

National Archives  
of Namibia

## NATIONAL UNION OF NAMIBIAN WORKERS

## POSITION PAPER

Land must not be viewed as being only an economic asset, land is far more than that - Land is a political resource that defines the power relations in society. Without Land there is no power. Neither socio-economic nor political power exists without Land. Land is the first resource that is invariably grabbed by any colonial or occupying force. The existing Land relations in Namibia was a necessary pre-condition that ensured that the white minority became the economic, social and political beneficiaries of the existing order. The majority of Namibians will only be able to benefit from this National Resource, if a democratic transformation of the Land Relations is effected.

Historically, the Land in Namibia has been the primary cause of social injustice and the exploitation and domination of the labouring people. It has been the central of the struggle for National Liberation and freedom. Without the resolution of the present land problem, so as to redress the racial and social inequalities that exist in ownership and access to Land in our country, the Struggle of the Namibian Workers for Liberation will be incomplete.

It is our considered view that a democratic and equitable redistribution of Land is not incompatible with agricultural efficiency and production. Workers of Namibia are demanding real Land redistribution and proper supportive mechanisms that will enable the people working the Land to work it productively. The workers want to see significant changes in the ownership relations and access to land directed at improving their economic and social position.

Workers are demanding a redefinition of the rights of ownership to recognise that the Land belongs to the State on behalf of the people of Namibia. To give people on communal Lands a degree of permanence, to recognise their traditional and other rights, to ensure equal access to Land and to ensure that the rights of ownership is limited to those rights that promote production and the protection of our common resource - the LAND

There is no justification that absentee landlords continue to be allowed to own some of the productive Land in our country, while the Namibian people are landless.

There can also be no justification that some farmers continue to own land that is either under-developed or under-utilised.

All restrictions on the sub-division of commercial land must be lifted - immediately.

Workers feel bitter that the land that was once occupied by the Namibian people and seized violently from them, cannot be expropriated without full compensation. This does not make sense morally, politically or economically. It would rather make sense if the present occupiers of the land be compensated only for the infrastructural development made on the land, rather than the full market price of the land. There are many who could also demand to be compensated and their original position restored to them.

All soft loans given to commercial farmers by the Land Bank must be removed to ensure that only those farms that are commercially viable will continue. Commercial farmers must respect the right of their workers as enshrined in the condition, if they are to be given any State assistance.

The control and administration of communal lands needs to be democratised and controlled in a tripartite manner - by the State, the Community and the Traditional authorities.

Private sector companies and churches who own large pieces of land must make these available to workers for housing, recreation and food production, especially those that are situated near towns.

Special assistance must be given to non-government and community based organisations and non-profit making structures that are interested in utilising land for community development programmes.

State intervention is needed in the process that will enable workers to acquire land for housing, or that will ensure workers' access to subsidised housing.

All State owned Land, including particularly, municipal land around towns should be recognised and used as a common resource for communal food production and some kind of social security for the urban poor.

As an organised labour movement, we stand ready to guard against the adoption of a land reform policy that would deepen the contradictions between the rich and the poor in favour of private capital interest. This will in no way redress the historical injustice of class and race privileges under which the workers have suffered since the advent of apartheid colonialism.

For political independence to be meaningful to their lives, workers must be given a fair share in the wealth that they are producing, and must enjoy the protection of their economic rights and interests.