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MEDIA RELEASE

Issued on June 07, 2018

SUBJECT: KALAHARI HOMELESS INDABA AIMS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

About 11 per cent of households in Kalahari Constituency in Omaheke Region live in improvised housing or shacks. This, according to the 2011 Population and Housing Census, is a total of 190 households, the second highest percentage in the entire region, following Okorukambe (19 per cent) and Gobabis (37 per cent).

An assessment conducted by the Constituency Office discovered that about 300 households in the entire Constituency are in need of decent housing. Blouberg, a small community close to the Trans-Kalahari border settlement of Buitepos, is the most affected by poor housing the Constituency. Other communities in need are Tsjaka, Vergenoeg and Drimiopsis.

The need for decent housing in the Kalahari Constituency has, therefore, necessitated the Kalahari Homeless Indaba (KHI), an initiative of the Regional Councillor of that Constituency, Honourable Ignatius Kariseb, who is also the Chairperson of the Omaheke Regional Council.

The aim of the KHI, launched in August 2016, is to replace houses constructed with plastic sheets and dilapidated iron sheets with new iron sheets, by constructing 30 to 60 houses per financial year. This process began during the end of the 2016/2017 financial year with ten houses in Blouberg as a pilot and is expected to continue for the next two to three years.

The patron of the KHI project and Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy, Kornelia Shilunga visited the project in Blouberg on May 30, 2018 to familiarise herself with the project. Out of the 35 households registered to be constructed, seven houses have already been constructed by the beneficiaries themselves.

The existing improvised houses, some of which have been constructed in flood-prone areas, in Blouberg have already been electrified by CENORED. Initially, the existing improvised houses were to be replaced with new iron sheets and a concrete slab at an estimated cost N\$5,000.00 to N\$6,000.00 per house.

However, Honourable Shilunga advised the Constituency Office to request a structural engineer to design an alternative low-cost dwelling to be used instead of the temporary iron sheets currently being used. This is to ensure that houses constructed are permanent. Honourable Shilunga said she would dedicate herself to solicit support from mining companies and other private companies for the project.

The Omaheke Regional Council allocated N\$80,000.00 for the project from its value-added tax refunds of the 2016/2017 financial year.

The Kalahari Constituency Office held a fundraising sport tournament about two years ago in an effort to solicit sponsorships for building material of which some have already been received from the private sector.

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