities (TA). These ‘mini wars’ emanated from the fact that certain elders from Traditional Authorities continued to give land in newly proclaimed town territories.
- 7.32 Conflicts between TA and Town Councils were quite prevalent in the Kunene, Ohangwena and the Zambezi Region. The Town Councils of Eenhana and Katima Mulilo had since convened meetings where new policies about land acquisition by town were deliberated.

Concerns with Bureaucracy

- 7.33 Town Councils raised issues pertaining to the elongated processes of acquiring land for servicing. The dissatisfaction with the current procurement procedure were raised particularly in Keetmanshoop, Kavango East and Katima Mulilo. Her Worship the Mayoress of Keetmanshoop in particular, stressed that if the town planning processes were not too cumbersome, the redesign could have been long granted and 365 plots could have been available at the town.
- 7.34 They suggested that the town planning activities should be decentralised to hasten those cumbersome procedures. They felt the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development had to come up with strategic plans that would allow for an internal process that would lead to internal activities to create performance agreements for administrators.
- 7.35 Furthermore, the Hon. Governor of Ohangwena called for real decentralisation where regions would follow and solve their own problems. He called for regional budgets, and for that of constituencies. He pitied Honourable Counsellors who made promises on radios but had no money to do anything in practice.

8.0 FINDINGS from the Ministry and NAMWATER

- 8.1 The visitations to the different regions ended with audiences sort from NAMWATER and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry. These meetings presented an opportunity to the Committee to ascertain whether or not the outcomes of the regional visits could be corroborated. The stakeholders here comprised of the Managing Director of

NAMWATER, the Delegation of two Directors from the Ministry of Agriculture, and the PS and his entourage from the Ministry of urban and Rural Development.

The CEO of NAMWATER

- 8.2 The Members of the Standing Committee on Habitat's deliberations with the MD, Dr Shivute, revolved around the challenges that different town councils and water points in general had raised during the regional visits.

The Debt Situation of Many Entities to NAMWATER

- 8.3 NAMWATER was a Government entity that had the mandate to operate on a cost recovery 1 basis. NAMWATER had to recover costs to remain operational as an entity, and any attempts to write off the debts on a wholesale basis would see the whole system collapse.
- 8.4 Cost recovery meant that both the capital cost and the operational cost had to be recovered. The picture of the level of debt to the company was alarming and letting go of all the debts would spell out a huge loss in revenues to the company.
- 8.5 The table below gives a hint to the amounts of money different entities owed to NAMWATER to date.

The Different entities in relation to debt owed to NAMWATER

Government & Local Authorities	N\$417 000 000.00
Water Points	N\$209 000 000.00
Accrued interest	N\$77 000 000.00
Total debt owed	N\$713 000 000.00

- 8.6 Writing off of debts was not the solution, as debts for entities such as Communal Water Points were once written off and they immediately came rolling back.
- 8.7 Water was a sensitive issue and everyone knew the emotional impact it had on our society. Its sensitivity was the very reason why entities failed to honour their debts. Debtors knew that if they set out alarm regarding their debt situation with NAMWATER, then they would win everyone's sympathy.
- 8.8 NAMWATER had only one means at its disposal to compel entities to pay for the services they received, and the practice of cutting water to indebted entities always managed to win compliance to payment requirements.

Government's Financial Assistance to NAMWATER

- 8.9 NAMWATER could not write off the huge debts owed to it by different entities without assurance of financial assistance from Government. This Government parastatal, received assistance for a period of just three years since its inception 20 years ago, and it was then left to fend for itself.
- 8.10 The total amount of money NAMWATER had received from Government since its inception in 1997 was N\$277 million, an amount that could easily be dwarfed by sums of money other Government entities had so far received.
- 8.11 The funding of water had not been debated at national level, like the debates of other entities like the Roads Authority that received serious national attention. Such debates meant that we could now travel to different parts of the country on proper roads. The road infrastructure needed Government assistance, and, in like manner, the water infrastructure needed assistance from Government too.
- 8.12 There was no point in time where Government poured money into the refurbishment of water infrastructure in the country. Therefore, expecting NAMWATER to replenish the water infrastructure in the whole country on its own was a far-fetched proposition.

Namibia's Ability to Provide Water

- 8.13 Namibia could provide water to all its inhabitants without fail, as it was surrounded by so many rivers. The country signed contracts with neighbouring countries in terms of how both countries had to use the shared water resources.
- 8.14 However, the water that Namibia extracted from the Kunene River, for instance, was way below what was indicated in the contracts.
- 8.15 In any case, Namibia could still extract water from its side of the rivers without hindrance, and any investment into the water infrastructure could enable Namibia to provide water to all corners where it was needed.

Pre-Independence, or Historical, Debts

- 8.16 NAMWATER inherited the operations of Water Affairs, and it was during the process of exchanging roles between NAMWATER and Water Affairs that certain Water Point Committees' roles were done away with. Therefore, the debts owed to Rural Water Supply were transferred to NAMWATER. The idea was to have the debts distributed to individuals, and the mechanism to do just this should be addressed by all stakeholders.

Water Supply to Riverine Areas

- 8.17 The company was prepared to invest into a new treatment plant at the town of Rundu, but the poor financial status of the company meant that the project had to be delayed. The

treatment plant was estimated at an amount of N\$300 million, and the current NAMWATER revenues were not adequate enough to cater for such an expensive undertaking.

- 8.18 Again, NAMWATER had requested Rundu Town Council to avail a piece of land for this undertaking, but the Council offered a piece of land in a flood-prone area. However, the parastatal had since requested for a different plot of land, and, at the same time, also requested for money from somewhere else for the construction of such an endeavour.
- 8.19 Furthermore, different councils determined a pattern of paying for their bills with NAMWATER, and NAMWATER prioritised its investment in water infrastructure in relation to the pattern of how each customer paid for the debts. The Rundu Town Council owed NAMWATER an amount of N\$55 million and the town had since failed to pay instalments of N\$2 million on a monthly basis.
- 8.20 The infrastructure that supplied water to the Zambezi Region was power-driven and, therefore, the sporadic supply of power to the region had a negative bearing on the performance of the NAMWATER infrastructure. Katima Mulilo had no power supply 'stand-by system', and, therefore, this meant that 'power failure automatically resulted in water supply failure', and this whole saga could not be blamed on NAMWATER.

Reparation Procedures to the Pipes

- 8.21 Some water pipes belonged to NAMWATER and others to the Government. If there were leakages to the pipes, an investigation was first carried out to determine the exact location. If the leakage to the pipe was experienced between the NAMWATER pipeline and the water metre, the loss was incurred by NAMWATER.

Delays in Private Off-Take Connection

- 8.22 The whole issue began with the withdrawal of WPC members in areas where a huge number of residents depended on their services. The withdrawal of services by members of these committees were highly noted in the Kuvelayi area, where members withdrew en-masse claiming compensation for their duties.
- 8.23 The introduction of private off-takes saw an influx of people vacating the Communal Water Points, and NAMWATER could then not cope with this unexpected level of instant demand. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the skills to install the infrastructure for these off-takes were limited to NAMWATER employees.

Compensation to Water Point Committees

- 8.24 Compensation to WPC members was an issue that needed all parties involved to come together and work on how compensation could be realised. After all, it was Government that crafted the Water Point Committee issue and even offered training to its members.

9.0 The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

- 9.1 The Ministry had been given the mandate to provide water to the remote areas, and that responsibility was shared with the community through Water Point Committees. The strategy of cooperation in the endeavours of providing water to remote areas followed three routes:
- The community did minor maintenance;
 - Completion of training; and cost recovery.
- 9.2 The review of the strategy indicated that the community could not do cost recovery.

Borehole Drilling versus ‘Sitting’

- 9.3 The situation presented some challenges, as certain areas could show the presence of water on top but that did not indicate the depth at which water could be found. Water could be at the depth of 400 metres under the ground.
- 9.4 Drilling tenders gave specifications in relation to the depth of the drilling, the contractor ceased drilling upon arriving at the given specification. This would be the situation even if the drilling endeavours had resulted to nothing, and a new contract would be required to extend the effort.
- 9.5 It was not easy to include ‘sitters’ who relied on traditional methods because they could not tender. The drilling endeavours were preceded by tests conducted at the site and traditional experts did not have pumps to conduct tests and also lacked the necessary skills to interpret data.

Reparations to Obsolete Infrastructure

- 9.6 Many rural water supply infrastructure, especially boreholes, had multiple functional deficiencies and requests for reparations had long been made, but boreholes still malfunctioned during the visit, even for years before then.

Delays in Reparation Endeavours

- 9.7 The centralised procurement procedure delayed activities such as the reparation endeavours. The procurement process was such that approval was only done at Central Government, and any arrangement to the alternative had to be endorsed by the Ministry of Finance.
- 9.8 The situation was very dire to an extent that even acquiring small spare parts for the infrastructure had to be subjected to those cumbersome procurement procedures. Cars were always not in good repair to respond to concerns in remote areas.

The San People's Water Plight

- 9.9 The follow-ups concerning the San people were better carried out through the office of the Prime Minister. All concerns related to debts of water had to first be directed to the Prime Minister's Office, and then referred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry for approval.

The Provision of Water Tankers

- 9.10 The water tankers had been bought following the request by the Honourable Governor of the Ohangwena Region. Eight other water tankers had been provided by UN but were received by NAMWATER, and the process was under way to acquire them for the Government Namibia.
- 9.11 The delivery of trucks to the Ohangwena Region, had been in delay because the drivers still had to receive training that was arranged by the supplier. It was, however, stressed that the provision of pipelines, and then private water off-takes, was the feasible option in all saline regions.

Private Off-Takes not a Compulsory Undertaking

- 9.12 There were Water Points which could not be closed down by NAMWATER. Government supplied water metres and the communal water users did not have to pay.
- 9.13 Approval was, however, still awaited to allow communities to buy water metres and then donate them to Government for installation and maintenance.

Compensation to Water Point Committees

- 9.14 The initial arrangement was such that community played their part in communal water management on a voluntary basis. However, the current Community Based Management under review was such that members of Water Point Committees would be paid by NAMWATER.
- 9.15 However, NAMWATER indicated that if they were required to pay WPC, then they would have to increase the water tariffs.

Earth Dams for Saline Regions

- 9.16 One earth dam had been planned per region but budget cuts had delayed the whole endeavour.

Water Supply Security Task Force

- 9.17 There was a need to establish an entity that would be funded to supply water to all parts of the country.

10.0 Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

The New Public Private Partnership Policy

- 10.1 The inflated prices of properties was the underlining concern that formed the basis for the current framework that determined the formulae of engagement between local authorities and private partners.
- 10.2 The control over PPP was a challenge as it was controlled by people down at the regions. The local authorities, however, had the leeway to then use the land they had to negotiate for a win-win situation. The contractors could be told to build houses for specific people, to try and control the prices of houses.
- 10.3 Issues likely to be addressed by the PPP Policy under-review
- Determining the relationship between the house and the person laying claim to the plot;
 - Categories that would relate to the income levels of different land applicants;
 - Certain functions which were done at the centre will now be done at sub-national level;
 - Houses built within a certain range to be considered for one to be awarded tender.

MTEF versus Actual Allocation

- 10.4 The disparity between the amounts projected in the MTEF and the one eventually received baffled almost all Local Authorities. The reflected budget stretched to span a period of three years, and each ministry had the duty of defending this budget each of the three years. Therefore, there was no way an amount that was indicated in a book that was not updated accordingly could reflect the real fluctuations of the budget for each of the three years.
- 10.5 The ministry was indebted in amounts stretching to N\$400 million. Though these debts were being addressed, it meant projects that were on-going received first priority, and it should be borne in mind that salaries had to be addressed foremost.

The Impact of Government Priorities

- 10.6 The Local Authorities had been told not to enter into contract without engaging Central Government for approval. The Central Government could then tell these entities whether or not to continue with certain projects due to financial constraints. There could be intervention from Government to respond to emergencies.
- 10.7 Failure by certain Local Authorities to submit accountability records was another issue that was also taken into consideration.

Distribution of Resources to Local Authorities

- 10.8 The findings were such that the distribution of resources depended on the needs that were given.

- 10.9 Priority was given to the needs that were currently running, and also given to Local Authorities that had already appointed someone for a given undertaking.
- 10.10 The number of residents in a given region could now be considered in resource distribution.

Cases of Vandalism

- 10.11 The grotesque pictures of vandalized Mass Housing properties in Keetmanshoop represented the saddest occasion of the trip. The PS indicated that the reality was that the very communities such services were brought to save were behind the scheme. Security had been hired to ensure that the site was kept safe. Verification had to now be done to determine cases of vandalism before payments to the contractor was done.

Invoices Preceding Payments

- 10.12 Complaints regarding the request to provide invoices for payment even before the work had been done were encountered at most regions.
- 10.13 The findings indicated that it was very important to demonstrate what had been done the previous month before latest requests could be addressed. It had to be borne in mind that money can only leave state account with an invoice.
- 10.14 It was also incumbent on the local authorities to prove that there were no money laying in their accounts.

Lack of Government Offices in Nkurenkuru

- 10.15 The deliberations with the PS led to the realisation that different ministries could apply for land as they qualified for a reduced price. Also, the applications from Government entities met approval within the quickest possible time, as services had to be brought near people. Another misfortune was that the town of Nkurenkuru made its request when only less was available.

11.0 Summary of Findings

- 11.1 Land servicing in the central (Otjozondjupa, Omaheke) and southern regions (Hardap and //Kharas) of the country were also hampered by the inability of the urban centres to grow due to commercial land that converged on them.
- 11.2 The salinity levels in many parts of the northern regions (Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Omusati and Kunene), some parts of the //Kharas and some parts of the Zambezi were quite high and the underground water was therefore not clean for human and animal consumption.

- 11.3 The supply of water in the riverine regions of the Zambezi and the two Kavango regions was hampered by frequent “cut offs” brought about by power failures.
- 11.4 Budget cuts had had a negative effect on the initiatives of rural water supply and land servicing initiatives in many parts of the country.
- 11.5 The distance from one borehole to the next was too long and residents in Kavango, Kunene, and Zambezi travelled long distance to get water.
- 11.6 The drilling process of boreholes under the SA grant was way too slow and the situation was the same even in cases where boreholes were already drilled by Rural Water Supply and simply had to be revamped.
- 11.7 Water Point Committee Members were abandoning their duties as their roles were not incentivised.
- 11.8 The debts accumulated with NAMWATER had hindered the supply of water to certain communities that accessed water through pipelines.
- 11.9 The NAMWATER pipes in most regions were leaky, obsolete and outmoded.
- 11.10 Commercial farms that surrounded many towns in Otjozondjupa, Omaheke, Hardap, and //Kharas hindered towns the expansion of many towns.
- 11.11 Traditional “sitters” were not included in the process of identifying specific sites where boreholes could be drilled.
- 11.12 Urbanisation left Town Councils struggling with the provision of services to the huge influx of new comers to urban centres.
- 11.13 There was conflict between Traditional Authorities and Town Authorities over the control of land especially in newly proclaimed areas.
- 11.14 Certain regions were suspicious of the process that was followed in the distribution of financial resources to regions.
- 11.15 Projects that were underway had stalled due to budget cuts and many contractors had threatened to sue for decommissioning and re-commissioning fee.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

- 12.1 It is recommended that the pipelining activities in saline regions should be intensified to curb the regions’ reliance on the tainted water for both human and animals.

- 12.2 “Stand-by” power stations should be installed to counter water “cut-offs” emanating from power failures in riverine areas such as the Zambezi and the two Kavango regions.
- 12.3 NAMWATER should receive budgetary allocation like all other parastatals to address national water concerns, such as renovating old pipelines and installing new pipes.
- 12.4 The legally recognised distance from one borehole to the next should be reduced to counter long distances travelled by people from place of residence to the nearest water point.
- 12.5 The boreholes being drilled under the “SA Drought Relief Grant” should be supervised by local experts to ensure that the process is enhanced.
- 12.6 NAMWATER should enlist professional debt collectors to take over the roles that were abandoned by WPC.
- 12.7 The outdated and outmoded NAMWATER pipes should be replaced with modern pipes to counter the health risks associated with the asbestos ones (*see p.8, prag. 6.8*).

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

- 12.8 Government should buy more of the commercial land to allow towns that are surrounded by commercial farms to expand.
- 12.9 The budgetary cuts should not be minimised as regards land servicing initiatives to quail the mushrooming of informal settlements in urban centres.
- 12.10 The Local Authorities should meet those affected by relocation realities and agree with them on their new relocation centres.
- 12.11 Local Authorities should create urban reception centres to avert “land grabbing” by newcomers. Local Authorities should directly meet those affected by relocation realities and agree with them on their new relocation centres.
- 12.12 Traditional Leaders should always be invited to discussions regarding the relocation of people who occupy land that is considered town property.
- 12.13 Local Authorities should call general meetings with Traditional Authorities to explain policies sentence by sentence word by word. Also, workshops could be engaged with Traditional Authorities to suggest changes to policies.
- 12.14 The Ministry should devise a transparent formula for distributing resources where different challenges faced by each region and the population size of each region will be considered.
- 12.15 The budget aligned to projects that are underway should not be cut, for such cuts could see contractors sue for loss of profits.

Addendum



Otjingambu water reservoir in Kunene



Ekeholongo litaba Project (water pumps)



Water pump and reservoir under constuction



Diesel engine in outskirts of Nkurenkuru



Communal water point abandoned in Oshana



Courtesy call on the Omaheke Governor



Water queues in Wazanga settlement



Water queue in Katjinakatji

This report was adopted by the Standing Committee on Habitat on 27 November 2017 at 16h09 at its meeting held in the Blue Room, National Council Building.

Hon. Sipapela C. Sipapela Chairperson	(Signed)
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Hon. Betty B. Kaula Vice-Chairperson	(Signed)
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Hon. Lukas Muha Member	(Signed)
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Hlon. Weich Mupya Member	(Signed)
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Hon. Laina Mekundi	(Signed)
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Hon. Simon Dukeleni	(Signed)
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