

STATE HOUSE

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HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
THE RIGHT HONORABLE PRIME MINISTER,
HONORABLE CABINET MINISTERS,
HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS,
MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORE,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

24 JUN 1991

STATE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

I HAVE THE PLEASANT AND HISTORICAL MOMENT TO INFORM THIS TIMELY AND MUCH NEEDED LAND CONFERENCE ABOUT THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE NAMIBIAN WOMEN.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA DEEMED IT NECESSARY TO CONSULT THE ENTIRE NAMIBIAN POPULATION THROUGH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR SEX, ETHNIC ORIGIN, CREED, SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC STATUS.

MR CHAIRMAN MY PAPER IS COMMISSIONED TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE THE POOR STATUS OF THE NAMIBIAN WOMEN WHEN IT COMES TO OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY UNDER WHICH LAND RESORTS. WOMEN HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATURAL INVIRONMENT, THAT IS LAND, WATER, FOREST ETC.

AS FOOD PRODUCERS, RURAL WOMEN ARE PARTICULARLY DEPENDENT ON LAND AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES. ARABLE LAND IS THE BASIC RESOURCE FOR SATISFYING FOOD NEED AND WOMEN ARE AND WILL IN THE FUTURE BE THE CENTRE OF SUSBSISTANCE FOOD PRODUCTION. BUT ABILITY TO INVEST TIME AND RESOURCES IN LONGTERM PRODUCTIVE ROLE IS CONSTRAINTED BY LACK OF PROPER FACILITIES TO ENABLE WOMEN TO ACQUIRE PROPERTIES.

MR CHAIRMAN, MY ADDRESS IS NOT A DEMAND FOR LAND FOR WOMEN, LAND IS LIKE MANY OTHER ISSUES, ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG REGARDING TO WOMEN'S NEEDS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNISE THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL UNDERLYING FACTORS WHICH AFFECTS WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND AND OTHER PROPERTIES.

THEY ARE:

1. CREATION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
2. IMPROVED MARKETING AND CREDIT FACILITIES
3. ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE FACILITIES
4. LEGAL FREEDOM AND
5. SOCIAL SECURITY

HOWEVER I SUPPOSE WE ARE HERE TODAY AS LEADERS OF VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES NOT TO DEMAND AND CLAIM LAND BUT TO DISCUSS HOW TO GUIDE THE GOVERNMENT TO SOLVE THE CRUCIAL LAND QUESTION.

WE AS LEADERS MUST BE CRITICAL IN ANALYSING THE HISTORY AND THE PAST BUT MUST BE FIRM IN OUR JUDGEMENTS AND SOLUTIONS: FOR WE ARE LEADING A YOUNG AND UNEXPERIENCED NATION.

WE THEREFORE PLEDGE AS WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT AND ALL THE INSTITUTIONS TO UNITE THE WOMEN OF THIS COUNTRY AND OUR COUNTERPARTS TO WORK TOWARDS RECONCILIATION FOR THERE IS NOT A SINGLE PROBLEM THROUGH THE GLOBE THAT WILL BE SOLVED IF THE ENTIRE POPULATION IS NOT SENSITIZED ABOUT THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF RECONCILIATION. SO LET US NOT SEE RECONCILIATION AS A WEAKNESS BUT RATHER AS A HISTORICAL, BIBLICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TOWARDS AN INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, CITIZEN, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SOLUTION FOR OUR PROBLEMS:

SO FOR THIS CRUCIAL LAND CONFERENCE

I THANK YOU ALL.