



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**THE PRESIDENCY**

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**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR – KUNENE REGION**

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**STATE OF THE REGION ADRESS, 2025**

Chairperson of the Kunene Regional Council, Honourable Western Muharukua  
Hon. Councillor UeutjereviNgunaihe and all Regional Councillors here present.

Director General of the National Planning Commission, Dr. Kaire Mbuende

Deputy Minister of international relations and trade, Honourable Jenelly  
Matundu and all other deputy ministers present

His Worship the Mayor of the Opuwo town, Hon. Kasipo Kakondo and all  
Mayors Present

All members of parliament here present

King Fillemon Shuumbwa Nangolo, the deputy chairperson of the Council of  
Traditional leaders and leader of the Ondonga Traditional Authority

All traditional leaders here present

Religious leaders here present

Esteemed leaders of our youth forums

All invited guests

Members of the fourth estate

Residents of the Great Kunene Region, the Region of possibilities,

Fellow Namibians,

On the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1984, in this very town of Opuwo Kunene Region this man  
standing humbled before you was born. Forty-one years on, I stand here  
before you, representing the first citizen of our Republic, H.E. our President  
Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, in terms of Article 110A of the Namibian  
Constitution.

I extend my profound and humble gratitude to H.E the President for having  
accorded me, out of over 120762 inhabitants of Kunene region, the honour of  
being her representative in this Great Kunene, the Region of possibilities.

Certainly, I take my appointment as Governor of the Kunene Region with a deep sense of duty towards the people of the Kunene Region, Namibia and H.E. the President.

By virtue of being the political head of the Kunene Region, one becomes answerable to the President, at whose behest I serve, if government policy fails the sovereigns. It goes without saying, therefore, that if all three tiers of government within our region are not coordinated and working well together for the advancement of our people, the Governor must bear the responsibility for such failure.

This is a responsibility and challenge that I fully embrace to ensure that Government policies, programmes and interventions, as guided by the SWAPO Party 2024 elections manifesto remain effective for the Kunene Region. I therefore also reaffirm my commitment to be the link between all stakeholders and the central government. I commit that as Governor, I shall coordinate the execution of government programmes and represent the President with the energy, passion, dedication and speed with which the President wants to transform Namibia and our Region for the better.

Honourable councillors, fellow citizens,

Our collective call to duty is straightforward, because we are simply called to execute good leadership. Yet the task is daunting, because we are leading a region whose people are impoverished, with a monthly income per capita of N\$2000. We are leading a region where the majority of our people have no disposable income, after spending on food items. Our people do not have

access to potable water. Our school teachers and learners are bracing through challenges and restrictions within our education system.

Our people yearn for better healthcare. Our region is reeling in a lack of infrastructure; especially the roads on our tough regional topography. Our District hospitals are challenged with space and infrastructure. These and many other challenges are what we must embrace as leaders, but I do not for once support the notion that these challenges are insurmountable. We can and we will conquer them!

Honorable councillors, fellow citizens,

These challenges call for leaders not to necessarily follow an existing pathway, but rather to blaze a trail even where there is no path. It is time to turn a new leaf; as our President says 'it is not business as usual'. With coordinated efforts we can put an end to the perpetual hardships faced by our people through crafting local solutions to our local problems.

My vision as political head of this region is to create wealth, wealth that will be evident in the region's contribution to the National GDP, and that is felt at the dinner tables as we increase our regional income per capita and disposable income. This is what the eighth administration wants for you and I, to be an economically booming region with wealthy, healthy, happy and progressive inhabitants.

In a politically polarised region such as Kunene, such vision has always been met with pessimism and the message of the prophets of doomsday has always ignited settled negativity, pessimism and prejudices. This has always delayed

and slowed down well intended and noble developmental initiatives. These days are gone, not under H.E The President's leadership!

*"A leader takes people where they want to go. Great leaders take people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be."* I am therefore confident that together as leaders we will lead even the most pessimistic of them all to gain strength, courage, confidence and willpower as we swim up the current against what may seem insurmountable challenges and seemingly unattainable goals towards our human development agenda.

Fellow Citizens, for the past four months I have traversed our region. Notwithstanding that I have not yet gotten to all four corners of our region, I conclude that numbers don't lie; our people are suffering. Suffering, not necessarily because of a lack of initiatives by central government, but mostly by circumstances beyond our control. Honourable members; the wealth creation mooted is therefore not mere political posturing and promising. It is a genuine drive borne out of care, love and a deep sense of duty to push back against these adversities as we take our region to the mountaintop. The noble call is therefore made to us all to unite under this umbrella for development.

The duty to act with unity of purpose to create wealth for our people should not be negotiable and must compel us all to reach across our political divides, as we focus on the actions that matter in improving the lives of all 120,762 Kunene inhabitants. The inhabitants of this region will do well to demand from us, their leaders, nothing less than unity of purpose for their sake!

We are fortunate that we need not start anew with this agenda. The call for prosperity is part of a settled and long-standing agenda by Government to

improve all our lives as exemplified by the implementation of the just completed NDP 5 Programme. Today I am invited and called upon to report on aspects of NDP 5 in terms of Article 110A (5) & (6) of our Constitution.

For the purpose of this report today, I shall highlight the gains that Kunene region has derived from Government's pecuniary investments during the financial year 2024/2025. I am today also putting forth a vision for this region under this year's theme: "KUNENE REGION, SHIFTING FROM PROMISE TO WEALTH AND PROGRESS". In outlining this vision, I shall point out the regional initiatives together with national developmental efforts as budgeted for the FY2025/26 and as outlined in NDP 6 under its four overarching pillars, being:

- Economic Growth, Transformation and Resilience;
- Human Development and community Resilience;
- Environmental sustainability; and
- Effective Governance and Public Service Delivery.

Government has made a host of meaningful investments through a variety of programmes in Kunene Region. As the saying goes 'Health is Wealth'. The health sector is one of the beneficiaries of continued substantial government investments, and the performance of our healthcare services testifies to this investment.

Under the leadership of Director Shapumba and his able team, I have the confidence that our regional health services are in good hands, and that it shall continue to grow from strength to strength.

The Ministry of Health has 232 potential health outlets across the region. Inhabitants of the Kunene Region continue to use the services of three district

hospitals at Opuwo, Outjo and Khorixas. We also have three health centres being Okanguati, Sesfontein and Kamanjab. We have 27 clinics, one health post and 199 outreach points.

During the past three months as Governor, I have visited the Opuwo and Khorixas District Hospitals. At our district hospitals, our people continue to receive primary health care services, medical services; radiological services; pharmaceutical services; dental services; social welfare services; laboratory services; public environmental health services by the Government of the Republic of Namibia, supported by the Development partners and others health care providers.

During April 2024, all our districts successfully conducted the African Vaccination week. Ten nurses were trained on Nimaret. Nimaret is a Nurse Initiated Management of Antiretroviral Therapy to HIV patients. 40 nurses were trained on mental health.

During the period under review, twelve staff members were trained on malnutrition, directly impacting the fatality rates as it dropped from 3.6% to 2.9% by the end of 2024. Thus, not to say, the statistic is favourable, it is 2.9% deaths too many. No child should die as a result of malnutrition in a resource rich region such as ours. We do recognize, however, the leadership of the Health Director Shapumba that continues in partnership with Spar to give soup to malnourished children. I must thank the Regional Council that it has availed food parcels to the district hospitals to combat malnutrition. Fellow leaders, to end this malnutrition, community soup kitchens are important, especially

when we are faced with an imminent end to the drought relief food programme.

During the period under review, our health surveillance teams have successfully responded and suppressed suspected measles, anthrax and diarrhoea outbreaks. By April 2024 the Regional TB notification rate had dropped to 43 cases, a decrease of 25 cases. Malaria and Cholera remain health threats for our region and these were largely contained during the greater part of the period under review.

However, following the floods situation in Epupa Constituency during the just past rainy season, the region recorded numerous malaria cases of which no fatalities were recorded. I extend my gratitude to our health professionals for having availed in good time amenities such as clinical, pharmaceuticals, mosquito nets, water purification sachets and other health necessities to arrest and mitigate health risks posed by the flood situation. I must equally report that a total of 9 cases of cholera have been recorded of which (7) Seven were confirmed from Alpha village area during the month of June. Sadly, I am reporting one (1) cholera fatality. The other (2) two confirmed cases were from Orutjandja location in Opuwo. On a positive note, I am informed by our medical team, that the cholera outbreak is under control. All suspected victims were successfully treated, cleared and released from quarantine. We have had no reports of other cholera cases in the past 13 days.

We have had no maternal deaths recorded for the period under review; I must however report that earlier this month we sadly lost one prospective mother due to ante natal complications. I also further report, that our health



professionals have continued towards reducing the Neonatal Mortality rate, which currently has been reduced to 6.4 % per 1000 lives from the previous 7.4% in 2023/2024.

Our health professionals continue to touch lives through regional health outreaches. During the period under review, 244 Orthopaedic, 10 mental health, 51 dermatology and 476 eye patients were helped during these regional health outreaches.

Our health facilities have been recipients of various equipment such as sonar machines and examination beds from UNICEF. I am reliably informed that this equipment will enhance our patient care services. Opuwo District hospital has received a new Dental Chair Unit, valued N\$622,500.00. Furthermore, a new General X-Ray Machine, the Modest, was procured at a price of N\$2 million, also for Opuwo.

During the period under review, the Oroutumba health post was constructed at a cost of N\$628,813.00, and has been officially inaugurated.

The construction of Epupa Clinic and staff accommodation is 98% complete, at the cost of N\$9,900,000.00. However, I am informed that there is a continuous slow progress and poor performance since 2024. Appropriate action and intervention in this regard is being taken by The Governor's office. The Government also constructed and completed doctors' residences at the Opuwo District Hospital and at Ongongo, Otjokavare and Oruvandjei Clinics. The Opuwo hospital stores and installation of new water tanks were completed at a combined cost of N\$3,533,276.73.

I am a proud Governor to reiterate the gains of The Khorixas district Hospital for winning the Simon Kunene Award in 2024 for being the cleanest hospital, and for reducing malaria towards elimination phase. I had the pleasure of inspecting this district hospital and I must testify that the upkeep of that state health facility is something to emulate. Congratulations to Dr. Buyi and his team.

We continue to face challenges such as the unwillingness of health professionals to work in remote areas, which challenges are hugely exacerbated by our scanty road networks. We need to improve and speed up the filling of available posts in accordance with the recruitment plan, otherwise health services may be found wanting in this new era of quality service delivery. Equally, we must be efficient in the procurement of equipment, clinical supplies, laboratory reagents and cartilage.

During my visits to the Opuwo district hospital, we have found alarming practices such as the combined waiting area for patients awaiting doctor's consultations, emergency room out patients and patients waiting to receive pharmaceutical products from the district hospital. It was further alarming to have noted serious breaches of patient confidentiality and privacy, because up to two doctors would consult two separate patients at the same time, in the same room and on the same table.

In this regard, I can confidently report that the hospital is actively planning to remedy the situation. In line with the human development pillar, the residents of Opuwo should expect changes at the district hospital as of this week. We look forward to the construction of additional staff accommodation and the

installation of solar power system at Terrace-Bay clinic. During this current financial year we also hope to see the upgrading of internet to 3G at all our health facilities.

The regional Administration block is also expected to be expanded at the estimated cost of N\$14 million. I must also stress that I remain optimistic that our hospital will receive a new ICU room budgeted for at the cost N\$10million. It is also expected that the incinerators at the three district hospitals will be upgraded at the cost of N\$ 7, 000,000 and that all three hospitals will get water softener installations. I have instructed for the enlisting of Architects and Engineers to conduct a feasibility study for the expansion of Opuwo hospital OPD/Casualty, as well the Extension of the Hospital Maternity Ward, based on Oshakati Hospital's Maternity Ward Model.

Fellow citizens, our healthcare sector is in a satisfactory state. We must demand the same or better from other sectors such as education, police force and others.

The police is a critical enabler for a conducive habitable and business environment for the Kunene Region. The security apparatus of our country as is with the health sector, remains an important stakeholder in our vision and quest to create wealth for the inhabitants of our region. We are therefore thankful for the continued investment towards the advancement of our policing operations and capital projects.

The region is serviced by seventeen police stations and seven border posts. To this end, capital projects were well undertaken. The Omakange Police station has been completed and was inaugurated on 13 March 2024. The Palmwag

Police Station was completed and inaugurated on 24 May 2024. The Regional Police Headquarters in Opuwo was completed and inaugurated by H.E. The President.

The drilling of a borehole and supply of water at Ehomba Police station has been completed. The Outjo Municipality has put up a mobile police station at the Legacy Centre in the informal settlement area. A new vehicle clearance office was opened at Outjo Police Station to provide services in Outjo. The Outjo, Khorixas and Kamanjab residents now do not have to go to Otjiwarongo for these services.

The overall crime trends have reduced over the past 5 years, with the past year having seen a 2% decrease in crime rate. Crimes of concern predominantly are Assault GBH, Stock Theft and house breaking. It is found that unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse are part of the biggest contributing factors to crime. With the intended new frontiers of wealth creation and employment creation in our region, we must hope to have sharper declines in crime rates. However, with the population growth, new business opportunities and serious pecuniary investments from government, we must be vigilant not to lose our status of being the Region with the least serious crimes in the country.

Notwithstanding our declining crime rate, our policing efforts are not without challenges. The rough terrain of the region takes a toll on the region's allocation of working police vehicles and this remains an ongoing challenge. Out of 112 vehicles 77 are running; with the rest grounded due to mechanical failures. Other challenges include illegal immigrants from Angola into Namibia, poor mobile communication network coverage, human wildlife conflicts, insufficient accommodation for police force members, reluctance of

residents to report GBV cases, substandard police mortuaries and substandard mechanical workshop support are some of the problems that need urgent attention of central government.

Under the Leadership of Commissioner Nderura, I thank the professionalism of our force in their crime prevention efforts and operations. One must commend how all seventeen police stations in the region minimize criminal opportunities, and sensitize and encourage cooperation with the police in crime prevention. I must therefore thank the inhabitants of our region for their cooperation with the force through community policing and organised crime prevention forums such as the neighbourhood watches, farmers associations and youth against crime.

Our 45.9 % are school dropout and the fact that 37.6% of our people have never attended school is a concern. Human capital development underpins all other progress, so Kunene must aggressively expand education and training opportunities. By investing in its people, Kunene will create a virtuous cycle – a skilled population that can attract and execute development projects.

Renovations of schools N\$ 3,162,000. Specifically, the renovation of Mureti Secondary School in Opuwo was done at cost of N\$11,000,000 in the past FY. Construction of additional classrooms and other facilities at Oukongo Combined School was done at a cost N\$6,200,000.

The Kunene Region's education sector comprises a total of 86 schools distributed across three main circuits: Outjo, Epupa, and Opuwo. Specifically, Outjo has 28 schools, Epupa has 30, and Opuwo has 28. These schools are categorized into various types, including junior primary (Pre-primary to Grade 3), full primary (Pre-primary to Grade 7), extended primary (up to Grade 9),

combined schools (up to Grade 11), and secondary schools. Additionally, the region has 27 Ondao units, all of which offer junior primary education. The total learner population in the region stands at 35,870, supported by 1,269 teachers across all circuits.

### **Kunene Regional Youth and Sport Sector Report**

In terms of the human development pillar, the involvement of our youth is critical. Their transformation and development remains a strategic priority for our National agenda under NDP6. Government has made meaningful investments in our region's youth and young people as is. During the period under review, through the Khorixas Youth Centre and the Opuwo Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre government has embarked on various activities with the aim of developing and empowering young people.

There has been specific emphasis on inculcating entrepreneurial skills among our youth, specifically through information sharing, life skills education, wellness programs and youth enterprise funding. During the period under review, ten young people received training in mushroom cultivation. 21 youth completed tailoring training courses; six young people underwent charcoal production training and were absorbed by the National Youth Service charcoal production company.

The wellness and gym program at khorixas has an average of 20 registered members at any given period. The life skills program has reached 246 young people from Khorixas, Sesfontein and Epupa Constituencies, where they received sexual education; economic strengthening, grassroots soccer, among others. The Government's Youth Credit Scheme has trained 97 young people

and funded 54 businesses of young people. I am informed that the remaining 43 will be funded. Thus far a total of N\$900 000, was disbursed towards the Epupa Youth investment CC and the Outjo Bricks and Blocks CC projects. The project in Outjo continues to go from strength to strength, while I am led to believe that the enterprise in Epupa is static. A 4 hectare plot was donated to the Ministry of Education by the municipality of Outjo for the construction of a Primary School within the informal settlement area. One block has so far been completed, including ablution facilities. Similarly, 3 plots were donated for the construction of three kindergartens which are being constructed by the communities themselves.

The Khorixas Vocational Training Centre opened in 2024 and more emphasis will be put on trades that speak to the realities of the town and the region. In Outjo an amount of N\$900 000 was spent on the upgrading of the sport facilities for the successful hosting of several sport events such as the Namibian Newspaper Cup, the Football trophy remains with us. Much is still required in order to improve the sports field in Etoshapoort. This field was proposed for development of a basic sport facility for coming financial years.

Despite government's best efforts our youth continue to face challenges, such as the digital gap and delayed access to financial support and inadequate wellness facilities. Some graduates from the national youth service remain unemployed. Challenges with regards to infrastructure and stakeholder engagement are a constant reminder that more needs to be done.

To this end The Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture seeks to develop 3 sports facilities: The Opuwo Multipurpose Youth Resource Centre and Sport Complex Category 2 at the cost of N\$23,000,000; the Khorixas sports stadium is also budgeted for renovation at a cost of

N\$4,000,000;finally N\$14,000,286.98 is budgeted for the construction of basic sports facilities. Okanguati in the Epupa constituency and Kamanjab will each receive these basic sports facilities.

This 8<sup>th</sup> administration is indeed for the young, and the opportunities for our youth go beyond what the directorate of youth and sports can offer. The young people will be in pole position to benefit from all capital projects coming to our region, through employment and business opportunities. In addition to this, Government has launched a National Youth Fund in line with The SWAPO Party 2024 Election Manifesto. Of the N\$257,000,000 budgeted, our youth must be prepared to sensitise themselves with: the lending channels and the lending facilities of the fund. Women, previously marginalised and people living with disabilities from our region are specifically encouraged to tap into the fund. Leaders must study the modalities of the fund for the benefit of our people.

My office has taken a deliberate attempt to consult young people on their issues and registered about 2600 unemployed young people in Kamanjab, Outjo, Khorixas and Opuwo. I am pleased to confirm that as we are improving our road infrastructure, young people are already employed from our compiled list of unemployed young people. These are not just statistics but people with names and families; I am pleased that the governor's office could assist them in giving them employment. The opportunities are continuous; I urge you my fellow leaders to join hands and fight for our young people's benefits. We have a long road to go in the economic emancipation of our young people.

#### **State road Infrastructure Kunene North**



The long road towards wealth creation requires the necessary road connectivity. Road infrastructure is thus not just important to us because they are a source of employment for the young, but a well-developed road network connects people, places, fast tracks business and logistical activities.

It is no secret that Kunene Region has been significantly prejudiced by the social and economic criteria for National Road construction. When we say Kunene region has opportunities, but impossibilities have been the order of the day, the underdeveloped road network and bad road infrastructure is chief among factors that has been holding us back.

Today we are sitting with a mere 537 kilometres of bitumen paved roads in total. Of these 537km, Kunene North only enjoys 56 km, the MR 100 between Opuwo and Omakange. The remainder 4,449 km of the regional road network, of which 1,764 km is located in Kunene North, are a combination of gravel, earth track, salt and other proclaimed roads. The Kunene North non-bitumen roads remain in a dire state, a state exacerbated by the good rains that the region has enjoyed.

Our terrain is specifically challenging to our road network and the maintenance efforts. This is worsened by the fact that our roads lack major drainage. Roads in areas prone to flooding such as the Omuramba-Otjokavare and, many others, are in need of gravelling. However, such roads are still only being graded. I also specifically note that the D3705, the 206 km road stretching between Opuwo and Etanga and Okanguati crosses large rivers, and have proven to cause our communities serious hardship, especially during the rainy season. The lack of drainage results in sections of our roads being washed away, necessitating the re-gravelling of many parts of our roads. The roads that are severely affected by rains include the D3708; The Roads Authority

estimates that 3710, MR 124; D3709; D3701; D3602 among many others in Kunene North can be repaired at a total of N\$ 20 441 713.98.

However, despite the reported hardships and challenges, I am happy to report that the long-awaited upgrading of the D3700, has commenced, with contractors for the first 75 km, from Opuwo to Otjivize being on site after the completion of the procurement process. 10 young people have already attained temporary employment with the contractors. The plan is to upgrade the D3700 up to Omaseratutundu, beyond Okanguati.

I am further happy to report that upgrading of the MR76 between Kamanjab and Khorixas has also commenced, with a total number of 46 employment opportunities created thus far.

However, conversation at governmental level are ongoing to ensure that while we are busy upgrading mentioned roads, the need to build bridges on other needy roads is not neglected. The roads that need urgent bridges also include the D370 Kaoko-Otavi through Orupembe to Sesfontein.

The Governor's office has facilitated a consultation on the ranking of priority road infrastructure development during this month. The roads prioritised for development in the next five years shall be furnished to council once the consultants avail the said report to the governor's offices.

In respect of Kunene South, the Roads Authority Outjo maintenance office reports to the Governor's office that it has 8 blading units, 1 concrete and 1 steel contractor, 1 road side contractor, 2 grass mowing contractors, 1 BMU and 1 litter control contractor. In addition, it is reported that the office is busy re gravelling the MR126 road. The following roads are also prioritized for re gravelling: D2612, D2743, D3236, D2666, D2625, D2671, D2780 and DR2302.

The Ministry of Works and Transport also has other capital projects being conducted in our region. The Construction of the Opuwo Aerodrome is expected to commence this year and budgeted at a cost of N\$ 47,000,000. The Opuwo Government Garage is expected to commence with a budget of N\$12,500,000. A marine radar system will be installed at Sesfontein at a cost of N\$13,600,000. Pillar 3 of NDP6 compels us to foster to have regard to environmental sustainability in our quest for wealth creation. We can therefore not discuss our developmental agenda without integrating that agenda with environmental sustainability.

The directorate of forestry advocates for environmental sustainability across all constituencies and sectors. The efforts through various forestry projects have been implemented to ensure sustainable use and conservation of forest resources via the four forestry offices and the one substation in the region. Key forestry programmes undertaken during this period include the development and implementation of the Forestry policy and legislation. Awareness meetings were conducted, permits issued, patrols and inspections enforced on both commercial and communal land.

Community based natural resource management was also undertaken with seven community forests gazzetednamely: Puros, Sanitatas, Otjiu-West, Marienflus, Okondjombo, Ehirovipuka and Orupembe community forests. Other activities included Tree planting and orchard developments, forest protection and conservation, beekeeping and fire management prevention. The current challenges facing the forestry management in the region include scarcity of water for tree planting, the poaching of succulent plants, unpredicted forest fires, lack of awareness on fire management and lack of funds for activities and programs.

However, we can overcome these challenges by implementing various solutions, starting with the installation of solar –powered boreholes, rainwater harvesting systems, awareness campaigns on the value of biodiversity, establishment of fire committees, and sourcing of additional environmental grant funds for projects.

Government through Regional Councils and Local Authorities has made notable investments in the foundation of land use i.e. human settlements.

In Opuwo: Orutjandja North, Katututura & Okatuu is undergoing formalization with a plan to draft layouts for erven being crafted. Flood mitigation actions have been instituted in Opuwo with land allocated to 127 flood victims.

To address land and housing shortages in the settlement areas, the establishment of new extensions in Okanguati and Sesfontein are underway. In this financial year the implementation of the Decentralised Build Together Programme will begin to construct low cost housing in these settlement areas.

Opuwo has commissioned a gravity sewer main line to a wastewater treatment plant , and is currently ongoing with the site having been handed over on the 29th of April 2025. The Orutjandja North Water storage and pipe connection is currently in its second phase. Orutjandja North Boreholes first phase is completed with water storage construction finalised. Additional infrastructure funding by the KfW/GIZ is underway for the designs and construction of electricity, road and water infrastructure in Opuwo.

In khorixas the construction of water reticulation in Ada-//Naugu informal settlement has ensured reliable water infrastructure for 616 erven and created

13 local jobs. Sewer reticulation construction in Ext 11 and 12 are also underway in order to target 1,733 households. Medium and low voltage reticulation and street lighting in Khorixas is currently underway in order to connect households to the grid.

Outjo water and sewer reticulation in the informal settlement area is progressing well and is at 70% completion. 193 houses have been electrified in and around Ehangano and 7de Laan.

Outjo is making serious strides and is very advanced in helping central government with innovative ideas around the provision of residential plots for dignified housing for their residents. The town is reporting a total of 3,655 residential plots available to the residents. I am informed that, 437 plots are proclaimed, 243 are fully registered with another 243 having been fully serviced. 991 plots have been upgraded in Ehangano, with the assistance of the National Housing Action Group; another 931 plots have been surveyed and upgraded in extension 9 with community members having contributed to the land survey costs. 350 plots in Outjo were allocated to the Shack Dwellers Association of Namibia, and 460 plots were surveyed in extension 8, which will be proclaimed as a new extension.

The Kamanjab Village Council has made notable progress in improving essential infrastructure through various projects funded by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development. Among the key achievements is the construction of a sewer pump station and the upgrading of oxidation ponds, currently 57% complete, with both facilities securely fenced off. In addition, significant strides have been made in sewer reticulation projects in Extensions 4 and 5 of Nuweland. Phase 1 is nearly complete, with only minor side rehabilitation remaining, while Phase 2 is underway and 50% complete. The

village council also implemented a bulk electrification project in the Ourab informal settlement, achieving a 98% completion rate with 62 houses connected. Plans for Phase 2 are in motion to cover the remaining areas. Moreover, the council successfully completed the bulk sewer reticulation in Extension 2, Rotsvesting, although side rehabilitation is still required to improve road access. Similarly, the bulk sewer reticulation in the Ourab informal settlement has been completed, pending final site rehabilitation. These developments reflect the council's commitment to enhancing public infrastructure and service delivery in the community

During the period under review, the Kunene Regional Council has constructed 90 toilets across the region, with 70 due for construction in this current financial year. Other regional rural development programmes and projects underway include the construction of a community clinic at Eastwood Farm in Kamanjab, construction of the Hostel block at Etanga Primary School in Epupa, completion of the maternity shelter in Epupa, construction of the Okondjombo Community clinic in Opuwo Rural, the clearing of the access road from the main road to Malton Gegunin Outjo, the fencing off of the grazing area at Trekland Farm in Outjo, Provision of water to Okovingava Community kindergarten in Opuwo Urban, and the access to water for Ohungumure in Opuwo Urban.

Indeed, water scarcity continues to impact our inhabitants in all seven constituencies. The various local authority councils have therefore done extensive work on water provision to their local inhabitants.

Opuwo Town Council has installed an emergency water tank in Otuzemba for flood victims. Although a temporary solution, there are plans to integrate it with the permanent water infrastructure. In Outjo, 4 new boreholes have been drilled with 2 fully installed including electricity, pumping and fencing. N\$14,000,000 is allocated this financial year for the upgrading of the water infrastructure and additional boreholes due to the rapid expansion of the town.

The regional Council also attained a number of achievements regarding basic services of water and sewer infrastructure. The sewer pump station at Fransfontein settlement was rehabilitated. The construction of the water pipeline from Ohamaremba to Okanguati has also been completed, and awaits commissioning. The water supply project in Sesfontein is in progress, with the borehole and booster pump installation almost complete.

Through my office's efforts, funding was sourced for construction of a 14 km pipeline between Otumbuiti and Ovinjange, ending a lifelong water problem at Ovinjange. I have also ensured the drilling of boreholes at Okapembambu Combined school and Ozombombo village.

Our communities continue to face water problems and there is an urgent need to fast track our drilling efforts to provide water as prescribed by the water policy. Equally I find that there are serious bottlenecks when it comes to fixing broken water points and other machineries. These problems are causing serious delays in service delivery. I must however, note and appreciate the

coordination of Mrs Mutota, the Deputy Director at the directorate of rural water supply. I find that Mrs Mutota is always at hand to heed to the plight of our rural communities.

Regarding electrification, the construction of Purros off-grid Electrification system in the Sesfontein Constituency is to commence at the cost of N\$5,000,000 over the MTEF. Rural electrification at Okapembambu, Ovituambu and Okapuindjais to be conducted at the cost of N\$32,040,00 over the MTEF. The ministry of Urban and Rural Development is spending a combined N\$ 50,000,000 this financial year on various capital projects in the local authorities, constituencies and settlements. This money shall be used to provide our residents with services ranging from basic services, water infrastructure, water waste treatment plants, extension of settlement areas, etc.

The provision of land is a plight that also has received attention. To date 59 farms were acquired by the state for resettlement purposes, 7 by the office of the Prime Minister and 3 by Ministry of Defence, the Veteran Affairs Department. 235 people from Kunene Region have been resettled through the National Resettlement Programme. During the period under review one farm, OmbidaKarambi no 155 measuring 5,129.ha was acquired. One male beneficiary was resettled on Unit A of the said farm.

During the period under review 223 customary land rights were issued, 10 leaseholds, and 1 occupational right. This brings the total number of customary land rights in our region to 7,438; 372 leaseholds and 5 occupational land rights. The state has duly collected N\$56 066.50 in rental fees from resettled farmers, and N\$136 455.20 from communal lease rentals. Government land



policies encourage optimal use of land especially for our communal farmers, with the assistance of the Directorate of Veterinary Service.

During the period under review, the Division for veterinary service has been promoting optimal animal health, production and reproduction, and assuring the safe and orderly marketing of animals and animal products. Essentially the division is divided into two, Kunene North and Kunene South, the Veterinary Cordoned Fence being the dividing line between the two.

The Northern Division has 8 offices: 2 sections and 6 subsection offices. The region employs 29 staff members. The Division has 224 crush pens, of which 18 have undergone renovation during the period under review. The Khowarib Quarantine camp will also be renovated, with materials already bought during the year under review.

The directorate conducted the Annual vaccination campaign against Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (lungsickness) on a total of 55,895 cattle, and tagged 11,447 cattle. About 1,306 pets were vaccinated against rabies. An additional 1,238 cattle were vaccinated and 335 tagged during an emergency vaccination campaign at Okapuidja.

From 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2024, a total of 1275 pets were vaccinated against rabies in densely populated areas specifically to eliminate human dogs mediated rabies. A simultaneous rabies awareness campaign reached 11 schools, sanitising 5777 learners and 264 school staff.

In January 2025, 259 cases of lumpy skin disease were detected and reported. Government availed about 24,000 doses of lumpyvax vaccines. 17,842 cattle were thus vaccinated under an emergency vaccination programme. Our famers

also vaccinated 18 045 cattle on their own, bringing the total number of cattle vaccinated against lumpy skin disease to 35,887.

Hon Councillors, I pause here to express my shock at the cattle number that I am informed of. These cattle numbers are not the numbers that we are accustomed to in Kunene North. We must take drastic action to ensure that our people don't lose cattle on the scale that we have experienced over the period between 2010 and 2019. As I continue in this speech I shall introduce a new vision for our farmers in mitigation.

Marketing in the Northern part of Kunene has been and continues to be a challenge for our farmers. Firstly with auctions pens such as at Ovinjangeand, Otjokavare, Etati, all we need is the political will to help our people gain an organised and amore structured way of marketing their livestock. To this end my office is open to coordinating and harmonising efforts that will lead to synergy on the most suitable manner of marketing our livestock.

On a positive note, however, during the period under review, the DVS has overseen the renovation of the Opuwo abattoir to a class C abattoir at a cost of N\$30 000 000. Livestock in Kunene North can finally be slaughtered in Opuwo, and create additional business opportunities for our people. In line with our vision to create wealth, I look forward to support business proposals from our young people as they intend to take advantage of the spin-offs from this government investment. Tanneries, horn polishing and meat processing and catering businesses can complement the abattoir. We can really create wealth if we think outside the box.

Honourable Councillors, Fellow Citizens,

The OPM Disaster Risk Management has been doing well especially during the persistent droughts and occasional flooding in our region.

For the purpose of disaster risk management, the regional council reports that it has registered a total of 37,002 households. The Prime Minister's office reports that only 31,715 households have redeemed their food items. The Regional Council however reports to my office, that 35,002 households have been supported during the reporting period under review. Honourable councillors, these figures point to food items that were meant for 3,287 households not having been accounted for, if these figures are accurate. I direct that The Regional Council conduct an internal audit for accountability purposes.

I must point out to a further disparity between these figures and that of the 2023 National census, which indicates that the entire region has about 28,890 households. That is to say, Government has provided food for 7,002 households more than what the entire region has. Including households that were not registered or eligible to receive this relief food. Honourable Councillors, I find that this is an alarming state of affairs in our region with regards to drought relief food distribution.

Hunger is indeed an emergency, people are vulnerable. As leaders we must therefore guard against and ensure that officials do not exploit the neediest in our society. We therefore must make sure that these types of disparities do not lead to the stockpiling, sale and political weaponization of drought relief and other well intended governmental initiatives.

Honourable Councillors, I refuse to allow this region to be characterised by drought, floods. The Government intervention was indeed timely and much needed in the circumstances. However, I refuse for our people to be characterised as the poor who live on handouts. When times are good and the rain patterns are favourable, this region is not going to throw a pity party for sympathy and dependence.

We will use these conditions to return to our old glory of proud, hardworking and resourceful citizens of our country. Hence the theme of this year's address: "Kunene Region, shifting from promise to wealth and progress".

### **Kunene Vision**

Honourable councillors, fellow citizens,

Allow me therefore to turn to the last part of this report; my vision for this region. I reiterate wealth creation is my developmental agenda. Under the leadership of H.E. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Namibia is not just in safe hands, but also in capable hands to deliver on this vision and the agenda of NDP6.

Kunene Region therefore, fully aligns with the theme: Fostering Economic Growth, Inclusiveness and Resilience for Quality sustainable Development. Our operations must and shall be coordinated to stand on the four pillars of NDP6, as mentioned earlier, in order for our region to realize its full potential.

The region stands at a crossroads where it can "shift from promise, to wealth and progress". Simply put, our agenda is to create visible, tangible wealth at household level by leveraging our regional strengths and addressing its

bottlenecks in a coordinated way. Our region has a plethora of competitive advantages and economic opportunities that can catapult our people into real wealth. The foregoing 2025/2026 budgetary allocations demonstrate that Kunene's development agenda is firmly embedded within NDP 6. I am tempted to say we are a priority region for government.

The location of Kunene Region is a competitive advantage; we sit in a unique position from where we can be a catalyst for development even for other regions, especially our seven northern neighbours. It is therefore my submission that National development will only be truly achieved when regions like Kunene prosper. I am indeed blessed and fortunate to be in pole position to take this region on that journey.

We must therefore look to the future knowing that our current poverty indexes will not hold our region back from harnessing the opportunities, making it possible for the region to leapfrog into a future of real wealth and empowered individuals. We do have the making of becoming the wealthiest region per capita and together we will!

From my consultations, many Namibians continue to have an interest in seeing another harbour on the Namibian West Coast in Kunene Region. My office will continue to actively promote the agenda and engage potential investors in the project and accordingly report to the President on investment prospects in that regard.

However, as earlier said, numbers don't lie. We must understand where we are before we take the first step towards wealth creation. We must know why one of the theoretically wealthiest regions is amongst the lowest income per capita

and has its residents survive on mere salary, government social grants and migrant remittances. I find my answer in the following: We have about 28,000 households in the region. Our rural –urban divide stands at 63% 38%. We are sparsely populated at 1.1 persons per km<sup>2</sup>

The Kunene region is characterized by arid conditions and a primarily livestock-based economy. It is also known that the region is prone to drought, which significantly impacts livestock populations and rangeland productivity. Our cattle herd numbers therefore fluctuate and farming has become a very unpredictable source of income especially for subsistence farmers. Hence the shocking cattle numbers highlighted earlier.

Notwithstanding the above challenges, Kunene is increasingly becoming an investment destination. It is recorded that from the last business establishment census, the region has seen between 2018 and 2023 a 39.2% growth in business establishments. There is evidently a new drive for investment in Kunene. We must therefore expect this trajectory in business growth to continue. However, while we boast of a 39.2% increase in business establishments, one cannot with confidence argue that increase reflects that our people are encouraged and have taken on a culture of conducting commercial activities. Research shows that our rural communities, who are 63% of us, remain on the fringes of commercial activities. The main cause for this exclusion is our known low literacy rate. We should thus promote economic participation and diversification by our people in established and emerging sectors. As it shall be demonstrated hereafter, the Governor's office shall take immediate and radical steps to ensure that the inhabitants of this region take their rightful place in these economic sectors.

Our passiveness in involving ourselves in true commercial activities is demonstrated by the 2023 census. Kunene region only accounted for 1,407 or 2.3 %, of the total business establishments in the country, employing only 9,209 people across all constituencies of Kunene region. Although the business profile appears to be a good mix of micro, small, medium, and large business establishments, the picture is still rather gloomy. These businesses are concentrated around the two biggest urban centres being Opuwo Urban and Outjo. In fact Opuwo Rural constituency recorded the least number of business establishments, at 5%. A comparison of the concentration of these businesses and our rural urban divide tells you that the vast majority of our region do not have businesses and are not trading in the mainstream economy. In fact, it explains our low income per capita and why our people's streams of income are so lean and limited.

Our population is not static and is steadily growing at 2.7% per annum. We increasingly have more mouths to feed from unfavourable and worsening climatic conditions. We must therefore be mindful that our way of life, commercial and farming activities must adapt to our growing population and our climatic conditions. Our human capital remains our most valuable asset that has to take us on a path of true wealth creation. We must enhance this resource. This calls for us to usher our 63% rural community into the mainstream economy to bridge the gap between Kunene's current situation and the aspirations of its people to be wealthy. This calls for a bold and integrated approach with daring initiatives.

I deem it appropriate that we must formalize our rural economies from subsistence farming to commercial entities. To this end, the Governor's office will lead an aggressive campaign in transforming our communities by

commercialising our people's efforts through helping our people to create and register 5,000 commercial entities with BIPA.

While these efforts do not cost much money, it will act as a catalyst to bring 5,000 of the 28,000 Households into the mainstream economic activities, procurement systems and tenders within our region. To this end, the Governor's office calls on all those who are conducting some form of business within our region to get in touch with the respective councillors' offices and express interest in this initiative.

We have 8 traditional Authorities Gazetted in our region in terms of the Traditional Authorities Act 5 of 2000 and I have it on good authority that only one traditional authority has a formally registered company and thus can exploit commercial activities within our region for that traditional community. The Governor's office undertakes that it shall facilitate efforts for each of our traditional authorities to have at least one company registered in terms of Sections 21 of the Company's Act 28 of 2004 through which all our traditional communities may be served.

It is imperative for our resilience and wealth creation to modernize our rural agriculture away from subsistence farming that is currently defined by limited crop yields and high reliance on erratic rainfall patterns. Up scaling crop production, improving irrigation systems, and providing better access to markets are potential areas for growth. Building a resilient agricultural sector is crucial. The future direction should focus on climate-smart agriculture – adopting practices and technologies that maximize productivity per drop of water and maintain the health of the land. This involves promoting drought-resistant crops and livestock. Traditional crops can be reintroduced or improved: for instance, hardy grains like sorghum and pearl millet, and high-



nutrition legumes can be grown with techniques like drip irrigation, conservation tillage, and rainwater harvesting to cope with low rainfall. To this end, I must thank H.E. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah for championing our Drought Resilience and environmental sustainability efforts.

I am therefore very pleased to announce that plans are well underway for the construction of the Kunene Climate Resilience and Agricultural Dam. The dam and other components of it shall be known as “The Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah Centre for Climate Resilience”. 2 stakeholder meetings have been convened, and our people have approved the initiative, suggesting 9 possible construction sites. A high-level technical team of engineers and consultants have been on the ground to inspect the recommended sights. I am informed that these construction works are going to directly absorb around 1,500 unemployed youth from our region.

The dam will not only boost agricultural productivity in the region, it has far reaching positive impact across economic sectors, such as our promising mining prospects. Honourable councillors, I shall keep the Regional Council updated on these developments.

Maintaining food security while generating marketable surpluses is a key activity. Crucially, these efforts should build on indigenous knowledge of the land, blending it with modern innovations, thereby empowering local farmers as pioneers of sustainable, climate-smart agriculture. In line with environmental sustainability, economic growth, transformation, resilience and land use, our office has concluded a concept note which shall be the basis of consultations with all the local authority councils and willing commercial

farmers as an initiative to encourage the formation of PPP's between these stakeholders for food production. In terms of the concept note, Outjo has been recommended as the hub for food processing.

Honourable councillors, this initiative will optimize the use of our land, diversify income streams for our local authorities, absorb more than 600 unemployed youth and increase the profitability of our commercial farmlands. However, as Governor alone, I cannot bring this initiative to fruition. Therefore, I implore the local authorities to have thorough input and cooperation during the imminent consultations. It is for our region. The Government has initiatives to encourage the diversification of farming into other areas. To this end a Poultry Value Chain development scheme is in place with a budget allocation of N\$360,000 for the region. A Cereal Value Chain development scheme is budgeted for at N\$504,000. A Horticulture Value Chain development scheme is budgeted at N\$360,000. Outjo can tap into these initiatives to optimize food production, while other constituencies focus on other sectors such as mining.

Mining remains the mainstay of Namibia's economy, being the largest contributor to the GDP. Namibia is the fourth largest exporter of non-fuel minerals in Africa and the world's fifth largest producer of uranium. To align with Namibia's ambition for industrialization and job creation, Kunene must diversify its economic activities beyond subsistence farming and government services to include mining.

We are 4% of the total population of Namibia sitting on about 14% of Namibia's land mass. We are not just sitting on soil and water, but also on a wealth of mineral deposits, such as copper, tin, iron ore, and a host of precious stones. Our region is proving to be the next face of mining in the country.

While it is not a dominant sector in the region, mining has potential for growth and diversification, with a focus on value addition and industrial policy initiatives. Central Government is spending over N\$11,000,000 on the national airborne geographical survey in Kunene Region and over N\$15,000,000 on the Regional Geographical Mapping. There are plans to construct an informal trader's platform in the region. We encourage companies who are accorded prospecting licenses to not sit idle, they must do the necessary explorations and take the necessary actions for actual mining to start.

We must encourage and foster partnerships that will help Namibia and Kunene Region to extract and add value to our mineral resources, creating jobs and business opportunities for our communities. To this end I am pleased to announce that the Governor's office has facilitated a trip by the Ondore Traditional Authority to China. Negotiations are ongoing; we are on the brink of securing a U\$50,000,000 investment for factories that will add value to our mineral extraction. This will bring to fruition the Government's promise during campaigns that no minerals from our region must leave in its raw form. I am informed that these factories are likely to employ up to 1,600 of our unemployed young people.

Our small scale miners, those who take a pick axe will of course form part of those who will benefit from the registration of 5,000 companies. It is also true that there has been simmering tensions and un-pleasantries between our small scale miners, EPL holders/applicants and established mining companies. These needless tensions need dialogue and proper facilitation. To this end the Governor's office will convene a Kunene Mining and Energy expo that will be

characterized by an evening of dialogue amongst stakeholders and a gala dinner.

Setting up a small-scale mining and lapidary centre in Kunene could allow local processing of gemstones and ores, feeding into the manufacturing pillar of the national growth strategy. I am of the opinion that Khorixas can become a seat of precious stone polishing. The ministry of mines and energy has plans to put into operation the polishing factory that already exists in Khorixas within the next three months.

I must also report that the government is aware of disputes between mining companies and our conservation efforts. I am here referring to the dispute between license holders in Gwandagab Mine and various conservancies in the Khorixas vicinity. I am informed that the said mine has the potential to create up to 400 jobs for the residents of Khorixas and transform that town. However, due to the dispute, the mine is inoperative. To this end, I hope that this matter finds an amicable solution.

In conclusion fellow leaders, as a political leader you are only as powerful as the strength of the community that puts in into position. These people in Kunene are our backbone. We will do well to empower them moving this region from promising prospects and opportunities; into a new direction wealth and economic emancipation.

I thank you.