
AN INVESTIGATION OF COMMONAGES IN NAMAQUALAND

Editorial



Welcome to the M&E newsletter 3/2001, the journal of the Monitoring & Evaluation Directorate at the Department of Land Affairs. The M&E Directorate with Northern Cape Land Reform Office took an initiative to look at commonages in the Northern Cape. This study was conducted to inform some of the best projects that suit the Northern Cape Province. The Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in Northern Cape played an important role during the study process. Take a look at the highlights of the study.

M&E Directorate has conducted a survey on Personnel Performance Management System as well as Employment Equity. The findings of the survey will be communicated in the next issue of our newsletter. The results will also be available on www.me-dla.org.za.... So watch the space!

By: Makopoi

For more information on Commonage study please contact; Provincial Land Reform Office:

Director: Mr Obed Mvula
(053) 831 4090

Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Officer: Ms Nobesuthu Mashologu
(053) 831 4090

Summary

Reasons for investigation

The aim is to make recommendations with regards to the appropriateness of commonage in meeting the land needs in Namaqualand,

To provide information on the conditions surrounding the implementation of commonage in the area.

And to make recommendations on additional or alternative implementation vehicles to be considered in meeting the land needs in Namaqualand.

Main Findings:

There has been for many years a thorough information and consultation campaign in Namaqualand by the Surplus Peoples Project (SPP) and the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) Kimberley office, to ensure that the inhabitants know all the options available with regard to land reform.

Namaqualand rural land claims cannot be addressed through the Land Claims Court process because of the Constitutional 1913 cut-off date agreed to for land restitution matters. Although DLA is purchasing more land for the people of Namaqualand, this is also a programme of restitution. This is land stolen from the people over a period of two centuries and this is an attempt to return some of that land within in the context of 1913 cut-off date. The current DLA products are unusable in Namaqualand mainly because of the limited amount of land available and the cost involved.

The people of Namaqualand have maintained a communal way of living for time immemorial and although this was curbed and curtailed through two centuries of oppression by the various governments in power, it is still essential a way of life in Namaqualand.

It is clear that there are strong farmers on the commonages that might want to become commercial farmers, and for these DLA should find a product to assist them in this process.

Recommendations:

- At this particular moment in time and with the land reform products currently available, commonage is the only land reform option available in Namaqualand that will ensure that each landless family is catered for and ensured of an improved quality of life in the future.
- Aftercare is crucial.
- Financially strong communal farmers should be assisted to become commercial farmers.
- In the light that some strong communal farmers would want to be come commercial farmers, there are two “stepping stone” options to be considered in Namaqualand.

1. Purpose and Aim of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to assist in decision-making regarding the future of the implementation of commonage as the only currently available viable vehicle for land redistribution in Namaqualand.

The aim of the study was:

- To provide information on the conditions surrounding the implementation of commonage in the area.
- To make recommendations with regards to the appropriateness of commonage in meeting the land needs in Namaqualand.
- To make recommendations on additional or alternative implementation vehicles to be considered in meeting the land needs in Namaqualand.

Core issues of consideration:

1. The land needs of the Namaqualand landless
2. The knowledge of the landless of the land reform programme and the various options available
3. The use of commonages as the only viable tool to address land reform in the area
4. The attitude of the commonage user towards the commonage
5. The criteria used by the Department of Land Affairs in deciding who qualifies for assistance in terms of commonage
6. The potential improvement in the quality of life of commonage users
7. The participation of the commonage users in improving the commonage as a whole

Key informants: Behind success

- Deputy-Director: Provincial Office: Kimberley: DLA responsible for Namaqualand
- NC DLA officials working with commonage projects
- NC Provincial M&E officer
- Namaqualand District Council
- Municipal representatives in the case study areas
- Surplus People Project staff working with commonages
- Beneficiaries of commonage projects
- Members of the commonage committees of the various communities

Communities studied:

1. Former Act 9 areas:
 - Concordia
 - Steinkopf
2. Settlement:

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- Soebatsfontein
3. Mining towns:
 - O’okiep Copper Company (OCC) towns: O’okiep, Nabapeep, Carolusberg and Fonteintjie
 4. Previous municipal areas:
 - Springbok
 - Garies

Who will benefit from the study?

This study should ideally be used as a baseline to inform the National DLA Monitoring and Evaluation Units’ future Quality of Life surveys in Namaqualand.

Where do we come from: Namaqualand communities?

Land has always been a central part of Namaqualand people's lives. The history of land dispossession and the struggle for land stretches back over a period of 300 years. In colonial records and traditional oral history the complaints and protests of inhabitants against this dispossession of their land, and the disparagement of their rights are widely recorded.

The original inhabitants of the area were the San and the Khoikhoi who lived on the land centuries before the Dutch settlement in the Cape. The Khoikhoi were pastoralists and moved their stock freely throughout Namaqualand, practicing a sustainable system of production until being increasingly obstructed by encroaching *trekboers*¹ in the 1700s.

As the boundaries of the Colony shifted and settlers occupied more and more land, the nomadic life and livestock productive system of the Khoikhoi was curtailed. This forced some further north, or they became dependent on mission station protection in order to gain access to land. The Caledon Code of 1809 required every Baster and Khoikhoi to have a registered place of residence, and to obtain permission from the authorities to move from there. They were required to carry a pass or be treated as vagrants. The Reserves or Coloured Rural Areas began as these mission stations, which provided these people with some safeguard against the encroaching *trekboers* (white farmers who moved northwards from the Cap Colony in search of farming land). This protection came in the form of “Tickets of Occupation” which gave them a guarantee of permanent occupation but limited them to the areas around the mission and consequently changed the way in which they were able to manage their stock.

After the passing of the 1909 Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act, the Coloured Reserves, which had previously been under mission administration, came under the direct control of the state in the form of the Department of Native Affairs and local magistrates acted as its agents. After the full arrival of Apartheid in 1948, developments further impoverished the communities. The Coloured Rural Areas Act of 1963 created new local

¹ “trekboers” are white farmers who moved northwards from the Cape Colony in search of farming land.

government structures that lacked credibility and support. Management Boards were set up to manage and control commonage user rights, and responsibility for the function moved through a number of Government departments until they came to be administered by the Department of Local Government and Agriculture of the House of Representatives. The 1963 Act provided for the privatisation and subdivision of the Reserves. Despite the fact that “Tickets of Occupation” issued by the Colonial Government stipulated that land should be held in trust, settlement schemes were planned for the Reserves in the 1980’s. The schemes aimed to divide the land into agricultural and residential zones. Only those with capital or stock were entitled to agricultural land. The majority of poorer peasant farmers (who had traditional communal grazing and *saairegte*) were forced to live in residential areas without access to farmland. Such subdivision of the land caused much dissatisfaction and impoverishment. Even those granted private units found them to be too small. This decision was overturned by a Supreme Court judgment in the 1980s but left an indelible mark on the traditional stock management systems of the area. New regulations stipulated that residents had to apply for grazing and that grazing fees would be increased ten-fold.

Act No.9 of 1987 (House of Representatives) provides that the land be held in trust by the responsible Minister and gives the local councils the power to publish regulations for the management of stock on the commonage in the areas under their jurisdiction. Grazing regulations from 1909, 1963, 1965 and 1981 are often quoted but very few of these regulations have been used since the 1980s and that there is great confusion as to which regulations are applicable now. This has resulted in a collapse of commonage management, a general failure to pay grazing fees, overstocking, disregard for conservation legislation and inadequate record keeping by the local authorities.

DLA and Land Redistribution

Since April 1994, one of the Department of Land Affairs’ (DLA) aims has been to provide land to the rural landless poor. The four-fold aims of the Department’s White Paper on Land Reform (1997) are:

- Redress the injustices of Apartheid
- Foster national reconciliation and stability
- Underpin economic growth
- Improve household welfare and alleviate poverty.

As part of the National Land Reform Programme, the Land Redistribution Programme was created to achieve this aim. Under the programme settlement and or production projects, equity schemes and commonage are used as implementation vehicles or products to provide land. The implementation and success of these products vary between provinces and even districts. In some provinces and districts only one or two of the products are used because it is considered to be the most appropriate in meeting the needs of the local landless.

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- The DLA has identified municipal commonages as one of the key elements of the land reform redistribution programme.
 - Land is made available through leasehold at affordable rates for the local previously disadvantaged people.
 - A programme was also set up to assist and support the municipalities to release the existing commonages and to extend it.
 - The ownership and the responsibility of the commonage rest with the municipality. As commonages traditionally were an important source of income for most municipalities, many municipalities resisted this move, but in Namaqualand the municipalities are in favour of using their commonages to assist the previously disadvantaged members of their communities.

Land Reform in Namaqualand should be seen in this context:

- The six rural areas within the district. These areas are the previous Act 9 areas and are communally used. The Minister of Land Affairs keeps it in Trust.
- There are more than 400 000 ha of State Land, which is situated in the semi-arid northern part of Namaqualand. Some of these farms hold potential for irrigation along the Orange River.
- The downscaling of mineral-based economies contributing to a large problem of unemployment.
- Land held by mining companies and which can be used in the future, if the mines are willing to sell, for land reform.

There are roughly four types of commonages currently operating in Namaqualand:

- Municipal commonage with its old small pieces of commonage land, which can sometimes not be used for land reform purposes.
- the commonage land recently purchased by DLA for the traditional municipalities², such as Springbok and Garies for land reform purposes.
- in the six rural areas one finds the traditional commonage that has been used for time immemorial.
- These six areas have received additional land purchased through the DLA redistribution programme.

All four types are currently still mostly administered separately and differently, but should ideally in time all be administered and monitored under the same principles and guidelines. Integration of different types is slowly being introduced.

Intersectoral collaboration in Namaqualand

During the past five years, a very strong bond has been formed between the Communities of Namaqualand. DLA, Agriculture, DWAF, Namaqualand District Council and NGOs work very closely in the area. This good relationship

between the communities and PDLA staff would be further enhanced should the PDLA have a district office in Namaqualand.

The Financial Reality

The grant paid by DLA for the purchase of commonage is not linked to the R15 000 mechanism and the number of households, as is the case with other redistribution projects. Thus the amount of money spent by the Department depends on the value of the land.

Taking into consideration the vast areas of land needed to farm productively in Namaqualand, beneficiaries are forced to live cramped in on one small non-viable farm, making less than a subsistence existence. In the commonage set-up as it is currently undertaken and evolving in Namaqualand and through proper management, commonage can provide the people of Namaqualand the way of life of their ancestors combined with the upliftment of their living conditions, which is the aim of Government's land reform policy.

Concordia

Concordia is situated 20 km west of Springbok. It was originally administered as part of Steinkopf, but was proclaimed as a separate "Coloured Rural Area" in 1912. The original land was 63383ha to which a further 40760ha has now been added.

Unemployment is extremely high in the area and those of the population of some 4500 who are engaged in an economic opportunity, are employed on the mines or make a living from small stock farming.

Although Concordia received its first additional commonage in 1997, it wasn't until late in 1998 that a meentkomitee started operating – and that was only in respect of the new commonage. Certainly up to 1997 at least, there was little effective management of the old commonage, with no statistics, no stock numbers, no maps, etc. The meentkomitee is now registering all stockowners, numbers of stock and gathering all other important statistics, which will assist with the management of the commonage in the future. The members of the committee do this work without any payment. With time the community will introduce the regulations for the newly acquired commonage to the original commonage, as it is clear that similar structures are needed in the whole area.

Nineteen individuals (9 women and 10 men) were interviewed in Concordia and a meeting was held with some members of the Concordia Meentkommittee. All interviewed were fully informed about all the possible land reform choices and has praised the work done by SPP throughout all the years. They feel that the commonage was the right choice as they have lived for generations as a community involved in communal farming. *"Ons oupas en oupagrootjies het hier so geboer. Dis ons wereld die en ons leefwyse. Al wat ons vra is dat ons tog nou soos grootmense behandel word. Ons wil nie meer onder die Minister staan nie. Ons wil self besluit."*

"Die meentkomitee is die regte manier vorentoe. Ons moet net almal mooi saam werk."

"Ons het meer grond nodig, grond met water. Die water is so 'n groot probleem hier. As hulle tog net wil vir ons meer grond kan gee met goeie water, dan is alles OK."

All of the individuals interviewed either farmed themselves or had family members who were farming. They praised the efforts of Christo Smit of DoA. The guidance and attention given to the community by the DoA extension workers were seen to be indispensable.

Ten out of the nineteen felt that since the Meentkomitee is managing the newly acquired commonage, the management is going a lot smoother. They called for stricter measures to curb offenders and that everyone should be limited to a certain number of animals that will ensure the sustainability of the commonage. The stronger farmers should become commercial farmers and be assisted to move off the commonage by DLA. *"Dit is belangrik dat die mense gehelp word om verder te kom. Dis nie dat ons afgustig is nie, dis net dat die ryk ouens die veld verniel ten koste van ons wat net 'n paar diertjies het. Hulle moet af, sodat ons ook 'n bestaan kan maak."*

Commercial farmers prefer to sell farms to their neighbours or keep the farms within their families. There is also a scarcity of land on the market in Namaqualand. The little available land is expensive for land reform beneficiaries to purchase. Some farmers have expressed their interest in leasing farms to DLA for the use of communities, and in the light of the scarcity of land in the district, this might be an option worth investigating.

Steinkopf

Steinkopf is the second biggest "Coloured Rural Area" administered in terms of Act 9 of 1987. It is situated some 50km from Springbok alongside the N7 route to Namibia.

The original area was 329 300 ha to which 110 024 ha has been added under the Land Redistribution Programme. Population is some 7500 people, mainly settled in the main town of Steinkopf and scattered settlements of Goodhouse, Henkries Bulletrap, Ikosis, Eyams and Gladkopf, all of which fall under the administration of the Steinkopf Transitional Council.

There are few economic opportunities in the area outside of subsistence farming. In 1947 livestock holding was equivalent to 12754 life stock units (LSU's), and a 1997 SPP survey showed this number had reduced to 8015 LSU's (presumably because of a deteriorated carrying capacity). According to the Steinkopf meentkomitee, only 168 households were registered as livestock farmers in March 2000 (although the SPP survey suggested that 323 families owned stock). Assuming that there are some 1200 families in the area, the indications are that only 33% own stock.

The first Meentkomitee was established in 1998 to manage some state land (Vioolsdrift Suid) that was allocated in 1994, but Rooiwal and Vioolsdrift settlements disputed the allocation, and land has as yet to be transferred. It has now been agreed that disadvantaged members of all 3 communities should have equal grazing rights and that the land should be managed under a joint Meentkomitee. Although this meentkomitee is hardworking there are divisions within the group, in particular financially strong "commercial farmers" vs. more disadvantaged members. The meentkomitee has drawn up a management plan and a rating scale for applicants, as well as a method of administrating the land.

Currently, under the auspices of the SPP and the DoA, the Steinkopf Grazing Regulations Project is effectively illustrating how commonages in Namaqualand can be run in an efficient and fair manner, through a system of local authority and user group co-management.

Eleven individuals (4 women and 7 men) were interviewed in Steinkopf. At a meeting with representatives from the Meentkomitee and the local council, it was decided that each of the members would hold a small ward meeting to discuss some of the researchers' questions with them. The meentkomitee would then forward the feelings of their constituents to the researchers. It is unsure whether these meetings did take place, however, as several phone calls and faxes to the meentkomitee requesting for the outcome of the meetings, were not responded to.

Three of the women interviewed have husbands or fathers who had animals on the commonage, while the fourth woman lived in Steinkopf and was not part of a family who had animals on the commonage. Two of the men interviewed were not farmers, while the other five had animals on the old commonage. Everyone interviewed were very knowledgeable and well informed about the various programmes of the land reform. All were in favour of the commonage system as this is a part of their lives, and was the way their parents, grandparents and great grandparents lived and farmed. *"Dis ons manier, dis ons leefwyse."* Seven out of the 11 felt that the stronger farmers should leave the commonage and become commercial farmers as they often farm well to the detriment of the poorer farmers. *"Hulle boer ryk deur ons armes se skade."*

All eleven people interviewed felt that they needed some more land and that the majority of the people prefer living and farming in a communal system, but that more land is necessary to enable everyone to have a viable income. They do not want to have a subsistence farming lifestyle, and they feel that more land and better-enforced rules will ensure this. Everyone was enthusiastic about the meentkomitee and the future.

The four criteria for user selection and stock numbers are:

- The capacity of the commonage;
- The capacity of the user;
- The need of the user, and
- The Act 9 status of the user. (Concordia Meent Regulasies)

Power relations between all the meentkomitees and the TLC:

- Recommendations made by the meentkomitee to the TLC are not discussed properly and often just rejected without explanation
- Recommendations approved by the TLC are noted but with no action taken, or not carried out with often tragic results for the commonage: camps can remain with no water for weeks on end.

Meentkomitee and the TLC have achieved a great deal towards the proper management of the commonage and are willing to make further efforts to resolve the problems.

Newly acquired land: facts and concerns

Problem that was experienced through the purchase of farms and the occupation of farms by small-scale farmers was the time that lapsed between the date of transfer of the property to the local authority and the time of occupation by some farmers from the community.

The practice had been that farms would lie vacant for some time while all the mechanisms for managing the commonages was being put in place. In the absence of caretakers on the properties, damaged often occurred, either through vandalism or through natural courses such as the damage to wind pump caused by a strong wind.

By the time that the community members started to utilize the farm, they would assume that the PDLA had purchased them a farm with damaged infrastructure.

Only farms available and suitable for purchase are often far from the communities,(one of the new farms bought for Springbok is an approximate 40km away from the town). This often leaves the communal farmer with no transport to get to his animals on a regular basis, and the distance adds unforeseen financial costs to the already poor farmer. The Paulshoek farmers are 30km away from their animals with such bad roads that an off-road vehicle is needed to get to the animals. Often the farmers have no choice but to walk to the farm or use donkeys to get there, and once they are there,

Newly acquired land

In Namaqualand there are three types of commonage farmers:

- The financially strong farmer with several hundreds of stock and owns businesses in the nearby towns;
- The part-time farmer who has employment either on a mine or in town or who is a professional such as a teacher; and
- The subsistence farmer who only has a few livestock and who keeps them for subsistence means. This farmer is poverty-stricken.

Influence of Climatic Conditions

Namaqualand has a complex rainfall pattern as it receives both summer and winter rain. Without expert knowledge and very close observation and management of the commonages, overgrazing and other ecological damage can occur.

Fortunately most communities are aware of this and working hard to accommodate experts working with them and learning as much as they can.

Unfortunately the House of Representatives did not maintain the traditional commonages properly, which also contributed to the current level of degradation. Overgrazing and degradation of land in Namaqualand not only happens in the commonage areas of Namaqualand, but also on many of the farms owned by mining companies and commercial farms in the area.

Aftercare

1. Aftercare is crucial when working towards sustainable and productive commonages. Communities need to be guided and assisted after the transfer of the land.
2. Money needs to be put aside to allow for the appointment of NGOs and other groups who understand the communities and the area, to work with the various communities for some time.
3. DoA and SPP are working towards providing some of these needs, but they do not have the manpower or the finances to carry on doing it in all areas.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- ❑ DLA is not doing any monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in Namaqualand at the time of the report.
- ❑ During 1998 National M&E officials visited the area, but no report is available on this visit.
- ❑ The Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (PM&EO) based in Kimberley has never visited the district.
- ❑ Some effort has been made to draw up M&E plans for the monitoring of commonages nationally in generic manner, but this has still not been implemented.
- ❑ A reason for this is that the Directorate: Monitoring and Evaluation endeavoured to have their main M&E tools developed and implemented before starting work on monitoring commonages.

M&E plan must be designed for the monitoring of commonages in Namaqualand and that it be done with input and consultation with SPP and the DoA in the district. SPP and DoA have already implemented monitoring systems that monitor the effectiveness of the commonage committees and the change in the farming practices of the communities. Several projects that relate to the monitoring of land use and the preservation of the natural resources have been in progress at Leliefontein for the past five years.

Soebatsfontein

Soebatsfontein is situated 80km by road southwest of Springbok and 48km northwest of Kamnieskroon. The land is situated at a spring where seven farms meet, in an extremely low rainfall area (125mm. p.a.). It probably owes its name to a tragedy which is said to have happened there about 1798, when Hendrik Sievert (or Stievert), farm assistant of a widow Van der Westhuizen, fell into the hands of Bushmen. His Coloured herdsmen, hiding nearby, heard him imploring (*soebat*) them to spare his life, but there was no mercy. Before this event the spring was known as "Rietfontein" or "Doornfontein".

Soebatsfontein lies between the Leliefontein and Kommaggas settlements. It has a population of 235 Coloureds and 14 Whites (compared to a population in 1970 of 80 Coloureds and 85 Whites). Approximately 11 Whites live in town. The Coloured population live on a piece of land that belongs to the *Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk* (previously known as the *N.G. Sendingkerk*). It is known locally as "*Bloukamp*". This portion is located on Section 22 of the farm Soubattersfontein 467. In 1954 a Johannes Beukes sold a subdivided piece of land (portion 22 of Soebattersfontein 467) to the *N.G. Sendinggemeente*, Garies-Kammieskroon, to establish a church, school, house for the teacher and houses for local Coloured pensioners. The inclusion of pensioners in this land arrangement indicated that Coloureds were only allowed to remain on the farms as long as they could work as labourers. Once they got too old, the perception was that they had to leave the farms. This is how the first families settled there in what became known as the "*kleurling lokasie*" van Soebatsfontein, or "*Bloukamp*".

Currently the Whites live on the one side of the road, while the 43 Coloured families live on the other side on unsuitable land and in informal housing, with each family paying R2,50 per month to the Church.

In a 1995 survey conducted by SPP and the Soebatsfontein Community Committee, founded on 24 May 1994, found that 4 out of 40 families were female-headed households. 40% of the head of households were born in Soebatsfontein, with the rest coming from surrounding areas of Namaqualand. Eleven of the 40 households surveyed indicated that they had household members employed as farm workers, with De Beers being the main employer (15). Adult unemployment (18-60 years) was 31%.

The Department of Land Affairs has recently transferred 15 069 ha in the name of the Namaqualand District Council, to be used by the Soebatsfontein Community. The community is very happy about this new acquisition. The meentkomiitee is looking into the best practices for management of the land. A community meeting took place on 08 April 2000 and it was clear that this community was well informed about their land reform choices. They spoke highly of SPP (Ms Sue Powers in particular) as well as the DLA workers (Mr. Jordaan in particular). There was an obvious long history of consultation and trust between the community and the SPP and DLA. The community also consulted Dr Tim Hoffman with regard to proper farming and conservation techniques that will ensure the unique vegetation in the area.

The community felt that the commonage method was the only way to ensure that each of the families had the opportunity to make a viable living from farming, especially in the current economic climate in Namaqualand. There is not enough land or money to establish each family as a commercial farmer, but through a commonage system this community is allowed to return to the way in which their grandfathers farmed. "*Ons is so baie dankbaar vir hierdie kans.*"

Although there are some tensions between the older and younger generation in terms of payment for use of the commonage, these tensions are benign and the meentkomiitee appear to be strong enough to handle it effectively.

The five farmers interviewed had the same sentiments as those expressed at the community meeting. They all felt that this is a step in the right direction to restore their humanity. "*Met hierdie grond gee die Regering ons menswaardigheid terug. En daarvoor is ons baie dankbaar.*" "*Vyftien duisend hektaar is nie genoeg nie, maar dit is beter as niks. Ons hoop dat ons miskien nog een of twee plase by kan kry, dan kan ons die grond mooi oppas en dan is daar darem iets vir ons kinders en kleinkinders. Nou kan ek rustig sterf. Dit voel goed.*"

There are plans to draw up a baseline evaluation of the ecological condition of the farm that was recently purchased for the use of the Soebatsfontein community. This will be done with the assistance of Dr Tim Hoffman, who is a well-known botanist and who has been project manager at the Paulshoek study in Leliefontein. Some areas of the farm at Soebatsfontein⁰ are 5-10% in a bad condition, 70% moderate condition, but this should

also be viewed in the light that most farms in Namaqualand suffer damage of this kind because of the erratic rainfall and sparse vegetation. Unfortunately too often overgrazing and abusive land use contribute to a major problem of land degradation.

Significant and very encouraging though are the enthusiasm of the Soebatsfontein community to not only monitor their own land use, but also the ecological effect of their presence on the land. The baseline study will be done prior to the community moving onto the land with their livestock and this will provide a baseline for a long-term environmental assessment of the area. This is the ideal opportunity for the Environmental Impact Assessment arm of the Directorate: M&E to start working with the role players in the district.

Land Needs

<p>The assumption that need for land is limited to the use of land for production purposes, and not ownership or settlement is wrong. There is a strong need and emphasis from the beneficiary side to address the need for ownership of at least the “<i>saaipersele</i>” that has been used by families for generations. People are still in favour of having the communal areas for communal purposes, but in the light of the rapidly approaching finalization of the demarcation process, residents of Steinkopf and Concordia expressed their feelings of unease of not knowing how secure their residence is.</p>
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A further feeling of the various communities is that if it is indeed too expensive to give individual ownership of “*saaipersele*” than they would like to have some type of alternative arrangements that would assist them to feel “*volwaardige mense*” (mature adults)³. The fact that the minister still keeps their land in trust is like an insult to them as people, and they feel embarrassed that in the year 2000 they are still treated like minors in South Africa.

Individual ownership brings with it the pride and responsibilities of owning a title deed but it also carries other consequences: if someone takes out a loan and cannot repay it, they can lose their property.

Individual ownership of “*saaipersele*” would also imply the fencing off of the various properties. These “*saaipersele*” are not always economically viable pieces of land and through fencing off certain areas the entrance and access of the rest of the commonage users to the commonage and water points will be restricted. This might lead to further conflict and even more problems with the administration of the commonage.

Demarcation

The main concern at the moment is that of the OCC towns and their future. The OCC towns' people feel that they were neglected and not properly informed as to what will happen to them after demarcation. They still do not have any commonage of their own. Although the Springbok municipality will allow the residents of these towns after the finalization of the demarcation process, to apply to use the Springbok commonage, there would not be sufficient land to accommodate all these potential small-scale farmers as well as those already on the Springbok commonage.

Although these groups were not well informed on demarcation, they have a thorough knowledge of their rights with regards to land reform options.

It is unclear what the future of these four communities will be and whether DLA will be able to purchase land for them prior to the completion of the demarcation process. The community emphasised that they would also want the 18-month period allowance that was granted for the Act 9 communities to give inputs as to how their land should be administered. Unfortunately this is not possible, as this allowance is only applicable to the previous Act 9 areas.

State Land

- Namaqualand has little agricultural production potential, except in those areas close to the Orange River.
- Water is a scarcity.
- Although there are several state farms⁴ along the Orange River that could be used by the Namaqualand communities, the Northern Cape Provincial Government has not as yet introduced the legislation that will effectively deal with the future of these farms.
- DLA and DoA have completed the request using the Section 28 (1) certificate that would allow DoA to lease out the land until legislation that will allow for the transfer of land is ready.
- Some persons have since prior 1994 use these farms free of charge, and even if they would transgress the general rules and regulations for use of these farms, the Transitional Council can take no action against them.
- Many of the communities of Namaqualand could be able to use these farms more productively, if in the very least to grow lucern for feeding their livestock during dry periods.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Land reform in Namaqualand centers around one point:

Namaqualand rural land claims cannot be addressed through the Land Claims Court process because of the Constitutional 1913 cut-off date agreed to for land restitution matters. Although DLA is purchasing more land for the people of Namaqualand, this is also a programme of restitution. This is land stolen from the people over a period of two centuries and this is an attempt to return some of that land within in the context of 1913 cut-off date. The current DLA products are unusable in Namaqualand mainly because of the limited amount of land available and the cost involved.

The people of Namaqualand have maintained a communal way of living for time immemorial.

They have managed to stand two centuries of oppression by the various governments in power. All the individuals interviewed, except one, said that they would never want another way of farming, that they are happy with being part of a commonage system, but that the land is not sufficient.

Strong farmers on the commonages might want to transform to becoming commercial farmers, and for these DLA should find a product to assist them in this process.

SPP and DoA pulling together!!

Through hard work and commitment to the process, SPP and DoA have started some aftercare assistance to these communal communities, but it is important that the following questions should be addressed:

- Whose responsibility is aftercare?
- What are the ways to institutionalize aftercare to ensure that there are sufficient funds available to administer, manage and maintain commonages effectively to ensure sustainability?

Currently there are very little funds and resources available to deal with all the needs of the communities.

Recommendations:

1. Aftercare is crucial. It is thus recommended that a system for aftercare on commonage projects be introduced with the following aims:
 - The building and training of institutional structures for the management of commonage.
 - The support and training for community land holding structures.
 - To support and facilitate involvement in new land based economic activities
 - Conflict resolution within communities and between communities.

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2. Financially strong communal farmers should be assisted to become commercial farmers.
 - The recommendation here be would that very soft loans (4-5% per annum) be made available to the farmers, and that they be given some grace period of a year or two of no repayments, additional to other grants by DLA and other institutions.
