

**Director of proceedings**

**Chairperson of Otjozondjupa Regional Council – Honorable Marlayn Mbakera;**

**All Constituency Councillors and Honorable Members of Parliament;**

**Chief Regional Officer for Otjozondjupa Region Council – Agatha Mweti;**

**Captains of Government Agencies and Industries;**

**Esteemed traditional and religious leaders**

**Fellow Namibians following us live on TV, Radio services and social media platforms;**

**Members of the Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is indeed my sincere honour and gratitude standing here as a Regional Governor, Representative of His Excellency Dr. Hage G Geingob President of the Republic of Namibia and also as the Representative of the Central Government to account to you the sovereigns on the activities, projects and program of Government for the 2022/2023 financial year. This address is in accordance with the Namibian Constitution Art 110 (A) sub-article 5 and 6 and Section 11 (d) of the Regional Council Act No. 22 of 1992.

Otjozondjupa region is measuring 105,460km<sup>2</sup> in geographical size and a population of about 163,903 with a population density of 1.4 km<sup>2</sup>. The region has Seven (7) Constituencies namely, Okahandja, Omatako, Okakarara, Otjiwarongo, Otavi, Grootfontein and Tsumkwe, with Nine (9) Settlements namely; Okandjira, Okandjatu, Okamatapati, Okatjoruu, Coblenz, Kalkfeld, Tsumkwe, Gam and Kombat. In terms of towns, Otjozondjupa has a comparative advantage of having Five (5) Towns of which Three (3) Otjiwarongo- Capital, Okahandja and Grootfontein are Part 2 Municipalities, while Two (2) are Town Councils being Okakarara and Otavi. The Settlements are Growth Points, whose next level is a Village Council or a Town at Local Authority Level. The Five towns have various disparities in terms of strength and our aim is to ensure equitable distribution of social amenities and development opportunities, in order to create a chain of complimentary economic activities in the various towns and constituencies of the region.

This State of Region Address is aligned to V2030, National Development Plans, Harambee Prosperity Plan 1+2.

## **EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

The key focus of our region is to enhance good-governance through strict adherence to all principles of Good-Governance. One key principle is to embody a participatory approach to ensure that every sector whether Government or private, is part of the synergic efforts of prompt, effective, meaningful yet sustainable service delivery.

**Enhancement of Security and Rule of Law** is one of the strategic objectives of Effective Governance. Paramount to effective governance is a conducive and peaceful environment through enhancement of security and rule of law.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, through its law enforcement mandate has successfully executed 10 joint operations with other key stakeholders in the region during the 2022/23 FY:

In addition Nampol recorded the following cases that varies from criminal, fraud, commercial and poaching crimes.

At Otjiwarongo CR 61/05/2021 – Fraud: One suspect was arrested at a local financial institution (Nedbank Namibia) for transferring money of an amount of N\$ 320 158, 00 from a customer’s account. The money was recovered.

At Okakarara Police station CR 02/03/2021 – Robbery: Assault with Grievous Bodily Harm: Malicious damage to properties: occurred on March 2021, at Okakarara Save More wholesaler. Victims were held at knife and panga point by suspects who demanded for cash. An amount of N\$ 188 646.46 was stolen. Two suspects were arrested and an amount of N\$ 48 250, 00 was recovered. Investigation continues.

At Otjiwarongo CR 05/01/23 – Armed robbery during 31 December 2022 at around 18h00 hours at Ozondjahe Farm Otjiwarongo District. A female victim was held at gun point and suspects demanded cash. Suspects ran off with valuable items costing N\$504 515,18. No arrests have been made and no recoveries of stolen items have been made to date. Investigations continue.

### **Traffic Law enforcement**

Total summons issued – 5811 Total amount from summons – N\$ 6 257 550.00

Total number of people arrested on drinking and driving charges – 1420

Total accident fatalities reported -14

Total people arrested on warrant of arrest -139 and total amount from warrants of arrest – N\$ 162 ,107. 00

Road accidents in our region has been one of the biggest challenges especially along the B1 road between Okahandja and Otjiwarongo, Otjiwarongo and Otavi. The region has since established a Road Safety Regional Forum aimed at coordinating road safety efforts and programs within the sector to save lives and coordinate resource usage. Today I am happy to inform you that we have seen a tremendous decrease road accidents in key hot spots of our region. The last festive season recorded less road accidents than usual in our region due to efforts of the forum. However incidents of traffic offences, are still rampant, with the main causes being over-speeding and failure to respect road traffic rules.

On protected natural resources and wildlife species;

At Otjiwarongo - Three Namibian males were arrested, charged and released on bail for hunting of specially protected game species (plain Zebra valued at N\$5000),

A Namibian male was arrested for being in possession of Python skin valued at N\$ 15 000, while two others were arrested for being in possession of Leopard skin of specially protected game valued at N\$30 000.00.

Still at Otjiwarongo Two Namibian males and a Chinese national were arrested for harvesting, removal, transportation and possession of protected plants without a permit. In a similar case two Namibians and an Angolan national were also arrested for being in possession of protected plants.

Furthermore two Angolan nationals were arrested for Contravention of Section 50 (A) Ordinance 4/1975 by being in Possession of pangolin skin valued at N\$50 000. In another case a Namibian was arrested in possession of pangolin skin valued at the same amount.

Being the region with the highest number of livestock both in total per region as well as per capita there are indeed numerous challenges facing the livestock sector and key of all is stock-theft in both commercial and communal areas. A total loss amounting to N\$ 2,979,060 involving 289 cattle, 13 slaughtered carcasses and dry meat, was recorded. Small stock stolen included 369 goats and sheep valued at N\$605 000 and the suspects were apprehended. The Police further arrested and charged 47 suspects for hunting of various game species.

I would therefore like to caution and warn those who engage in crimes of stock theft and illegal hunting of game, that the long arm of the law will one day catch up with you and no mercy shall be shown. I am calling upon the police to work closely with local farmers, anti-stock theft units and support them wherever possible as they have proven to be of grate assistance and effective in the fight against livestock theft.

**Some of the challenges experienced by the Namibian Police are as follows:**

**Shortage of housing:** There is still a great shortage of housing for men and women in uniform and I therefore urge all Local Authorities to avail land for housing purposes for them.

**Police Mortuary:** There is a need for a Police Pathology unit for the region.

**Fleet Management:** During the period under review, 15 vehicles were decommissioned with 50% to 60% of the fleet still grounded, due to accidents and mechanical problems.

Mangetti Dune, Okakarara, Rooidag, Osire, Hochfeld, Kalkfeld, Kombat Police Stations and Otjiwarongo Crime Investigation Unit are without vehicles. Transport is these stations is being sourced from nearby stations to assist in cases of emergency.

### **Home Affairs and Immigration**

As we strive to enforce a sense of nationalism, we place emphasis in ensuring that our region's citizens have access to national documents such as IDs and Birth certificates which are mandatory documents for recognition purposes and accessing of services such as grants and most importantly, to enable young ones to enroll in schools. In Namibia it is mandatory for anyone who has attained 16 years, to have an Identity Document. I appeal for mobile outreach activities in remote areas of the region, such as Tsumkwe Constituency, as a lack of national documents deprives access to social benefits to many in rural areas. The introduction of Electronic Notification System for births and death and other services is therefore highly welcomed. 9507 births were registered while 10318 IDs were registered for 2022/2023 financial year. However, during the same period, the region recorded 4828 uncollected IDs. I urge the public to collect their IDs and for the relevant ministry to make means to deliver the uncollected IDs, as some people might be hampered by lack of means of travelling to Otjiwarongo from the rural areas to collect their IDs.

### **Anti-Corruption Commission**

The ACC has been at the helm of ensuring a corrupt-free region. In line with the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025. A Regional Forum chaired by myself as the Governor, was established and our first meeting was held in November 2022. The Regional Forum aims at reviewing the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan while also serving as a critical platform to discuss issues of governance, ethics and corruption in the region, thus the reason why I urge all stakeholders to participate in the Regional Forum meetings. In order to create awareness and enforce ethics, a total number of 206 public servants such as Police, Teachers, Health Workers and the youth were trained in the region. In addition, School Counsellors of the region, were also trained on the ACC Education Manual.

The ACC however faces challenges in executing its duties mainly; withholding of information of corrupt practices by witnesses, for fear of victimization. In the fight against corruption, we still face a challenge as the public provides limited information. I urge the public to live to the motto of ACC which is "BE PART OF THE FIGHT." One of the prime dangers to effective governance are evils such as corruption and red-tape in service delivery. As a responsible region, we condemn the misuse of the Government office through deliberate sabotage of service delivery or delays thereto, because we are aware that this might lead to soliciting of favours and corruption. Every service especially

Government, should be rendered freely, timely and without any conditions attached, so that, as a region, we can uphold the good governance.

## **ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT**

The **economic** potential of Otjozondjupa, is that it is centrally and strategically located and boasts of various minerals, and natural resources. Our economic strength is mainly driven by the Mining, Agricultural, and Tourism industries with contributions from various commercial business ventures. Otjozondjupa region therefore, positions itself as one of the major contributors to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). We boast of abundant and quality organic and naturally grown meat sector free of GMO in both commercial and communal areas, with the total number of livestock (cattle, sheep and Goats) totaling 796 948, making the region the highest in terms of livestock numbers. In efforts to maximize on the livestock sector the region intends to invest in local value-added facilities, so that Namibia can benefit from the bi-products and value-chain activities to create the much needed employment. In the same vain, we launched the Otjozondjupa “Meat Festival Concept” to promote, celebrate and appreciate the contribution of the meat industry to our GDP, national and regional economic development.

On Mining,

Our region is blessed with a total of 6 Mines involved in mining of various mineral resources which are B2Gold (Gold), Trigon Metal Mine at Kombat (Copper), two Cement factories (Cheetah and Ohorongo), Otjozondju Mine (Manganese) and Okorusu and Okanjande Graphite mine (Graphite).

As you might be aware there has been worrying developments of labour relations in various mines across the region that included the envisaged retrenchment at B2Gold and Okanjande Graphite mines. When people are employed, hope and expectations are created and abrupt retrenchments are harming the society adversely and it is a move I totally condemn. Retrenchment should be the last resort after all possible avenues and negotiations to save jobs have been explored in accordance with the national Labour Act. I implore our mining sector players to champion good working relations by following provisions of the Labour Act No: 11 of 2007 at all times.

Business and Trade activities in the region are facilitated through the **Ministry of Industrialization and Trade** that is mandated to develop and manage the regulatory framework of economic promotion and development. As a region we advocate for an increase in manufacturing industries, so as to create employment and maximize on value-adding activities.

## Agriculture

**Agriculture** is another economic strength of the region. Seventy percent of the inhabitants of our region are directly or indirectly dependent on the agriculture industry, primarily in livestock, horticulture and crop production. The maize-triangle, embedded on rich underground aquifers, produces tonnes of maize and other grain produce throughout the year, contributing to national economic growth.

In this regard the Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Land Reform; Department: Agriculture Development (DAD) and the Directorate: Agriculture Production Extension and Engineering Services – (DAPEES), facilitates technical and expert assistance to farmers in order to ensure household food security in the region and Namibia at large.

The Ministry of Agriculture Water and Land Reform through NAMSIP have procured and distributed farm machinery and equipment. Under this intervention, Otjozondjupa region received One hundred (100) diesel chipper hammer mills, One hundred and Seventy (170) seedling trans-planters, One hundred and Sixty (160) weeding cultivators, thirty five (35) walking tractors with matching implements and three (3) tractors of 77kw horsepower with matching implements and is still to receive 2-row engine propelled maize combined harvesters, boom sprayers, additional seven (7) tractors of 60-70kw horsepower and fourteen (14) tractors of 40-50kw horsepower both with matching implements before the end of August. This will total the additional number of tractors to 24 for the region. Some of the farm machineries and equipment received are commissioned and awaiting distribution to various Agricultural Development Centres (ADCs) in the region, while others are awaiting the recently finalized implementation modalities for loaning to farmers.

In fulfilling its objective of employment creation, the Ministry is seeking for thirty (30) contractual farm machinery operators from the region who will be undergoing an intensive training to operate the above machineries in all constituencies of the region. The advert is currently running and closes on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 2023 and interested applicants are therefore urged to participate and not miss this opportunity.

In addition about (1806) **One Thousand Eight Hundred and Six** households benefited from the subsidized agricultural production inputs, tools and equipment provided through the Dry Land Crop Production Programme, Horticulture Value Chain Development Scheme, Poultry Value Chain Development Scheme and the Namibia Agriculture Mechanization and Seed Improvement Project (NAMSIP).

A total of **1.8 tonnes of Pearl Millet** commonly known as Mahangu, **4.2 tonnes of maize**, **1.7 tonnes Cowpeas** and **One (1) tonne of Sorghum** seeds, were subsidized under the **Dry Land Crop Production Programme (DCPP)**.

Through the same intervention, (2514) **Two Thousand five hundred and fourteen** households benefited from the subsidized mechanized services such as ploughing, ripping, planting and weeding services through the Dry Land Crop Production Programme

during the previous planting season. With the assistance of the government mechanized services, a total of (866 ha) **Eight Hundred and Sixty-Six** Hectares of land was ploughed.

Under the horticulture subsidization programme, (56) **Fifty Six** horticultural farmers were subsidized to access items such as fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and irrigation equipment/material in the form of water tanks, drip-systems and submersible pumps at an amount of N\$443 557. To date, the Ministry of Agriculture Water and Land Reform has managed to reach about 3,235 (**Three Thousand Two Hundred and Thirty Five**) farmers through trainings, information days, farm and exposure visits and demonstration days, where farmers are informed on various practices and technologies with emphasis on climate-smart agriculture.

Under the Poultry Value Chain Development Scheme **ninety four (94) producers** were assisted with subsidized feed, production stock, material for housing and veterinary supplies to a tune of **N\$249 186.00**

The region alongside Omaheke region are being used to pilot the Dairy Value Chain Development Scheme which aims to make Namibia self-sufficient in milk and dairy products through modernization of our rural dairy industry. Importantly, it will impact positively on income generation, employment creation and nutrition status of our rural communities. An amount of **two million Namibian dollars (N\$2 000 000.00)** was allocated to the region to support farmers with subsidy for feed, vaccines, value addition, preservation equipment, cold storage tanks, milking machines, pasteurizers, cream separator, butter processors and capacity building. I call upon Farmers to stand up and tap on this lucrative opportunity.

The region has about (105) registered seed producers with the Ministry. During the period under review, **twenty four (24) seed growers managed to supply the Ministry with certified seeds of about ten tonnes (10 ton) of maize , five tonnes (5 ton) of cowpeas, about three tonnes (3 ton) of sorghum and two hundred kilograms (200 kg) of pearl millet/mahangu.**

Land Reform (national resettlement program)

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, and specifically the department of Land Reform as per its mandate, acquired three (3) farms for resettlement purposes which are divided into Seven (7) farming units and measuring 11 995 Ha worth N\$ 29 537 194.46 for the 2022/2023 FY.

The Otjozondjupa Regional Resettlement Committee, received a total of One Thousand Six Hundred Eight Five applications for recommendations to the Advisory Commission. The Committee's recommendations to the Commission managed to get Nine (9) applications approved and allocated by the Minister, The Nine (9) successful applicants are made up of Four (4) male beneficiaries and four (4) female beneficiaries and One (1) Cooperative. The received applications were considered by the Committee (OTRCC) in order to select and recommend suitable applicants to the Minister through the Land Reform

All these (7) farming units were successfully allocated to deserving beneficiaries, of which two (2) Units were allotted to applicants from Otjozondjupa Region, and the remaining five (5) Units were allotted to applicants from across Namibia. Additionally, two other units were re-advertised and allotted to two beneficiaries from Otjozondjupa region. It is my sincere hope that more deserving residents from Otjozondjupa Region will be resettled in the 2023/2024 financial year.

I am also pleased to announce that the total amount of N\$ 226,488.85 was paid for resettlement leaseholds for the year under review, which is of course an increase of 13.2% in revenue collection from the N\$200,135.80 received during the period under review. I, therefore, thank all resettlement farmers who have committed to paying their lease fees and, I herewith urge all resettlement beneficiaries in the Otjozondjupa Region to farm productively, adhere to their lease agreements and to continue paying their lease fees on time and not a burden to Government.

Programme for Communal Land Development (PCLD):

Hon Chairperson, fellow Namibians

The provision of water supply Infrastructure under the Programme for Communal Land Development (PCLD) aims to develop communal areas through investment in core farm infrastructure with the objective of improving livelihoods through improved agricultural activities. During the 2022/23 Fiscal year, the Ministry completed the development of water supply infrastructure at 8 villages to the tune of N\$ 23,437, 051.75 in Gam areas under the PCLD program. The PCLD also has a component of farm advisory services that extends agricultural extension services to farmers, mostly focusing on aspects such as farm management, animal husbandry, rangeland management etc. Farm advisory services were extended to about 300 communal farmers in the Tsumkwe-west and Gam PCLD focal areas during the 2022/23 financial year.



## Communal land registration

During the 2022/2023 financial year, the Otjozondjupa Communal Land Board registered a total of thirty-five (35) Customary Land Rights. The expenditure for this exercise is a total of N\$ 59,277.52, which includes mapping, and verification of Customary Land Rights, and Land Board meetings expenditure.

There is an ever-growing demand for farming and resettlement land in the region and beyond. The demand is high and supply low. I therefore urge all the inhabitants of Otjozondjupa Region and the rest of Namibia to be very patient while the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform derives methodologies and accelerate the implementation of the Land Conference Resolutions on some of the pertinent issues on Land Reform in the Country. There has been a growing trend of farm evictions and this is a course of concern to the Regional Leadership. I urge the Ministry of Agriculture to prioritize the farmers in the corridors.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Hon Chairperson,

As you might be aware, the government is busy working towards the relocation of Batswana of Namibian Decent back to Namibia. Cabinet has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee headed by MAWLR and so far a reception area measuring 21.5 Ha in Gam Settlement has been cleared and fenced off. A further farming land measuring 240 Ha has been obtained through the Kambazembi Traditional Authority to be used for settling of the relocatees as most will be having livestock for economic integration purposes. In addition, GRN also bought 5 commercial farms for allocation to the relocatees. GRN bought food items for the relocatees upon arrival. Cabinet further directed MOHSS to beef up its capabilities and capacity at the Gam clinic and to cater for the relocatees. Today the total number of relocatees is estimated at 118 adults and 64 dependents. Today there is no fixed date of the return of the Batswana of Namibian Descendants who have renounced their Batswana citizenship.

## **SOCIAL PROGRESSION**

The fundamental focus of Social Progression in our region is to ensure that every resident has access to health facilities. The Ministry of Health and Social Services, renders its services to a catchment population of 170,118 (Census 2011-projections) through the Four (4) District Hospitals namely, Okahandja, Okakarara, Grootfontein and Otjiwarongo; Two Health Centres at Otavi & Mangetti; Nineteen (19) Clinics, One Health Post and 239 Outreach points.

The vastness of the region results in transportation challenges as only 57% of vehicles and 64% of Ambulances are in running condition as far as health care is concerned in our region. Fortunately, the region received an ambulance that was donated by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for use at Osire Refugee Camp. The quest for improved health infrastructure has been accelerated with the ongoing upgrading of Okondjatu Clinic to a Health Centre (ongoing) this project has been delayed and should reach conclusion as soon as possible. Renovation of Omatako Clinic, new mortuary installation at Ovitoto Clinic and Okahandja District Hospital, Installation of air conditioners at the Theatre at Otjiwarongo District Hospital and renovation of health personnel staff accommodation at Otjiwarongo District Hospital. The construction of the referral hospital for Otjiwarongo however remains pending, and I call upon the Ministry of Health and Social Services to speed up the process of the referral hospital. The construction of an Intensive Care Unit at the Otjiwarongo hospital has commenced and this is to complete the 12 bed ICU unit established in the previous financial year.

**Social welfare** continues to be one of our focal goals as this involves the survival and “bread and butter” issues of the grass-roots; such as water, nutrition, clothing, blankets, health care services and access to social amenities. I believe that, our region, with concerted efforts from all stakeholders, we can close or narrow the poverty gap as we strive to ensure improved quality of life for the residents especially the most vulnerable members of our society. Let us hold hands and move together. I can gladly say that, the region has made tremendous strides in ensuring meaningful progress in addressing poverty, income and wealth inequalities, through resource mobilization with the help of stakeholders and external partners.

With Otjozondjupa having the highest number of marginalized communities, various initiatives and projects have been implemented under key strategic pillars known as the four – legs of integration namely Advocacy and promotion of human rights related issues; Educational Support; Livelihood Support and Land Re-distribution amongst the marginalized communities

A total of 5758 targeted beneficiaries from all 7 constituencies received food items once per quarter. We must understand for the marginalized communities food is not a luxury. Additionally, food parcels were distributed to 53 patients in Tsumkwe constituency, suffering from Multi Drug Resistance and extensively Drug Resistance TB.

Furthermore 84 funeral service benefits were offered through the Funeral Programme for elderly and people with disabilities in the Region to the value of N\$398 945.90 for community members that could not afford the burial cost.

The **Rural Development Programmes** supported by Government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, continue to be a lifeline in improving the living standard

of the rural communities by providing basic social and economic services support, through projects. During 2022/2023 Financial Year, a total of N\$ 862,958.33 was spent on the implementation of Four (4) Programmes namely; **Food/Cash for Work, Micro Finance (SME support), Support to Poor Rural farmers, and Region Specific Action Plan for Food Security.**

A total of 15 projects under Food/Cash for Work program has been reported. These projects included construction and re-gravelling of roads, de-bushing and fencing of graveyards and stadiums at some Settlements, Rehabilitation of Water Points as well as renovation of a Community Hall at Kalkfeld.

Hon Chairperson, fellow Namibian.

Under the programme of Micro Finance, beneficiaries of Small and Medium Businesses were supported in trades of Design and Craft, Welding and Ice-cream production while the programmes of Support to Rural Farmers and Region Specific Action supported horticulture and poultry projects. I urge the beneficiaries of the Rural Development Programme, to have ownership of the projects and use them to change their living standards and grow their businesses, in order to be able to employ others, so as to lessen the unemployment rate.

The Otjozondjupa Regional Council from its own sources introduced a programme to empower people in the Constituencies with projects that can help them not only to generate income but also make an impact to change of livelihoods in their areas

#### Governor's Office Support

During the period under review, two students were assisted with bursaries to the value of N\$10,000.00 Twelve (12) participants benefited from a Youth Poultry Production training valued at N\$6,099.00. A total amount of N\$85,000.00 was spent on Sports activities including the Governor's Cup. The Governor's office further assisted with minor repairs of vehicles of the Police and Ministry of Health and Social Services at a total value of N\$100,000.00.

#### **Education**

Our region embraces, **education and knowledge** empowerment as a tool to enable us to have a secured future in terms of knowledge, skills and growth.

Hon chairperson, fellow Namibians,

A total of 56,194 learners were enrolled in 90 schools with 1,954 teachers during the period under review. The Directorate enforces non-discriminatory admission at schools

as per the admission policy. Furthermore, 34 schools benefited from the Remoteness Allowance for qualified teachers to ensure that all learners, regardless of their geographical location have access to quality education.

Our region continues to excel in terms of academic performance and I am proud that the region is always represented among the top performing categories. The school came at 5th place nationally in terms of its overall academic performance during the last academic year. The Grade 12 (NSSCAS) 2022 examination, 229 learners (59,4%) of 385 Grade 12 learners obtained A-D symbols. For Grade 11 (NSSCO) 2022 examination, 435 learners (23,4%) of 1860 learners qualified for NSSCAS admission with C or better grade in three (3) or more subjects. I must report at these juncture Four hundred and forty (435) learners qualified to proceed to Grade 12 NSSCAS level in 2022 compared to four hundred and forty (440) of 2021. This represents an increase of 1,9%. This upward trend is commendable and must continuously be pursued. Omake to the Directorate of Education.

However there is nothing exist without challenges, dilapidated schools and shortage of houses for teachers remains a critical challenge that threaten the success of education in the region. Having said that I would like to point out that the education directorate is in need of 30 Heads of Departments, 241 classrooms, 29 science labs, 36 libraries and 8 schools throughout the region to meet their current demands. The key contributing factors are increase in enrolment and limited financial resources. Therefore, I appeal to the business community and other partners to emulate others that have joined us to improve the status of education in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our region will forever be grateful to our regional partners in Education such as B2Gold that built a Primary School in the Informal Area of Ombili in Otjiwarongo and others such as Palms for Life in Tsumkwe Constituency. Mother tongue at primary school level is constitutional and should be implemented forthwith.

New private schools also opened in the region namely; Reenborg Paradyse Private school in Grootfontein constituency offering Pre-primary – Grade 3 and St. Veron Academy in Okakarara Constituency, also offering Pre-primary – Grade 3.

**Youth empowerment** is crucial to ensure that the future is ascertained in terms of sustainability and continuity. Key to youth empowerment is the instilment of patriotism values and civic responsibilities in our youth.

Otjondjupa is fortunate to have the National Youth Service (NYS) at Rietfontein, where Namibian youth are trained to be patriotic and modelled in their role to promote civic awareness and reconstruction. This is done through skills and knowledge transfer to enable the youth to be employable and transcend to be responsible future leaders and caretakers of the Country.

A total of 485 trainees from the National Youth Service – (NYS) at Rietfontein completed their Six month training and graduated recently. From the youth that apply from across the 14 regions for training at NYS, a 30 % quota is reserved for youth from the marginalized communities. To date, NYS has trained over 6000 (Six Thousand) youth since its inception. However, there is a challenge of absorbing this youth in the employment sector and I thus urge O/M/As to give preference in absorbing these graduates into employment opportunities.

Another organization that contributes to youth empowerment is Young Africa Namibia Trust, which is based right here in Otjiwarongo and has been offering Solar Installation and Equipment Maintenance, Cosmetology, Facility Maintenance, Welding & Metal Fabrication, and ICT training since its establishment in 2014.

During the period under review, Young Africa (YAN), trained **525** under privileged young people through Centre -based and Mobile training. YAN expanded its services to 9 other regions through Mobile trainings. The training focuses on Renewable energy, specifically on installation and maintenance of Solar systems. These mobile trainings, allows YAN to reach young people who cannot afford to come to Otjiwarongo. The training also prepares them for the enormous opportunities in Green Hydrogen within their regions that the government is embarking on. Over 60 Solar Installers, who are SMEs, were trained under this project.

YAN secured funding worth 2.9 million from GIZ for Solar booster for a Sustainable Future Project (SB4SF) training through the “Green People’s Energy Project”. To date, 220 young people have been trained through this project.

During the same period, Stakeholder feedback meetings were conducted reaching 107 stakeholders including governors, councilors, captains of industries, municipalities, REDS, private sector, public sectors and Solar installers in 8 regions of our Republic. The aim was to give feedback on the Baseline Study conducted and sensitize stakeholders on the importance of renewable energy to align to the government programmess on Green Hydrogen.

**Youth** programmes are facilitated by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and National Development that provides empowerment to young people through various programmes that do not only shape their minds but also takes care of their physical being. It is therefore delightful to mention that some Youth of Otjozondjupa Region benefited from the Government-to-Government Programme (G2G) funded by USAID and facilitated by the Directorate of Youth. The programme aimed at reducing vulnerability among the adolescent and adult youth, provided training to Youth Club-Facilitators, with the objective of assisting young people to understand the world around them through addressing issues that affect them, such as Sexual Gender Based Violence and Sexual exploitation. The Thirty One (31) youth who participated in the training, were selected from all 7 Constituencies of the region.

Hon Chairperson, fellow Namibians

Under the component of Sport, the region is fortunate to have four (4) soccer teams in the Debmarine Namibia Premier League, namely: Life Fighters FC, Mighty Gunners, Okahandja United and Okakarara Young Warriors (New kid) as well as Two (2) netball teams, Mighty Gunners and Nampol Otjozondjupa.

The introduction of the Governor's Cup in the region has set a platform for soccer talent-scouting in the region and also for young people to be given an opportunity to be sports enthusiasts. The tournament which is an annual activity is funded and hosted by the regional Governor's office with the purpose of selecting a regional team for both soccer and netball codes, that will represent the region in the Namibian Newspaper Cup. All seven constituency forms part of the Governor's Cup.

I must report that the region hosted one of the best Newspaper Cup competitions and I would thus want to thank all those who made it a success. I would like to announce that PST Bet has signed a deal of N\$ 210 000, 00 towards the hosting of the Governor's Cup for the coming three years. Moving forward the Governor's Cup will also include other sport codes such as athletics, volleyball and boxing. However, there is an urgent need to ensure necessary infrastructure for such activities to flourish.

Also as part of Social welfare in the region, is the programme of **War Veterans** who participated in the liberation struggle of Namibia. The aim is to ensure the well-being of our war veterans through socio-economic projects and psycho-social support as well as preserve the rich history of the national liberation struggle and keep it alive for future generations. The major achievement in this regard, has been the construction of a Veteran Affairs Regional Office at Otjiwarongo at an amount of N\$10,496,487.78. For the period under review, a total of N\$295,800.00 was spent for the Subvention and Improvement Grants for Veterans in the region, while a total of number of 15 Individual

Veteran Projects were funded during the FY 2022/23 at an amount of N\$ 2,550,000.00 **(Two Million, Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand Namibia Dollars).**

## **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Hon Chairperson, fellow Namibians

Infrastructure development at regional level is spearheaded by the **Otjozondjupa Regional Council** under its mission to spearhead integrated planning and oversee implementation of socio-economic and physical infrastructure development, for the upliftment of the living standards of the people of Otjozondjupa Region. During the 2022/23 Financial Year, Five (5) capital projects under the Otjozondjupa Regional Council totaling N\$14,309,000.00 were implemented. These includes the Government Office Park, Construction of Dumping site boundary wall at Okandjira, Water Infrastructure services at Gam, Upgrading and lining of sewerage ponds at Okondjatu and Okamatapati as well as Water Infrastructure services at Dinosal, Kalkfeld of Otjiwarongo Constituency.

Apart from Government funded projects, the region also managed to undertake projects generated from own resources which included the Phase 2 renovation of the old Okakarara Constituency office at an amount of N\$ 1,036,919.18 and the renovation and upgrading of the Council Guest house at Tsumkwe to the tune of N\$ 1,137,531.11

The Five Local Authorities in Otjozondjupa, guided by their mandate as provided for in the Local Authorities Act 23 of 1992, are the drivers of land delivery and infrastructure development at town level.

The Municipality of Okahandja has budgeted about **N\$70 Million** on infrastructure development for land delivery acceleration, including water and sewerage construction for Ekunde 4 and 5 for N\$24,000,000.00; and decommissioning and commission of a new dumpsite at N\$25,000,000.00.

Most Municipalities in the region are engaging into smart partnerships to ensure maximized land delivery. Otjiwarongo Municipality partnered with Development Workshop Namibia (DWN) to develop 483 plots for Low Income earners. Otjiwarongo is also involved in the Informal Settlement upgrading and formalization to ensure the much needed flexible land tenure system to enable residents to have security of tenure through the formalization of Eie Risiko Informal area. At Otjiwarongo 104 plots were also allocated to the Shack dwellers Federation of Namibia.

Otavi has budgeted a total of N\$13,043,275.58 for Infrastructure development related to land delivery while Okakarara envisages to develop a total of 1478 plots.

**Housing delivery** - the region is progressing well through various housing programmes and public private partnerships. 53 Build Together Houses were completed at Otavi while at Otjiwarongo a total of 311 houses were built. 67 Shack dwellers Federation houses has been completed at Okakarara, bringing the total of houses constructed in the region during 2022/2023 to 431.

### **Government Sector Infrastructure**

The Police, infrastructure projects within the region, included the construction of the Nyae-Nyae Police Post and Barracks in Tsumkwe Constituency in the Gam area, at an amount of N\$ 43 938 965.33. On-going projects for the Police include, the construction of Gam and Omatako Police Stations at a total cost of N\$59,000,000.00 (**Fifty Nine Million Namibia Dollars**) with the construction of a Police Regional Headquarters, and a Police Mortuary at Otjiwarongo as future projects.

In order to ensure that the learning environment is conducive for the purpose of yielding good results, the education sector places emphasis on infrastructure upgrading. The key Capital projects for education during the period under review, include, the construction of a Primary School at Otavi at a cost of N\$51,166,019.58; Four (4) classrooms at Okahandja Project Secondary School at an amount of N\$1,920,000.00; renovation of Rogate Primary school to the tune of N\$1,700,000.00 and construction of Ombili Primary School by B2Gold to the tune of N\$3,138,493.00; under the friends of education initiative.

For Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, an Early Childhood Development Centre at Otumborombonga was constructed, at an amount of N\$ 680,000.00.

**Water infrastructure** services under the Rural Water Supply Division, provides services that are pertinent for the arid situation of the region through drilling and rehabilitation of boreholes. During the period under review, boreholes were successfully drilled at Omatako, Rest camp, Otjiyere-Gam in Tsumkwe constituency, Farm Thalita in Grootfontein constituency, Farm Felseneck in Okahandja Constituency and Farm Quovadis in Okakarara Constituency. Of the total 8 boreholes drilled, 2 were not successful and could not yield water.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform through the Programme for Communal Land Development (PCLD), drilled and rehabilitated Two (2) boreholes, Installed Two (2) 65 000 liters Steel and Seven (7) concrete reservoirs. The project also included the installation of Ten (10) PVC 10,000 liters tanks, Thirteen (13) Livestock Troughs, Six (6) elephant barriers and a Forty-two (42) kilometer water pipeline.



**Electrification** – Electricity has become a major need in our communities and the Central North Regional Distributor (CENORED), electrified a total of 497 houses at cost of N\$5,767,732.57, while 275 houses were electrified in 2023 at a cost of N\$6,645,663.66 This brings the total number of houses electrified from 2022 to date, to 772 at a total amount of N\$12,413,396.23. The electrification across the region includes Low cost houses such as Shack dwellers and Build Together as well as Informal Settlement and rural areas.

Furthermore, through the Off Grid Plants of 300 Kilo watts at Tsumkwe a total of 326 Households and Businesses have been connected to electricity; while at Gam the off-Grid capacity of 292 Kilo watts, has managed to connect 450 Households and 72 businesses to electricity.

The Ministry of Mines and Energy's support in the electrification of the region is tremendous and commendable and projects funded to CENORED, total an amount of N\$51,000,000.00 (**Fifty One Million Namibia Dollars**), for projects such as Mangetti Over Head Line, Outjo 2<sup>nd</sup> Feeder Bay, Distribution Station at Otavi and Over Head Line for Otumborombonga.

**Road Network development** in the region is facilitated through the Roads Authority and the Road Fund Administration that provide funds to maintain roads in towns and settlements. The Roads Authority projects envisaged in the region:

M0074 Grootfontein – Tsumkwe Road Phase 1 (Grootfontein to Rooidag Gate). The tarring of the gravel road between Tsumkwe Constituency and Grootfontein covering a stretch of more than 300 Kilometres is a milestone for the region, with the first phase expected Grootfontein-Rundu tarred to Rooidag Gate

M0112 (Hockveld – Okondjatu) The road was initially planned for upgrade to low volume seal standards however the current traffic volume warrants that the road be upgraded to full bitumen standards.

M0117 (Okakarara – Coblenz) A contractor was appointed and has established on site to commence with works to re-gravel the road.

M0115 (Okakarara – Okondjatu) the proclamation and upgrading of the branch line 1,5,6 roads in Okakarara constituency,

The RA plans to re-gravel the 31km long section from Okakarara to Okahitua which is currently in a very poor condition and highly trafficked.

The Ongoing road network upgrading of a stretch of the B1 Road between Okahandja and Otjiwarongo to dual standard is one major achievement in the region that will alleviate traffic congestion. Otjonzondjupa' s Settlements mostly have gravel roads and thus regular maintenance becomes a requirement. Through the Road Fund Administration (RFA), the region has managed to improve the condition of its roads in the settlement. For the

Financial Year 2022/2023, Otjozondjupa received an amount of N\$ 1,720,000 (**One Million, Seven Hundred and Twenty Thousand Namibian Dollars**) that was spent on road maintenance and graveling at Okatjoruu Settlement. Design of the Okahandja-Okondjatu road, upgrade to bitumen standard of the first 31 km.

**Telecommunication** coverage in the region has improved but more still needs to be done to ensure that all the areas are covered. The world today, evolves around technology and therefore no one should be left behind. It is against this background that the initiative by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to conduct Basic Computer Literacy training, is highly appreciated. The pilot of Basic Computer Literacy training was done at Tsumkwe, inhabited by mostly marginalized San people.

In terms of the 4G Network Coverage, statistics indicate that Otjozondjupa is still below the coverage standard, with about 35% of its population still not having access to network coverage. This is a serious concern and it needs to be addressed promptly for us to be on par with the World. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) phase, calls for us to embrace technology in the new World of communication, connectivity, digitization and human-machine interaction.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**Environmental sustainability** is a must in the world we live in for us to be ascertained of a clean and preserved environment. The sustainability of the environment requires maintaining synergy between the utilization of the natural and waste resources for economic potential and effect on the society. The region has thus been encouraging environmental value-chain activities, not only to safeguard and keep the surrounding clean but to promote innovation in the management of the environment. The rainfall from the last rain season was below average and has affected our total yield and agricultural productivity. I urge all our farmers to start to implement stricken agricultural practices the ensure that at least core productions herds and breeding stock is preserved, lets implore traditional knowledge systems in surviving this tough times that lies ahead. I would like to implore the office of the Prime Minister to accelerate its drought assessment so as to permit implementation of intervention to kick start timorously so as to save lives. Critical intervention need will be food provision at household level, subsidization of tacking livestock to grazing area in terms of transport and rent fees, accelerate water provision through water tankers and drilling boreholes in grazing areas for farmers to relocate and provision of licks and fodder subsidies.

A key project that will compliment the Biomass Project at Otjiwarongo is the Waste-Water Treatment Plant and Waste-to-Energy Project that is being made possible through funding from the African Development Bank, African Water Facility and the Middle-Income

Country Technical Assistance Fund (MICTAF). The project, which will directly boost the initiatives envisaged to maximize a Circular Economy for environmental sustainability will cost about N\$72,000,000.00 (**72 Million Namibia Dollars**).

On its part the **Directorate of Forestry**, responsible for the enforcement and implementation of Forestry laws and regulations, has been ensuring sustainable management of natural resources to reduce the loss of biodiversity as mandated through Forest Act No. 12 of 2001 as amended. The region managed to generate a total amount of N\$ 2,849,729 from Forestry Permits, seedling sales and other services such as auction and veterinary services fees.

Community Forestry is a programme that involves the communities in managing the forest resources in the areas where they live. These projects create income generating prospects and notable communities that benefited includes the Ondjou conservancy, African Wild dog, Otjituuo conservancy, Nyaatsana Conservancy, Nyae-Nyae conservancy and M'kata forest. The project distributes N\$15,000.00 per community forest per quarter. Apart from tree planting, food security for human and animals, is another project under Forestry, which has seen the production of 11,040 tree seedlings in nurseries in the settlements where the projects are allocated. The seedlings were distributed to schools, public institutions and communities.

Otjonzondjupa is prone to **veld fires** especially in the dry season and in 2022, scores of hectares of rangeland were affected, causing a loss of grazing land.

The Charcoal industry is one of the culprits of veld fires in the region as well as involvement in the illegal harvesting of trees. So far about 113 tonnes of firewood, 78 poles and 360 droppers harvested illegally in the region, were confiscated and consequently 33 fines were issued to culprits. I am glad to note that the Otjonzondjupa Regional Council in its **Integrated Multi-Hazard Disaster Plan**, has created a platform for multi-sectoral participation addressing issues of the environment and Emergency preparedness.

## **BILATERAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

Hon. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Otjonzondjupa does not want to exist as an island and therefore the region has a continuous programme to explore bilateral relations and cooperation, regionally, at national level and outside the Country. Our focal areas are based on comparative activities that we have in common with others as well unique competitive advantages that we want to accelerate in terms of innovation and economic potential. One of the unique potentials that we want to tap on as a region in terms of bilateral trade is livestock and thus we have engaged a province (Midlands) in Zimbabwe that has similar potential in that regard, while we are also exploring Cross-border trade opportunities with Angola.

In conclusion, Otjozondjupa region remains a region of excellence and choice. A region where partnership in service delivery is the norm as we contribute to the socio-economic development of this beautiful Mother-land – Namibia.

Thank you Namibia and thank you for listening.