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NAKACO (NAMIBIA KATEMO AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE)
STATEMENT ON LAND REFORM: NORTH EASTERN REGION AS FROM
25 JUNE - 1 JULY 1991.

- Honourable Master of Ceremony
- " Ministers
- " Distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

In each communal area the institutional deficiencies in land administration and resource management are different, but in all cases there is an urgent need for solutions to be found. However, each locality has its own unique set of inherited and current problems. Further, many of the solutions to these highly specific issues can be generated mostly at local level. On the other hand, local solutions have to be in accordance with a National Policy on Land Reform i.e. land use and rights of access to land and natural resources.

The prevailing economic and social conditions in the communal areas are primarily the result of a colonial policy of territorial apartheid, which favoured white commercial farmers on a core of freehold land, served by black migrant labour drawn from underdeveloped

So called "homelands"

Having said that it is important to realize that the economic future of the great majority of rural people will continue to lie in the rural area's. The majority of the country's population (70%) have been living in communal area's. About (60%) 60. percent in the mixed, mostly subsistence farming area of North, Northeast and far North Eastern Region. This distribution has probably not changed significantly. Between 1981 and 1990, the population in Kavango has increased from 105 690 to about 170 000, indicating a rapid population growth of 4,5 percent (4.5% p.a) per annum. Most of the rural population of Kavango are uneducated but skilled agriculture wise and live in conspicuous poverty.

People live on land, the primary economic source. If people are removed or their limited space further reduced, this could aggravate the already existing 30 to 40 percent (30 -40%) high figure of unemployment and increase landlessness. Instead, people's skills, abilities and willpower (efforts) in subsistence mixed farming should be exploited in this regard. Therefore, communal area's should continue to be communal and not commercialized which would increase landlessness and unemployment, as said before.

Opportunities for the improvement of rural incomes and living standards in the communal area's are to a varying degree related to the resolution of general issues of

Land Reform and resource allocation. In its wider sense, Land Reform is concerned with measures to achieve:

- a) Greater justice and equity in the allocation of land resources (Wildlife, natural plant resources, grazing and crop land)
- b) More secure tenure and livelihood for harvesters and producers.

The other aspect I want to mention here is the lease system. As you know, in the communal area no one own the land, the land belongs to its inhabitants. The individual farmers should be given a lease of at least 99 years, this is to enable the communal farmers to acquire loans from the land and agricultural banks.

- c) Greater community responsibility and profit from the environment,
- d) New skills and knowledge in agricultural extension services. (in the context of ecologically viable systems of a land use).

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF LAND ALLOCATION AND ADMINISTRATION

In the Kavango region, the Hompa (tribal chief) allocates land. A traditional procedure's to be followed criteria or requirement for land allocation was set up and the body responsible for land allocation, traditionally are the inhabitants of the area in which the person intends to be allocated land, the Timbi (Headmen), and the Hompa who has the final say. Further, the procedural framework for redress of people affected by the decisions in terms of how land was allocated, appeal to the Timbi or Hompa and requirements for bringing issues or disputes to the relevant forums were also laid down. To sum up, traditional authority in Kavango enjoys authority over land administration, allocation and control. From times along past, the traditional leaders have had a customary role in land administration. It is therefore essential that they continue to have an important, though not exclusive, voice in the allocation and administration of land. We are therefore of the opinion that tribal chief be made (more) accountable to the people and not enjoy arbitrary powers. We realize the need for local institutions that regulate land allocation. This institution should, ideally, have the respect of the people and the support of government to undertake the administration of land and natural resources. This institution should combine local knowledge and tradition with the principles and techniques of modern land use and

planning. The decisions of this body must respect the needs, aspirations and past land claims of the people it serves and must have the legal authority to implement and enforce its decisions.

The Homba should be part of an institution that regulate land allocation with community participation. We already started pioneering a system of land allocation and administration for the communal areas in Kavango in which the traditional authorities (Homba), the Land Allocation and Farming Committee's could then become a Land Board for the whole region. We are therefore proposing that the established Land Allocation and Farming Committees should be given legal authority to implement and enforce its decisions by the government.

ECOLOGY USE OF LAND

Earlier, the number of cattle and type of crop cultivated and the manner in which it is cultivated was the individuals choice and decision. If there is limited space for grating, she/he could be refused permission to stay on the plot requested. The person could be recommended to go to another area by the Headmen, and the person should see to it as to where she/he could go.

In the 70's, with the dawn of the war, people started to live close to each other along the river, they became overcrowded. So that, if someone has a lot of cattle, and there is limited space for grating, she/he could be refused permission.

The war aggravated the situation, so that presently, people are overcrowded along the river. Most of the people in the Kavango are of the opinion that the situation is unbearable and measures should be achieved/ designed to alleviate it. Their only hope is the inland (Wiya). They are saying that if the inland are out of their hands or destroyed than our people cannot live anymore.

Masters of ceremonies,

Sir, you would appreciate it that this legitimate fear of our people reflects the extend of the carrying capacity of the available land.

It is a loud cry for more land by our people. We are of the opinion that our people should be allowed to move to the inland (wiya), measures which at the moment the land (Allocation) and Farming committees in the Kavango has dealt with tentatively, waiting on the Land Reform Conference. Further the potential for crop production is threatened by the increasing short cycle of "slash-and-burn" system short agriculture practised by the rapidly expanding population.

PRODUCTIVITY: ECONOMIC EMANCIPATION AB

Earlier, if a person stayed on a plot and was unproductive, the person could stay there provided the person had good behaviour and was able to live with others. If the person is lazy, and is unable to live with others for reasons which could be theft, "witchcraft", murder, assault and others land, could be taken back.

Later, especially since people were overcrowded, pressure is exerted on this type of people to be evicted and land taken back solely for being too absent and negligent or lazy.

however, some headmen had not taken back land because of too long absence and neglect, especially taken into consideration the condition and situation of migrant labourers.

AB In the Kavango, people were engaged in subsistence mixed farming. In the colonial period, the Apartheid, colonial government made no coherent policy for Agricultural development in Kavango, which was regarded as a source of cheap unskilled labour. Little (or no) assistance has been given to develop agriculture in the black, so called "homelands". There was no properly functioning government extension services to help the peasant farmers, no organized market for Mahangu or livestock, no adequate control of stock diseases, as a result of which the whole Kavango are lies north of the veterinary cordon fence, no agricultural processing industries agronomic research programme, no proper programme for rational use of game.

Mahangu we believe, is a staple food for more than two thirds of the Namibian people. As such the production thereof on a large scale needs to be encouraged and increased.

Further, overall in Nambia it was precisely because of state aid (aid to the white commercial farmers landowners, of course) that the peasant in such an enormous number of cases were deprived of land they vitally needed. We will put forward the demand for restitution to the peasants of the land of which they have been deprived, a condition which still binds them to forced labour, that virtually keeps them in a state of serfdom. We will put forward the demand for the establishment of mechanisms and institutions to remove the crying injustices perpetrated against the black majority by the colonial Apartheid government.

The problem that most peasant farmers face is that of co-lateral security. We are of the opinion that the government should intervene and act as co-lateral securer of this poor, willing farmers. The provision of water and gravel road in the inland is of paramount importance.

1. Government extension services should be installed and Adequate Control of stock and crop diseases. The cordon veterinary fence should be slashed to allow communal farmers to use the stock markets available to commercial farmers.
2. Efforts should, with participation of local community, be initiated for the establishment of agricultural processing industries for Mahangu and other produce especially for those people organized in co-operatives further efforts are necessary for the establishment and opening up of markets.
3. An adequately supported agronomic research programme, also with local community participants, should be initiated. This could be very educational to the local peasant farmers. Most important is the feedback of findings to the peasants after the research has been conducted.
4. There should also be community participation and benefit in game use. Community elected structures such as the Land and Farming Committee's should be given authority and power to raise local revenues. (e.g. from tourism fee's, trophy hunting and licence fee's) from users of communal resources. When local communities have responsibility for, and authority over their natural resources, they will begin to understand the limits of those resources and develop the capacity to manage them in sound equitable and management terms.
5. Education and acquisition of modern skills is still needed by peasant farmers to run their own lives. Most important in this regard is training in management skills, cost accounting, budgeting and so on. This is needed especially in the organized bodies such as the co-operatives.

Namibia gained independence one year ago, history has shown that in Zimbabwe the contribution of communal farmers towards GNP before independence was less than 20%, but with independence of Zimbabwe, the contribution of communal farmers has tremendously increased. Today it is being estimated at 63%.

The colonial regime highly subsidized the commercial farmers, land and Agricultural Banks were only giving loans to the commercial farmers.

From the economical point of view this situation should be redressed. The Namibian themselves should be given access to the land.

Subsidy, if any and land and agricultural Bank should be made available to the communal farmers under affirmative action policy of our government. This will definitely increase the productivities of the communal farmers. At

the end of the day our GNP percentage per capita will also increase.

On the issue whether the government should confiscate land or should it compensate?

I believe that we are all well aware that 70% of the Namibian people are today staying in the communal area, which is over population density. Namibia land is a special and important commodity to all the Namibian.

Let us first start with:

- (a) Absentee Landlords - This farmers a commission should first be established to investigate the legality involved in acquiring such land. If it is found that he owns more than one farm, the government should immediately confiscate all the remaining farms without any compensation. One remaining farm should be highly taxed on it.
- (b) Namibian owning more than one farm should also be investigated to find out how the land was acquired. (Commission should be appointed). Wild life farming reason should not be enough for having more than one farm. Because this turn to be unutilized land, which could be redistributed to other landlessness Namibian. Compensation if any should be determined by the commission appointed by the government, for those remaining farms to be confiscated by the government.
- (c) To those who forced Namibian in order to acquire their land by force removal should not be compensated what so ever. This land should be given back to the people it belongs.

In conclusion Namibia Katemo Agricultural Cooperative will not be represented by Agricultural Union or association which is proponent of racial discrimination. We need to establish an agricultural Union which represent the interest of all the Namibian farmers. We also would like to appeal to all international organization, who are willing to finance the communal farmers, that all funds intended for communal farmers, should be given to the communal farmers cooperatives or associations and not to Agricultural Union, which does not represent the interest of the peasant farmers.

Namibia belongs to you, Namibia belongs to the Namibian, Namibia must be given back to the Namibian themselves.

I thank you all.