

# Expropriation: What about under-utilised farms?

THIS reader appreciates the repeated statements of Prime Minister Theo Ben Gurirab that land expropriation will be done according to the Constitution and in compliance with the law.

Therefore, please allow me a question:

Is it compliant with the law that a farmer should be expropriated because there has been a labour dispute on his farm?

Surely there are regulations with which to punish those found guilty of breaching the labour law. Up to now, I

understood that farms that were under-utilised would be expropriated. It would be in the national interest if such expropriated land would then be managed in such a way as to support more people than at present.

What has happened to farm employees living on farms that were bought by the state for resettlement purposes? Where do they live now? How do they make a living?

Having lived on such a farm for most of their lives, such former employees know the land, the vegetation and

climatic conditions and could provide very valuable inputs to those wanting to manage the place in future.

Where is a report on the productivity of farms that have been resettled?

I am NOT advocating that farms should not be resettled.

However, one of the most pressing needs of Namibia is the alleviation of poverty. The mere fact that one has access to a certain piece of land in no way means that one will derive an adequate income from that land,

let alone make enough money to be able to pay taxes.

T h e r e f o r e resettlement should be well-planned and executed in such a way as to really provide the people concerned with a reasonable livelihood. Otherwise they will turn to the state for help with providing water, transport, health services etc. That would not be a way to counteract poverty and need.

**Luise Hoffmann**  
Address supplied