



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
KUNENE REGION**



REGIONAL DROUGHT ASSESSMENT REPORT



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GOVERNOR – KUNENE REGION

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OPUWO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is my honor and privilege to announce that the trip for the assessment of the extent of the effect of drought in Kunene region that was conducted from 9 to 16 May 2021 was a success. In this regards, I dedicate special votes of appreciation and thanks to the Accounting Officers of the following institutions for permitting their officials to participate in the trip and for availing their resources to make the exercise a success.

The institutions are Office of the President, my office, Kunene Regional Council, Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security (NAMPOL), Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ministry of Work and Transport (Government Garage), Ministry Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Namibia Red Cross Society, Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU), Welwitchia Farmers Union and Ngatuuane Farmers Union.

Equally so, I would like acknowledge and thank the team of officials who participated in the trip for their dedication and team work during the trip and for supporting the production of this report. Last but not least, I would like to urge all stakeholders to avail themselves and resources in future similar endeavors for the wellbeing of the regional inhabitants and our environment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In keeping up with Article 95 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia and Section 2(4)(b) and (c) of the Special Advisors and Regional Governors' Appointment Act, 1990 (Act No. 6 of 1990) as amended, the Governor of Kunene Region, Hon. Marius S.T. Sheya initiated a trip comprised of various stakeholders to assess the extent of drought effect in the region. The objectives of the trip were as follows;

- a) Assess the extent of the recent rainfall received in the region;
- b) To verify the distribution of drought relief consignment;
- c) To assess and update on the current drought situation in the region in effect on human and animals; and
- d) Provide necessary outreach services to the affected community.

The assessment team comprised of 34 persons from different stakeholder institutions namely; Office of the President, Office of the Governor, Kunene Regional Council, Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security (NAMPOL), Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ministry Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Namibia Red Cross Society, Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU), Welwitchia Farmers Union and Ngatuuane Farmers Union.

In short, the drought assessment exercise was carried out successfully and the followings are the outcomes of the exercise:

- On the extent of drought, the trip found that most areas in the region did not receive adequate rainfall and as result both grazing and crop fields are very poor.
- With regard to the distribution of drought relief items, the process is on-going despite logistical challenges such limited suitable transport, difficult terrains and poor network coverage for coordination.
- Both human and livestock were adversely affected as farmers have lost most of their livestock in which they depended on and hence now impoverished.

At the end of the exercise, all participants acknowledged the importance of their participation in the trip citing that the exercise created a platform for

their institutions to provide essential services to communities living in the remote areas. The exercise also afforded participating stakeholders an opportunity to collect relevant information from the visited communities. This information will be used for better future planning and service delivery. A list of recommendations on improving the wellbeing of human and their livestock in the Region was proposed and agreed upon.

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ABBREVIATIONS

KuRC	Kunene Regional Council
MAWLR	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
MGEPESW	Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
MICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
MoEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
MoHSS	Ministry of Home Affairs
MWT	Ministry of Works and Transport
NAMPOL	Namibian Police
NNFU	Namibia National Farmers Union
NRCS	Namibia Red Cross Society

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Kunene region has been experiencing severe drought for the past seven (7) consecutive years due to poor precipitation. In most instances, the effect of drought has been felt throughout the seven constituencies of region, while in fewer instances, the region received sporadic rainfall leaving some of parts of the region with spotted pastures.

While Kunene region is known for livestock farming, the effect of drought has led to the high mortality rate of livestock. This has reduced the populations of both large stock and small stock in the region significantly. This reduction in livestock population has affected the livelihood of the majority inhabitants of the region as they sorely depend on them. Some community members have been left in abject poverty, while others have been forced to relocate their families in search of better grazing.

The situation got worse early this year when the majority of the farmers migrated from other parts of the region to the central and eastern parts in search of better grazing. During this period, the government intervened by providing drought relief food and fodder for livestock. The distribution of these items is ongoing in the mostly affected five (5) constituencies, namely; Epupa, Opuwo Rural, Opuwo Urban, Sesfontein and Khorixas.

In view of the persistent climate change induced drought phenomenon, the ongoing efforts of distributing the drought relief food items to the affected communities and indeed in keeping up with Article 95 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia and Section 2(4)(b) and (c) of the Special Advisors and Regional Governors' Appointment Act, 1990 (Act No. 6 of 1990) as amended, the Governor of Kunene Region, Hon. Marius Sheya initiated a trip comprised of various stakeholders to assess the extent of drought effect in the region and to ascertain the rate of the distribution of drought relief items in the region. The trip was conducted over a period of eight days commencing from 9 to 16 May 2021.

1.2 Objectives of the trip

The following are the objectives of the mission:

- a) To assess the extent of the recent rainfall received in the region;
- b) To verify the distribution of drought relief consignment;
- c) To assess and update on the current drought situation in the region in effect on human and animals; and
- d) To provide necessary outreach services to the affected community.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

In total, 34 officials from different government and non-governmental institutions participated in the trip. The participants represented the following institutions: Office of the President, Office of the Governor, Kunene Regional Council, NAMPOL, Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Works and Transport (Government Garage), Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ministry Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Namibia Red Cross Society, Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU), Welwitchia Farmers Union and Ngatuuane Farmers



Figure 1: Participants of the trip pausing for picture at Otjiu - West Union (see figure 1 and table 1).

Table 1: List of participants

S/N	Surname & Name	Institution	Contact number
1.	Antsino, Johaness	KuRC	0811603669
2.	Awises, Tiree	Office of the Governor	0811459640
3.	Djuma, Belaganayi	MoHSS	0814531239
4.	Goraseb, Romanus	Office of the Governor	0811264411
5.	Hepute, Ismael	NAMPOL	0817271733
6.	Humu, Jakumisa	MoEAC	0813084687
7.	Israel, Lukas	Office of the President	0811400677
8.	Itewa, Kaino N.	MoEAC	0812341170
9.	Josua, Phillemon	MGEPEWS	0811440022
10.	Kamuinjo, Mervin	Ministry of Works (Government Garage)	0811404988
11.	Kapi, Ben	Ngatuuane Farmers Union	0812632523
12.	Katonyala, Thomas	NAMPOL	0818977675
13.	Kavari, Nelson K.	MGEPEWS	0812929278
14.	Kazombiaze, Theodor	Office of the Governor	0812795785
15.	Nafele, Emmanuel	KuRC	0811272768
16.	Naulondo, Simson	MoHSS	0813249956
17.	Nderura, James	NAMPOL	0814145405
18.	Ndjoba, Victoria	NAMPOL	0813921945
19.	Ndundu, Verikouje	Namibia Red Cross Society	0812086013
20.	Neumbo, Cons	Nampol	0815585247
21.	Nyati, Inomusa	NNFU	0813250977
22.	Pandeni, Tulimekondjo	KuRC	0813500517
23.	Shadika, Nataniel	NAMPOL	0813958232
24.	Shikongo, Iinge	NAMPOL	0816503266
25.	Shikongo, Josua	MoEAC	0812690965
26.	Shilula, Willika P.	MoEAC	0813174984
27.	Shooya, Jeremia	Office of the President	0811478410
28.	Tjazapi, Hikuru U.	Office of the Governor	0814664450
29.	Tjipundi, Seuako T	MoHS	0812439502
30.	Tjumbua, Donald	Namibia Red Cross Society	0812027223
31.	Tjumbua, Weich	MoHSS	0814890181
32.	Useb, Salom	Welwitchia Farmers Union	0814383294
33.	Willem, Fredrick	KuRC	0812807673
34.	Xavier, Cecilia Liyolifeni	MICT	0811407357
35.	Kaveta, Daniel	MGEPEWS	0812807673

3. METHODS

3.1 Approach

The visit used various approaches to assess the effects of drought in the region and mainly targeting the most affected Constituencies. The main approaches employed in the assessment of the extent of drought included personal observations, interviewing the communities, on site provision of outreach services mainly health services as well as distribution of food items.

3.2 Areas visited

The team visited mostly affected areas in five (5) constituencies, namely; Epupa, Opuwo Rural, Sesfontein, Khorixas and Opuwo Urban. Specifically, the following areas were visited; Etanga, Ondiye, Orupembe, Serra Cafema, Otjinungua, Rooi Drum, Puros, Sesfontein, Warmquelle, Khowarib, Palmwag, Bersig, Deriet, Twyfelfontein, Sorris - Sorris, Anixab, Khorixas, Otjokavare, Omuramba, Okozongombe, Otjamaungu, Otjimuhaka, Enjandi, Onungurura, Epupa, Okanguati, Kaoko - Otavi, Oruvandjai-West, Otjiu - West and Okatumba - West (see Figure 2).

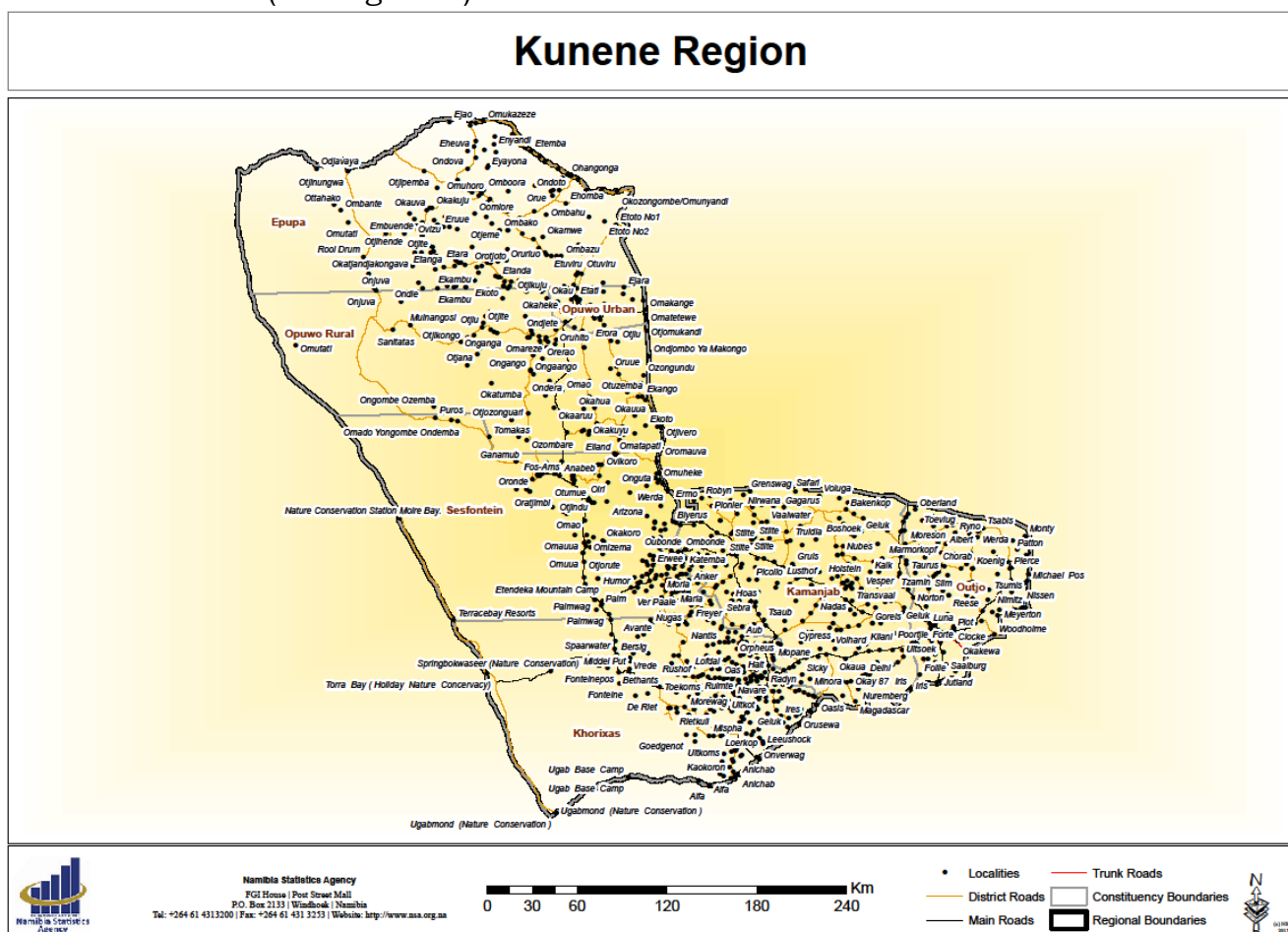


Figure 2: Map of Kunene Region

3.3 Observations

The trip looked at the conditions of the pastures, spoke to community members, distributed food aids and provided outreach services mainly the medical services (see figure 3 and 4).



Figure 4: Community meeting at Otjavaja village



Figure 3: Community meeting at Okatumba-West village

The following observations were made during the trip:

- Most of the areas visited showed very poor grazing with some areas completely having no grass while others with little grass, it appeared the grass only germinated from the sporadic rain showers received in March 2021. Very few livestock were seen during the trip an indication that most animals died or were relocated to other areas with better grazing mainly the Eastern parts of the region and the neighboring regions like Omusati. Many carcasses of livestock mostly cattle were observed along many roads especially in Orupembe and Otjinungwa areas (see figure 5).



Figure 5: A carcass of a horse starved to death due to drought

- The relocation of livestock has affected the livelihood of the inhabitants more especially the school going children as they were forced to leave school and relocate with parents. The team observed many abandoned houses in most visited areas. According to locals spoken to, people have relocated to areas with better grazing for their livestock, while in some cases boreholes dried up due to persistent drought.
- Lack of Early Childhood Development Centres and Pre-Primary at many places including Serra Cafema, Otjavaja and Okatumba - West as depicted by the interaction between the Regional Head for the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Mr. Phillemon



Figure 6: Gender and Social Welfare official interacting with the children at Otjavaja village

Josua and the children (Figure 6).

- Lack of national documents (birth certificates, identity cards, etc) among the members of the communities, especially at Serra Cafema, Otjamaungu, Okaanga, Otjavaja, Enyandi and Onjungurura;



Figure 7: Stakeholders engaging the communities

- Adaption of drought coping mechanisms by members of the communities, for example, community members at Serra Cafema resorted to eating wild fruits due to lack of food. Other drought coping mechanism is adaption of crop farming by communities living along Kunene river, where some grow dry land crops while others practice



Figure 8: Dry land crop farming at Okozongombe village



Figure 9: A combination of dry land and irrigated farming at Otjamaungu village

irrigated farming;

- Bad roads conditions in most of the remote roads especially in areas of Opuwo to Otjiu - West, Okatumba – West, Serra Cafema, Otjinungua, Otjavaja and Onjuva as depicted in figure 8.



Figure 10: Participants attending to the tyre puncture due to bad roads

- The interventions of some Community Conservancies towards the upliftment of the local communities was not visible at some conservancies;
- Most of the communities in remote areas such as Otjavaja, Serra Cafema, Otjinungua, Puros, etc, have no access to health services hence the nearby health facilities are located as far as ± 200 km as depicted in figure 9 where community members were receiving medical services;



Figure 11: Members of the community curing up for medical services at Puros

- Low understanding or adhering to COVID-19 regulations especially the wearing of masks at many areas visited.

4. KEY FINDINGS

6.1 The extent of drought in the region

The observations revealed that most of the areas visited are very dry without signs of receiving rainfall over the past rainy season. A summary of the observations and classification of the extent of drought in the areas visited is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Classification of the extent of drought in the visited areas

Area visited	Status
1. Etanga	Dry
2. Orupembe	Very dry
3. Serra Cafema	Very dry
4. Otjinungua	Dry
5. Purros	Very dry
6. Sesfontein	Very dry
7. Warmquelle	Very dry
8. Khowarib	Very dry
9. Palmwag	Very dry

Area visited	Status
10. Bersig	Dry
11. Deriet	Very dry
12. Twyfelfontein	Dry
13. Sorris-Sorris	Dry
14. Anixab	Dry
15. Khorixas	Dry
16. Otjokavare	Dry
17. Omuramba	Very dry
18. Okozongombe	Dry

19.	Otjamaungu	Dry
20.	Otjimuhaka	Very dry
21.	Enjandi	Very dry
22.	Onungurura	Dry
23.	Epupa	Very dry

24.	Okanguati	Dry
25.	Kaoko-Otavi	Dry*
26.	Oruvandjai-West	Dry*
27.	Otjiu-West	Very dry
28.	Okatumba West	Very dry

The team found that in most of the areas in the region, grass only germinated from the last rainfall received in March 2021. The grass could not however grow to maturity but wilted and can be easily brown away by wind. The few grasses that germinated would not be able to sustain livestock and wild animals for the next few months.

Some areas are more severely affected by drought than others, for instance Okatumba-West, the effect of drought has been worsened by water unavailability, a problem that has been experienced by the community over many years. At Okatumba-West, the community travels about 25 km to fetch water for human consumption contrary to government policy of access to potable water in the radius of 2.5 km. This lack of water situation at Okatumba-West has forced some members of the community to relocate to areas with better water access, such as Omuhiva – uaNgango, Ounguati and Otjiheke.



6.2 Distribution of drought relief

The distribution drought relief items was ongoing at some areas visited. However, there were

Figure 12: Picture of the borehole infrastructures that was washed away by storm water

areas where distribution of drought relief items could not reach yet due various challenges such as limited availability of suitable transport to areas with difficult terrains. Such areas include Serra Cafema, Otjinungua and Ondiye. While some of the communities from the areas visited appreciated the government for providing them with the relief items, some indicated that the households' registers excluded some households and requested for updating of such registers to accommodate all households. The update reports on the distribution of the drought is presented

in table 3 and 4 for maize meal and tinned fish respectively. The distribution of drought relief items is being hampered by shortage of transport.

Table 3: Distribution of maize meal (12.5 kg bags)

Constituency	Reporting period			Total	Remarks
	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021		
Epupa	3,036	3,043	0	6,079	The distribution of drought relief items in May is affected by the shortage of transport
Khorixas	3,036	3,043	0	6,079	
Opuwo Rural	3,036	3,043	0	6,079	
Opuwo Urban	3,036	3,043	0	6,079	
Sesfontein	3,036	3,043	0	6,079	
Total	15,180	15,215		30,395	

As of the 18 May 2021, the stock balance of the maize meal (12.5 kg) and tinned fish in the ware house was standing at 9,838 bags and 60,120 tins respectively.

Table 4: Distribution of tinned fish (400 g)

Constituency	Reporting period			Total	Remarks
	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021		
Epupa	6,685	6,685	1,068	14,438	
Khorixas	6,685	6,685	1,068	14,438	
Opuwo Rural	6,685	6,685	1,068	14,438	
Opuwo Urban	6,685	6,685	1,068	14,438	
Sesfontein	6,685	6,685	1,068	14,438	
Total	33,425	33,425	5,340	72,190	

In addition to the maize meal and tinned fish, the region received and distributed fresh meat for 20 x zebras, 2 x eland, 2 x buffalos, 1 x thigh of oryx, 2 x front legs of the oryx and 2 pairs of ribs of oryx. The fresh meat was also distributed among the five (5) mostly affected constituencies.



Figure 13: Distribution of drought relief food during the drought assessment trip

Further to the ongoing distribution of drought relief items by the Regional Council, the Office of the Governor availed food items including the tinned fish, 10kg maize meals, 750ml of cooking oil, 2 kg sugar and tins of tuna fish which were distributed during the trip (see table 5). The following food ration were distributed during the trip:

Table 5: Drought relief items distributed during the trip

Item description	Quantity
• 10 kg bags of maize meal	503
• Tinned fish 400 g	1,003
• Tinned Tuna fish	1,509
• 750 ml cooking oil	503
• 20 kg bag of white sugar	400

6.3 Effect of drought on human and livestock

The assessment team observed a number of carcasses of livestock and wild animals alongside the roads especially in the areas of Epupa and Sesfontein constituencies. These observations and evidence can be alluded to the effect of persistent drought that have been experienced in the region. In view that the majority inhabitants of the region heavily depend on livestock farming for life



Figure 14: Abandoned kraal at Okamanga village and small stock at the water point at Orupembe village

sustenance, the assessment team concluded that both human and livestock are significantly affected by the ongoing drought. Figure 14(a) and 14(b) present the common situation in the region, i.e. the abandoned kraals and bare range land.

The assessment team confirmed that there is a significant reduction in the population of livestock and wild animals in the region as a result of the effects of prolonged drought (Figure 15(a) and 15(b)). For the majority of the farmers in the region, having livestock means food security and the opposite lead to poverty and food insecurity.



Figure 15: Carcasses of livestock and wildlife observed during the drought assessment trip

The team has learnt that farmers have relocated from their areas of origin to other areas in search of better living conditions, be it grazing for their livestock and or water for both human and livestock. Amongst other areas affected are Orupembe, Otjinungua, Omuramba, Otjavaja. According to farmers spoken to, most farmers relocated to areas as far as over 200 km such as Omakange, Opuwo and Etanga where grazing and water availability was initially better than their places. The relocation of farmers has led overcrowding in areas they settled and subsequently overgrazing and other social conflicts as a result of competing for same resources.

The relocation of farmers has affected families negatively, where learners were forced to drop out from schools and losing the education opportunity. Early child development for children is equally affected negatively by relocation of farmers.

While some farmers opt to relocate for better pastures, others developed coping strategies to live with drought. Such coping strategies include initiation of farming with dry crops and irrigated crops along the Kunene River. The team observed a number of farmers growing dry land crops mainly pearl millet (mahangu) and preparing land for irrigated crops, such as tomatoes and maize. The crop cultivation activities were observed at the villages along the Kunene river, namely; Okozongombe, Otjamaungu, Otjimuhaka, Enjandi, Omungurura, etc all in Epupa constituency (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Dry land crop field at Otjamaungu village and the harvested pearl millet at Okozongombe village

On the other hand it was disturbing to learn that some members of some communities resorted to feed on wild fruits (wild grape) at places such as Serra Cafema, Otjavaja and Epupa falls as the main source of food. This finding demonstrate the seriousness of the effect of drought to human beings in most affected areas. The starvation situation at places such Serra Cafema where community livelihood depends also on tourism spin offs has been worsened by the combined effects of drought and COVID-19 where tourism activities slowed down significantly.

The assessment team has learnt that some communities were experiencing increased conflicts with wildlife, the situation attributed to the effect prolonged drought. Some of the affected areas include Bersig, Palmwag, Sesfontein, Omuramba and Deriet where elephants continuously ravaged gardens and damaged water points. The communities in some areas such as Deriet, Bersig, Palmwag and Sefontein have initiated to install predator proof fences around livestock kraals to combat marauding lions and other predator.

6.4 Provision of outreach services

As alluded above, the assessment team found that there are communities without access to basic services mainly, medical services, gender issues, civic issues, education, agricultural extension services, police services, etc.



Figure 17: Health official providing medical services to community members at Serra Cafema village

As such, the team provided some necessary outreach services, mainly the information dissemination, medical services and information collection.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a nutshell, the trip for assessing the extent of drought and its effect in the region was conducted successfully. As such the objectives of the trip were attained, as follow:

- On the extent of drought, the trip found that most of the areas in the region are did not receive rainfall and as result are very;
- With regard to the distribution of drought relief items, the process was going on, however it was being affected by the challenges such limited suitable transport and difficult terrains;
- Both human and livestock were seriously affected as the farmers have lost most of their livestock in which they depended and hence impoverished; and
- The participants of the drought assessment exercise acknowledged their involvement in the trip citing that the exercise created a platform form them to provide essential services to the communities living in the remote areas and collect relevant information for better future planning and service delivery.

With reference to the observations and findings of the drought assessment trip, the team proposed the following recommendations for improvement of people and livestock welfare in the region:

- Expedition of the implementation of drought relief interventions in the region with special consideration to the most drought stricken constituencies, namely Epupa, Sesfontein, Opuwo Rural, Opuwo Urban and Khorixas;
- The Office of the Governor to engage the institutions with essential services for them to organize a joint outreach programme to the affected areas. The affected institutions include; the department of Civil Affairs of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, primary health unit of the Ministry of Health and Social Services, gender and social welfare related issues under the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, education under the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and police services. It is recommended that the joint outreach programme be initiated and conducted before the end of August 2021. The outreach programme is mostly needed at the following places; Otjavaja, Enjandi, Otjamaungu, Onjungurura and Otjunugua;
- Kunene region is home to many community conservancies, however, the contribution made by such conservancies vary from place to place. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism be engaged to promote equitable sharing of benefits accrued in the community conservancies to contribute toward regional development and efforts of combating the effect of drought;
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR) and farmers unions to take advantage of the farmers growing crops at the villages along the Kunene river by providing them with incentives and extension services. Furthermore, MAWLR is encouraged to pursue the establishment of the proposed green scheme projects at Otjavaja and Otjinungua and support the existing small-scale irrigation initiatives in the region to promote food security and self-reliance. Similar initiatives can be extended to schools;
- The Office of the Governor to engage MAWLR to seek permission to use the current redundant quarantine facilities at Swart Booï Drift and Kovareb for irrigated horticultural and fodder production;

- It is recommended that similar trips be organized in future to involve regional stakeholders in addressing the issues affecting the region jointly and head on;
- It is recommended that the Office of the Governor request relevant organizations such as the Nampower, Road Authority/Ministry of Works and Transport (MTWT) and MTC to electrify, install accessible bridges and install communication network in the remote areas, e.g. Otjinungua, Serra Cafema, Onjuva, Onungurura, Enjandi; and
- Last but not least, the team recommend that for effective implementation of the recommendations, stakeholders should sit regularly to review and track the implementations of the implementations.