



**PRESENTED BY HON. KUAIKMA RIRUAKO (PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF THE OVAHERERO PEOPLE)**

**DATE: 12 JANUARY 2013**

**VENUE: HILTON HOTEL AT THE OCCASION OF A MEETING WITH HON. HEIDEMARIE WIECZOREK-ZEUL**

We do not reject any genuine help that comes our way and if it is to sincerely address the legacy of the abject poverty left with us by past colonial practices, especially by the Extermination Order of Gen. von Trotha.

With regard to the issue of the Special Initiative Programmes we have expressed our reservation and skepticism in the manner in which it was conceived and imposed on the Namibian people and Government without their asking for it.

It was a product of a top-down decision which excluded the participants of the intended beneficiaries at the time of its conceptualization. It has a history. At some early stages our President refused to sign it; years later an agreement and a memorandum of Understanding were signed between the two governments. Nowadays we hear, even from high German Government Officials, that it has not gone on well ; that more money will be added whilst the initial funds have not yet been exhausted but lying dormant in a Frankfurt Bank.

We hear, and we have seen it ourselves, that the conditions of some of the livestock (goats, and cattle) are very poor - old age whilst some have defects – so much so that towards the end of last year (2012) some of the intended beneficiaries in the Omaheke Region refused to accept these poor quality animals. Housing and garden projects speak volumes of failures.

A lot more about the apparent failures of the attempt to help those identified for assistance can be enumerated but perhaps not in this short meeting.

For my people, and in particular the Ovaherero Traditional Authority, to participate in a more meaningful way in this program, I now wish to propose as follows:

1. The Special Initiative Program's intent and purpose (aims and objectives) be re-opened and be relooked at with the full participation of the intended beneficiaries' representatives and other relevant stakeholders.
2. The depth and extent of the legacy of the colonial past (German past) must be properly assessed with a view to determine a commensurate formula for funding, because (in our view) N\$ 160 million earmarked for the Special Initiative is a pittance to cover all the regions identified. Since the identified communities (Ovahereros and Namas) are the ones who bear the brunt of the poverty legacy of the past, who experience the extent of their poverty they cannot be excluded from the assessment process and the implementation actions that would follow.
3. Since your Party has tabled a motion in the German Parliament last year (2012) which acknowledged the genocide of the Ovaherero and the Nama people and then linked Special Initiative to that motion, is Special Initiative your remedy for the genocide that your Party has acknowledged and if not what then is your remedy for the genocide mentioned in your Party's motion?
4. To continue the discussion about the sensitive issues of Special Initiative with sufficient time, rather than for one or two hours, we propose that an ad hoc committee of the stakeholders alluded to in proposal 1 and 2 above be set up to continually engage itself with threshing out all the sticky issues surrounding the Special Initiative.
5. What is the lifespan of the Special Initiative, 3-5 years or 10 years or can it be extended to more? What will happen if the lifespan expires and all the stated aims and objectives are not realised?

We hope that by seeking clarity and proposing those few areas to be relooked at would not be construed as a rejection of your idea of Special Initiative by the Ovaherero people or by the Ovaherero Traditional Authority. We must only go back to the drawing board, as it were.

Finally, Frau Wiczorek-Zeul, I would like to present to you personally two documents that I hope will add more to your understanding of some of the issues we have been raising over the last years:

1. A joint position paper by the Nama and Ovaherero people to our two governments concerning the reparation package we envisage.
2. My statement during the fetching of the skulls in Berlin.

**THANK YOU AND HAVE A NICE TRIP BACK TO GERMANY!**