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**ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN NAMIBIA &
NAMIBIAN ASSOCIATION ON LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICIALS**

ALAN & NALAO JOINT CONSULTATIVE MEETING COMMUNIQUE

“KENAKO!!” - THE TIME IS NOW FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM!!

July 09, 2010

Oshakati, Namibia

Whereas ALAN and NALAO as the associations that represent both the political and technical arms of local government in Namibia share the common vision of enhancing excellence in local authority governance and administration.

Whereas ALAN and NALAO have committed themselves to work towards a united voice for local authorities in Namibia, we have jointly organized and hosted this ***Joint Consultative Meeting*** in ***Oshakati*** from ***July 08 -09, 2010***.

Having appreciated the excellent, warm and friendly way in which the Oshakati Town Council have hosted the *Joint Consultative Meeting*, we wish to register our most heartfelt appreciation to the Mayor, Her Worship Cllr. Katrina Shimbulu, the entire Council as well as the management and staff team who have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to make this meeting the evident success that it has been.

Having committed ourselves to be responsive to the issues and challenges facing local authorities we have therefore convened this joint Consultative Meeting to deliberate and find common ground and articulate a way forward on the current and emerging issues facing local authorities in Namibia.

Now after some presentations, discussions and analysis we arrived at some conclusions and recommendations for follow up by those in the local government sphere who have the mandate and authority to act on these resolutions and recommendations.

We now release for public consumption this ***Communiqué*** for the benefit of all stakeholders not present and as a basis for follow up action.

1. **Improving Cooperation at the Political and Administrative Interface at the Local Authority Level:**

We have taken note with increasing concern that there has been pervasive conflict at the political-administrative interface in local authorities. These conflicts are manifesting themselves in the increasing number of vacancies in management, suspension of CEOs and subsequent extended acting appointments, incompleteness of critical service delivery projects, negative publicity and the consequent negative public perceptions about the local authority sector.

We call upon all elected and appointed officials in local authorities need to work together as public servants who may have different roles but are always united by a common will and purpose to serve the people of this country without fear or favour.

We also appeal to the Hon. Minister of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development to declare for a moratorium on the suspension of CEOs and call on local authority councils to call back all suspended CEOs to their offices until the line Ministry, ALAN and NALAO has finalized practical guidelines to deal with issues around the discipline of CEOs.

Further more, we resolve that:

- No CEO should be suspended indefinitely and charges must be brought and a proper disciplinary hearing conducted within a reasonable timeframe of not longer than three (3) calendar months.
- Whenever conflicts arise at the political administrative interface the first line of action should be at the level of a joint committee of ALAN and NALAO to send a fact finding mission to local authorities experiencing difficulties.
- Suspension should only be considered after the issue has been referred to the line Ministry and only based on the investigation and recommendation of the line Ministry.
- CEOs and Councillors need to recognize that the role of the *council is to set the political vision and provide the resources* and the mandate of the *management is to implement the political vision*. This understanding will limit unnecessary conflicts and meddling in each others mandates.
- The training for CEOs and Councillors should be context specific to the Namibian political and legal framework and should preferably be conducted by Namibian professionals.

2. **Status and Conditions of Service for Local Authority Political Office Bearers:**

The Consultative Meeting noted with concern that local authority political office bearers remain the most unappreciated politicians in the political spheres of Namibia. This is reflected not only in the issues around protocol but also in the way local authority politicians are remunerated. The conditions of service and benefits for the local authority political office bearers is an impediment to providing the needed leadership,

oversight and community engagement, necessary to improve service delivery at the local authority.

We therefore call for a speedy review and improvement of the conditions of service for local authority Councillors including the implementation of the recommendations of the *Local Authority Reform Position Paper* that recommends full time Councillors.

3. **Local Authority Reform:** The consultative meeting expressed its frustration at the delay in implementing the recommendations of the position paper on local government. We are convinced that many of the issues local authorities are struggling with can be resolved if the local authority reform is implemented. In the mean time, the meeting took note that some of the issue can be included in the current Amendment Bill on the Local Authorities Act, Act 23 of 1992 as amended. The time is NOW!!
4. **Legal Recognition of the Association:** We call on the line Ministry to include the legal recognition of the local authority association in the current Amendment Bill to the local authority Act.
5. **Subsidies for Local Authorities:** We take note with appreciation the commitment of Central Government through the Ministry of Regional Local Government, Housing and Rural Development to support capital projects in some local authorities. However, we also note that now more than ever before, there is a need for direct subsidies to local authorities in order to ensure that the standard of service delivery is maintained. This is particularly critical because local authorities are the closest level to the people and the pillar of government.
6. **Performance Management Development Project:** The meeting confirmed the support of the Associations as this project will help a lot in bringing about a more objective system of handling performance issues in local authorities. We call on the line Ministry to provide the seed capital to kick start this project. We also call upon local authorities to demonstrate their commitment to this project by contributing financially to the project.
7. **5% Contribution to Regional Council:** The meeting resolved to recommend that the mandatory 5% contribution by local authorities to regional councils should be discontinued.
8. **Conditions of Service for Local Authority Staff:** That the line Ministry do away with 5% limit on increases of local authority salaries to enable respective local authorities to determine suitable salaries for their staff, based on their specific circumstances.
9. **Spearheading International Twinning:** That ALAN takes a lead in spearheading international twinning arrangements for local authorities. ALAN should also organize forums for the sharing of best practices and lessons learnt from international twinning

arrangements. Such twinning should include experiences from both western and eastern countries.

10. **Amendments to the ALAN Constitution:** The meeting received the proposed amendments to the ALAN Constitution (2003). The meeting referred the final discussion on the amendments to the ALAN Congress in 2011. The secretariat will make sure that all local authorities have received the draft amendments and all councils are called upon to review and provide feedback within a deadline that will be communicated to them by the ALAN Management Committee through the Secretariat.
11. **Supporting HIV/AIDS Responses at the Local Authority Level:** The meeting confirmed its support for the local action on HIV/AIDS and called on all councils to assign Councillors as well as to appoint specific staff dedicated to support and coordinate HIV/AIDS Workplace Programs as well as to support the Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) Community Conversation initiative. The meeting also confirmed its support for the work of **AMICAALL (The Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS at the Local Level)** and agreed that ALAN will continue to take a more visible ownership and support of the AMICAALL Namibia Chapter.
12. **Review of Membership Contributions to ALAN:** The meeting took note of the need to strengthen the financial base of the Association in order to provide more effective services to members. The meeting referred the detailed discussion on this matter to the official ALAN Congress in 2011.
13. **Local Authority Service Commission:** The meeting resolved to recommend to the line Ministry to put mechanisms in place to develop a Local Authority Service Commission that will function in the similar way to the Public Service Commission. Such a commission would create a statutory platform to regulate with setting up and enforcement of rules and codes of conduct, conditions of service, appointments and terminations of service, performance management etc, for the local authority sector.
14. **Local Authority Councillor Leave Arrangements:** The meeting recommends that provision should be made that when local authority Councillors in full time employment elsewhere attend meetings and businesses on behalf of the council or on behalf of the Association, such leave should be treated as special leave and not deducted from their respective work as Annual Leave.
15. **Land Delivery:** Currently bureaucratic delays in the delivery of land remains one of the key limiting factors in speeding up revenue generation, housing and economic development in the local government sector. We therefore call upon the line Ministry to work with the Associations and local authorities to explore opportunities and solutions to

speed up land delivery. We also call upon the line Ministry to support local authorities with the servicing of land in local authorities.

16. **Decentralization:** We call on the government to speed up the decentralization process to local authorities. In particular the decentralization of the functions of the Township Board to the Regional level. This will speed up local and regional social and economic development.
17. **REDS:** The meeting also noted with frustration that the long awaited Electricity Summit has not taken place yet. The process of getting an independent consultant to verify the concerns of local authorities is also long overdue. The meeting reaffirmed earlier calls by ALAN and NALAO and resolved to call for the scrapping of the REDS and that electricity distribution be returned back to local authorities in line with the mandate given to local authorities in terms of the Local Authorities Act, Act 23 of 1992, as amended.

By ALAN & NALAO and as Authorized by:

Hon. Cllr. Pio Nganate, Vice-President ALAN & Ms. Niita Alugodhi, President, NALAO

Date: July 9, 2010
