



Republic of Namibia

STATEMENT BY

ERGINUS ENDJALA

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE OF THE REGIONAL
ADDRESS**

21 JUNE 2018

OUTAPI

OMUSATI REGION

Director of Ceremonies

Honourable Comrade Modestus Amutse, Chairperson of Omusati Regional Council and Honourable Chairpersons from other Regional Councils;

Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;

Your Worship Comrade Selma Nelago Asino, Mayor of Outapi Town and Mayors from other Towns;

Tatekulu Oswin Shifiona Mukulu, Chief of Ombalantu Traditional Authority;

Tatekulu Johannes Mupiya Japhet, King of Ongandjera Traditional Authority;

Tatekulu Shikongo Taapopi, King of Uukwaluudhi Traditional Authority;

Tatekulu Herman Ipumbu, Chief of Uukwambi Traditional Authority;

Tatekulu Matias Walaula, Chief of Ombadja Traditional Authority;

Tatekulu Daniel Shooya, Chief of Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority;

Commissioner Titus Shikongo, Regional Commander of the Namibian Police;

Comrade Amutenya Protasius Andowa, Chief Regional Officer

Heads of Government Institutions;

Captains of Industries;

Spiritual Leaders;

Media Practitioners; and

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I feel very honoured to welcome you all to Omusati Regional Council today. I am particularly impressed by the attendance of our invitees this morning, especially those who travelled from far afield. Indeed, your attendance is highly appreciated and I am looking forward for your kind attention.

By Act of Parliament, the President of the Republic of Namibia has the power to appoint Regional Governors under Article 32 Sub-Article (2) of the Namibian Constitution. The primary functions or terms and conditions of the Governor, amongst others include:

- To act as the Political Head of the Region and
- Generally, to act as a link between the Central Government and the Regional Council, Local Authorities and Traditional Leaders in the Region concerned.

In this light, Regional Governors by the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia are obliged to deliver the Regional State Address after the State of Nation Address by the President of the Republic annually.

Today, 21st June, we are gathered here to listen to what I intend to share with you as part of my assignment by my appointing authority. This year's address will be conducted under a Theme: *"Passing the edge of difficulties and entering the era of prosperity for all"*. I will mostly concentrate on the proposed activities and plans about where we are, where we are heading to and how we will reach there.

At this juncture, I am delighted to inform you that we convened two important Conferences in 2018, namely the Water, Food Security and Adaptation to Climate Change Conference on 7-8 March 2018 and Omusati Investors Conference on 17-18 May 2018. They were convened as platforms to measure the speed on which we are moving in addressing ongoing challenges about developmental issues such as the climate change, erratic rainfalls and unemployment among the youth, to mention but a few.

Our Region is endowed with abundant resources such as fertile land, water resources suitable for agricultural purposes, large number of livestock population, amongst others, which can be harnessed in uplifting the living standards of our people. Besides abundant

resources, our Region is also well-known for tranquility, tolerance and manageable crime rate.

Therefore, I kindly appeal to the people to critically consider utilizing our resources and thereby contributing towards the realization of our Vision 2030, the National Development Plans and the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

Director of Ceremonies,

Omusati Region is the third highest populated Region in Namibia. According to the 2011 Census Report, it has a population of 243,166 people. It comprises of 12 Constituencies, namely Anamulenge, Elim, Etayi, Ogongo, Okahao, Okalongo, Onesi, Oshikuku, Otamanzi, Outapi, Ruacana and Tsandi, five Local Authorities i.e. Outapi, Okahao, Oshikuku, Ruacana Towns and Tsandi Village and three Settlements Okalongo, Onesi and Ogongo. The Region is predominantly an agricultural one and thus it focuses mainly on crop and livestock farming. Trade and service sectors in urban areas continue to provide employment apart from the agricultural sector, while manufacturing is conducted on a small scale.

Pertaining to the agriculture sector, various irrigation crop farming Projects have been established in the Region based on successful experiments. Among others, they are:

- University of Namibia – Ogongo Campus;
- Onavivi Research Station;
- Epalela Aquaculture Research Centre Production;
- Etunda Irrigation Scheme, specially the Asparagus Project;
- Oshaambelo Bulls Breeding Centre; and
- Omutambo gwOmawe Quarantine Camp

Regarding the development of infrastructure, the Region has good infrastructure which strongly support and promote investments. Currently, there are quality and reliable road networks, airstrips, airport, telecommunication infrastructure, electrical and water services. The Region is a gateway to the Republics of Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, DRC and Botswana through Hifikepunye Pohamba Corridor. Therefore, goods and services are transported through Henties Bay-Uis-Khorixas-Kamanjab-Ruacana Road.

Likewise, tourism holds potential in providing support services such as car hires, accommodation establishments, tour guides, curio shops and exchange of cultural experiences. Uukwaluudhi, Sheya shUushona and Uukolonkadhi Conservancies have been established and continue to attract both local and foreign tourists. Equally, the proposed development of Ruacana Waterfront, OmugulugwOombashe Heritage and Onashiku Heritage in Elim will attract more tourists in future.

Regarding Health Centres, there are 50 health facilities, namely 4 District Hospitals, 6 Health Centres, 40 Clinics and 134 Outreach Points. Given the size of the population of 243,166 people and its location closer to the Republic of Angola, there will be a need to establish modern private health facilities in order to complement the existing ones. Thus, opportunity exists to invest in constructing modern private hospitals, clinics and paramedic services.

Concerning poverty eradication in the Region, the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare has offices in three Constituencies, namely Outapi, Tsandi, Okahao and Oshikuku. There are currently Thirty Thousand, six hundred and Seventy-Three (30,673) people receiving monthly grant for old age pension and disability grant, respectively. That is Twenty-Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Ninety-Seven (25,797) people receiving the Old Age Pension Grants and Four Thousand, Eight Hundred and Seventy-Six (4876) people receiving disability grants.

Director of Ceremonies,

Pertaining to tourism, the below narrated areas are viable potential areas for future investment. Outapi Town has developed a popular Olufuko Centre. Olufuko Festival Centre is located on 17 hectares of serviced land with basic infrastructure such as water, electricity and sewerage system. The Centre is fenced off and it has ablution facilities. It promotes cultural heritage and eco-tourism. Within the Centre, there is a permanent Olufuko Traditional Homestead, traditional kraal and clay pottery oven (onzimbogo).

Thus, the following investment opportunities exist in this Project:

- Hotel facilities with the capacity of at least 500 rooms;
- Conferencing facilities with the capacity to accommodate at least

- **2000 people;**
- **Living Museum Theatre will host cultural activities; and**
- **Office Park for various service providers.**

Ehao Cultural Expo has been proposed by Okahao Town Council and it has availed 15 hectares piece of land where cultural museum, traditional homestead, exhibition centre, office park and bed and breakfast can be developed. Likewise, Tsandi Annual Trade Fair and EXPO have been proposed by Tsandi Village Council. A piece of 10 hectares has been availed where exhibition centre, cultural museum, office park and bed and breakfast can be developed.

Similarly, Oshikuku Cultural Heritage Centre has been proposed by Oshikuku Town Council. Thus, a 3 hectares piece of land has been availed where traditional homestead, bed and breakfast camping site, park with swimming pool and braai facilities can be developed.

By the same token, Ruacana Cultural Centre has been proposed by Ruacana Town Council and 80 hectares piece of land has been allocated along Kunene River. The proposed area is earmarked for development of cultural museum, cultural village houses, accommodation facilities and zoo park.

The promotion of sustainable urban agriculture is highly placed on the agenda of our Region. Hence, Outapi Town Council has availed 407 hectares piece of land for urban agriculture investment. It has been established to address food security and it will create employment for about 1000 people. Thus, investments opportunities are available in agro-industry such as crop production, animal husbandry, aquaculture and tree planting.

In the same breath, Okahao Town Council has availed 40 hectares piece of land for urban-agriculture investment through using semi-purified sewer water. Thus, investment opportunities are available in sewer treatment plant in order to purify sewer water for urban agriculture. Agronomic activities such as crop production, animal feeds, orchards, aquaculture and tree planting are potential areas for investment.

Equally, Tsandi Village Council has availed 20 hectares piece of land earmarked for investment in urban to supplement the capacity of existing Regional Silos and envisaged Milling Plant. Correspondingly,

Oshikuku has availed 2 hectares piece of land for the production of animal feed lot. Ruacana Town Council has also availed a piece of land to supplement the production of Etunda Irrigation Project, particularly for asparagus.

Director of Ceremonies,

The importance of renewable energy cannot be overemphasized and hence the Region has invested in this sector. It is known that Namibia has 95 percent of sunlight yearly. Thus, the availability of sunlight creates opportunity for investment in solar energy. Outapi Town Council has already availed 30 hectares piece of land for renewable energy investment, while Okahao Town Council has 25 hectares of land available for similar purpose. Equally, Tsandi Village Council has availed 15 hectares piece of land for renewable energy. This clearly indicates that the Region has potential opportunities for investing in solar energy.

Education is the key to our future. Thus, the Government of the Republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture continue to invest in this sector. According to the 2017 Education Report, Omusati Region has a total number of 94, 672 learners. Out of 287 schools, only 12 schools are privately owned. Thus, it is obvious that there is still a need to establish top-notch private schools in the Region. This will enable learners within Omusati Region to access quality education. Likewise, opportunities exist to invest in tertiary education, especially in the institutions of higher learning such as vocational training, research centres and universities.

The Region places importance on the provision of education and training and therefore serviced land has been availed in the below narrated local authorities. Outapi Town Council has availed 12 hectares, Okahao Town Council 10 hectares, Oshikuku Town Council 6 hectares and Tsandi Village Council 6 hectares.

As far as fleet service centre is concern, it is proven that the vehicles population has increased drastically for the past ten years. However, there's no standard vehicle service centre. Hence, there is a need for establishment of one-stop-shops for vehicle maintenance and service. Thus, pieces of land have been availed by Outapi Town Council 1 hectare, Okahao Town Council 0.8 hectare, Tsandi Village Council 0.5 hectare and Oshikuku Town Council 0.5 hectare.

Director of Ceremonies,

The shortage of housing remains one of challenges facing the Region and thus there is an urgent need to provide quality affordable housing for low, middle and high income earners. The Region has a backlog of 10,805 housing units which is a conglomerate of housing units required in local authorities. Thus, Outapi Town Council has availed 4305 plots, Okahao Town Council 1,200 plots, Tsandi Village Council 3,800 plots and Oshikuku Town Council 1,500 plots of land to address the shortage of housing.

The good news is that local authorities are ready to address this challenge head on through availing pieces of lands in their respective areas of their jurisdiction. For example, Outapi Town Council has availed 140 hectares, Okahao Town Council 130 hectares, Tsandi Village Council 145 hectares and Oshikuku Town Council 120 hectares of land. Thus, there are opportunities to invest in housing sector in partnership with local authorities through the provision of planning and surveying of identified pieces of land, service construction and construction of quality affordable housing units.

Also, the development of recreational facilities plays a major role in keeping up with a healthy lifestyle and thus it is essential to invest in these amenities in our Towns. This includes the establishment of green parks, playgrounds, cinemas and spas. Therefore, investment is required for development of the said facilities in our Towns.

It is further pleasing to inform you that Outapi Town Council has a 5.2 hectares serviced plot (Onanhunda Park) and it is specifically reserved for recreational facilities that shall include playground, swimming pool, braai area, conference and wedding halls, sport grounds, ablution facilities, resting area and camping area. Okahao Town Council too has reserved a 2.3 hectares site called Ombupupu which is earmarked for recreational facilities. It is worth mentioning that this Site has a historical and cultural values associated with the lineage of early Kings of Ongandjera District.

Likewise, Tsandi Village Council has an undetermined piece of land earmarked for recreational facilities, while Oshikuku Town Council has reserved a 0.5 hectare for similar purpose. Ruacana Town Council has also reserved 20.3 hectares for recreational facilities.

Director of Ceremonies,

It is also critical to bring to your attention that our Region needs to develop modern taxi terminal centres for both short and long distances taxis in all our Towns. In this light, Outapi Town Council has reserved 8.7 hectares to address this challenge. Okahao Town Council, Oshikuku Town Council, Ruacana Town Council and Tsandi Village have also allocated piece of land for development of the said facilities.

The management of solid and liquid waste management continues to pose challenge to our local authorities in particular and the country at large. However, it is heartening to learn that the Government of the Republic of Namibia is committed to promote sustainable development as per Article 95(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. This is being addressed through pieces of legislation and policies such as the Environmental Management Act 7 of 2007 which is the key in ensuring sustainable development. However, it is saddening to note that the rapid increase of waste production both solid and liquid result in significant environmental pollution and ecological degradation.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to manage both solid and waste management such as waste water treatment systems, segregation of waste, modern waste disposable sites and recycling of solid waste such as papers, bottles and glasses etc. Also, our existing dumping sites and oxidation ponds need to be replaced with modern sewerage water treatment system/technology and waste management infrastructure.

Director of Ceremonies,

According to 2010 Census of the Meat Board, Omusati Region has approximately 275, 000 herds of cattle, 245, 000 goats and 15, 000 sheep. Thus, animal husbandry is one of the main agricultural activities in our Region. Sadly, the majority of farmers do not perceive cattle farming as a business, but rather as a way of life style according to which their status and wealth are measured against the number of livestock families own. Therefore, business opportunities can be ventured in meat processing and meat products, value addition initiatives such as dairy products i.e. milk, butter, cheese, horns for buttons and hooves for glue, private abattoirs, tannery and leather factory, to mention but a few.

It is also pleasing to inform you that there is a window opportunities in industrial development. This can be achieved through the establishment of industries and manufacturing business such as manufacturing of toilet papers, mahangu processing plant such as mahangu flour, spaghetti, cereals and biscuits, steel processing plant, processing of gypsum minerals for cements production, manufacturing of quality slates and stones/bricks, waste recycling plant, logistics i.e. warehouse development, truck ports and warehouses, among others.

It is evident that there are abundant and untapped resources within our Region. However, the Region is not in a position to untapped and utilize such resources due to lack of resources, expertise and exposure. Thus, it is high time for all of us to seriously engage one another through investment models such as the public-private-partnership (PPP), direct private investment, build operate and transfer (BOT) and other possible business ventures.

During the Financial Year 2018/19, the below narrated funds were allocated through Capital Projects to Omusati Region:

Ministry of Safety and Security	=	N\$18, 527,000
Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture	=	N\$37,305,000
Ministry of Health and Social Services	=	N\$20,000,000
Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation	=	N\$260,000
Ministry of Mines and Energy	=	N\$5, 478,000
Ministry of Justice	=	N\$2, 600,000
Ministry of Urban and Rural Development	=	N\$55, 648,000
Ministry of Environment and Tourism	=	N\$17, 820,000
Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development	=	N\$54, 200,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	=	N\$24, 595,000
Ministry of Works and Transport	=	N\$3,039,000
Ministry of Land Reform	=	N\$10, 424,000
Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Services	=	<u>N\$714,000</u>
Total:	=	<u>N\$250,610,000</u>

Ministry of Safety and Security: N\$ 18,527,000

- **Construction of Oshikuku Police Station Class C;**
- **Outapi Correction Services; and**
- **Construction of Housing Border Post and Outpost.**

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture: N\$37,305,000

- **Basic Education Facilities Upgrading in the Region;**
- **Construction of Regional Library in Outapi;**
- **Construction of Primary School in Outapi;**
- **Construction of a Circuit Office in Anamulenge Constituency; and**
- **Construction of a Boarding School at Omakange.**

Ministry of Health and Social Services: N\$20,000,000

- **Upgrading and repairs Okahao Hospital;**
- **Maintenance, repairs of health infrastructure; and**
- **Revamping of Outapi District Hospital.**

**Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation:
N\$260,000,000**

- **Renovation and upgrading of MLIREC Buildings.**

Ministry of Mines and Energy: N\$5,478,000

- **Rural Electrification**

Ministry of Justice: N\$2,600,000

- **Renovation of Lower Courts; and**
- **Construction Mobile Courts.**

Ministry of Urban and Rural Development: N\$55,648,000

- **Construction of Services Infrastructure in Okahao (Phase 3);**
- **Construction of Services Infrastructure in Oshikuku (Ext 2&3);**
- **Construction of Services Infrastructure in Ruacana;**
- **Construction of Services Infrastructure in Outapi Extension 8;**
- **Construction of Services Infrastructure at Tsandi Village Council;**
- **Construction of Services Infrastructure in Onesi Settlement; and**
- **Construction of Services Infrastructure in Okalongo Settlement;**

Ministry of Environment and Tourism: N\$17,820,000

- **Upgrading of Tourist Roads;**
- **Construction and extension of Regional Offices and Houses for Staff;**
- **Fencing of conservation areas; and**
- **Human Wildlife Conflict.**

Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development: N\$54,200,000

- **Tomatoes Processing Plant at Omahenene Business Park;**
- **SME and Industrial Park at Omahenene Business Park; and**
- **Construction of Phase 1 Outapi Industrial Park.**

Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry: N\$24, 595,000

- **Rural Water Supply coverage i.e. rural secondary pipeline construction;**
- **Integrated Forest Resource Management;**
- **Livestock Development, Breeding and Marketing Infrastructure in Communal areas;**
- **Implementation of Community Based Management;**
- **Renovation of Upgraded MAWF Buildings;**
- **Construction of Veterinary Clinics Offices and Accommodation;**
- **Improvement of animal health and marketing in North Central areas;**
- **Water, Resources Management; and**

- Construction of earth dams, traditional wells and pans for livestock drinking water purposes.
- Development of animal and plant health inspection centres at border entry points through the Region;
- Seed system development scheme;
- Debushing in commercial areas;
- Comprehensive conservation agriculture programme for Namibia;
- Production incentives for sunflower oil seed and cowpeas;
- Establishment of Agro Processing Facilities; and
- Horticulture Support Programme.

Ministry of Works and Transport: N\$3,039,000, Department of Maintenance

- Ongoing renovation and minor capital renovations;
- Rehabilitation – upgrading and construction of oxidation ponds;
- Extension, upgrading and construction of the Regional Office, Sub Offices and Workshops;
- Rehabilitation of Infrastructure and upgrading of exist specialized installations;
- Upgrading of network infrastructure and expansion of IT services to Regional Offices;
- Construction of Gravel Road Epato – Onkani;
- Construction of Gravel Road from DR3619 Onaanda–Otamanzi (25 km); and
- Maintenance of paved and unpaved roads.

Ministry of Land Reform: N\$10,424,000

- Namibia Land information System;
- Flexible Land Tenure System;
- Development of communal areas;
- Improved offices and assigned officials' houses; and
- Upgrading of the Ministerial Regional Office in Outapi.

Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service: N\$714,000

- **Outapi Sport Complex Construction; and**
- **Provision is made for N\$10,000,000 for the 2019-2020 FY and additional N\$10,000,000 for the 2020-2021 FY.**

Total Budget for the FY 2018-2019 = N\$250,610,000

Director of Ceremonies,

It is also pleasing to report about the Projects that are currently underway in the Region:

- **Outapi Solar Plant Project**

The Project has already been completed and we are just waiting for an Official Opening through switching on the 5 Megawatts Power Plant to Nampower Grid.

- **Asparagus Production at Etunda**

About 60 hectares that are leased for the Project by Agribusdev at Etunda are already in full production. On 14 June 2018, the land earmarked for the construction of Asparagus Processing Plant has already been handed-over to the Company for the construction of Asparagus Processing Plant at Oshifo in Ruacana Constituency, while we shall witness an Official Ground Breaking Ceremony that will symbolize the actual construction of the Plant. A number of employment opportunities will be created during the production level, while more will be created during the processing of asparagus.

- **Tomatoes Processing Plant at Omahenene Business Park, Onesi Constituency**

I also wish to inform you that the Office of the Governor and Omusati Regional Council realize the potential of tomato production both at Etunda and alongside Olushandja Dam. This will culminate into establishment of a Tomatoes Processing Plant. So far, the Feasibility Studies has led to the formulation of a Business Plan through the financial assistance by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development in 2015.

As we speak, the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development has already transferred N\$3,200,000 to our Namibian High Commission in India to procure necessary machineries and technology for a Tomatoes Processing Plant at Omahenene Border Post. Our idea is to inaugurate all the Processing Plants concurrently so that we make a meaningful impact to an Agro-Processing Revolution in Omusati Region.

Meanwhile, the same Ministry through the Namibia Development Corporation has availed N\$41,000,000 towards Outapi Industrial Park and Omahenene Community Model Market that are under construction. However, we must bear in mind that they have the potential to open up new windows opportunities such as packaging, sorting services, can and drum manufacturing for Tomatoes Processing Plants.

In the meantime, Honourable Modestus Amutse, Chairperson of Omusati Regional Council will lead a delegation to Portugal to explore and learn about good practices for tomatoes processing and other products from tomatoes such as tomatoes jams and tomatoes soaps.

Thus, the future of our Region looks brighter than what we thought and anticipated as far as the promotion of development is concerned. What I am seeking from you is your undivided support that should not be seen as the promotion of Endjala Legacy but rather strenuous efforts geared towards improving the living standards of our people in the Region.

Director of ceremonies,

Another game changer opportunity which has put our Region at an most advanced position was the Official Opening of Outapi Abattoir by Honourable Alpheus !Naruseb on 4 June 2018.

It is worth mentioning that from Zambezi to Kunene Regions, including the entire northern Regions, we are the only Region that has an operational abattoir. What does this mean to us? It means that we have now access to markets for our livestock more than any other Region. Its services will improve the living standards of

our people, especially our farmers if they take the full advantage of selling their animals while they are in good conditions.

I, therefore, want to encourage our farmers to make use of the opportunities. We are aware that the current rain patterns are very much unpredictable and our grazing are saturated by numbers of livestock in our communal areas. We must again bear in mind that since the outbreak of foot and mouth disease about 5 years ago, we never had a proper market to destock our livestock as per Census of 2011.

Director of Ceremonies,

Currently, we have a population of approximately two hundred and seventy thousand heads of cattle, excluding luminar animals such as goats, sheep and donkeys. The grazing land however has also reduced by the migration from areas that are earmarked for development such new proclaimed towns. Thus, I want to remind to all farmers that is high to sell your animals while they are at marketable conditions. The good news is that I was approached by certain comrades from the Republic of Angola who knocked on our doors for many years seeking for exportation of the Namibian beef to their markets. We are ready to receive and engage them with view to export our beef to Angola.

Besides our excellent plans, the shortage of skills to meet the labour market demand remains the challenge. Our Region is one of the Regions that are lacking behind when it comes to tertiary education taking into consideration the number of enrollment per year. It is saddening to learn that out of 94,672 leaners yearly, only 23 percent are admitted into tertiary institutions and thus leaving thousands of youth in streets and eventually resulted in high crime rates.

According to Unemployment Survey that was conducted, it was revealed that unemployment amongst the youth in the Region stands at 48 percentage which is indeed high and worrisome. Therefore, there is a need for establish many tertiary institutions in the Region to cater for school dropouts, especially those who failed Grades 10 and 12.

However, the good news is that the only Government Vocational Training i.e. Nakayale Vocational Training Centre is located in our Region. For your own information, Namibia as a country has 48 Vocational Training centres both private and public and Nakayale Vocational Training Centre is ranking at No. 9 out of all Vocational Trainings, while out of 7 Government Vocational Training Centres Nakayale Vocational Training Centres is ranking number 1 and because of its outstanding performance, it was given to serve as a model in the country to train up to level 5. This means to us as a Region, we are on virtue of creating the Centre of Excellency, through the excellent performance of Nakayale Vocational Training Centre.

In fact, a tender adjudication has already been conducted and sooner we shall witness a Ground Breaking Ceremony for the actual construction. The first phase shall include the *state-of-arts* hotel for hospitality training and workshop facilities.

This clearly indicates that Omusati Region continues to make headlines and we should ascertain that we support all developmental efforts within our Region. Likewise, the DAPP Vocational Training was accredited to be the only Vocational Training in Namibia to train early Childhood Development Teacher Course at Diploma levels. It is hoped that the development which unfolds in our Region will definitely answer the question how we shall reach there. I am confident that we have the ability and capacity to turn around this Region through addressing developmental challenges with vigour and head-on but everything depends on your support of our regional initiatives.

RICE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION

The Region remains committed to the promotion of rice cultivation and popularization of its food products among local farmers and consumers. Rice research has been conducted by Namibia-Japan Rice and Mahangu Project of the University of Namibia at Ogongo Campus in Omusati Region.

The Project has trained a number of local farmers on how to grow rice through using rain or flood water in field wetlands.

More recently, the Project has developed new food products of rice and *mahangu* blends called *oluthima* which has potential for commercialization. This includes *oluthima* flour and *oluthima* cookies, which are both nutritious and delicious. I should also mention that on 28 June 2018, our farmers, youth and traditional leaders and local and regional authorities' representatives shall join their counterparts from other parts of Namibia through attending the Annual Rice Harvest Festival at Ogongo Campus. It will offer an opportunity to attendants to learn new promising rice cultivation and learn about rice production and processing. On the same day, we shall also witness a bumper harvest recorded by the Campus this season and thereby serving as motivation to potential rice producers.

Director of Ceremonies,

POULTRY PROJECT

The University of Namibia, through its agriculture experts at Ogongo Campus is ready and committed to support the Region's initiatives which are aimed at improving poultry production and related products. Specifically, Ogongo Campus intends to introduce a hatchery to its existing poultry enterprise in order to supply the Region and beyond with day old chicks, eggs and breeding stock. These activities have the potential to generate income to local people and thereby eradicate poverty within the Region.

To ensure sustainability, UNAM will offer training and mentorship programme to emerging poultry farmers through its community service mandate. During phase one of the Project, the renovation of the old poultry infrastructure at Ogongo Campus was made possible with funding from the Turkish Embassy through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). The renovated facilities and new poultry production equipment will be officially handed-over to UNAM, Ogongo Campus during the course of the year.

All what I have narrated to you fellow countrymen and women; they are verifiable and real and can be seen in the Region. Although we have recorded notable progress, such successes were not achieved on a silver platter but through hard work and dedication. The below narrated are most pressing challenges that are being faced by our Region:

For the past three years since my appointment as the Governor, the issue of Tsandi-Onesi-Epalela Road has been a thorn in a fresh of residents of Onesi taking into consideration that almost the whole Region is connected with tarred roads. However, the good news is that I have attended the Launching of the Roads Authority Strategic Plan for the 2018-2020 FY in which this Road is earmarked for construction during the 2019-2020 FY.

As far as the construction of Outapi Sport Facility is concern, it is saddening to learn that since the attainment our Independence on 21 March 1990, the third largest populated Region still does not have sport facilities. To add salt to the wound, a meager N\$714,000 is earmarked for the construction of the Facility. This is very wrong but the question remains, *“When are we going to host national events in our life time at this facility in our Region”?*

On a serious note, I have put in the bid to host the Namibian Cup in 2019 because it is aimed at improving the well-being of the youth through promotion of sports, particularly soccer. At look of things, we do not to stand a chance to succeed in our bid due to the non-existence of the facility. Sadly, no question was ever asked how we have won the 2016 Edition of the Namibian Cup, followed by three consecutive defending the Scorpion Zinc Cup. Therefore, our bid to host the event still stands and we are crossing our fingers with hope that we shall be accorded a chance as others Regions.

Director of Ceremonies

It is also disheartening to learn that the rate of teenage pregnancies is on increase as per statistics received from the Ministry of Education 2017 Academic year. It is indicates that we

have lost 445 learners due teenage pregnancies, with Okalongo Circuit recorded as the highest with 78 learners.

But what is more saddening is that some impregnated learners are even under aged because they include those in Grades 4,5 and 6. This is shocking, meaning that the youngest mother could be 10 years old. Literally, what we are saying is that raping is on increase in the Region but it goes unreported to relevant authorities.

It defies human logic on how younger learners of 10 years got pregnant but no single report was registered with the Police it shows something is definitely wrong with members of our society, especially parents. By law, any child under the age of 17 can't give consent to engage in sexual relation with elderly person and by implication that is statutory rape and it must be reported to relevant authorities.

In this context, we need to convene a Consultative Conference in future and address this evil in our society. Perhaps, it is also high time to conduct regional prayers so that the Almighty God changes our behaviors and conducts in order to ascertain that moral decay in our society is addressed timely.

Director of Ceremonies,

Equally, the deadly virus HIV/AIDS continues to annihilate the productive members of our society and therefore we need to remain vigilant. According to recent statistics, about 220,000 adults are living with the virus. Shockingly, it is reported that 25 new infections are recorded per day, while 11 deaths related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic are recorded daily. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that our people have access to accurate and timely health information.

Our Region was also identified as a Region under threat, after the outbreak of Hepatitis E. So far, the number of infected cases stands at 11 cases but there is an urgent need to mobilize and educate our people about the danger of this disease and thereby eradicating new infections. I really wish to encourage our people

to promote and maximize hygiene by washing hands whenever they use toilets.

The rate of crime is also worrisome but togetherness we shall emerge victorious. This requires all of us to join hands with the Law Enforcement Agencies through reporting all criminal activities on time.

Currently, there are gangsters who continue to terrorize community members under notorious names such as “Denga o Dom” and “Boko Haram”. Let us stand together and crush criminal activities within and around our Region.

Director of ceremonies

In conclusion, the achievements which I have just shared with you in this August House are indeed the concerted efforts of all of us. They have been achieved because of hard work and commitment towards our respective responsibilities. We must clearly understand that no one else shall develop Omusati Region but the onus is indeed upon all of us. I have the confidence in your capabilities and eagerness. So, let us pull together, coordinate and remain focus in executing these noble ideas.

**Long live the people of Omusati Region!
Long live the Harambee Prosperity Plan!
Long live the Republic of Namibia!**

I thank you!