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NAMIBIAN STUDENTS EDUCATION MOVEMENT (NASEM)

LAND REFORM CONFERENCE 25 June 1991

Your Excellency Ode. President Dr. Sam Nujoma, Hon. PM. Hage Geingob, Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers, distinguished guest, Ladies and Gentleman I stand here in front of you today as an advocate for justice, equality and human dignity.

Our coming here today is not only another platform for the nation to air its grievances nor is this another way of making sure that democratic principles entrenched in our constitution are upheld

but this is a gathering that marks an important chapter in the history of decolonisation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Eminent^t sons and daughter of Africa.

We all know our colonial history and repeating it to you will be a colossal waste of time, however I am sure that most of you will agree with us that this conference will not arrive at any credible solutions, should it fail to take our peculiar historic context into consideration. Namibia fell victim to foreign invasion in 1884 when the Germans invaded the then South West Africa destroying whatever resistance. The tested and approved formula of divide and rule was applied. After hard, bitter and protracted struggles our people suffered a temporary defeat. A liberation struggle was started which culminated in political independence for Namibia. However no words today can fully describe the bitter and painfulness of this struggle. (nothing is certain the war for liberation is not yet over. The war for liberation is not yet over until and unless every Namibian has a roof over his/her head and the living standard of the majority of our people has improved. The war against poverty, will end the day when the Namibian Nation will cry at the top of voice "Free at last, Free at last".

THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ever since the Namibian government took power the policy of national reconciliation was advocated day and night. (It is our considered opinion that reconciliation can not take place in the air and has therefore got to take cognisance of our peculiar historic context.

Any attempt to reconcile the Namibian people in isolation from their history is without substance and doomed to failure. We can never reconcile until the cause of hostility between the different farming sector has been addressed and the historical wrongs been corrected. After having paid with its blood and even lives for the FREEDOM of this country this nation is prepared to settle for nothing less. *then the return of their God given land.*

COMMUNAL LAND

Nasem strongly believes that any attempt to alleviate the plight of the communal population by simply developing the communal areas is just ^a drop in the ocean. Development in some areas has stagnated and were possible only a section of the population will benefit from it. This necessitates some more drastic steps from the side of the government aimed at acquiring more land from the commercial land and be made available to communal farmers. Because of overgrazing and unpredictable rainfalls the process of desertification has reached a critical stage. The government can help the people to survive in communal areas by:

- improving the infrastructure which is a sine qua non to economic growth
- expansion of communal AREAS
- sinking of more boreholes
- education to communal farmers aimed at raising productivity
- removing a greater number of the communal population and re-settling them in commercial land
- state subsidy to peasants
- setting up veterinary centers in all the regions
- encourage co-operatives
- cattle fattening and marketing.

COMMERCIAL FARMS

Commercial land in Namibia is entirely owned by the minority at the expense of the majority. This means that the most fertile and most productive land is in the hands of the minority.

It therefore remains the sacred task and sole responsibility of the government to re-dress this unpleasant predicament. The government has no choice but to purchase land in the commercial areas and to avail it to the poor and landless people. Today the land issue centers around the land ownership disparity between the black majority and

the white minority. As ~~apanaea~~ ^{to the tension between the different} farming sectors drastic steps must be taken and inequity as far as the use of natural resources is concerned be re-dressed. We propose certain measures aimed at regaining or acquiring more land, these are:

-PROGRESSIVE TAXATION (farmers will be heavily taxed on their second farm and up to three times more on the third one. Ownership transfer as far as farms are concerned will be freezed. Ownership transfer during the last twelf months should be recalled.)

-ABSENTEE-LAND lords should not be tolerated and the governarnt should buy this farms at a cheaper price.

-every piece of land should be UTILISED and no one should be allowed to own a farm if he/she is not living on the farm or making a direct living from the farm.

-GAME PARKS should be limited and more land be made available to the needy.

RESETTEMENT

The aquired land must be redistributed to the landless according to their needs.. Affirmative action must play an important role in the redistribution proces. The aquired land should be under state control to secure economic growth and prevent ~~mismanag~~ mismanagement.

We futher propose that a ^{parastatal} body be formed to raise funds for the buying of land. The money could come from land tax revenues, communities, banks, individuals and donors.

^{HOW PM}
Your excellency cde. President remmember that "GOOD GOVERNMENTS DERIVE THEIR JUST POWERS ~~TE~~FROM THE CONCERN OF THE GOVERNED"
Sir, the fate of this NATION is in your hands.

THANK YOU.

STEVE AUMORE
(PRESIDENT) *Steve Aumore*