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## Dr Nickey Iyambo, Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing on Decentralisation

Christiaan Keulder



**“If democracy is to survive, it will only survive provided the grassroots people see democracy as their own.”**

**IPPR:** Mr Minister, Thank you for giving us the time to do this interview on decentralisation. If I can first start off by asking: why decentralisation? Does a sparsely populated country such as Namibia require three tiers of government?

**Dr Iyambo:** Why decentralisation? The answer is, decentralisation is necessary for Namibia because, by definition, decentralisation is a way of delegating or devolving power to the local grassroots and by that it is necessary for the political and administrative power to be shared between central government, and regional and local councils. A sparsely populated country such as Namibia: Yes indeed the three tiers of government are suitable because while Namibia is sparsely populated. It is a huge area and the distances therefore are too vast. If one is to cover the far remote, sparsely populated areas all the time from the centre, it will become extremely expensive. But, if people at the local level are delegated or devolved with the power then it becomes easier for central government to look at the issue of policy formulation rather than keeping itself busy with day-to-day administration.

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**“Three tiers of government are suitable for Namibia. If one is to cover the far remote, sparsely populated areas all the time from the centre, it will become extremely expensive. “**

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**IPPR:** The Policy on Decentralisation was drafted a while ago, why is it taking so long to be implemented?

**Dr Iyambo:** The Policy came into being in 1997. The implementation of it started last year (2000). The reason for it taking so long was that at the time of formulating the Policy, the law that will govern and administer the

implementation of the policy in terms of legislative procedures was not in place. So, it has then taken a long time to draft the law itself. Last year (2000) the Decentralisation Enabling Act become law and that's why it became necessary that the programme of decentralisation started now for the implementation part.

**IPPR:** So the legal framework is now being put in place?

**Dr Iyambo:** Everything is in place now.

**IPPR:** Who wants decentralisation? Is it a political or an economic necessity? Are politicians at the centre willing to see their powers being devolved to local politicians?

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**Dr Iyambo:** Well obviously at the beginning it has been a duty or a responsibility of politicians to map out a way in which a country called Namibia should be governed. Now you may recall that decentralisation has actually been a domain phenomenon of the current ruling party of the country. So much so, that already way back in exile while we had our central headquarters in Luanda, anywhere in Angola where we had settlements the people in the settlements were given the power, the responsibility to administer themselves without any interference whatsoever from the headquarters in Luanda. I may add that Namibians in those years in exile were probably among the few who never allowed anybody to come and administer the populations that were in those refugee camps (so to speak) because we regarded ourselves to be freedom fighters rather than political refugees. As a result, not even the UNHCR was permitted by us to administer the affairs of the Namibians in their situations: we did it ourselves. By extension to us it was a way of decentralising power already in exile. Of course, that practice was first put in writing in 1986 by the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN) by publishing a book called "*Prospectives for Administration and Development in Namibia*". In there, the way of administering a future independent country called Namibia was spelt out. I may add also that in the SWAPO Election Manifesto of 1989 it was also very clear that the country called Namibia, once it became independent, was going to be divided into regional and local authorities. It is also very important to mention that, in the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia that was drafted, particularly Chapter 12, it clearly stipulates that Namibia shall be divided into local and regional units for the purpose of administering the country. Politicians, who obviously represent the people of Namibia, are bounded by the Constitution because the Constitution was drafted by Namibians themselves after the elections. In this spirit, therefore, it must be stated that the people of Namibia wanted decentralisation through their representatives whom they themselves have chosen at that time to represent them to speak and do things on their behalf for the next five years. So, the Constitution itself must have decentralisation embodied in some of its chapters. Therefore, decentralisation in Namibia cannot really be termed to be a matter for central government or a matter for politicians only. It is the will and expressed desires of Namibians to have a country being administered on decentralised basis both politically and administratively.

**IPPR:** Mr Minister, as you explained, the historical background to the principles of decentralisation and also the practical side of decentralised governance go way back prior to Independence. But do you experience some reluctance on the side of some people at the central level (let us say - some of your colleagues for example) to really see some of that power go to local officials?

**Dr Iyambo:** Well, we are a unitary state and Cabinet, which is the first organ of state in terms of division of institutions, being the executive branch so to speak, is normally ruled by collective consensus. One can differ in Cabinet and very often we have heated arguments and opposing views are expressed. But once the Chairman of Cabinet weighs the pros and cons and realises that the majority of cabinet members are citing a particular position (as opposed to that of the minority) he makes a ruling, and once a ruling is made, we all as members of Cabinet abide by that collective decision. Hereafter, if one is still opposed to the policy or its implementation programmes that view should be kept to him/herself because it's a *fait accompli* as a policy of Government. The policy of decentralisation has been part of that process. Laws that are now forming the instrument for the implementation have also been approved by Parliament. Obviously, we are a country of laws and if one would oppose the implementation of the programmes, it would mean that one is also not adhering to Parliament having passed the law. Of course, I have to add quickly that people are free to express their opinion for or against a particular issue of implementation but it should not prevent the laws of the country from being implemented. That, I



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think, is the guiding principle on which the programmes of decentralisation are currently being implemented.

**IPPR:** If I can ask you a question about the role of political parties. If decentralisation means the devolution of political power and accountability to sub- national agencies, we have seen in the past with regard to putting up candidates, drawing of lists and so forth and also in some parties' manifestos there has been an attempt to re-enforce the control of central level of the parties over and above the localities. Is that not in a way undermining the principle of decentralisation?

**Dr Iyambo:** First, we are a unitary state and by the nature and operation of a unitary state, we have to act according to the values that we have set for ourselves. Sub-national levels are nothing more than the extension of central government. That is in the context of Namibia. In other words, while regional and local authorities can operate independently from central government, it is still to be stated that the overall national position is to be determined by central government because the policy formulations that govern the country will remain the responsibility of central government. This is because we must ensure uniform national standards.

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**“... the policy formulations that govern the country will remain the responsibility of central government. “**

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**IPPR:** With regard to the political parties, does it mean that political parties will become a part of this process? Also, will they allow local constituencies, for example, to put up their own candidates or draw up their own lists and maybe in that sense reduce the impact of party structures at the national level?

**Dr Iyambo:** Speaking for SWAPO, I can say local authorities and regional councils are embodied in the local politics and regional politics. Normally, candidates are arrived at first by having section meetings, district meetings and regional meetings. Regional meetings are the ones that finally select the candidates. Candidates selected on the basis of representation that will be made to the regional institution from the delegates that would have come from the sections and district organs of the party. It is only then that the regional organs of the party send those names to the central political level for endorsement. So, it is not the central political organ that determines who is to be a candidate. But, once the central organ adopts those names of course they become candidates for a political party because it is the party that is being represented at the local, regional as well as the central level. So my analysis of the situation (at least as it functions so far) is that, yes indeed, the local and regional structures of the parties are allowed to select their own candidates.

**IPPR:** Which brings me to the next question involving the electoral system. Again, in the spirit of decentralisation and the devolution of political power, it is assumed that there will be a lot closer contact between the local constituencies or local voters and their representatives. But, for local authorities we use a proportional representative system, which has been criticised the world over for creating gaps between voters and their representatives: purely because it does not operate on the basis of single member districts or clearly defined constituencies. What is going to happen in future with the proportional list system for local authorities? Will that be changed to fit in with the idea of decentralisation or will it be maintained?

**Dr Iyambo:** Let me explain this that, at Independence it was decided that all local elections will be held on a party list. The first and second local authority election will be held on party list as well. But from the third local authority election and onwards that would be on a ward system. The Act currently has been amended to provide for elections based on the ward system. But let me



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add here that I received petitions from civic organisations and political parties to maintain the party list system even at the local level from the third election onwards. The argument they have advanced is that if we want gender equality representation in our national politics, (and national politics includes local elections) we cannot achieve gender equality speedily if we adopt a ward system. But, if we have a party list system then obviously political parties will have to take a political decision that will have to be implemented by all the structures. This will, for example, mean that the ranking of candidates for a political party should be based on a “zebra-crossing” for example. By implementing that “zebra crossing” party list, it cannot be denied that we will have more gender equality representation in the local authorities. That is one argument being advanced in favour of the party list system continuing if we want to achieve gender equality. This argument has been arrived at as they say because of the cultural beliefs and experiences. That when you would have single-men (member) constituencies in local authorities by virtue of the nature of culture there is that possibility that even women will vote for male candidates. That is the position now. I have not as yet been able to bring up this argument before Cabinet. I will do it some time this year and Cabinet has to express itself. Whichever way Cabinet may express itself may necessitate that I will go to Parliament. Should it be, for example, that a party list be maintained, it will mean that the Act needs to be amended again. But until then, for now at least, what is in the law-book is that the next local election will be held on a ward system basis.

**IPPR:** That is the next local authority election?

**Dr Iyambo:** The next local authority election yes.

**IPPR:** We at the IPPR often do surveys where we ask people about their feelings towards their various levels of representatives. One interesting thing that comes out is that people feel themselves closer to national government rather than sub-national levels of government. We measure their feelings of closeness as people’s beliefs that their candidates or representatives are responsive, that they can be trusted, and that their representatives perform well. It seems that Namibians feel themselves closer to the national level of government than regional councils and local authorities for example. The assumption is often that, because local authorities and regional councils are spatially closer to the people than national government, people would have more intense feelings of closeness towards them, but it does not seem to be the case. Do you have any plans to address these attitudes or to promote feelings of closeness to sub-national levels of government as part of the decentralisation process?

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**“...if democracy is to survive, it will only survive provided the grassroots people see democracy as their own.”**

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**Dr Iyambo:** Well that’s one reason why the policy of decentralisation was formulated. The establishment of democracy in Namibia must not be owned by politicians at the higher level of the society only. It must filter through to the grassroots level because, if democracy is to survive, in fact, it will only survive provided the grassroots people see

democracy as their own. If that is the case, they will own democracy and obviously democracy will survive longer. This is because they will be there at the local level after the politicians at the central level are long gone. So, I believe it's a matter of time, we are a young nation and there are many issues obviously that are still not yet clear in the minds of people. I'm now referring to the overwhelming majority of the people particularly in the rural areas for whom issues of modern governance are still not very clear apart from what they have been brought up in. That is the traditional authority type of administration. So modern administration, when it was introduced in Namibia, of course as you well know, the majority of the inhabitants were not made to participate in them. So, it is strange to the majority of them still up to now; and yet every effort has to be done



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by the central government to include them. We have deliberately chosen decentralisation as a way to administer Namibia but we have also realised that it will take a long time before decentralisation takes root at the grassroots level. But that is the desire.

**IPPR:** Are you thinking about implementing some measures to track how much decentralisation has actually become an imbedded policy?

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**“One thing that I'm determined to see is that decentralisation must be implemented the Namibian way so to speak. “**

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**Dr Iyambo:** Yes, we will be carrying out surveys from time to time during the course of decentralisation to find out how much or at what pace can we still implement our programme of decentralisation. One thing that I'm determined to see is that decentralisation must be implemented the Namibian way so to speak. I understand the sentiment that decentralisation is too slow but I can respond to say that decentralisation is not an all-at-once implementable policy. It is a process. It will have to take a long

time and for me it is better that it takes a long time than taking a short cut because a short cut may be politically desirable but it may not have a long lasting effect.

**IPPR:** Namibia's regions and urban settlements are characterised by great inequalities. How is decentralisation going to address these inequalities? If we take an example from public resources, there is a lot more money being spent per child in education in some of the southern regions than in other parts of the country. Also, you have all the municipalities with relatively large cash reserves and investments and yet on the other hand you have fairly young town councils that do not have those sorts of resources. You have poor regions and richer regions. How is decentralisation going to deal with these inequalities?

**Dr Iyambo:** Yes, that is the legacy that we have inherited. Former communal areas above the red line, so to speak, were obviously neglected. They were used as a labour reservoir for people to come and work on the southern part of the red line. The present situation for which we are spending more money in the central and the south as opposed to the north is a true reflection of this fact. The situation then being that you have already more schools built in the south, more clinics built in the south, more roads in the south, more development that has taken place in the south and in the central. Those infrastructures have to be maintained. Therefore, now when the budget is drawn up you have this situation, and for example, education is one of the sectors where this inequality is quite visible. Because of history, you have highly qualified teachers that are teaching in the schools in the south, you have less qualified teachers in the north and less classrooms in the north. Now, fewer classrooms in the north means, therefore, that money that will be made available for maintenance is less because obviously, there are less schools. Money that has to be paid as salaries to teachers in the north has to be less because there are less qualified teachers. When it comes to the south it is the opposite. We have highly qualified teachers therefore the salary that you pay to them is higher. We have more classrooms, more clinics and therefore the money that we have to make available for those clinics to be maintained is higher. Those are the disparities we have. Money has to be made available otherwise the existing infrastructure will deteriorate. So, that is really the problem that we are facing today. Until such a time that you have increased classrooms in the north and the teachers have also become highly qualified then you will see the equal vision coming closer.

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Before that happens I'm afraid unless we neglect the infrastructure that is already in the south to become dilapidated it cannot be achieved more speedily. Yet, those infrastructures are national assets so you cannot afford dilapidation. What we are trying to do now is obviously to increase the pace of availability and higher qualifications of teachers in the northern areas, which will take some time. Increase the classrooms, increase the network of roads and so many other infrastructures that is currently not there. Yet you might have heard, you might have read that, while the present government is making efforts to equalise these disparities, the way the people normally see it is that all development is taking place in the north as opposed to the south. What is really happening is that because there is less need for new classrooms, new clinics or new roads to be built in the south, people do not see more openings of schools and clinics in the south. They see more of these being opened in the north and the perception now is more development goes to the north. While the truth is, those clinics, those schools are being opened in places where there are none, while in the south they are already there. So now, this is a problem for me as the Minister responsible for decentralisation because one of the functions of this Ministry is to see that equity must be seen in practice in all the regions. We have the natural factors of course being that some regions are rich and other regions are poor. Some regions have natural resources, others have less and that also plays a role in terms of what type of development activities take place in a particular region. It is because obviously, while there are no attractive elements for investment in a particular region because of the non-availability of these natural resources, central government should be the only one remaining with the responsibility to cater for those regions that are naturally or historically left behind. That is the headache that I have in this Ministry. Yet, we are saying because we are a unitary state, the resources (including natural resources) that are found in this country must be owned by all Namibians. Obviously what ought to happen is that the resources should be distributed evenly to each of those regions where there are insufficient resources. That is the position of this Ministry and the position of Government - for me it is just to implement but I also have to be realistic that it cannot be done overnight. There are those infrastructures as I said earlier that are already in place that we cannot afford to ignore and therefore let them to be dilapidated. But while that is the case, we are not also forgetting those regions that have been left behind.

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**“Obviously what ought to happen is that the resources should be distributed evenly to each of those regions where there are insufficient resources. “**

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**IPPR:** Do you have any ideas on how you are going to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources? For example, should there be an equity fund and/or equalisation fund where resources are pooled or revenue generated from richer regions could be put into and be used for cross-subsidies to poorer regions?

**Dr Iyambo:** Last year we passed a law called the *"Trust Fund for Regional Development and Equity Provisions Act"* to create a fund. That is the fund that is supposed to cater for the development of the regions and therefore take care of the inequalities that exist between the regions by encouraging regions to find ways and means to make revenue available, and secondly, also by using central revenue i.e. revenue that comes from central government. The funds will be put in the trust fund and will then be divided to regions in order to address the inequalities that exist. That trust fund has a Board of Trustees and the Board of Trustees would then allocate the funds as per those projects and programmes that were identified by the regions themselves for implementation. It is those programmes and projects that need to be implemented on a discriminatory basis, may I say so. Because if five projects are from a region in the north and the same five projects are from a region in the south, we have to discriminate when implementing those projects if we are to reach equitable distribution. In other words, maybe



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one or two of the projects from a region in the south will be implemented while a region in the north may have all five of its programmes implemented.

**IPPR:** Where would this Trust Fund be located?

**Dr Iyambo:** The chairman of the Board of Trustees is the Permanent Secretary of this Ministry and other trustees are the Permanent Secretary from the Planning Commission, the Permanent Secretary of Finance - but because it is a fund for the regional and local authorities there are only those three representatives of central government. We then have two members from regional councils, two from local authority councils, one from the Namibian Chamber of Commerce, one from the Non-Governmental Organisations and one from disabled or physically handicapped people. Their interests too must be protected. But, we make it deliberately that those people that represent either the community or the regions or local authorities are in the majority in this Board of Trustees in order to see to it that the programmes of the regions are addressed.

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**IPPR:** Earlier you said that regional councils would get some authority to generate some of their own revenue. What sort of sources might they draw on and would that not just mean for ordinary citizens more heavy tax burdens?

**Dr Iyambo:** No. Not necessarily tax burdens. Yes, obviously I can add quickly that there has to be some form of levy that will be introduced in the region. That does not need necessarily to mean additional taxes. It will simply mean for example that if a company X in a region Y is to be taxed, the tax that the company pays X% for example could be decided to be left in the region and that will be a portion of the central revenue so to speak, that will be allocated to the region. The other then is that the regional councils themselves

have executive powers to enter into joint ventures and create business opportunities. You might have known that local authorities have the right for example to invite people to invest in their particular local authorities giving incentives. Either they will give the erven free or partially free (or whatever) in order to attract investors to come to their region or they can offer tax havens to these investors while inviting people to come. But the purpose behind it is to have their people employed and therefore the revenue that will, I mean, the money that will be generated will be of course used to employ the people in that particular region. So, that's one way. The other is that when central government has to collect national tax, it is that national tax that can also then be divided back to the regions. So, all these possibilities exist.

**IPPR:** Another problem that might occur is that there are severe skills and human resource inequalities in these regions. How are you going to tackle those?

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**“[regional powers to raise revenue] does not need necessarily to mean additional taxes. “**

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**Dr Iyambo:** There are programmes that are looking at the shortage of human and financial resources. The problem of human resources has actually not been addressed by the regions themselves. It is a national responsibility because the standard has to be set by central government. Now, when a region is further behind than others in terms of the availability of human resources, central government must have the responsibility of making human resources available to that particular region. Whether it is addressing the problem of the availability of human resources in the region or transferring the necessary resource capacity to where they do not currently exist. I can just point out that in the modern administration if you want



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equality in administering a region (especially in the far remote areas) obviously it may require that central government has to make human resources available to the region concerned.

**IPPR:** Does this mean that within the decentralisation plan there are provisions for central ministries to physically hand over staff to, say, regional councils to perform certain functions?

**Dr Iyambo:** Actually, that's what is going to happen. We are not going to recruit new personnel for the regions. The personnel will be recruited from the existing public service domain. The question being that if you remember by Independence we had to absorb personnel from all eleven administrations as it were and we added new ones particularly for the people that came from exile. So, that then led to what is termed a bloated civil service. Now, what should happen in implementing the policy of decentralisation programmes is that the functions of government have to take place in the regions. We are saying as the functions go to the regions, it has to be accompanied by human resources, needed to implement it there. In other words, there has to be expansion in the regions and shrinkage at the centre. So, if we do so, what remains at the centre is for the centre to take care of policy formulation to set national standards but the implementation of the programmes themselves, the schools, the clinics, hospitals and all these have to be in the region. It is where it takes place. Currently, these things are been done on a deconcentrated basis so to speak. So what we need to have is the human resource movement from the centre to the region.

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**“There has to be expansion in the regions and shrinkage at the centre.”**

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**IPPR:** What steps are you going to take to make sure (as part of decentralisation) that people in the various regions and various localities will get the same quality of service at more or less the same price? Is there a need for the centre to intervene in that or is that also going to be up to the sub-

national levels?

**Dr Iyambo:** Yes the centre has to intervene. That will be the responsibility of the centre. That is why I'm saying that the centre has to continue to have the responsibility of setting the national standard: that the quality of service to be found in Khomas should also be found in Caprivi, and should also be found in the Kunene region. So, the national standard has to be set by central government.

**IPPR:** I would like to draw your attention to some of the possible negative things that one can get from decentralisation. I think we have seen now in the last couple of months that there are problems at local authorities. There are problems with corruption, there are problems with people not doing what they supposed to do and that the citizens as the clients of local authorities and regional councils are suffering as a result. We've also seen that your ministry is prepared to take steps to rectify matters. What is your thinking around these possible negative effects? Are there any that you are aware of? Are we not decentralizing problems? Everybody talks about the benefits but what about the problems?

**Dr Iyambo:** That is exactly why I said that I would like decentralisation to be implemented very slowly. I am afraid the people that are involved at the regional and local level want decentralisation to have been implemented fully yesterday not today and I am saying let's go slowly. Those problems will always come up, obviously taking into account the historical perspective that a lot of these people have never been part and parcel of the modern management, modern administration, handling modern issues in terms of administration. These





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types of problems will come up but they are human. What is more important, I think, is the resolution that, should they come up, they ought to be identified and be addressed. I am not afraid of problems coming up. I am not afraid of that. I am afraid that should problems come up, should corruption be identified and be swept under the carpet that is the headache that I wouldn't like to have. But, if they come up I regard them as human because we are all human beings and problems are bound to happen. These are problems of societies all over the world but what is important is that when they come up you must take them out, you must address the problems. That's why I'm taking the steps that I'm taking both in the local authorities and in the regional councils and I didn't make any secret about it. I've said I have started to implement the programme last year and this year I will go around checking how things are being done on the ground because I want the grassroots, for whom decentralisation in the first place was meant to benefit, to harvest the fruits. If not, those who will engage in unbecoming activities will have to be dealt with.

**IPPR:** A little bit earlier you talked about the fact that we are predominantly a rural society in which people are still under the jurisdiction of various traditional authorities. What is the role going to be for traditional leaders in the process of decentralisation?

**Dr Iyambo:** Traditional authorities are very important for a country like Namibia. Let's take one example: that is why Namibia is at peace today. It is not because you have police or the army all over the country. It is because there are traditional authorities in every corner of Namibia wherever people are living. People are living under the care of the traditional authorities. It is those traditional laws I believe that are keeping the peace together. Of course, reinforced by the police, that's fine. So, I see traditional authorities playing a big role. You go in the history and you'll establish that before colonialism dawned onto Namibia, the country was ruled by traditional leaders. They have established their form of kingdoms or chieftainships under which people have lived and, to a large extent, Namibia is still a rural society. The majority of Namibians live in rural areas and therefore, by that extension, they are living under the jurisdiction and administration of traditional authorities. So, what we now have to do is to make sure that the traditional norms and the modern norms of administering the community are not in competition with each other; but that they complement one another. So I see, for instance, that traditional authorities will have it easier to reach the local communities and to understand certain issues. Even for the implementation of government policies, the government uses traditional authorities to pass the message to their subjects, so to speak, at the grass roots level because these are the people they know.

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**“What we now have to do is to make sure that the traditional norms and the modern norms of administering the community are not in competition with each other; but that they complement one another.”**

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**IPPR:** Yes, the Traditional Authorities Act, as it stands at the moment, limits the powers of traditional leaders quite significantly from what it was before. One of the important roles prescribed for the traditional leaders is that of advising: it could be local councillors, it could be regional councillors or national office bearers. Are we going to see more functions going to traditional leaders; more clearly specified functions in (for example) the planning exercises of regional development plans? Or let's say in the administration of communal land. Are there any clear roles that are going to be added to that of traditional leaders?

**Dr Iyambo:** Yes indeed. The Constitution is very clear on that when it comes to communal land. Under Chapter 12 I think the Council of Traditional Leaders will be established to advise the



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President on the utilisation of the communal areas. They are the ones that are responsible for settling and resettling people in communal areas. Nobody is settled by regional councils or by local authorities. Local authorities settle people in proclaimed urban areas because traditional authorities do not have a say there and are not supposed to have a say there. But, in the region as a whole when it comes to settlement, yes, it is done by traditional authorities. Traditional authorities also are consulted whenever regional councils want a certain regional project to take place, a road for example. They cannot come and plan for a regional road or even a school without consulting traditional authorities. As a matter of fact, I dare say that they have to get permission from the traditional authorities to do so. Although it always happens, in many cases it happens that the regional council gets it approved because obviously if it is a school, if it is a road, it is being done for the regional interest and consequently for the national interest. Their array of functions are also going to expand because currently there is a bill going to come to Parliament very soon that is entitled 'Community Courts Bill'. Now the community court is going to function side-by-side with the common court that we have in the country to try issues in the regions by traditional leaders as they used to do it before. Of course, there will be those capital cases that need to be tried by common courts. But even that, for example today, if you can think of any serious criminal case (for example a case of murdering somebody), once you are a member of a traditional area you can murder somebody and be tried in the common court here, but you still have to pay the traditional punishment. So the roles for them to play are definitely very important and they can say the two can actually exist and function side-by-side to assist each other. What is needed is the understanding between the other so that there is no suspicion of one being undermined by the other.

**IPPR:** A last question. How long do you think it will take to successfully implement decentralisation as a policy?

**Dr Iyambo:** Oh! I wish I had an answer! No, it will not be fair for me to say how long it will take to fully implement decentralisation. Decentralisation is development. As long as there is a society called a Namibian society in existence there will always be development and, therefore, there will always be decentralisation. I can only say that my aim is that by the year 2030, I would like an evaluation to be done although there will be other evaluations before that. I would like an evaluation to be done and say that, in the case of decentralisation, we have reached this far and yet we probably still need to go on.

**IPPR:** Thank you very much Mr Minister.

**Dr Iyambo:** Thank you.

This is the transcript from an electronically recorded interview between Dr Nickey Iyambo, the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing, and Christiaan Keulder of the IPPR conducted on Wednesday 27 June 2001. While every attempt has been made to reproduce the interview word for word, it has been shortened in parts and minor language changes have been made.

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