

ADDRESS BY THE HON. PENDUKENI IIVULA-ITHANA, MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL

At the occasion of the official launch of the web-site of Law Reform and Development Commission

15 AUGUST 2006

The Ministry of Justice is certainly performing most important functions in the public sphere. These all important functions are constitutional and some derived from various acts of parliament.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia has the all important duty to promote and protect the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights and freedoms. It is with this background that fundamental institutions were established.

The Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC) is one such institution which was established by the Law Reform and Development Commission Act, Act no. 29 of 1991.

Our country emerged from a past where discrimination and oppression was institutionalized and enforced through the law. We certainly need to do away with such laws through a careful process of research and reform.

The LRDC therefore has a statutory function to :

- repeal obsolete or unnecessary enactments;
- consolidate or codify any branch of law;

- integrate customary law with common and statutory law;
- develop new or more effective procedures for administration of the law;
- work towards the enactment of the laws to enhance respect for human rights as enshrined in the Namibian Constitution or to ensure compliance with international legal obligations.

In carrying out these functions the Commission relies on well trained staff members and the required facilities like libraries and other forms of access to information.

The LRDC is part of regional and International networks of organizations which are also involved in the reform and development of the law.

The launching of the website for the LRDC is a very important milestone in the development of the Namibian laws. This website will enhance the quality of the research which is being undertaken by the Commission. It will further ensure an optimized networking with regional and international bodies with similar aims. The LRDC website will feature issue papers, discussion papers as well as research findings which could be used by students from our tertiary institutions as well as the public at large. The LRDC website will further be a gateway to other websites as there will be links to websites of other law reform agencies, universities, parliaments etc.

As I have stated earlier the Law Reform and Development Commission has a very important role to play. We are

keeping pace with the technological developments, but I am aware that not all of us will have access to the latest information systems. The website will be very useful for those individuals and institutions who have access to computers, Internet, etc. The vast majority of our people who do not have access to Internet should not be left out. The Law Reform and Development Commission have a secretariat, which is housed in the Justitia building. The officers there are willing and eager to serve the general public. The commission has set up a resource center where members from the public can access important information regarding law reform therefore encourage you to make use of the website and the resource center and to make requests for law reform initiatives.

As I launch this website today I call on the Namibian public to make use of all these opportunities provided by the essential institutions. It is the task of all of us to make the constitutionally guaranteed rights a practical reality.

I trust that this small contribution with the LRDC website will ensure that the Justice system in Namibia is a resounding success and call on all the officers involved to work hard and to use the available resources optimally to the benefit of all our people.

I officially launch and commission the LRDC website.