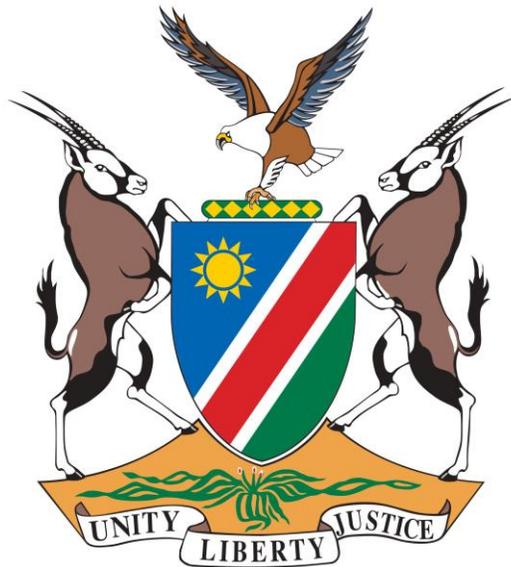


MINISTRY OF JUSTICE



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MEDIA RELEASE

VISIT TO COMMUNITY COURTS AROUND OMARURU

09 May 2019

All media

1. **On 08 May 2019 the Honourable Minister of Justice, Mr Sakeus Shanghala, MP met with the justices, assessors, clerks and messengers of the Tsoa-xudaman Community Court, Zeraua Community Court, Dâure-Daman Community Court and !Oe#Gân Community Court in Omaruru, which was the most central location for all four courts.**
2. The purpose of the visit was to present and discuss suggested amendments to the Community Court Act, 2003 (Act No. 10 of 2003). At present there are issues relating to the appeal process and the matters relating to the succession of traditional leaders that should fall within the ambit of the community court, but does not.
3. Restructuring of the appeal process will allow communities to experience true, efficient justice in terms of the local customs and norms. Should the accused or the aggrieved person be unsatisfied with the decision on village level, such person can appeal to the community court. It is proposed that the present appeal system be amended. Instead of appealing to the magistrates' court from the community court, one must be able to appeal to a regional community court, on the level of a magistrates' court and thereafter a national community court, on the level of a high court.
4. The proposed amendments will ensure that customary law enjoys the protection afforded to it in terms of Article 66 of the Namibian Constitution which states that customary law remains valid and in force as long as it is not in conflict with the Namibian Constitution.
5. The community court staff, whom have never been visited by a Minister of Justice, were also given ample time to bring operational issues to the Minister's attention. Discussions relating to contempt of court, allowances of justices and the administration of true, speedy justice in terms of customary law was discussed and debated at length.
6. To conclude the meeting, the Minister thanked the courts for the excellent work they have been doing and encouraged them to continue serving their communities with fairness and kindness.

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