



**Republic of Namibia**  
**State of the Region Address**  
**Hardap Region**  
**28 July 2021, Mariental**

**The Governor**  
**HONOURABLE REVEREND SALOMON**  
**MENTHOS APRIL**

*Honorable Dausab, Chairperson of Hardap Regional Council*

*Honorable Regional Councilors present*

*Your Worship Kuhlmann, the Mayor of Mariental Municipality and All Local Authority Councilors present*

*The Acting Chief Regional Officer*

*All management cadres and representatives from all Line Ministries*

*The Acting Regional Commander of the Namibian Police*

*Officer in Charge of Hardap Correctional facilities*

*Chief Executive Officers of All Local Authorities*

*Distinguished Traditional Leaders*

*Inhabitants of the Great Hardap Region*

*Members of the Media*

*Viewers and listeners on different media platforms*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

Honourable Chairperson, I would like to thank you for convening a Special Session of Council to allow us to execute the mandate entrusted upon us by Article 110A subsection (5) and (6) of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, to present a State of the Region Address (SoRA).

In this report, I will present the following aspects crosscutting all sectors:

- Effective governance through improved community-based planning, tourism, agriculture, education, health, safety and security, gender and housing

### **In order to promote Effective governance through Community Based Planning**

I held a meeting in May 2020, with the Constituency Councillors and the Local Authorities, to review annual budgets and development plans. A key outcome was that we need to pro-actively set long term development targets.

Similarly, external resource mobilisation, Public-Private-Partnership and revenue collection should be enhanced in good faith to improve livelihood of our fellow citizens. It was also emphasised that the needs and opportunities identified at local authority and constituency level, must inform the overall strategic plan of the Hardap Regional Council, in order to ensure bottom-up participatory planning.

The Directorate of Development Planning was assigned to coordinate the completion of the Regional five (5) year strategic plan. A community based participatory development planning model has therefore been formulated. Implementation has started in Mariental Rural Constituency in the Hoachanas settlement, and will be rolled out to all constituencies, with support from Namibia Development Trust and RISE Namibia.

We introduced the process in Hoachanas by mapping settlement boundaries and existing services, collecting household and key informant socio-economic data, as well as data on development needs through a community planning studio. The information gathered will inform development and upgrading of services, as well as compiling an economic profile and a five (5) year strategic plan for the settlement.

## **On the Tourism Sector**

In collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, we are committed to unlock the potential of the industry for the benefit of local communities.

We have established the 1<sup>st</sup> Tourism Forum in the country, comprised of all stakeholders in the sector to oversee tourism development and economic growth.

The two conservancies namely Oskop and /Huibes have received a concession for Farm Sukses in the Namib Naukluft Park, and have signed a head concession contract with the Ministry.

Funding was secured for the following projects:

Oskop Conservancy integrated farming project was funded with an amount of N\$1.8 million by the Environmental Investment Fund in Gibeon Constituency.

/Huibes Conservancy Livestock and wildlife management project received N\$1.5 million from the same funder in Daweb Constituency.

We received infrastructure development funding from Namparks Five Project to the tune of N\$18 million at Sesriem Namib Naukluft Park entry still in the Daweb Constituency

Further funding was received for water provision for game, transport and park maintenance equipment valued at N\$1.5 million from Namparks Five Project in the same constituency.

The Road Fund Administration and Roads Authority funded the construction of 12.5 km road worth N\$38 million at Sesriem in the Daweb Constituency. The construction was completed.

### **In the Agriculture and Food Security Sector**

The following projects are aimed at food security under the auspices of the Office of the Governor realized through external funding from corporate and international development partners:

Stampriet Food System Program funded by WFP at the tune of Two Hundred and four thousand Namibian Dollars in Mariental Rural Constituency at Stampriet Primary School

WFP committed funding valued at Five Hundred and Eighty-eight thousand Namibian Dollars in Mariental Urban Constituency for Regional Emergency Operations Centre.

WFP further committed another Three Hundred and Sixty thousand for Food Systems Dialogue Expo in Mariental Rural Constituency aimed at consolidating the Hardap Regional Food and Nutrition Security Strategy and Implementation Plan

Another achievement is that Hardap Region is serving on the National Projects Steering Committee for the project – Build Back Better - aimed at enhancing food security during emergency related shocks.

In addition, UNDP provided funding amounting to N\$1.9 million for food and nutrition Security at Farm Daweb Green Scheme in Maltahohe.

A multi-sectoral technical team is coordinated by the Directorate of Development Planning in the Hardap Regional Council.

**Other agricultural projects funded directly through the Ministry of Agriculture are as follows:**

The NAMSIP project has a capital injection amounting to One point Four billion (N\$ 1.4 billion) from the African Development Bank, Government of the Republic of Namibia and contributions from beneficiaries (farmers).

Horticulture Value Chain Development Scheme started during the 2019/20 financial year at a tune of Six hundred thousand Namibian dollars (N\$600 000) and 2020/21 at Eight hundred thousand Namibian dollars (N\$800,000), benefitting 31 and 62 farmers respectively, with subsidized seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and machinery and equipment.

Poultry Value Chain Development Scheme, commenced in 2020/21 with a regional allocation of Three hundred thousand Namibian dollars (N\$300,000), which has thus far benefitted Twenty-two (22) farmers. The scheme's overall objective is to provide poultry producers with subsidized inputs and build capacity.

Small Stock Distribution & Development in Communal Areas project benefitted 20 farmers with 20 ewes and 1 ram (420 goats) to the tune of N\$1 million. The project is aimed to provide quality core breeding flock of suitable local small stock

In addition, the region implemented the Hydroponic Fodder Production Systems funded through the Central Emergency Response Fund of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform. A total of N\$1.4 million was allocated through the purchase and installation of 11 hydroponic structures, barley seeds, veterinary medicine and capacity building.

**Other key achievements in agriculture include the following:**

- Three thousand five hundred and seventy-six (3,576) farmers were supported through training and extension services.
- Farmers were supported to register five (5) cooperatives.
- Fifty-four (54) Community based gardens were established.
- Thirty-six (36) farmers benefited from Agriculture Technology Development.

**Under the rural water supply and sanitation program the following investments were made:**

- 20 boreholes were constructed at a cost of Five million, Seven hundred thousand Namibian dollars at the following constituencies; Gibeon, Rehoboth Rural, and Rehoboth Urban East.
- One borehole was rehabilitated at a cost of one hundred and sixty-seven thousand Namibian dollars in Karanas, Rehoboth Rural constituency.
- Two earth dams were rehabilitated at a cost of One million Namibian dollars at Fleyveld and Tafelkop in Daweb and Gibeon constituencies respectively
- Water points were rehabilitated at a cost of Two point three million Namibian dollars across the Region
- Water supply by tanker services was done at the cost of One point Five million Namibian dollars at Withuis and Bloukranz

The Community led Total Sanitation program primarily focuses on behavioral change targeting communities in rural areas for ending open defecation. This program aims to enable communities to become Open Defecation Free.

It was piloted in Hardap Region in July 2020 with the financial assistance from UNICEF at the tune of Fifty-three thousand Namibia Dollars. A total of five (5) villages have been triggered of which four (4) are in Gibeon constituency and one (1) in Daweb Constituency.

Two hundred and thirty-two (232) Ventilation Improved Pit latrines (VIP) toilets were constructed across the Region to the tune of Four million Namibian dollars in order to reduce open defecation.

**In the Department of Land Reform** and the Land Purchase Program no farm was bought during the Financial Year under review thus, no family was resettled.

However, under the Communal land rights Registration Program, Fifty-eight (58) Customary land rights were successfully verified and mapped in Mariental Rural and Gibeon Constituencies.

Water Infrastructure Development/Rehabilitation is still ongoing on the resettlement farms where three (3) farming units were equipped with solar pumping systems. Water storage infrastructure (tanks & troughs) were set up on six (6) farming units.

## **I shall now proceed to the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture**

A total number of Twenty-six thousand, six hundred and sixty-six (26,666) learners wrote end of year examination in 2020.

Out of Ten thousand, one hundred and Fifty-five (10, 155) in Junior Primary Phase, on average eighty-point seven percentage (80.7%) were promoted to the next grade.

Out of Nine thousand, five hundred and eighteen (9, 518) in Senior Primary Phase, on average Seventy-Eight percentage (78%) were promoted to the next grade.

Out of Four thousand and eight (4,008) in Junior Secondary Phase, on average sixty-eight percentage (68%) were promoted to the next grade.

Out of Two thousand, nine hundred and eighty-five (2, 985) in Senior Secondary Phase, on average twenty-six-point three percentage were promoted to the next grade.

Four (4) Schools are offering Advanced Subsidiary namely: Dr Lemmer SS, M&K Gertze Technical School, Mariental SS and C //Oaseb SS, while Twenty-nine (29) student teachers graduated from the Diploma in Junior Education In-service Training

In order to complement Central Government efforts, the Office of the Governor has initiated several projects to enhance the quality of education delivery. Land owners of AA Denk Memorial School in Kalkrand, Rehoboth Rural Constituency, donated the school and four hectares of land to the Government through the Office of the Governor.

Scholarships were secured for 5 learners to study with Nantong University in China as well as the enrolment of 14 students for nursing studies at D'Expert Health Care Institute in Keetmanshoop, of which an amount of N\$60 580 was paid by Namibia Community Trust through the Office of the Governor.

The following capital projects were completed in year under review

- Vooruitsig Hostel at a cost of Sixty-eight million (N\$68 million)
- Renovation of Mariental Secondary School at a cost twelve million (N\$12 million)

- Renovation of Dr Lemmer Secondary School at a cost Six million, eight hundred thousand (N\$6.8 million)

The following Basic Education Facilities were constructed.

- One million, eight hundred thousand (N\$1.8million) was spent on construction of classrooms (4 x Rehoboth Primary School, 2 x Daweb Secondary School, 1 x Oanob Primary School) in Rehoboth Urban-West, Daweb and Rehoboth Urban-East Constituencies.
- A new primary school, Acacia Primary School was started in 2020 in Rehoboth Urban-East Constituency. The buildings are being rented from Methodist Church of Southern Africa at a tune of One hundred and fourteen thousand (N\$114, 000) per year

The Government allocated Twenty-nine point five million (N\$29.5 million) to improve facilities to prevent spread of the corona virus.

Of these, Seventeen million (N\$17 million) was spent on construction and renovation of ablution facilities at twenty-two (22) sites namely: Hoachanas hostel, Empelheim Secondary School, Mariental Primary School, Mariental Secondary School, Sonop Primary School, PJ Tsaitaib Combined School, Aranos Library, WM Jod Primary School, C //Oaseb Secondary School and Hostel, Capt Hendrick Witbooi Primary School, Rev PA Schmidt Primary School, Maltahohe Library, Namalia Hostel, Nabasib Primary School, Rehoboth Primary School, Rehoboth Secondary School and M&K Gertze Technical School.

Twelve million, five hundred thousand (N\$12.5million) was used to renovate the following hostels and work is completed successfully at:

Stampriet boys' and girls' hostel in Mariental Rural Constituency

C //Oaseb SS three (3) large hostel blocks in Gibeon Constituency

Klein Aub Resource School three (3) boys' dormitories in Rehoboth Rural Constituency

One teacher's house at Rooiduin Secondary School in Aranos Constituency

One hundred and twenty-two thousand (N\$122 000) was used to ensure water provision at Groendraai and J&W Mouton Primary Schools.



Provision of school feeding program to 9151 learners at a tune of One million, three hundred thousand (N\$1.3 million). The Stampriet PS feeding program initiative by WFP is meant to complement the ongoing Government program with an emphasis in guaranteeing sustainability in food security and concentration during lessons to improve students' achievement.

The Governor's Office in consultation with traditional Authorities has embarked upon a program of identifying heritage sites. This program is aimed at promoting a culture of historical remembrance, customs, and identity. It will also stimulate local economic activities through heritage tourism.

The following sites were declared as heritage sites on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2021:

- Witbooi's homestead and Church
- House of late Reverend Markus Witbooi and Mrs. Lea Witbooi
- House of Gaob Hendrik Witbooi !Nanseb /Gabemab
- ELCRN Church in Gibeon

**Moving into Health and Social Services matters, I would like to present the following:**

As we are still battling with the Covid 19 pandemic it is befitted that I provide a brief update on the regional situation as at 27 July 2021. The total number of people tested till date are Thirty-Three Thousand, two hundred and twelve (33 212) of which Seven Thousand six hundred and eight (76080 were confirmed as having COVID19. Seven Thousand one hundred and ninety one (7191) people have recovered whilst one hundred and eleven (111) are currently active. Unfortunately, Three hundred and six (306) people have succumbed to due to COVID.

**May their souls rest in peace**

The total number of people vaccinated as at 26 July 2021 stands at Nine Thousand five hundred and thirty One (9531). I am pleased to announce that thirteen percent (13 %) of those eligible has receive their first dose of vaccines whilst three percent (3%) is fully vaccinated.

Rehoboth district remains the regional epi-center of the outbreak followed by Mariental District with Aranos district reporting the lowest number of cases

During the year under review a total of 54 Health Care workers were recruited, of which 95% are Namibians.

The Measles and Rubella vaccination rate stands at 78% which is relatively low compared to the 90% coverage as per the WHO set standard. I therefore urge all parents to take their children for immunization according to the schedule on the child health passport

100% of women attending antenatal care were tested for HIV and know their status. In addition, 97% of babies born from HIV positive mothers tested negative whilst our HIV Treatment coverage has increased from 81% to 98%.

A total of One Thousand three Hundred and Fifty-eight men were circumcised for the year under review. Hence, I urge all men between the ages of 15-49 years to visit your nearest clinic or hospital to get booked for circumcision

Our TB treatment success rate stands at 81% whilst deaths as a result of TB has increased from 9% in the previous year to 13 % during the year under review. It calls for concerted efforts to bring about reduction in the death rate.

On a brighter note, we have been very fortunate during the year under review to receive both high- and low-tech equipment for effective health service delivery. In addition, we have received furniture not only for hospitals but also to furnish accommodation used for health professionals especially for medical officers. PPE and other medical supplies were available throughout the response and are being replenish as need arises. Mariental and Rehoboth districts received ambulances as well

Mariental district has received a 12-bed high care facility for the treatment of COVID 19 cases to the tune of N\$ 2. 8 million. In addition, Mariental hospital received prefabricated structures which includes a laboratory, pharmacy and a septic theatre to serve on the hospital ground to the tune of N\$ 5.8 million.

Aranos Clinic situated in Rooiduin area has reached completion and was constructed at the value of N\$ 12 million.

### **On Safety and Security sector**

To curb crime and enforce law and order, the Police have a total number of hundred and fourteen (114) vehicles at their disposal. Out of these, Sixty-six vehicles are operational and forty-eight are grounded because of mechanical defects. The Hardap Correctional Facility is providing auto-mechanical services to the Police Force.

Stock Theft Reported for 2020/2021 to the police are as follows:

A total of Two hundred and twenty-nine (229) stock theft cases were reported and two hundred and seven (207) adult males were arrested in respect of these cases. Stock theft is rife in Hardap Region due to impact of COVID-19, a total number of One thousand nine hundred and seventy-three of large and small livestock to the value of Five Million was stolen of which Nine Hundred and Seventy thousand, and three hundred was recovered.

The crime rate across the Region in the fourteen police stations range from the highest forty-nine percentage in Rehoboth, twenty-two percent in Mariental with the lowest recorded of Zero percentage in Derm and Six percent in Gibeon.

I will now report on the number of drug related cases. Ninety-one cases were reported and one hundred and five (105) males and Seventeen (17) females were arrested. The following substances were confiscated.

**Cannabis**, Seven thousand five hundred and eight one kilogram worth Seventy-five thousand eight hundred and ten Namibian dollars

**Skunk**, Three thousand and six hundred and fifty-five kilograms worth One Hundred and Two, seven hundred and fifty Namibian Dollars

**Mandrax**, Eight Hundred and Fifteen Kilograms, worth Ninety-seven thousand and eight hundred

**Crack Cocaine**, Eighteen units worth One thousand eight hundred Namibia Dollars

### **I am now moving to the Hardap Correctional Facility**

Psychosocial Rehabilitation Programmes were offered to Two hundred and thirty-four (234) inmates at the Hardap Correctional Facility.

The following education programmes were offered to one hundred and thirty-five (135) inmates:

67 Functional Literacy

50 Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE)

11 NAMCOL Grade 10 and 12 Final examinations

7 Tertiary Education end year Examinations

The following healthcare services were provided

One hundred and two (102) inmates were circumcised.

Six hundred and one (601) inmates were screened for Tuberculosis.

Thirty-eight (38) inmates were offered for the first time HIV counselling and testing services.

In complementing the Central Government feeding program for inmates, the Hardap Correctional Facility continued to implement its horticulture and animal husbandry projects to promote self-sustainability.

These projects saved Government One Million, Four Hundred and Eight Nine Thousand Namibian Dollars. The Correctional Facility should be commended for the initiative. Other correctional facilities in Namibia such as Swakopmund, Tsumeb, Luderitz also benefit from the produce of Hardap Region

The following projects were executed to a combined total of Two Hundred and Forty-Nine thousand, three hundred Namibian Dollars:

- Demarcation of classrooms into offices
- Renovation family house
- Construction of offenders' kiosk
- Renovation of the facility kitchen
- Construction of showers in short term unit (Short Term Unit)

**Key achievements in the Ministry of Trade and Industrialisation are as follows:**

Business registration process has been improved through digital processing. The turnaround time has greatly improved with 120 businesses registered in the past 12 months

The same has been done with Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises certification, to allow registered businesses to participate in the Public Procurement Process (65 certificates were issued in the past 12 Months)

Fourteen Thousand Five Hundred face masks were produced by local suppliers from material procured by the Ministry for distribution to vulnerable persons in the fight against Covid19

### **On Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare**

The Division Child Welfare Services has rendered the following services:

Counselling and support were provided to victims and families who have experienced different forms of violence. Children were removed from harmful environments and taken to places of safety.

The following grants are provided for by the Government: maintenance, special maintenance and foster care. These Eleven Thousand Three Hundred and Eight (11 308) beneficiaries received an amount of Two Million Eight Hundred Thousand Namibian dollars.

The Community Empowerment Division received five (5) million from the European Union to construct three (3) Early Childhood Development Centers in Aranos, Daweb and Rehoboth Urban East Constituencies.

ECD training for ninety-three (93) educarers was conducted for seven weeks and their services is inclusive of a monthly allowance. The total number of children enrolled at early childhood development centers is One Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty-Seven (1,557).

### **Moving to Veteran Affairs**

The cumulative number of registered veterans for the region currently stands at 393. The ongoing number of funded projects for Hardap are sixty-six (66), to the amount of about N\$12 million. Thirteen (13) approved projects to the value of about 2. 5 million are still awaiting funding. Seventeen (17) families were assisted with funding to erect tombstones on the graves of deceased veterans

## **On Sports, Youth and National Services.**

The Kai//Kanaxab construction of a Vocational Training Centre was funded by Namibia Training Authority (N\$ 12 million) and African Development Bank (N\$71 million). After completion this Training Centre will accommodate 240 students.

Youth gardens were established in Mariental and Stampriet, run by youth themselves.

Contact sport was relatively limited due to the Covid - 19 pandemic. We could however send athletes to represent the Region on the National Athletics competition. Youth members also participated in the transitional Namibian Premier Football League when it kicked off.

## **Service provision by Local Authorities**

### **Aranos Village Council**

Replacement of Old Asbestos Pipes and Rotten Pipes from the water network at N\$ 1,8 million

Revamping of Council Workshop and official residence for the cost of Five Hundred and Fifty-Nine Thousand Namibian Dollars.

Supply of Water Pipes and fittings in Nuwerus Informal Settlement at a cost of Three Hundred Thousand Namibian Dollars.

5 KM road Maintenance through RFA Funds costing Seven Hundred and Sixty Thousand Namibian Dollars.

Procurement of 165 Prepaid Water Meters at N\$ 1,6 million and 65 Prepaid Electrical Meters at Three Hundred and Ninety-Six Thousand Namibian Dollars.

Upgrading of Sewerage Ponds at N\$ 2 million

ABC Lines to Veepos for the Shack Dwellers housing program at Two Hundred and Thirty-Five Thousand Namibian Dollars.

Upgrading of Service Station Juncture to Rooiduin Area at Eight Hundred Thousand Namibian Dollars through Road Fund Administration (RFA) Funding

Allocation of 100 erven to Shack Dwellers Federation.

Installation of subsidized prepaid electricity in the informal settlement for 40 households at a cost of Two hundred and fifty thousand (N\$250 000)

Assistance to 31 affected families in the informal areas of Nuwerus, Bosduin, Veepos with blankets, mattresses and corrugated iron sheets

### **Stampriet Village Council.**

Construction of Sewer Reticulation System to replace the existing vacuum system at a cost of N\$ 11 million

Putting up of Water Tower at the cost of N\$5 million

Memorandum of Understanding signed between Development Workshop Namibia Trust for servicing of land

### **Mariental Municipality**

Construction of a sewer pump station and an elevated water tower for Empelheim at a cost of N\$7.6 million

Acquire funding for the roll-out of 800 pre-paid water meters and construction of 200 toilets in the informal settlements at the cost of N\$4.7 million

Construction of a fire station for Mariental at the cost of N\$5,5 million.

Allocation of 321 erven and issuing of certificates of ownership to Shack Dweller Federation

### **Gibeon Village Council**

Replacement of water lines for 30 houses at the cost of N\$ 2 million

Sewer construction to connect to houses at a cost of Three hundred and twenty thousand

Regravelling of road at Six Hundred and Twenty Thousand Namibian Dollars

Construction of butimen road at a cost of N\$ 2 million

Allocation of 40 erven and issuing of certificates of ownership  
to Shack Dweller Federation

### **Kalkrand Village Council**

Installation of sewer Reticulation and Water Reticulation at the cost of twenty-four million (N\$24 000)

### **Rehoboth Town Council**

Construction of Sewer and water services N\$1.04mil to provide services to 193 Erven

Construction of Municipal Services (Sewer and Water) to about 300 Erven N\$2.2mil

Replacement and installation of electricity 500 prepayment meters in phase 1 N\$2.8mil

Construction of a fire station N\$4mil

### **Gochas Village Council**

Sewerage Project at a cost of Three point two million (N\$ 3 226 778.00)

Roads Maintenance at a cost of Six hundred and eight thousand (N\$ 608 837.60)

Allocation of 11 erven and issuing certificates of ownership to Shack Dweller Federation

### **Honorable Chairperson, the following are the interventions initiated by my office on low-cost Housing**

My Office has worked closely with Shack Dwellers Federation, the National Housing Action Group and the Mobile Telecommunication Company Namibia (MTC) to fast-track access to land and low-cost housing in the following settlements, villages and towns.

A total number of eighty-seven houses were constructed at



- Gochas (Aranos Constituency) – 11 Houses
- Gibeon (Gibeon Constituency) – 13 Houses
- Maltahohe (Daweb Constituency) – 24 Houses
- Stampriet (Mariental Rural Constituency) - 13 Houses
- Aranos (Aranos Constituency) – 26 houses

65 Hectares of land was donated by ELCRN to the Government through the Office of the Governor for the benefit of informal settlement residents in Mariental.

2000 square metres of land was donated by Former Minister of Poverty Eradication, Honorable Bishop Emeritus Zephania Kameeta, to the Office of the Governor to build a multi-purpose youth center in Mariental.

**In summary, I would like to present ongoing and upcoming projects**

The process of establishing Nampost Services at Hoachanas is 70% completed.

Construction of more houses is upcoming for Hoachanas, Gochas, Stampriet and Maltahohe

Milk Value Chain Development will commence in the current financial year, with a budget allocation of N\$500 000.00.

Road rehabilitation – Gochas intersection in Hardap Region to Tses in IIKharas Region.

My Office has partnered with my counterpart in the Oshana region to strengthen effective governance Accountability and Transparency in collaboration with the Regional Councils

Similar partnerships have begun with Erongo and IIKharas Regions through the Offices of respective Governors to stimulate economic activities in agriculture, fishing, mining and education

The Hardap Region will benefit from phase 2 of the UNDP funded program: Strengthening Namibia Food System to recover from emergencies and disease related shocks through the Build-Better-Program

Expansion of farming and strengthening of horticulture at Bernafay and Westfallen Farms in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is ongoing

Ten million is budgeted for a construction of a new Primary School in Mariental

The Hardap Region will benefit from the Integrated Climate Resilient Community based Range Land and Livestock Value Chain Project which is an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The Governor of Iikharas Region and myself have initiated the IIAub fund for targeted programs in socio-economic spheres in the two Regions

Hardap region is further engaging the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, to develop a long-term Cultural Heritage Trail.

**In conclusion**, I want to touch on general challenges and critical interventions.

At a more operational level, aging fleets and shortage of vehicles remain a challenge. Maintenance of the old fleet is becoming unsustainable, hence need to be replaced.

Further, the implementation of capital projects remains slow and some came to a complete stand still. We must therefore work at both regional and national level to find innovative ways of fast tracking the implementation process.

We observe challenges with filling key vacant positions across all the sectors.

We should partner with national and international organizations to support young professionals to upgrade their skills and young people to obtain relevant qualifications.

It is also important to conduct a formal study to better understand the reasons behind staff turnover and under performance in some areas in the region.

Dropout rates continue to remain a grave source of concern and we have to move much faster to address underlying reasons for this unacceptable

situation. Poverty and unemployment need to be addressed with the vigor it deserves.

It is unacceptable that about 60% of people continue to live in shacks without access to water and sanitation. We must therefore fast track housing delivery and sanitation, as well as service delivery in general.

It is equally important to invest in critical sectors such as agriculture in order to ensure food and nutrition security at household level. I want to thank the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Development Program and the World Food Program for the investments they have made. These partnerships with UN agencies have seen commitment of investments of over N\$ 4 million for the last year.

In just one year, we have proven that working together as a team can bring tangible results.

Therefore, I want to thank the team that worked tirelessly to make these externally sourced investments possible.

We can only achieve results if we cooperate as a team across all sectors, both as politicians and professionals in the best interest of the people we serve, as Together Each Achieve More. Let us hold hands and work towards a common goal and elevate our collective interests above our group or individual interests.

Finally, I would like to thank the Regional and Local Authority Councilors, the Hardap Region Council, community at large and all stakeholders across the sectors, for all your contributions during a year that was not so easy. We have proven beyond reasonable doubt that we are indeed a resilient society in Hardap Region. Given all the collaboration we have enjoyed across the sectors and initiatives taken we can only grow from strength to strength if we continue with what we have started during the year under review.

We have seen an increase in community involvement and a much stronger level of ownership so I would encourage us all to forge ahead in the spirit of collective good for the region

Once again, I encouraged all residents of the Hardap region to go for COVID 19 vaccination, as this is the only way in which we can save precious lives.

I thank you