

# CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION ON LAND REFORM

**Inclusive Access to Land for the Urbanising  
Namibians**

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**NALAO/NHAG/SDFN**



# INTRODUCTION

- The momentum of urbanisation in the world is unabated and Namibia is no exception: Namibia after independence was 28% urbanized but the 2011 revealed that urbanization has already grown to 42% and current projections are that by 2020 urbanization would be 66% and more than 70% by 2030.
- Recent informal settlement back yard profiles indicate that 228,423 shacks in 308 informal settlements estimate to accommodate up to 950,000 people
- As Namibia is gearing itself towards the second land conference the decisions and strategies in terms of making urban land more accessible for all Namibians is crucial to bring about socio-spatial justice and poverty eradication.



# INTRODUCTION

- Namibia has faced mounting challenges in terms of housing and urban land issues which has been in the public domain because of widespread reporting, public debate and social activism.
- Land and housing remains prohibitively expensive in Namibia with no end in sight for speculative pricing.
- Especially effected is the youth, for example in the City of Windhoek the Shack Dwellers Federation groups have not been able to access for the past 12 years, which mean that it is difficult to find a federation head of household under 40 years of age in the city.



# Contextual Analysis

- Security of land and basic services to enable a home for their families is still a basic need for the majority of Namibians.
- Additionally for the urban poor access to decent, secure land remains a critical issue because access to land cannot be separated from the struggle of poor households to survive, earn, prosper and lift itself out of poverty.
- After 28 years after independence there are still entrenched class based socio-spatial segregation in our towns and cities Namibia.
- As urbanization continues poverty is also being urbanized which leads to the increasing concentration of poverty in urban areas.
- This situation is contributing to the reality that almost half of Namibia's population lives in informal settlements.
- Thus, participatory informal settlement upgrading can be used as a key tool that can help with housing and land delivery that includes the communities.



# Contextual Analysis

- Poor people have good reasons for moving to urban areas. People are coming to urban land and will keep on coming as long as there is the slightest prospect of a better life.
- There is an ever growing challenge to keep up with the growing demand for housing, infrastructure and basic services.
- Local authorities as the governments of proximity to the people has an important role to play in the provision of access to conveniently located land, services, housing and the benefits of urban life.



# Key Issues

Considering the current situation and potential options for the way forward the following challenges and issues need to be recognized as the issues that affect the ability of our country to respond adequately to provide improved access to urban land.

1. Innovative and inclusive planning instruments.
2. Conflicts between elected councils and traditional leadership that needs to be managed with sensitivity.
3. Lack of a sustainable economic base and unemployment in smaller local authority influence finance available for development
4. Partnerships and collaboration between local authorities and non-governmental organizations and communities need to be strengthened.



# Key Issues

5. Poor people continue to address their housing needs themselves through incremental improvement over time, if they have access to tenure
6. New low income houses are located too far away from the means of livelihood of the low-income population facing high cost of transportation and long traveling times
7. The Flexible Land Tenure Act is not implemented yet
8. Other types of housing tenure, especially increased opportunities for decent rental housing are secondary to owners occupation.
9. The emphasis on 'peoples housing solutions' have contributed to the acknowledgement of local initiatives and innovations led by organizations like the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN/NHAG) and other saving groups formed and run by the urban poor



# Key Strategic Options

The following are the proposed strategies to make more land available for the urban poor.

- **Strategy Option 1: Focusing on basic services and security of tenure to the majority through**
  - Strengthen and Scale Up Community Land Information Program (CLIP) and other land related information systems
  - Planning for Informal Settlement Upgrading and greenfields development through Inclusive Citywide Planning, considering appropriate standards
  - Supporting community initiatives for installing services
  - Building capacity to scale up delivery
  - Learning by doing and feed into a national strategy and plan to ensure secure tenure and basic services for all: Fast Track land Availability (Learning from Informal Land Developers)





# Key Strategic Options

- **Strategy Option 2: Investigate and implement land options that will avail more land for greenfields development which include**

Improved Land Taxation Systems

Land Sharing

Land Pooling

Cross Subsidy Schemes

Using public land for housing



# Key Policy Options

- Enable partnership approaches to fast track inclusive city planning based on shared knowledge about the needs for land and shelter
  - Determine viability of the existing informal settlements to become permanent
  - Plan greenfields for community groups/individuals.
  - Enable communities to install their own services
- Through capacity building, learning and sharing lessons ensure that all low-income households through informal settlement upgrading and greenfields development obtain security of tenure and basic services by 2030
- Utilize a holistic “best use” framework for making decisions about the use of public land..
- Revise rules and procedures to increase the supply of land and housing
- Introduce and collect taxes on all develop and undeveloped land.
- Allow incremental development of buildings and services.



# Conclusion

## **We commit ourselves as Civil Society and Community Based Organizations to:**

- Promote local-national partnerships in which stakeholders and local, regional and central are strategic partners for improving access to land
- Continue to advocate for the speedy enactment of the Regional and Urban Planning Bill to replace outdated legislative framework.
- Advocate for a transformation of Namibian urban policies, legal frameworks, strategies and actions at the national, regional and local levels to change the way that our towns and towns are planned.
- Promote bottom up inclusive participatory informal settlement upgrading that will result in inclusive city-wide plans



# Conclusion

## We ask the local authorities to:

- Develop holistic multifaceted and realistic land delivery and human settlement plans to ensure that the living conditions of all citizens progressively improve.
- Mobilize increased financial resources to increase and enhance deliver of shelter.
- Recognize the community as a resource.



# Conclusion

**We ask the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and the Ministry of Land Reform to:**

- Prioritise the scaling up of inclusive city planning and partnering with community to ensure tenure and basic services
- Fast tract the tabling of the Regional and Urban Planning Bill in the parliament.
- Provide adequate funding to build local capacity and enable local authority's to service land and provide housing for the poor.
- Facilitate the development of an integrated urban development policy framework that seeks to link economic ambitions with inclusive social development strategies.
- Expedite the implementation of the Flexible Land Tenure Act and include civil society actors as stakeholders.

