



OMUSATI REGION

OFFICE OF THE HONOURABLE GOVERNOR

**STATE OF THE REGIONAL
ADDRESS
BY
HONOURABLE ERGINUS
ENDJALA,
GOVERNOR OF OMUSATI**

**Outapi
03 June 2016**

Honourable Cde Modestus Amutse, Chairperson of Omusati
Regional Council

Honourable Regional and Local Authorities Councillors

Your Worship Selma Nelago Asino, Mayor of Outapi Town

Esteemed Members from Traditional Authorities

Representatives from SWAPO Party

Comrade Reverend Philipus Kashima, Advisor to the
Regional Governor

Captains of the Industries

Esteemed Regional Heads of Ministries and Agencies

Dear Staff of Omusati Regional Council

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed my distinct honour and privilege for having been accorded this opportunity to address you today, Friday 3 June 2016 in this August House. This task is in accordance with the Article 110, Sub-article 5 and 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia which require the Regional Governor to attend a Meeting of the Regional Council of the Region once every year. It shall occur after the President address Parliament in terms of Article 32 Sub-article 2. It further stipulates that during the Meeting, the Regional Governor shall address the Regional Council on the State of the Region, on the previous planned activities of the Central Government in the Region and thereafter be available to respond to questions.

I, therefore, wish to welcome you all in this August House and thank you for having responded to my invitation. Also, allow me to express my profound gratitude to His Excellency, Dr Hage G Geingob, the President of the Republic of Namibia for having appointed me on 10th April 2015 to lead Omusati Region. Equally, I wish to thank the Government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, under the able leadership of Honourable Sophia Shaningwa for her strenuous efforts which are geared towards the upliftment of the living standards of our people.

Indeed, the achievements that I shall share with you today could not have been achieved without the commitment and support of our 12 Regional Councillors.

Equally, the support and advice we continue to receive from stakeholders in the development of this Region cannot be left without mentioning. Likewise, I wish to commend our Administrators for their audacity in carrying out these tasks which eventually culminated in accessing goods and services in our Region. Therefore, I wish to thank you all for your contributions towards the well-being of the Region, be it individually or collectively.

Also, indulge me to reflect on the peace and stability that prevails in our Region. As we all known, the peace and tranquility we all enjoy today was not achieved on a silver platter.

It was indeed attained through the dedication and immense sacrifices of the sons and daughters of our soil. Therefore, I urge you all to remain united and shun all tendencies of tribalism and regionalism which can easily derail and destroy our achievements. It is a known fact that where there is no peace, there will be no development. Thus, let us work together, unite and remain vigilant and never allow destructive forces to disturb the peace and stability that we enjoy today in our Region in particular, and the country at large.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Allow me now to briefly narrate the nature of our Region in terms of its location and population demography. The Region is situated in the northern part of the country. It shares borders with the Republic of Angola on the north, Ohangwena Region on the north-east, Oshana Region on the east and Kunene Region on the south-west. Also, there are nine Traditional Authorities, namely Ombalantu, Ombandja, Ongandjera, Uukwambi, Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi, Oukwanyama, Otjikaoko and Vita Tom Royal House. Outapi Town is its Administrative Capital.

It has a total land surface area of 26,551 km² and it is the 9th largest Region in the country. There are 12 Constituencies, namely Anamulenge, Elim, Etayi, Ogongo, Okahao, Okalongo, Onesi, Oshikuku, Outapi, Ruacana, Tsandi and

Otamanzi. It is the third populated Region with the population of 243,166 out of which 133,621 are females and 109,545 are males. Its annual growth rate stands at 0.6 percent. The population grew at an average annual rate of 0.6 percent between 2001 and 2011. More than 90 percent of the population lives in rural areas versus 5.7 percent of the population who resides in urban areas. There are 46,698 households in the Region with an average size of 5.2 persons per household.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

At this juncture, allow me now to present the planned activities of the Central Government in the Region during the Financial Year 2015/16. In the spirit of good governance, accountability and integrity, I will present them sector to sector. Indeed, it is pleasing to inform you that during the Year under review, the Government of the Republic of Namibia, through its respective line Ministries has spent an amount of N\$1,497,399,109 in our Region. However, it must be understood that we could not receive all expenditures incurred in the Region by some Ministries and Agencies due to reasons beyond their mandates and therefore they will not be included in my address today.

As we all aware, the Office of the President has the responsibility of upholding, protecting and defending the Namibian Constitution.

Thus, it has the task of ensuring an effective and professional civil service in order to enhance efficient service delivery. To achieve this, it continues to extend its services to all corners of the country. Hence, it has constructed an office worth N\$5,000,000 in Oshifo in Ruacana Constituency during the Year under review.

To ascertain the health of the people, the Government continues to invest substantial amounts of resources in this sector. There are four District Hospitals, namely Okahao, Oshikuku, Outapi and Tsandi with 530 beds. Additionally, there are 6 Health Centres and 40 Clinics within the Region. It is pleasing to report that outreach coverage was reached and it stands at 89 percent, while attended delivery stands at 94 percent. A total number of 176 Health Extension Workers are operational throughout the Region, while 35,024 people were tested for the HIV/Aids virus. Similarly, 1,706 eligible clients were initiated on Highly Active Anti-retroviral Treatment (HAART), while 25,424 community members attended Awareness Meetings on TB prevention.

Likewise, counseling and testing on the HIV/Aids, TB screening and medical male circumcision was conducted during the Health Promotion Week which was held at Olufuko Festival Centre. Furthermore, Anti-Retroviral Treatment services were rolled out to new 3 additional sites which gives a total number of 17 in the Region.

The HIV Rapid Testing was rolled out to 31 additional sites which now gives a total number of 48 sites.

An ambulance and medical equipment were donated by the Programme for Accelerating Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality (PARMaCM) to Outapi District Hospital.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Despite rendered services, this sector faces numerous challenges such the shortage of medical personnel, lack of electricity and staff accommodation in remote areas and potable water at some health facilities. For instance, there is no electricity at Onamatanga, Uutsathima, Amarika, Okatseidhi and Okathitu Clinics. The medical staff, especially those operating at border posts has neither office nor accommodation.

It is also saddening to state that the construction of some medical facilities takes too long to complete. In this particular case, I am referring to the renovation and upgrading of Okahao Hospital. The line Ministry is urged to take necessary measures in order to ensure that it is completed within a reasonable time.

The Region is vast and it is very difficult to reach most medical facilities, especially during rainy seasons. This results in cases of home deliveries or born before arrival at medical facilities.

About 286,107 patients were treated and received medical services during the Year under review. The total numbers of the approved posts on the establishment is 752 but there are still 76 vacant posts. The population per doctor is 10,783 while the population per nurse is 1,354 per year. There are 15 medical doctors and 222 registered nurses and 259 enrolled nurses. This indicates that there is a shortage of medical personnel and hence the youth should be encouraged to join this profession. Likewise, local entrepreneurs and other interested stakeholders are also at liberty to establish medical facilities in order to render medical and other related services in our Region.

It is disturbing to learn that our Region is topping the entire country as far as the people living with disabilities are concern. According to recent statistics, there are about 15,000 people living with disabilities in our Region. The majority receive monthly grants from the Government through the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Therefore, I urge the Ministry of Health and Social Services to conduct a study in order to determine the root cause of disabilities.

At this juncture, allow me to express our profound gratitude to our President for having increased the Pension Grant of our elderly people and those living with disabilities from a mere N\$600 to N\$1,100 monthly.

This assistance keeps them living and enabling them to meet their basic daily needs. It is very much appreciated by all of us.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

In effort to promote hygienic environment, the implementation of the sanitation facilities should be supported. The Region is a flood prone area as it was experienced during the previous years when it was hit by natural calamities. Hence, it is very important that we ascertain that the Region is not hit by outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as bilharzia and diarrhea. This can be achieved through the promotion of hygiene in terms of managing human effluents by constructing well standardized pit latrines. Due to budgetary constraints, the line Ministry however could not make any provision during the Year under review.

However, in accordance with the Harambee Prosperity Plan, a total number of 960 pit latrines will be constructed within 4 years in our Region. Thus, our Region will be required to construct 80 sanitation facilities within the stipulated period in 12 Constituencies. Therefore, I urge Administrators to ensure that we comply with this requirement.

Apart from floods, our Region still faces hardship due to droughts. This results in loss of livestock and decrease of agricultural production. However, it is pleasing to learn that the Government through the Office of Prime Minister continues to take care of the less fortunate, including vulnerable and marginalized groups. This compassionate is still manifested through the provision of the drought relief food items to our people.

The Region has received 452,173 of 12,5 kg bags of maize meal, 1,580 20 kg of bag of rice, 135,725 tins of fish, 15 bags of dried fish, 2 bales of fish fillets, 3 bales of fish powder, 296 boxes of soup chili and 433 boxes of fresh meat. It is however likely that the majority of our citizens will be affected again by the drought this year. Thus, we appeal to the Government to make further provision to ensure that nobody dies from hunger as per the directive by the President of the Republic of Namibia.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

On the educational front, it is pleasing to state that nationally the Region is ranked 3rd in the Junior Secondary Certificate Examinations in 2015. During the Year under review, learners' enrollment stood at 4,888 out of which 3,229 learners were promoted.

Its performance however dropped to position 11 in the National Senior Secondary Certificates. The learners' enrollment was at 3,037 out of which 539 learners qualified for universities, while 1,648 learners qualified to enter other institutions of higher learning. There are 135 primary schools, 107 combined schools, 15 junior senior secondary schools, 13 secondary schools and 6 private schools within the Region.

In addition, there are 203 administrative staff, 3,656 qualified teachers and 233 unqualified teachers, 698 non-teaching staff and 91,109 learners. Teacher-learner ratio at primary schools is 1:22, while it stands at 1:45-50 at secondary schools. The text book ratio is 1:4 for Grades 0-7. This is attributable to the implementation of the new curriculum in 2015 per capita N\$120 per learner. The text book ratio for Grades 8-12 is 1:2 in certain subjects but it will change upon the implementation of the new curriculum in 2018 per capita N\$350 per learner.

Furthermore, the basic education facilities were strengthened either through construction or renovation. In this connection, 46 new classrooms, 2 hostel blocks, 1 science laboratory, 20 blocks of 5 seats pit latrines were constructed and 2 kitchens and dining hall were renovated at an amount of N\$38,092,974.

It must be however understood that the learning environment is still not conducive and it stands to reason that it is likely to further deteriorate unless drastic interventions are embarked upon to improve learners' performance. This sector faces numerous challenges such as the lack of accommodation of personnel, while some learners are still being taught under shades, budgetary constraints, the shortage of qualified personnel and science laboratories, unavailability of electricity at schools in remote areas, to mention but a few. The high rate failure in grade 12 is worrisome and it is high time for the Region to devise mechanisms aimed at addressing them.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

In addition, Nakayale Vocational Training Centre continues to impart knowledge in order to meet the needs of communities and industries. Currently, it offers courses such as hospitality and tourism and office administration. In June 2016, it will conduct its second intake of 20 students who will study electrical and other related courses. It will also introduce 16 trades as from 2016 to 2020, which includes training to trainers, nursing, auto-motive, web design, air-conditioning and refrigerator, sport administration and information communication technology, among others.

It further intends to construct a hostel to the tune of N\$400,000,000 and conduct evening classes in order to cater for skills upgrading. Besides these achievements, the Centre is still haunted by numerous challenges such as the lack of hostel to accommodate trainees, the shortage of classrooms, a resource centre and proper school for hospitality and lack of office space and accommodation for staff. To address these anomalies, the Region should consult the line Ministry through Namibia Training Authority with view to normalize them.

In meantime, Outapi Town Council has signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Ferrara in Italy to construct the University of Excellence in Outapi Town. It will offer courses such as architect design, quantity surveying, land surveying and construction management and other related courses. This Memorandum is already partly implemented at Dr José Eduardo dos Santos Campus in Ongwediva in Oshana Region.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members

The maintenance of law and order is the mandate of the Ministry of Safety and Security. Thus, it is pleasing to report that the crime situation in the Region is under control. However, there is an increase in theft of cellular phones and livestock.

A total number of 2,348 criminal cases were reported in 2015 but they reduced to 1,208 in 2016. Top ten priority crimes within the Region ranges from assault, house breaking and theft, common assault, reckless and or negligent driving, assault by threat, stock theft, rape, theft of cellular phones and murder.

As we speak, recorded criminal cases have drastically reduced and stands at 545 cases. A total number of 118 criminal cases such as hanging, drowning and suicide (by shooting) were also recorded. It is however noted that most of such cases are attributable to multi factors such as post trauma stress disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, low self-esteem, domestic violent relations and stress associated with diseases such as HIV/Aids and other related ailments.

Besides these challenges, it is pleasing to inform you that Etayi Police Station was constructed in Etayi Constituency. Also, a site was handed-over to a contractor to build accommodation and office at Wakasamane Border Post. Another site was also handed-over to a contractor in Oshikuku where a B-Police Station with holding cells, accommodation and office will be constructed. Equally, the Ministry is constructing the Correctional Facilities in our Region. The Project is under full swing and it will be constructed at the tune of N\$65,873,044.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Pertaining to the development of infrastructure, it is pleasing to report that the Government has invested in this sector and still continues to do so. The construction of electrical services in Ogongo Proper worth N\$4,700,000 is progressing well, while the construction of sewerage treatment plant worth N\$5,974,253 has been completed. The construction of gravel roads, electricity and guard house in the Rural Development Centre in Ogongo Settlement worth N\$9,475,801 has also been completed. The construction of sewer and water reticulation in the Rural Development Centre worth N\$4,216,801 is still in progress.

In Okalongo Settlement, the construction of oxidation ponds, raising main and pump station worth N\$7,913,221 has been completed, while electrical work is still in progress. Also, the construction of sewerage reticulation network in Okalongo Extension 2 worth N\$5,000,000 has been completed. In Onesi Settlement, the construction of electrical services worth N\$4,930,000 is in progress. An oxidation ponds in Onesi Settlement worth N\$7,000,000 is completed.

Also, in Tsandi Village Council an oxidation ponds worth N\$16,000,000 is completed. In Outapi Town, the construction of additional storm water drainage at the Old Regional Council Offices worth N\$473,532 has been completed, while the construction of waterproofing at Omusati Regional Council Offices worth N\$2,016,819 is still in progress.

The interlocking pavement of Namaungu Street to Omusati Regional Council worth N\$840,707 has been completed, while the construction of office extension at Omusati Regional Council Finance Building worth N\$1,244,530 has been completed.

The construction of 2 bachelor flats worth N\$1,236 237 in Otamanzi Constituency is in progress. In Onesi Constituency, the construction of fence and guard house of the proposed Tomato Processing Plant worth N\$1,539,210 at Epalela in Onesi Constituency is still in progress. Likewise, the installation of the irrigation system at Okaanga in Onesi Constituency worth N\$1,254,315 has been completed.

Additionally, the construction of water reticulation in Portion A and B worth N\$639,000 and the elevated water tower worth N\$3,400,000 were completed. Likewise, the construction of electricity in Portion A and B worth N\$2,100,000 and the construction of a business technical centre worth N\$4,604,915 were completed. All these development were recorded in Okahao Town.

Furthermore, an Open Market worth N\$5,082,846 was constructed while an amount of N\$6,800,000 was spent in upgrading a 900 meters road in Outapi Town. An amount of N\$1,600,000 was spent on the construction of storm water channel.

However, it is important to bring to your attention that our Towns, especially Outapi continues to experience the problem that is being posed by overflowing oxidation ponds. To address this, alternatives such as recycling of sewer water should be considered with view to be used for agricultural purposes.

In Oshikuku Town, the construction of sewer reticulation in Extension 4 worth N\$1,900,000 has been completed. The construction of Oshikuku Fire Station worth N\$3,000,000 and the gravel road in Extension 2 and 4 were completed. The construction of municipal services in Extension 3 was completed at N\$3,000,000 while the construction of bulk services and filling at Oshikuku Cultural Heritage Centre is nearly completion.

In addition, it is pleasing to report that the Government through the Ministry of Works and Transport has constructed 2 District Roads in our Region. Omafo-Okalongo-Outapi Road was constructed at the tune of N\$813,000,000, while Omakange-Ruacana Road was constructed for N\$419,135,795. These Roads serves as the linkage between our Region and neighbouring Regions, while at the same time, enhances and facilitates the movements of goods and services as well as the people within and outside the Region.

Despite the construction of these roads, the construction of Tsandi-Epalela Roads as well as Tsandi-Omugulugoombashe still remains our top priorities. They are vital in facilitating the movements of goods and services within the Region, including the people.

Hence, we request the line Ministry to secure funds so that they are developed to bitumen standards.

Equally, the Ministry of Works and Transport through the Department of Works: Maintenance which is delegated to the Regional Council, has allocated an amount of N\$7,412,129. The money has been spent on the procurement of materials for maintenance activities, transport, utility operations and outsourced maintenance expenses by annual tenders, attendance of workshops and symposiums, including travel and subsistence allowances.

Most of planned activities were conducted but budgetary constraints remain an impediment that needs to be revised to ensure that all Government assets and properties are properly maintained and thereby ensure their durability.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Regarding land delivery in terms of the provision of plots in Towns, Village Council and Settlements, the Region tries its best but no satisfactory output could be achieved due to budgetary constraints and shortage of land. In Okalongo, 542 plots were serviced, but 435 remain unserviced, while in Onesi 71 plots were serviced, but 121 remain unserviced. Likewise, 235 plots were serviced in Ogongo Settlement.

In Tsandi Village Council, there are 288 serviced land, while 1,138 still remain unserviced. In Outapi Town, there are 1,686 serviced land but 1,954 is still unserviced.

In Oshifo, there are 1,201 serviced land, while 660 is still to be serviced. In Okahao Town, there are 638 serviced land but 421 is still unserviced. In Oshikuku Town, there are 419 serviced land while 857 still to be serviced. These figures consist of both business and residential plots in respective Towns, Village Council and Settlements in our Region.

In Ruacana Town, sewer reticulations were constructed at Okondeka, Omonauatjihozu Settlements and water reticulation in Oshifo Extension 1. Roads were constructed at Oshifo Extension 3, including electricity. The shortage of accommodation is real and therefore efforts must be embarked upon to ensure that our people receive roof over their heads.

The Government remains committed to the provision of decent housing for all in the country and therefore we are obliged to make contributions in this regard. This can be achieved through construction of houses on the aforesaid serviced plots available in our Towns, Village Council and Settlements. The planning and surveying of urban land worth N\$1,890,543 in Onesi Settlement is in progress.

However, not much could be achieved because the Regional Council cannot attract engineers and town planners on its establishment, coupled with bureaucratic red tape and inadequate funding. Therefore, it is crucial that adequate resources are secured so that the compensation takes place without hindrance in order to fast track this process.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

At the national level, the Ministry of Land Reform still continues to empower the Namibian people through the implementation of the Resettlement Programme. This Programme is aimed at resettling the Namibian people who were previously denied the rights to occupy land in commercial areas. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that 57 families from our Region have been resettled since its inception. Again, 27,809 customary land rights were registered, including 1 occupational land right. Likewise, 61 rights of leaseholds were registered and generate N\$107,529 annually into the Communal Land Fund.

About 137,088 hectares were supported through the provision of infrastructure which have benefited over 300 farmers in Otjetjekua, Ongandjera East and West. However, this process is complicated by illegal fencing, self-allocation of land and extension of occupied land, conflicts emanating from village boundaries, land disputes and traditional authority boundary conflicts.

Hence, all conflicts emanating from the said instances should be directed to relevant authorities in order to be resolved peacefully.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Our Region is endowed with abundant mineral resources such as gypsum, slates, concrete materials and sand, to mention but a few. Most if not all, are vital in building industry and they can be marketed to outside for commercial purposes. It was found that there is plentiful gypsum in the vicinity of Uukwaluudhi and Ongandjera Districts which can be further developed and thereby adding value to our local produce.

Likewise, the Region can enter into a well-known business concept i.e. *public-private-partnership* with entrepreneurs within and outside the Region. Similarly, an income can be generated from utilization of our local resources such as harvesting sand for construction of buildings and other related facilities. The promotion and marketing of quarries has also the potential to be translated into production of quality materials such as cements and other similar materials.

Hence, I call upon the captains of industries to come forward and join us in promoting this business concept in order to address the challenges posed by unemployment, especially among the youth. As far as the promotion of trade is concern, satisfactory progress has been recorded regarding the construction of the Logistics Hub at Omahenene Border Post. The construction of this Facility will improve and accelerate the trade between the Republics of Namibia and Angola.

It will also shorten the distances between the Harbour Town of Walvis Bay via Swakopmund, Henties Bay, Uis and Khorixas to Omusati Region before reaching the markets in the Republic of Angola. Upon its completion, volumes of movements of goods and services, including the people will drastically increase and thereby empowering our people through strengthening their buying power.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Water is life! Hence, the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry continues to extend water resources to remote areas. Thus, an amount of N\$41,260,781 was spent on the rehabilitation of boreholes infrastructure, cleaning and pump tests, construction and rehabilitation of water pipes.

Again, substantial amounts were spent on the construction of Okeeholongo Bulk Pipeline and the construction of 205 pit latrines within the Region. Equally, arrangements are at advanced stage to rehabilitate and deepening Olushandja Water Reservoir and Uuvudhiya Water Canal. The rationale behind this is to promote and support the implementation of the Green Scheme through the provision of adequate water to both households and animal consumption.

Currently, the Region is engaging potential investors with view to conduct a feasibility study before the actual implementation. The intended activities will go a long way in providing reliable water resources to residents in our Region, including neighbouring Regions.

The availability of fertile land can make our Region to become a bread basket that can feed both local people and those outside the Region. This is proven by agricultural productions that are being produced at Etunda Irrigation Project in Ruacana Constituency. It produces maize meal, tomatoes, cabbages, butternuts, water melons and sweet potatoes, amongst others. In addition, the produce of Etunda Irrigation Project can be supplemented by similar productions of 67 Members of Olushandja Horticulture Association.

They are farming along Olushandja Water Reservoir and continue to promote food production and security within the Region. However, its potentiality is under severe threat due to the provision of inadequate water. This can even be worsened by the intention of Namwater to replace the Calueqe-Oshakati Water Canal with pipeline.

As a Region, we strongly denounce this intention because it will undermine the good intention of the Government that encourages local people to become self-reliant in terms of food production and security.

Thus, we still stand firm behind our stance which supports the maintenance of the current status of the Water Canal. Allow me also to share with you the activities at Omahenene Crop Research Station. Their mandate is to conduct crop research and produce foundation and certified seeds. Among others, they produce pearl millet, sorghum and cowpea.

It is pleasing to learn that 180 out of 200 seed growers from the Northern Namibia Farmers Grower Cooperative are from Omusati Region, while total pearl and millet seeds produced during 2015 worth 170 metric of tons were produced at the Station. About 110 metric of tons of seeds were distributed for drought relief in Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Otjozondjupa, Kavango-West and East, Kunene and Zambezi Regions. Also, an amount of 55.5 metric tons of seeds were distributed through subsidies to the said Regions.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Besides these achievements, it is disturbing to learn that there is no regulatory framework to regulate the seed industry. There were also no plant breeders for the past 10 years. There were also inadequate seeds due to budgetary constraints, mileage for seeds inspection and limited capacity of seeds processing machinery.

It is however pleasing to learn that the Draft Seed and Seed Varieties Bill have been submitted to the Ministry of Justice, while the Draft Plant Variety Protection is under review. Likewise, it is pleasing to state that plant breeders are now available at the Station. Nonetheless, the line Ministry is urged to urgently address these anomalies.

The levels of poverty and unemployment are indeed worrisome and hence it is high time to device appropriate mechanisms to mitigate them. Statistics indicate that poverty levels in the country stands at 26,9 percent, while our Region stands at 28,6 percent. This shows that both poverty and unemployment levels are above average.

I am convinced that this can be addressed through the promotion of the Green Scheme and other related activities, the implementation of Programmes such as the Cash/Food for Work, Micro Finance, Food Nutrition, Support Resource for Poor Rural Farmers and Rural Employment Scheme.

In this context, it is pleasing to inform you that financial assistance worth N\$500,000 was received through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Namsov Community Trust and Omusati Region Governor's Social Fund. The Fund seeks to support community based projects in order to uplift the living standards of our people. An amount of N\$78,516 has been spent so far through buying 1 digital incubator, 1 digital fether and 2 digital auto-hatchers.

For transparency and accountability, the Committee consisting of the Board of Directors is constituted to manage all activities. The intention is to produce chicks to selected Constituencies in order to assist those with interest in poultry. The remaining funds will be spent on the construction of infrastructure, training of beneficiaries and other related activities. More information and other essential details will be availed in due course through relevant channels of communication. The machinery will be handed-over shortly after this Session.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

Furthermore, the Veterinary Services form core of essential agricultural activities within our Region. According to statistics, there are 294,258 cattle, 17,817 sheep, 265,446 goats, 39,859 donkeys, 14, 398 pigs, 187,220 poultry, 22,087 dogs and 9,082 cats. These animals belong to about 200,000 inhabitants within the Region. This indicates that the Region is abundantly blessed with livestock but at look of things it does not optimally utilize them.

This can be achieved through adding value to such produce via initiating joint ventures with slaughter houses, constructing tanneries whereby by-products such as skins, bones, hooves and horns will be manufactured into buttons, bracelets and other valuable materials.

These activities can be further strengthened through the creation of feeding lots where fodders and others feeding materials shall be produced.

However, this sector also faces numerous challenges such as outbreaks of mouth and foot disease, rabies and lumpy skin diseases, to mention but a few. To mitigate these challenges, the line Ministry will erect the border fence between the Republics of Namibia and Angola, constructing import and export offices at Wakasamane, Omahenene and Ruacana Border Posts.

Similarly, the promotion of horticulture and aquaculture has the potential to empower local people in terms of employment creation and food security. Currently, there are 46 activities related to this section, including 6 locals engaging in fish farming.

The demand for fish and agricultural produce is great but high costs and technicalities involved remains one of challenges. Therefore, it is essential to initiate funds to assist those who wish to venture into these activities, introduce incentives and granting grace period.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

The availability of electricity plays a very crucial role in promoting productivity in any given industry.

Currently, the Ruacana Hydro Power Station in Ruacana Constituency operates with 4 turbine generators with the capacity to produce 340 megawatts. Due to insignificant industrial activities, our Region consumes merely 10 megawatts unlike Oshana Region which consumes 29 megawatts.

Besides its location, about 85 percent of rural areas within the Region are still not electrified. Therefore, we urge the Ministry of Mines and Energy to rectify this anomaly through speeding up the electrification of rural areas within the Region as a matter of urgency.

Nevertheless, it is pleasing to state that an amount of N\$771,271 has been invested in the electrification of 3 Growth Points, namely Okanala in Outapi Constituency, Eputulyakonganda in Onesi Constituency and Omutsewondjamba in Etayi Constituency.

Likewise, an amount of N\$6,520,385 has been spent by the Ministry of Mines and Energy through the implementation of its Rural Electrification Programme in the Region. The beneficiaries were Etayi, Outapi, Ogongo, Okalongo, Otamanzi and Oshikuku Constituencies. Furthermore, an amount of N\$7,688,858 is earmarked to benefit Etayi, Outapi, Onesi, Okalongo, Ogongo, Tsandi and Ruacana Constituencies during the Financial Year 2016/17.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

It is a known fact that information is power and keeps us posted about the current events. Towards this, the Government through the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has constructed a new Regional Office consisting of 10 offices and well equipped with *state-of-art* equipment. It was completed during the Year under review at the cost of N\$20,000,000. It is now in use and the public is encouraged to visit it and acquaint themselves with its operations.

Additionally, the importance of tourism cannot be overemphasized, let alone advantages that can be derived from this lucrative sector. Hence, allow me to share with you about plenty natural resources in our Region. There are beautiful sceneries, wild game species and flora and fauna. They continue to attract both local and foreign tourists to Omusati Region. Ruacana Waterfall, Otjipahuriro Community Camp Site, Omugulugwoombashe National Heritage, Olufuko Festival Centre and Tsandi Royal Homestead and Cultural Heritage Museum, Sheya Shuushona Conservancy in Okahao Constituency, Uukwaluudhi Conservancy and Uukwaluudhi Safari Lodge in Tsandi Constituency, among others, are worth visiting.

Apart from visiting these sites, potential investors are at liberty to liaise with the Council and consider investing in any available opportunities.

Likewise, there are well established accommodation facilities within and around the Region such as Outapi Town Hotel, Outapi Mini Lodge, Outapi Guest House, Eha Lodge and Uukwaluudhi Hotel, to mention but a few. Hence, you are all urged to visit these facilities while visiting our Region. Besides these facilities, we urge potential investors to consider investing in any available opportunities in order to address the problem of accommodation within and around our Region.

Due to conducive business environment prevailing in our Region, it is pleasing to inform you that we continue to attract retailers in the names of Shoprite, Pick n Pay and Woerman Brock etc. They provide services to local residents through selling variety of items, including agricultural produce. However, most of their produce is outsourced outside the borders of our country. Therefore, I call upon captains of industries to join hands in selling local produce and thereby supporting local farmers.

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Members,

In conclusion, once again, I wish to thank His Excellency, Dr Hage G Geingob, the President of the Republic of Namibia, for his visionary and able leadership.

As a Region, we believe that through his idealistic leadership and philosophy in the name of the Harambee Prosperity Plan we shall eradicate poverty, diseases and ignorance from our midst.

Also, I wish to sincerely thank the Members of the Executive for having engaged us regarding the overall management of crucial affairs in our Region. I will also fail in my duty if I fail to recognize and appreciate the support that I continuously receive from our Regional and Local Authority Councillors and other stakeholders through providing timely advice in managing pertinent issues affecting Omusati Region.

Equally, I must thank our Traditional Leaders for their continuous support and guidance in traditional matters. Please, remain the guiding lanterns you are today.

I enjoy working with you and looking forward to collectively bring our Region to higher heights in efforts to uplift the living standards of our people. I am convinced that together we shall succeed in accelerating improved service delivery and upholding integrity and accountability in managing affairs of the Region.

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, 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!