

STATEMENT BY

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WINDHOEK, CLLR.
MUESEE KAZAPUA, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LAND
DELIVERY RETREAT

HEIJA LODGE, 24 FEBRUARY 2015, 08:30

Director of Ceremonies, Mr. Edward Kawesha, ACEO

Honourable Alderpersons and City Councillors

Strategic Executives and Staff of the City of Windhoek,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my honour and privilege to officiate at this important workshop that has been deliberately convened to discuss a burning and challenging subject matter, the *state of land delivery in the City of Windhoek*.

First and foremost allow me to welcome you all to this first session, especially the Honourable Councillors, for setting aside time to attend this two day workshop, an indication of the importance that you individually attach to the provision of land to our people.

Director of Ceremonies,

The acute shortage of serviced land in Windhoek has always been a priority concern to the City Council.

The limited access to land in the City is therefore of great concern to all of us. The most profound housing constraint in Windhoek and Namibia in general; is the mismatch between the supply of developable land and the demand thereof. Addressing this persistent imbalance will not only unleash the full potential of the housing market and its contribution to the economy, but will also address the social aspects related to sustainable and affordable housing. Let me state at this juncture that finding practical solutions, which are achievable in the short-term is certainly a daunting task, which cannot be underestimated.

Equally, the unprecedented increases in house prices continue to reduce the majority of the population's ability to access affordable housing. This is because; such high prices are not supported by any economic fundamentals, for instance an increase in household incomes.

The shortage of serviced land and the cost involved in servicing the land is prohibitively high; plus the cumbersome and process involved in the allocation of land. This limits the provision of affordable housing, especially to the low-income segments. It is evident that the challenge is not only lack of houses, but equally the acute shortage of serviced plots for housing and commercial development. This state of affairs brought about mainly by the

lack of adequate financial resources and bureaucracy in the land delivery process.

Coupled with the aforementioned realities, is the rapid urbanization and the mushrooming of informal settlements on the outskirts of our city. The high Windhoek population growth also has an adverse impact on the planning and the City's developmental efforts. It is for this reason that for the past few years the City has not been able to cope with the demand for residential plots particularly in the low income categories.

This calls on us to assess and revisit our operational approach; inclusive of our local authority legislation Act 23 of 1992.

You may agree with me that the current local authority legal framework and operational policies are not responsive enough to meet the demands for municipal services by our communities. Therefore, we need to change course, in order to adapt to the prevailing operational environment.

Similarly there is an urgent need for the central government to significantly boost financial support to local authorities across the country to enhance their capacities to service land. In fact, the purpose of decentralization will not be fully achieved if local authorities have no adequate capacities to deliver on their mandate. A review of the land acquisition and registration process also needs to be undertaken in order to streamline the processes for timely land delivery.

In this context, ladies and Gentlemen, this workshop is long overdue. The workshop is convened with the purpose to review our systems of operations looking at the existing policies, methods of land sale and finding medium term solutions. The workshop will also look at ways of how to deal with the current application backlog and strategies to improving our administrative processes.

The workshop will further consider progress reports on the City's various land delivery initiatives, such as Township Development Programs, Public Private Partnership land servicing initiatives and the Government funded TIPEEG programs. Our discussions should be geared at coming up with workable recommendations that will address the challenges that we face in the supply of serviced land. The recommendations that will result from our discussions will be shared with relevant stakeholders in Government as some of the legal instruments dealing with alienation of land are national laws. I am encouraged to note that our program covers pertinent topics that are pivotal to the process of land delivery. I therefore urge all of us participants to actively contribute to the discussions during this two-day's workshop.

With this few remarks, allow me now to declare the Land Delivery Workshop officially open.

I thank you.