

Question of land

THE present so-called investigation on the issue of senior officials who have appropriated land illegally should be viewed alongside Chapter 3 and especially Article 16 of the Namibian constitution which enshrines the fundamental rights of the Namibian people to own and acquire properties anywhere in Namibia.

The same subject should also be viewed in line with the war of national liberation which in fact was prompted by the theft of land by the white minority. This struggle is yet to take its logical conclusion if the land question is not yet solved.

It is surprising that the Government and especially the Office of the Prime Minister is prepared to mislead public opinion by appointing someone to investigate the acquisition of land by only three people and especially in the communal areas. That office being responsible for the implementation of the Land Conference, recommendations could have started there to solve the national issue of land.

It is also surprising that the Government, whenever it talks of the legal or rightful acquisition of land, only concentrates on communal land. Let it be stated here categorically clearly that we the Namibian people, and especially those of us who laboriously fought to return back our stolen land, did so for the whole of Namibia including the so-called commercial farmland.

Lasting peace and stability in this country could only come if equitable distribution of land is done now and not later. The question of senior officials acquiring land only demonstrates to us that people are hungry for land. If senior officials have the means of using their official positions to acquire the land, the mass of our people who on numerous occasions have demonstrated publicly to have the land question settled, may one day take up arms to revoke the present status quo as far as land ownership is concerned.

It is hurtful to note that the land price is artificially made to be exorbitantly high to benefit those who forcefully took control of our people and ownership of our land. Once cannot accept that in Windhoek it is practically impossible to buy a piece of land to build a dwelling.

So, Mr Prime Minister, we the silent majority, who fought for the liberation of this country and suffered imprisonment and detention for the liberation of this country, who demonstrated fearlessly in the streets of Windhoek, Katutura, mines, schools, did so to ensure that Namibia is free. We who voted the Swapo government to power want our land NOW. We expect you urgently to implement the Land Conference recommendations. The more delays to the solution of this problem, the more our patience will run out. Land is a fundamental right of every citizen of our country. Land is the source of life, the key to development as a crucial component for

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the means of production. It should not be left in the hands of a few.

My recommendation is to ensure that landownership is taken over by the government in trust for the people. Those who want to utilise the land will then lease it from the Government as is done in communal areas today in Namibia where land is entrusted to traditional leaders on behalf of those communities. It is the only way that those who have a desire to own land will have access to it.

If this suggestion is not workable, may I ask the Government to put the question to the electorate during regional elections which are due before the end of the year. I think that the verdict of the majority of people is necessary. My verdict is that we are being held hostage by an unpatriotic few who think of Namibia in terms of their own benefit alone and who through their access are misleading public opinion. Commercial farms are not touched now, but are they able to respond to the urgent need for food in this country? I am pretty sure and convinced that if access to land was easy, the effect of the present natural calamity would not be the same. Because more people could have engaged in food production.

I want to point out that the Namibian food market is relatively stable because the pressure is reduced by the communal land which provided 71 per cent of the livelihood of the inhabitants of those areas. Now the population of both animals and people is increasing, and the ecology has taken its toll because of the way in which the land has been over-utilised. The logical solution is therefore the urgent need to solve this question. We want our land back.

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Note: This letter has been shortened. - Ed.

On Earth Summit

THE Earth Summit presently being held in Brazil once again highlights the precarious position Planet Earth finds itself in because of the short-sighted, profit-oriented exploitation of its natural resources.

It also shows that if man has learned anything from history, it is the fact that man never seems to learn from history.

Take, for instance, the average citizen's matter-of-fact attitude towards the environment, especially in our still developing, relatively non-industrialised country.

We need just look at the severe problems being experienced by the so-called developed, First World and in-