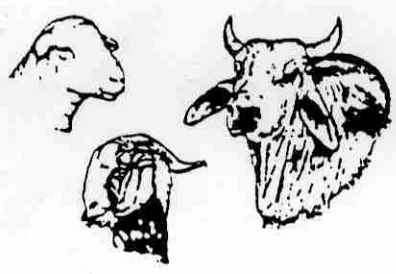


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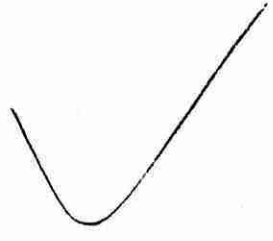
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RIETFOONTEINBLOCH RESERVE  
FARMERS' ASSOCIATION

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P/BAG 13187  
WINDHOEK  
NAMIBIA



Mr Chairman  
Distinguished delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

First and Foremost, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to all the members of parliament and the office of the Prime Minister for convening a National Conference on Land Reform. I would like also to thank the chairman for the opportunity given to my organisation.

The RRFA is today represented by Mr Mosé Uanguta (speaking), Mr Edward Ndjoze, Vice-chairman and Mr Eerike Kaposambo, Secretary. The RRFA was established five years ago to represent and promote the general interest of the Rietfontein farming community. Encouraging and promoting agricultural education and extension services. We are grateful that this conference has been convened to look into one of the issues that caused many to loose their lives and properties and later to be left landless.

We would like to emphasise that the objectives of this conference should be to look for devices for the equitable distribution of land to all Namibians who are intending to develop it and utilised it for commercial agricultural purposes.

In short, land should be distributed since no one can claim that land has been ever distributed. If one can claim that land has been distributed, equally than this conference shouldn't have been convened.

We are not going to touch on the historical background of the land issue in Namibia since many delegates here are going to talk quite a lot on this specific aspect.

The only thing we would like to mention here is the problems facing the communal areas.

- (1) lack of water resources.
- (2) overgrazing.
- (3) stock theft.
- (4) bad stock marketing and the unfencing of communal areas.

These problems are man-made problems and other natural problems like drought, diseases, poisonous plants, etc.

We would like to propose these possible solutions for these problems. It is our view that it is the Government's duty to take land owned in excess and to distribute it to all that can use it properly. It is also our view that land shouldn't be a private property, but should be state land leased to individuals. Therefore it must be looked into people owning more than one farm, how they managed the other farms. The Government then should take these farms. We are not saying that the Government should take land by force, but due to reconciliation those farmers should be willing to part with excessive land. Therefore the Government should only compensate farmers for what they have developed at that particular farm like buildings, boreholes, dams and fencing, but the Government should not buy these farms.

Underutilised land or areas should be developed and then fenced in order to be used for resettlement purposes. We are <sup>of</sup> the opinion that some of the areas should be sold to those who can afford it and other areas or land be allocated to small farmers and landless. Rich farmers in communal areas should be encouraged to buy farms in the commercial areas to relieve pressure in the communal areas.

The Government should negotiate with the land bank to bring down interest rates on loans from 13 percent to either 8 or 6 percent to accommodate small farmers in the communal areas.

An investigation should be launched into those farms bought by the second tier authorities during the pre-independence era, today they have become individual

properties. These farms should be used in times of drought to help people as they are state farms.

If the Government has some problems in acquiring land as we have earlier proposed, then the Government should impose more strict measures on the farmers who owned excessive land to give up some of their land. The Government should set a standard on the physical sizes of the farm and if some one owned more than the limit, fine should be charged on every piece of land owned in excess.

Farmers owned more than one farms shouldn't receive state's subsidies at all. Legislations should be also enacted that can help the government to acquire land.

A proper control mechanism should be set up for land owned by foreigners. Some of the profit acented from those farms should be re-invested in Namibia and remainder can be repatriated elsewhere. If those farms are not fully utilised, the Government should take them, and compensate them for what they have developed on these farms.

Foreigners should only be allowed to own one farm at the maximum. We are aware that games and hunting farms are the attraction of tourists but it must be taken into account that most of the arable land shouldn't be taken by these farms.

- Absentee Landlords
- A Namibian manager should be appointed to run farms owned by absentee landlords. If there is no proper management than those farms should be sold to the Government.

#### WEEKEND FARMERS:

Weekend farming should only be allowed in communal areas since farmers in communal areas could not afford to maintain their families with the little cattle they have in the communal areas and resort to working in towns. Cattle in communal areas are used for traditional and cultural purposes and therefore weekend farming in communal areas should be allowed.

EXISTING COMMUNAL AREAS:

The Government should take measure to improve and develop communal areas especially in the Eastern part of namibia that is on the perspery of the Kalahari desert. Therefore the communal areas should be fenced on to allow cattle ranging from one area to another.

In conclusion we are proposing that the Government should established a Committe on Land Distribution. This Committee should include farmers in the communal and commercial areas. It is our opinion that this problem of land should be solved within this four years before next election.