

**Remarks Tom K Alweendo, Minister of Economic Planning and
Director General of the National Planning Commission
Launch of Poverty Mapping and Index of Multiple Deprivation Reports
Windhoek, 23 April 2015**

The Hon Zaphania Kameeta, Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
Deputy Minister of Economic Planning, Honourable Lucia Ipumbu
The UN Resident Coordinator, Dr. Bandora
Members of the media

I wish to start by thanking representatives from the media fraternity for responding to our invitation. I have invited you to witness the launch of two documents that we consider important as part of our national development agenda. The two documents are the result of a recent study on poverty by the National Planning Commission.

We all agree that the issue of poverty - as part of human development - is important and that we all must make it part of our business to address it. At its basic definition, human development is about promoting the fullness of a human life; it is about creating an enabling environment in which citizens enjoy long and healthy lives; it is about enlarging people's choices, be in access to knowledge, health services and other economic opportunities.

During the past two decades Namibia has enjoyed a steady improvement in its human development agenda. There is enough evidence that today Namibia is a better place to live in than it was before independence. With regard to poverty, the percentage of people living in poverty has declined significantly from 70 percent in 2001 to 28 percent in 2011. We, however, still regard fighting poverty as a priority that must enjoy our attention.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This launch is also coming at an opportune time when our President, Dr. Hage Geingob, in his inaugural speech on 21st March 2015, declared an all-out war on poverty. As proof that he is all about walking the talk, he decided to create a new Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare. As a nation we are also fortunate in that the person that is entrusted with this huge responsibility is none other than our able Dr. Zaphania Kameeta. This is a fitting recognition of Bishop Kameeta's widely-acclaimed service to the Namibian nation in various capacities.

The two reports describe the well-being of the population from two perspectives. The Poverty Mapping Report describes poverty from a money-metric perspective using

derived income, while Index of Multiple Deprivation report describes poverty from a non-monetary perspective such as lack of opportunities and lack of access to services due to other reasons other than income. Both reports describe the situation between the population censuses of 2001 and 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Poverty Mapping Report gives the level of poverty in the country by linking poverty to particular areas up to a constituency level. This report validates findings from other studies that poverty levels in Namibia have been declining. Using two data points of the population censuses of 2001 and 2011, poverty has decline by 11 per cent over that period on a national level and in all regions, except for Zambezi and Khomas regions.

In addition, the report reveals that poverty levels in a particular region differ from one constituency to the other; and that the poorest region does not necessarily have the poorest constituency in the country. For example, the study shows that the poorest region in Namibia is Kavango with a poverty headcount of 53.2 per cent while the poorest constituency is Epupa in Kunene with 69.2 percent.

Of the estimated more than 560 thousand poor people in Namibia, 21 per cent are found in the Kavango region. Ohangwena and Oshikoto account for 15 and 14 per cent respectively. The three largely rural regions of Kavango, Ohangwena and Oshikoto accounts for half of the total number of poor people in Namibia, where the main source of income in these regions is mainly subsistence farming.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation report uses five domains of deprivation to describe the lack of opportunity or access to a service. These are material, employment, health, education and the living environment. The report further adds an analysis at a lower level than a constituency in recognition of the fact that even in the same constituency there may be segments of the population which are less privileged than others.

To demonstrate the value of looking at poverty not only from an income perspective, the results show that while Epupa in Kunene region is the poorest constituency in Namibia using income as a measure, Kapako in Kavango West is the most deprived constituency in Namibia. Windhoek East is both least poor and least deprived constituency in Namibia. It is therefore clear from the findings that poverty measures using only income tend to underestimate the needs of communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The reports have a wealth of information that can assist us in addressing poverty in the country in an effective and consistent manner. I therefore urge all of us, especially

policy makers, to make good use of the findings of the reports in our intervention when fighting the war on poverty.

It is now my distinct honor to officially launch the two reports.