Republic of Namibia

STATEMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF FIRST LADY BY

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MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

ON OCCASION OF THE

LAUNCH OF THE CSI HOUSING PROJECT

OTAVI

04 March 2016
• Director of proceedings;
• Your Excellency Madame Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;
• Honorable Otto Lipinge, Regional Governor of Otjozondjupa Region;
• Honorable Laina Nekundi, Regional Councilor of Otavi Constituency;
• Your Worship Martha Shipanga, Mayor of Otavi Town;
• Honorable Regional and Local Authorities Councilors present here today;
• Mr Hans-Wilhelm Schutte, Managing Director of Ohorongo Cement;
• Senior Government Officials;
• Spiritual Leaders;
• Members of the Media;
• Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is indeed with great honor and pleasure to be here today to deliver a statement and introduce our Keynote speaker, the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia. We have convened here today to witness and cherish this important developmental milestone as a result of joint efforts between various important stakeholders.

Director of ceremonies;
Ladies and gentlemen;
It is significant to note that any investment into a country is very important. However, it is important that such an investment enhance and accelerate national development of both physical infrastructure, as well as human capital development. This is indeed what we are witnessing here today, ladies and gentlemen. Three entities from the Private Sector have joined hands with an NGO, hence supporting and complementing Government initiatives and efforts, to positively change the livelihood of the Namibian people for the better!

Housing should be a component of quality living environments, which tends to promote health, safety, order, amenity, convenience and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. All these aid in the fight against poverty eradication.

The implementation of housing schemes cannot stand apart from good governance, land management, administration principles and capacity in this regard. It must be built and improved on, especially at sub-national government levels.

The fact that Namibia is categorized as a middle income country with a GDP per capita of US$ 5,719 in 2015, it is still one of the most stable countries in Africa with attractive investment opportunities. However, the Gini coefficient of 0.59712, makes it one of the most unequal societies in the world.

Housing in Namibia is currently facing many challenges, of which I will cover only a few today:

-Increasing costs
Due to the continuing increase of input costs, and the mismatch between rapidly rising demands for houses, the prices of houses continues to skyrocket. According to the Knight Frank Global House Price Index, Namibia ranks the second highest in terms of the increase
in house prices, with Dubai being the highest. This is making it increasingly difficult for low and middle income groups to acquire housing.

- **Unemployment rate**
  With the current high unemployment rate (28.1% in 2014), there is a sizeable group that earns a very low income, or does not earn an income at all. Low income earners ranges between NS 100 and NS 4600.00 per annum, and are hit hardest by housing shortages. This leads to the next challenge.

- **Access to credit facilities**
  The same index of 2011 showed that more than 73% of Namibians do not have access to credit facilities by the financial sector, and consequently cannot afford to buy urban land or housing. These groups do not qualify for housing loans from financial institutions, due to lack of collateral and low income base. Thus such groups are marginalised in terms of access to affordable and adequate housing.

- **Lack of Serviced land**
  Another challenge is the availability of serviced land. Government is hard at work trying to address such matters through the revision of policies and legislative frameworks, as well as through the implementation of the TIPEEG programme, in order to boost housing schemes at a subnational level.

- **Supply & demand**
  After Independence, rural-urban migration increased, which led to even more severe housing shortages in the urban areas. This creates yet another challenge, as the current supply is thus lower compared to the demand.
Director of ceremonies;

The Government of the Republic of Namibia has undertaken to address the above mentioned challenges through various radical interventions. The Ministry of urban and Rural Development, is implementing two important programmes namely, the Mass Housing Development Programme, and the Massive Urban Land Servicing Programme to ensure a boost in housing stock in our country. The ministry is also in the process of repealing the laws in our quest to accelerate delivery of urban serviced land and housing. The Ministry however continues to support housing initiatives such as the Shack Dwellers Federation and Build Together Programmes.

However, the Government cannot address the housing equation alone, hence the need for all stakeholders to join efforts to enable us to develop this country. We are thus extremely thankful that the private sector, in particular Ohorongo Cement, FNB Foundation and Pupkewitz Foundation have joined hands with Government today in its quest to deliver affordable housing so as the fight against poverty.

Finally, I would hereby like to hand over to Madame Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia and Patron of the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia to present the keynote address.

I thank you.

Your Excellency Madame Geingos, the floor is yours!