

OPENING ADDRESS, 24TH FEBRUARY 2023

PROTOCOL

- The Senior Divisional officer for Donga Mantung Division
- The Divisional Officers for Nkambe, Ako, Misaje, Ndu and Nwa Sub Divisions
- The Commanders of the 52nd Battalion,
- The Company Commander of the Gendarmerie,
- The Commissioners of Public Security and Special Branch Police
- The Chief of Liaison DGRE, Donga Mantung
- The State Counsel, Donga Mantung
- The Mayors of Nkambe, Ako, Misaje, Ndu and Nwa Councils
- Your Majesties, Members of the NW House of Chiefs
- Hon Members of the House of Divisional Representatives
- Your Royal Majesties of Nkambe, Assa, Dumbu, Akweto, Ndu, Mbem and Chup
- Religious Authorities
- Representatives of women and youth associations
- Representatives of local financial institutions, CamCCUL
- Our peace building expert and consultant
- Special Invites, Safety Net project, SHUMAS
- Junior Regional Councilors
- Ladies and gentlemen of the Press and Communication organs,
- Members of the technical secretariat
- Ladies and gentlemen, all protocol duly observed;

I want to particularly thank you for honouring our invitation to the capacity training seminar organized by the North-West Regional Assembly on peace building initiatives and local development in Donga Mantung Division. I feel both honoured and somewhat humble to be speaking to you today. Peace and development are crucial prerequisites for the maintenance of human dignity. I am therefore particularly pleased to be able to share with this forum some reflections of the North-West Regional Assembly on peace and development, which are, of course, mutually reinforcing.

Several elements are useful in defining peace. On an individual level, peace may start with having calmness within oneself. Expanding outward, peace entails

agreement and harmony among people. At its largest scale, peace is to live without violent conflict or war. Peace underlies our quality of life and the fabric of our communities; and, as our weaponry becomes ever more powerful, our very survival as people on this planet depends upon it.

Thank you Deputy Mayor of Nkambe council for your warm, friendly, brotherly, kind words of welcome. The feeling is always different being home in Donga Mantung Division. Before I continue, permit me introduce your representatives of the Division at the Regional Assembly (House of Chiefs – HRM the Fon of NKANCHI, HRM the Fon of NTEM, House of Divisional Reps – Hon Rep ESEH Peter, MVENYA Ernest, ACHU Kingsley, NKIWIKI Florence, Kenneth NFOR, NFOR Florence, CHUYEH Edward, NFOR Marcel, FRIDA LAKBUB, KALAK Flavius BOTEH).

Since the putting in place of Regions, the North-West Regional Assembly has been able to sit and deliberate nine (9) times in plenary sessions arriving at a total of 44 deliberations. The primordial of all the deliberations were those with the vision to build peace in the North-West Region through community driven decentralized activities, a way to rebranding a new North-West. Some of the deliberations resulted in the inscription of peace building mission in the Assembly's budget and the putting in place of peace and development committees in the 34 Sub Divisions of the North-West to champion the peace mission. In this spirit, the North-West Regional Assembly seeks to grow hope and faith, not fear and negation in the communities. We have made available the first and second editions of the North-Westerner alongside other materials which you may exploit and know more about your Regional Assembly.

As very important stakeholders in Donga Mantung Division, we are in Nkambe today to fully participate in this all important conversation on peace building and local development as statutory members of the various peace and development committees.

It has always been the vision of the President of the North-West Regional Assembly, Prof. Fru Fobuzshi ANGWAFO III that 'commitment and continuous interaction of all stakeholders is ever so necessary in the construction of a new North-West Region where everyone counts and is counted. Not only shall no one be left behind but we must all move ahead together as in our proverbial slogan "U na Mi, Mi na U, Wi bi Wi"

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable participants of this seminar, we must answer present at the challenging call for innovation and not be disinterested receivers only of values, science and technologies from elsewhere. Home grown solutions to our problems and needs must be harnessed to sustain peace and local development.

During the seventh session of the Regional Assembly, the Regional Executive Council opted for a Citizen Participation approach in peace building training. This is statutory as enshrined in sections 40 and 41 of the Bill to Institute the General

Code of Regional and Local Authorities, providing individuals (the Citizens, inhabitants, the public of the NWR) the opportunity to influence public decision making with regards to peace.

We wish that through your representation, the entire population of Donga Mantung actively participate at all stages of the Regional development cycle: planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and so on. This can only be attained if we elaborate a collective Regional framework to foster attitudes and practices towards a complete return to normalcy in the Region.

Your Regional Executive Council has been trying in its own way to ensure that the 'leave no one behind' principle is observed in Citizen Participation by effective participation of those who are traditionally left behind in peace talks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the inaugural speech of the North-West Regional Executive Council, we sought to rebrand the Region by going back to the heritage, relying on our proverbial community spirit that has waned over the years. This is special for we bring to our Nation, our Continent, the North-West character in costume, custom, dance, dress etc. The logo of the Regional Assembly proudly depicts our core values of peace, justice, unity, hard-work and solidarity. Let our uniqueness define our contribution today and build a lasting foundation for future generations. Let our manners, kindness, respect, compassion, self-control and anger management, and other aptitudes, attributes and skills sets pace our latitude for peace building, for harmonious wholesome development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable participants,

I pray that as members of Sub Divisional, Divisional Peace and Development Committee, we shall be peace ambassadors leading by example so that one day we live in a Division and a North-West Region free of jealousy, gossip, backbiting, envy, hatred, threats, verbal abuse, physical abuse of any kind, assault, battery, kidnapping and murder. It is our wish that we communicate more, collaborate more, love more, with compassion and empathy in solidarity for our survival.

Ladies and Gentlemen, peace building is a process where we all are encouraged to join the band wagon process of building peace in our Division, Region and Country.

The North-West Regional Assembly peace building mission in Donga Mantung Division has been ongoing through concertations, consultation, award of scholarships, distribution of didactic materials, distribution of MEDSHARE PPE, organization of sporting activities, meetings and so on.

In 2022, and in strict respect of the guidelines provided by the deliberative organ of the Regional Assembly, some stakeholders were designated by consensus, as members of Sub Divisional and Divisional peace and development committees. These peace and development committees of Donga Matung Division, Ako,

Misaje, Ndu, Nkambe and Nwa Sub Divisions were formalized by Prefectoral orders n^o 151, 156, 152, 155, 154, 153/PO/E27/SAAJP/2022 of 7/09/2022 respectively.

This seminar was organized for these members of peace and development committees and the profile and functions of each member shall be highlighted in a presentation in the course of this workshop.

Equally in 2022, some community driven decentralized projects were identified by local stakeholders of the peace and development committees to be executed by human high intensity labour approach. These projects under the guideline of the Regional Executive Council were costed by the competent technical state service concerned (the Delegation for Public Works). They include:

The manual maintenance of 6.6km of the AKO-Dumbo Berabe road (6,000,000FCFA),

The manual maintenance of 3km of the communal road Moh-Tchina and the leveling of the court yard of the youth empowerment center in Misaje (9,000,000FCFA),

The manual maintenance of 6.6km of the ring road Kakar-Mbiyeh (6,000,000FCFA),

The manual maintenance of 6.6km of the communal roads new market junction – GBHS Nkambe – Binju, Grandstand junction – ST RITA's college Nkambe (6,000,000FCFC),

The manual maintenance of the first 10km of the Communal road Nwa-Ntong (9,000,000FCFA)

These projects are expected to occupy about 500 targeted youths for this year and may be increased in the years to come. In the course of this seminar, the terms of reference for the implementation of human high intensity labour approach shall be presented alongside technical guidelines.

During this workshop, we shall be drilled on some key topics such as communication during crisis period, active and creative peace building activities for long lasting peace, citizen participation in peace building and exhaustive declaration of civil status events amidst security challenges by an expert of International Consortium for Peace, Human Security and Sustainable Development (Mrs. MAKOUDEM TENE).

At the end of this workshop and with the knowledge gained, we pray that the peace and development committees organize information, education, communication and behavioral training seminars on peace building at the Sub Divisions. In a holistic approach, this may bring on board Fons, Ardos, Quarter heads, Municipal Councilors, Religious authorities, Representatives of women and youth groups, Achaba/Drivers unions, Vigilante groups/lay security agents, registered beneficiaries and others.

As individual citizens, we all have to keep playing the lead role of engaging on an aggressive and constant mass sensitization for behavior change activities with the view to;

- De-radicalizing our youths*
- Stopping hate speech and abusive use of social media*
- Rejecting violence as a means of obtaining political gains*
- Changing of mentality from developing anger against fellow men to embracing peace and giving one another a chance to live by accepting and tolerating differences in opinion*
- Refusing to spread any inflammatory information that may jeopardize peace*
- Denouncing all those who are exacerbating the conflict like those who are using the conflict for economic gains*
- Causing citizens to choose peace crusading as a vocation*
- Encouraging the respect for State and personal property, public institution, emblems, etc.*
- Encouraging all initiatives aimed at institutionalizing dialogue and reconciliation among members of the community. Peace and Development Committees formed in every Sub Division should mediate and bring healing among afflicted persons. An expedient appropriation of the bottom-top approach*

I want to thank all of you who have come notwithstanding the challenges of the day. With such commitment, we are certain the North West shall overcome.

May God bless us with a fruitful seminar.

Thank you for your indulgence.