
By Tuli Pandeni

The Kunene Leadership embarked on a joint operation with all its stakeholders to assess the furthest and most remote areas in the region.

This operation made it clear that the planning and coordination in the implementation of socio-economical developmental programmes and projects is limited in this areas, due to the vastness of the region’s geographical challenges.

The monitoring and evaluation of natural resources should be improved in the sense that they are under-utilized in these areas and do not benefit the communities, the region or nation.

During the operation the team managed to visit Terrace Bay, Mowe Bay, Cape-Fria, Kunene river mouth area, Otjavaya village, Othisero, Otjinungwa, Otjiwe, Onungurura, Etemba, Swartbooi Drift (Otjimuhaka), Otjipahuririo, etc.

Despite the unsafe roads, identified challenges include food security, lack of official border posts, mobilization on the necessity of national identification and lack of infrastructures such as government offices to bring public services closer to the people. Access to portal water, health care, telecommunications, radio network and education for children continue to be an issue in this areas and the region at large. The marginalized people continue to suffer due to limited resources in the region.
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Whereas the Kunene region has so much untapped potential in terms of socio-economic development, barriers of financial constraints and opportunities for investors are also challenge.

Such an operation was vital for Kunene leaders so as to understand what the communities are going through and to put better mechanisms in place strategized toward the needs of the people.

During the operation, Hon Marius Sheya distributed food aid to vulnerable community members, The Ministry of Home Gender and Home Affairs managed to assess gender related issues in terms of Child Welfare and National Identification application.

The Office of the Governor distributing food to vulnerable communities, whilst the Ministry of Gender assessed gender related issues as well as collect data on members without National Identification documents.

The Ministry of Health administered medical attention to community members. Some members have not received any medical attention since birth and turn to traditional medicine when sick as the health facilities (clinics) are far from the villages.

Medical professionals on the operation lead by the Head of the Opuwo District Hospital Dr Magnus Rutakulemberwa administered immunization for children, treating of chronic diseases, immunization for pregnant & breastfeeding women and overall health education.

The Kunene Regional Council took note of roads that needed improvement, areas that had limited access to water, for future rehabilitation of boreholes when funds are availed, as well agricultural interventions needed for food security within the areas visited.
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It is undeniable that the process of planning and implementation will not be done overnight and will take years before results of improvement and stability can be seen, however what is most crucial during this operation is the identification of critical areas for planning purposes.

Food security is the most important aspect of development within any community or country, with this in mind small scale farming for survival sake. However it should be noted that to improve the lives of these people, more has to be done.

Small Irrigation Project in Etemba village, Epupa Constituency that farms with sweet potatoes, watermelons, tomatoes, onions, etc. They sell their products to the communities in Kunene, Omusati and Oshana region.

The need for agricultural training, material such as water tanks, pipes, machine to extract water from the Kunene River for farming purposes and constant mentorship is needed.

In the same light mining activities in the region is vital for economic growth, not just for the region but country at large. The region is rich of resources that with the coordination with stakeholders in the mining sector, through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), community enhancement and growth will take place. This was emphasized by Hon Marius Sheya in a consultative engagement meeting with the management of Northern Namibia Development Company (NNDC).

Hon. Sheya emphasized on the need for institutions operating within the region to plough back into the communities surrounding their area of jurisdiction, and make long term contribution to the community and its people. NNDC explores and mines quality diamonds near the Kunene River Mouth in the Skeleton Costal area of the region.
Kunene Leaders and Stakeholders’ courtesy visit and engagement with NNDC

The Kunene River Mouth Joint Operation during this COVID-19 pandemic also sought to evaluate areas around the mine that have limited access to health care facilities and clinics nearby which are undercapitalized. Clinics have limited resources to operate, lack of ambulance, equipment of which institution such as NNDC could assist with as part of their CSR strategies.

The monitoring of the effects of COVID-19 on communities as well as the tourism sector was also on the agenda. NAMPOL on the other hand patrolled the all border crossing for illegal crossing that might cause national security risk especially this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need for official border posts. Overall the stakeholders’ Joint Operation was a great success.

Ministry of Health Administering healthcare to the community of Otjavaya village during the operation trip.