

## City-regional councils: a myth or method for better planning? The case of the Khomas region (Namibia)

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### Abstract

The functions to be fulfilled by regional councils cannot be performed adequately by the Khomas Regional Council, due to the Council's lack of funds, capacity, expertise and experience. The Windhoek Local Authority Council, in comparison, occupies a very dominant position in terms of size, financial standing and expertise. At present there is virtually no co-operation between these institutions. It will be proposed that a 'city-regional council' be formed, which would enable the joint administration of the Windhoek Local Authority area and the Khomas Region's urban fringe developments, settlements and rural areas. It is anticipated that this proposed joint administration for the area will streamline planning processes and speed up decision-making.

Keywords: Windhoek Local Authority Council, Khomas Region, Namibia

### Abstrak

As gevolg van 'n gebrek aan fondse, kapasiteit, kundigheid en ondervinding kan die Khomas Streeksraad nie die funksies, soos vereis word van streeksrade, uitvoer nie. In vergelyking hiermee is die Windhoek Plaaslike Owerheidsraad wat betref grootte, finansies en kundigheid in 'n baie beter posisie. Tans bestaan daar byna geen samewerking tussen genoemde twee liggame nie. Daar sal voorgestel word dat 'n 'stad-streeksraad' tot stand moet kom wat die gesamentlike administrasie van die Windhoek Plaaslike Owerheidsraad se gebied en die Khomas Streeksraad se stedelike randgebiede, nedersettings en landelike gebiede moontlik sal maak. Die verwagting is dat hierdie voorgestelde gesamentlike administrasie van die gebied beplanningprosesse sal vereenvoudig en besluitneming sal bespoedig.

Sleutelwoorde: Windhoek Plaaslike Owerheidsraad, Khomas Streeksraad, Namibië

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## 1. Introduction

The Khomas region (please refer to Figures 1 & 2) is one of Namibia's thirteen regions and is located in the central part of Namibia (Republic of Namibia, 2003: 3). It is the only region in Namibia that has a dominant urban character, as eight of the region's nine constituency's fall within the area of the city of Windhoek. In comparison to the other regions, the Khomas Region is well endowed with basic infrastructure. Windhoek forms an important railway junction, and the major international airport of the country, Hosea Kutako International, is also located in this region.

Namibia's Regional Councils Act of 1992 determines that a regional council be established in respect of regions determined in accordance with Article 103 of the Namibian Constitution. The main functions of the regional councils are to undertake the planning of the region for which it has been established. Furthermore; the regional councils are responsible for the establishment, management and control of settlement areas within the region (Republic of Namibia, 1992).

Hall (1992: 63) refers to a region as a place that is specifically concerned with economic development issues, for example high unemployment and low income in relation to rest of the country. To manage regional issues like these demand a special expertise. The functions to be fulfilled by a regional council cannot be adequately performed by the Khomas Regional Council due to the Council's lack of funds, capacity, expertise and experience. The Windhoek Local Authority Council, in comparison, occupies a very dominant position in terms of size, financial standing and expertise. At present there is virtually no co-operation between these institutions. Therefore, a management structure for a new Windhoek City-Regional Council is an imperative that will serve to improve urban and regional planning and decision-making.

## 2. The need for planning

According to Banfield (1973: 139),

Planning is the process by which he (the planner) selects a course of action (a set of means) for the attainment of his ends. It is 'good' planning if these means are likely to attain the ends or increase the chances of their attainment. It is by the process of rational choice that the best adaptation of means to ends is likely to be achieved.

For the past 130 years there has been a definite shift from a society dominated by *laissez-faire* principles (Glasson, 1978: 17), which is translated as 'let things alone, let them pass.' *Laissez-faire* is also used as a synonym for strict free market economies: a situation where state intervention is accepted to varying degrees in many aspects of everyday life. The reason for this increase in planning is perceived to be the fact that the normal interaction of private action and market forces often results in situations which the nation is not willing to tolerate and which can only be improved by means of a control mechanism – planning. Particular problems of the *laissez-faire* approach are the inequalities of income distribution amongst groups and regions. Another problem is the divergence between the voluntary private costs and benefits and the involuntary social costs and benefits of private actions. Furthermore, the rapid increase in population, increasing affluence and improved technology all increase the need for planning.

In contrast to this, Allmendinger (2002: 102) points out the power struggle between central government planning and the importance of market mechanisms to regulate local land use. Hayek (2002: 110), however, is of the opinion that central planning is inefficient and that planning should be undertaken only at local level. Webber (1973: 95) argues that city planners are likely to be key members in the new partnerships among professionals and politicians at several government levels. He is of the opinion that city planners are in a position to act as catalysts to bring into action the development plans prepared by a specialised group in government. Individual plans thus, could be amended to satisfy criteria established by the plans for the next-larger system of components which, in turn, conform to comprehensive overviews of the future and of the community's objectives.

Friedmann (1965: 59) views regional planning as "an academic discipline that is characterised by a concern with the classification of social objectives in the ordering of activities in supra-urban space", and Glasson (1978: 31) defines regional planning simply as being "an attempt to guide the development of a region." The concept 'regional development' can also be referred to as 'economic development' and regional development can be the result of an attempt by government to interfere with the spatial development planning process.

Regional development concerns the incidence of economic growth. It is ultimately the result of the location of economic activities in response to differential regional attractions. Shifts in the location pattern have direct repercussions on income, employment and welfare (Glasson, 1978: 32).

### 3. Decentralisation in Namibia

Decentralisation can be defined as

the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies, to field units of government agencies and subordinate units or levels of government (De Kock, 1989: 1).

The Decentralisation Policy was introduced in Namibia in order to transfer political, administrative, legislative, financial and planning authority from central government to regional and local councils. The policy strives to promote participatory democracy, empower the local population to make its own decisions and to determine its own destiny.

The successful implementation of decentralisation in Namibia will only be realised if regional councils and local authorities are able to exercise and demonstrate accountability downwards to their community for the performance of the services and functions for which they are responsible. Regional councils and local authorities should strive to establish a clear link between taxes paid and services provided, so as to be able to get the much needed support and partnership from the local community in the decentralisation process (Republic of Namibia, 1998a: 29).

### 4. Delimitation of the Khomas region

The number of constituencies allocated to the Khomas Region is as follows: Khomas urban (8) and Khomas rural (1) respectively. The nine constituencies of the Khomas Region and their estimated populations are given in Table 1. It shows that the population of Windhoek has increased since 1991. This increase can be ascribed mainly to people flocking to the city in search of employment. It further shows that the majority (91,8%) of the Khomas Region's population resides within the Windhoek local authority area (which makes up only 0,4% of the surface area of the Khomas Region). Of the 19 908

people registered in the 2001 population census to be living in the rural area of the region, most lived on privately owned farms. There are only two more settlement areas within the Khomas Region which are to be developed and the number of people residing in these areas is very small.

Table 1: Khomas Region constituencies  
 Population: 243 272  
 Population density: 7.2 persons per km<sup>2</sup>

| Constituency     | Local Authority Area | Estimated population per constituency (1991) | Estimated population per constituency (2001) |
|------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Hakahana         | Windhoek (city)      | 20 634                                       | 59 546                                       |
| Katutura Central | Windhoek (city)      | 25 123                                       | 20 988                                       |
| Katutura East    | Windhoek (city)      | 11 391                                       | 17 737                                       |
| Khomasdal North  | Windhoek (city)      | 18 900                                       | 26 621                                       |
| Soweto           | Windhoek (city)      | 11 278                                       | 13 809                                       |
| Wanaheda         | Windhoek (city)      | 18 212                                       | 29 051                                       |
| Windhoek East    | Windhoek (city)      | 18 150                                       | 16 643                                       |
| Windhoek Rural   | Windhoek (rural)     | 18 930                                       | 19 908                                       |
| Windhoek West    | Windhoek (city)      | 23 367                                       | 38 969                                       |
| TOTAL            | Windhoek             | 165 985                                      | 243 272                                      |

Source: Republic of Namibia, 2003: 17

## 5. Khomas Region overview

The Khomas Region is situated in the central part of the country (see Figure 1) and has, according to the Second Delimitation Commission (Republic of Namibia, 1998:2), a surface area of 36 805 km<sup>2</sup>. To the north it is bordered by the Otjozondjupa Region, to the east by the Omaheke Region, to the south by the Hardap Region and to the west it borders on the Erongo Region (see Figure 2) (Namibia Development Consultants, 2000: 1).

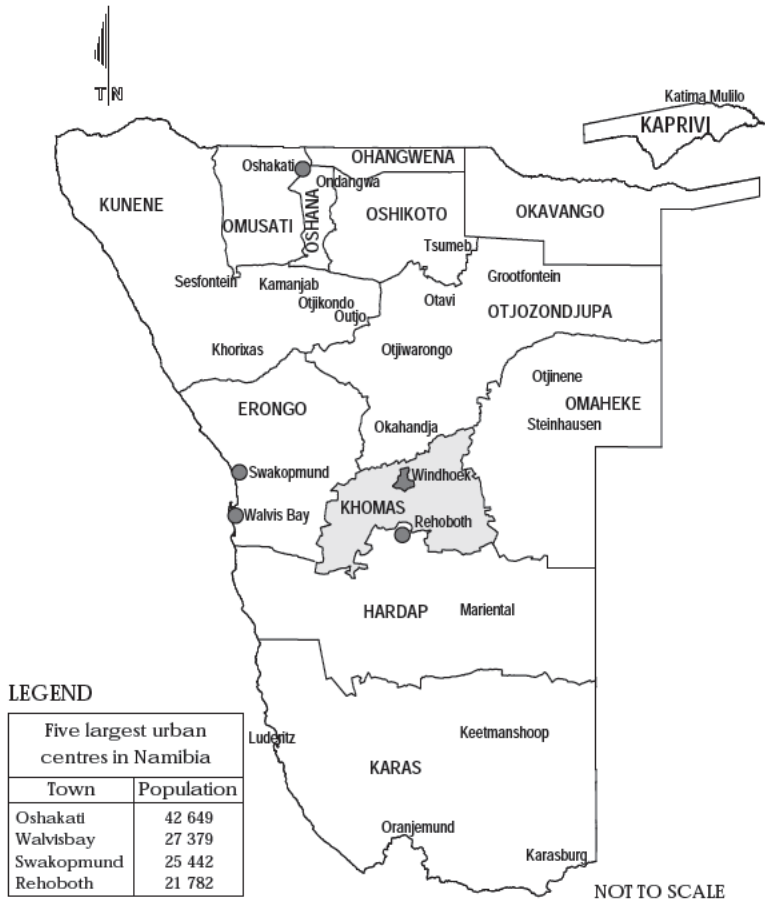


Figure 1: Location of Khomas Region in Namibia

Source: Namibia Development Consultants, 2000: Annexure

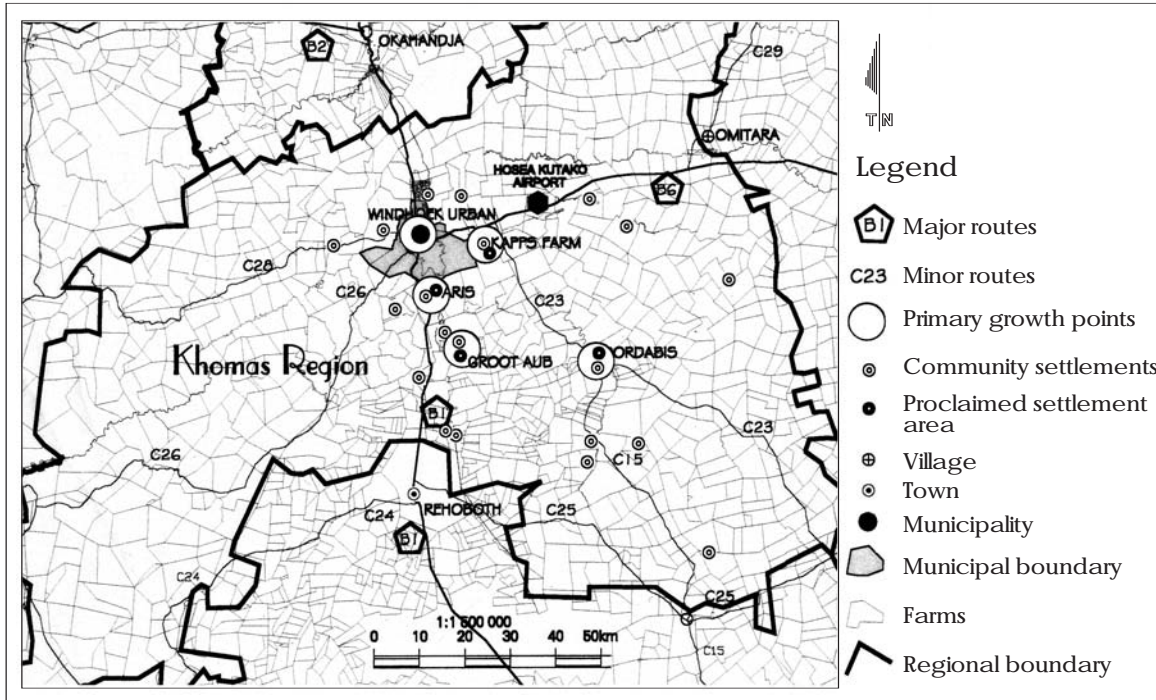


Figure 2: Location of settlements in Khomas Region

Source: Namibia Development Consultants, 2000: Annexure

The main urban centre of the region, Windhoek, is also the administrative, legislative and judicial capital of the country. The city hosts all the head offices of the various ministries, as well as the headquarters of banks and financial institutions. A strong industrial and trading sector supports the city's economy.

In comparison to the other regions, the Khomas Region is well endowed with basic infrastructure. Windhoek forms an important railway junction, linking the city with the rest of the country's rail network as well as with South and Central Africa. The major national roads connect the city with Namibia's southern, eastern and northern neighbours. The country's major international airport, the Hosea Kutako International Airport, is located approximately 42 km east of Windhoek (see Figure 2).

### 5.1 Population statistics

According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census (Republic of Namibia, 2003: 10) it is estimated that the region's population, which currently stands at 243 272, will increase to 375 900 by 2010. The reason for this expected sharp increase in population numbers can be attributed to the potential employment opportunities offered to the country's unemployed population in the institutional, household and industrial sectors of Windhoek.

Compared to the national average of 2.2 persons per km<sup>2</sup>, the population density within the region is relatively high at 7.2 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. The largest part of the population resides within the city of Windhoek, with an estimated population of 223 364 people, or 91,8% of the region's population (Republic of Namibia, 2003: 17). Of the 19 908 people living in the rural constituency of the Khomas Region, about 1 400 people reside in Groot Aub, 610 in Aris and 530 in Kapps Farm (Swart, 2004: personal communication). Unfortunately no population figure is available for the settlement at Dordabis.

### 5.2 Infrastructure

The commercial farming sector and the region's only municipality, Windhoek, are well provided for in terms of infrastructure. The region's strategic locality within Namibia, as well as the presence of the capital city offers challenging development opportunities. The provision of adequate and reliable quantities of potable water



remains the region's biggest challenge (Namibia Development Consultants, 2000: 7).

An issue that makes it difficult for the Khomas Regional Council to stimulate infrastructure development, is the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of the Khomas Region are located within the municipal boundaries of Windhoek. The Municipality of Windhoek is therefore responsible for rendering urban services to its inhabitants. According to De Kock (2004), the Khomas Regional Council is currently responsible for the settlement areas of Aris, Dordabis, Groot Aub and Kapps Farm (see Figure 2).

### 5.3 Economy

The Khomas Region has the strongest economy in Namibia with a sound non-business sector (government services) and finance sector (banking, insurance), while the manufacturing, transport and agricultural sectors are also well established. Most economic activities, however, are concentrated in the city of Windhoek, which creates a skewed picture, as the economic development of the region as a whole is not more advanced than that of other regions in Namibia. The importance of the mining sector has decreased after the closure of mines in the region. According to the regional plan for the Khomas Region (Namibia Development Consultants, 2000b: 6), about 71% of the people in the Khomas Region, aged 15 years and older, are economically active, while 29% are economically inactive. The high employment ratio indicates the diversity and strength of the regional economy, mainly as a result of an absence of poorly developed communal farmland within the Khomas Region.

The Khomas Region, and more specifically Windhoek, has strong trade links with Namibia's neighbouring countries. Trade is concentrated within the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), although imports from South Africa, the major trading partner, also contain imports of non-South African origin. Meat and alcoholic beverages (mainly beer) are exported to the neighbouring countries, mainly to South Africa and Angola (Namibia Development Consultants, 2000b: 6). Cattle farming is the main economic activity on privately owned farms. There also are a number of guest and hunting farms in the region, which attract overseas tourists and thus foreign currency.

The average annual household income of N\$ 47 409 indicates that the Khomas Region has, by far, a higher average annual household income than the national average of N\$ 17 198 (Namibia Development Consultants, 2000b: 7). Most (82%) of the households in the Khomas Region derive income in the form of 'wages and cash', compared to the national 'wage and cash' income of 44%. Household income from 'business' accounts for 9%, followed by pensions (6%) and cash remittances (3%). Subsistence farming is not practised within the region.

## 6. Windhoek local authority area overview

Windhoek is situated on an inland plateau and is surrounded by mountains. Apart from being the capital, it is also Namibia's main business, cultural and educational centre (City of Windhoek, 2001: 5).

### 6.1 Population statistics

When comparing Windhoek's population size to that of other towns in Namibia, it becomes clear that Windhoek remains the largest city in Namibia, with its closest rival being Oshakati, situated in the northern part of Namibia, with 42 649 residents. Statistics of the past 10 years (1995-2004) also indicate that the gap between Windhoek and the second largest city in Namibia has widened. In 1991, Windhoek's primacy index was 4.23, but increased to 4.3 in 2001. This means that Windhoek is 4.3 times bigger than its nearest competitor, Oshakati (City of Windhoek, 2001: 5). Windhoek is the fastest growing city in Namibia as people still migrate to the city in search of employment. In terms of national urbanisation management, something has to be done to counter this trend and to promote growth in rival towns to balance urban growth within the country (City of Windhoek, 2001: 5).

In order to discourage people from moving to Windhoek in search of employment, economic development, and thus job creation, is encouraged in the northern parts of Namibia, mainly around the second largest city in Namibia, Oshakati (see Figure 1). There is no other mechanism in place to discourage people from moving to Windhoek, other than the creation of job opportunities elsewhere. However, Windhoek is still growing steadily with increased pressure on its infrastructure and resources, especially water.

## 6.2 Infrastructure

After Namibia's 2004 rainy season, the water supply for the City of Windhoek was estimated to last for at least two years, with the hope that it will be replenished during the 2005 rainy season (Peters, 2004). Discussions are currently taking place between the City of Windhoek and NAMWATER, the country's national bulk water provider, to provide for the future water needs of the city. There are sufficient water resources in Namibia, which could be put to full use in future, but only at great expense. The price of water in Windhoek, therefore, is anticipated to rise tremendously. Maybe this increase in the cost of living in Windhoek will deter people from moving to the city to earn a livelihood.

## 6.3 Economy

Windhoek is the major national manufacturing centre and hosts several industries that add value to agricultural produce such as abattoir and meat processing, hide processing and leather manufacturing. These industries have major growth potential for the export market and consideration is being given as to whether to grant them Export Producing Zone status to encourage essential capital investment (Namibia Development Consultants, 2000b: 9). The City of Windhoek presents a classic example of what Jacobs (1985) calls 'elephant city'. It is the one economically very important city and city region in the country. The other cities in the country are not likely to develop significant city regions.

The Windhoek Local Authority Council has budgeted N\$ 51 068 536 in 2004 for township development in the city. In contrast, the Khomas Regional Council has budgeted a mere N\$ 2 888 560 for capital projects to serve the entire Khomas Region (Khomash Regional Council, 2004). This situation vividly reflects the financial dominance of the Windhoek Local Authority Council over the Khomas Regional Council. The total expected expenditure of the Khomas Regional Council amounts to N\$ 8 366 560. The Windhoek Local Authority Council annually contributes 5% of its income from property rates in its area to the Khomas Regional Council. During the 2004/2005 financial year, the Local Authority Council will contribute an amount of N\$ 5 589 300 to the Khomas Regional Council (City of Windhoek, 2004). This amount represents about 68% of the Regional Council's total income for the 2004/2005 financial year.

The following is an extraction of the functions to be fulfilled by local authorities such as the Windhoek Local Authority:

- Ensure that the majority of people in the city have access to basic services;
- Provision of water, sewer and sanitation to all people in the city;
- Upgrading of low income areas as well as provision of low income housing;
- Making available developed land for different categories;
- Ensure the implementation of local economic development and tourism strategies; and
- The construction, improvement and maintenance of roads and streets in the city (City of Windhoek, Annual budget for the 2004/2005 financial year)

The city's importance and dominance, as discussed, illustrate that Windhoek is the country's major city. In this position, the city's active economy has been compared to that of the Khomas Region where relatively little activity is taking place. The Windhoek Local Authority Council's budget has been discussed to show that the city is financially stable and independent, compared to the Khomas Regional Council.

#### 7. The regional council's involvement in development

The main functions of the Regional Councils are to "undertake the planning of the region for which it has been established, taking into account the region's resources and its economic development potential and the sensitivity of its natural environment" (Republic of Namibia, 1992: article 103). Furthermore, the regional councils are responsible for the establishment, management and control of settlement areas within the region.

Taking the above into consideration, one would anticipate that the bulk of the Khomas Regional Council's income would be spent on the region's (rural) development. This is, however, not the case, as the contribution of N\$ 5.5 million made by the Windhoek Local Authority to the Khomas Regional Council far exceeds the amount of N\$ 300 000 which is the Council's contribution towards municipal development projects. From its own resources, the local authority

of Windhoek spends N\$ 51 068 536 on development projects in the city (City of Windhoek, Annual budget for 2004/2005 financial year). These figures illustrate the financial dominance of the Windhoek Local Authority over the Khomas Regional Council.

The Khomas Regional Council has not yet sold any property in the settlement areas. N\$ 184 800.00 is earned from the lease of properties in Aris, Kapps Farm, Groot Aub and Dordabis. N\$ 50 000.00 has been donated to the Khomas Regional Council as a grant by UNICEF. The Office of the Prime Minister makes an annual contribution to create personnel structures within the Regional Council. The Ministry of Women Affairs annually donates money to the Regional Council to be used for special projects like housing, education or health.

A combined amount of N\$ 510 000 is spent on development projects, specified as 'rural, child (education), community and early childhood development.' Although it is presumed that the money spent on 'child, community and early childhood development' is used for the urban, as well as the rural area of the region, a mere amount of N\$ 100 000 is specified to be used solely for 'rural development.' Under 'capital project budget', another N\$ 2 888 560.00 is allocated to 'community projects from strategic planning.' This money is most likely to be used for projects in settlement areas within the region, which have been identified in the Regional Plan compiled for the Khomas Region.

Although other funds, like the contribution to 'health promoters', grants and bursaries have been budgeted for the region, the amount assigned directly to development is minimal. The small amount of money allocated to development projects in the region is another indicator that there are virtually no development projects, which need regional support.

#### 7.1 Contribution by the Khomas Regional Council towards urban development projects of city of Windhoek

The Khomas Regional Council's budget for the 2004/2005 financial year amounts to N\$ 8 366 560. Of that figure a mere N\$ 300 000.00 will be donated to the Windhoek Local Authority Council for development projects.

The Khomas Regional Council is responsible for development in the entire Khomas Region having a surface area of 36 805 km<sup>2</sup>. The Windhoek City Council is responsible for development in the Windhoek Local Authority area which covers only 0.4% of the entire surface area of the Khomas Region. One would therefore expect the Khomas Region's budget to far exceed the municipal budget. Yet in the case of the Khomas Region and the Windhoek Municipal Council, the situation is reversed. The Windhoek Local Authority Council's budget for the 2004/2005 financial year amounts to N\$ 255 690 852 (City of Windhoek, 2004), being about 31 times the amount budgeted for the Khomas Regional Council. The Regional Council generates only 2.2% of its income from levies and taxes from the region (De Kock 2004).

This reverse picture clearly demonstrates not only the financial dominance of the Windhoek Local Authority Council over the Khomas Regional Council, but also the fact that the responsibilities of the City Council are far more complex and extensive than those of the Regional Council.

## 7.2 Regional land management

The latest urban development trend in the Khomas Regional Constituency is the development of small private urban settlements on the fringe of the Windhoek Local Authority area. Currently, the Khomas Regional Council has no mechanism in place to manage these settlements (De Kock, 2004). Applications for the establishment of such settlements are being forwarded to the City of Windhoek for technical comment, although these settlements fall outside the local authority area and the Windhoek Municipality has no jurisdiction over them.

The management of these urban fringe settlements is a field where the joint administration of the Local Authority and Khomas Regional Councils could be advantageous to both institutions. The Khomas Regional Council recently appointed a consultant to draft Town Planning Schemes for the two peri-urban areas of Aris and Kapps Farm (De Kock, 2004). Although these areas have common boundaries with Windhoek and directly affect the urban environment, no provision was made for consultation with the local authority in the terms of reference for the drafting of the schemes. Since an integrated development or structure plan is essential to the successful implementation of development control in and around

Windhoek, this oversight is one more example of the lack of co-operation between the Region and the City.

### 7.3 Administration of settlement areas

According to section 31(1) (a) of the Regional Councils Act, one of the main responsibilities of the Regional Councils is to co-ordinate and spearhead regional development. In practice, this is not happening, as the councils are not as yet able to generate their own funds and therefore are dependent on the Ministry of Local, Regional Government and Housing and the 5% levy contribution by local authorities (Namibia Development Consultants, 2000: 6). Although there are four settlements within the region, namely Aris, Dordabis, Kapps Farm and Groot Aub, the Ministry is currently involved in the planning and administration of only two settlements, being Aris and Groot Aub. As Aris and Kapps Farm border on municipal land, they have taken on urban characteristics and are, in practice, extensions of the City of Windhoek townlands. In order to control the urbanisation of Aris and Kapps Farm, Town Planning Schemes are currently being prepared (De Kock, 2004). As indicated earlier, no efforts are made to consult and co-operate with the Windhoek Local Authority Council in the drafting of these schemes. Currently no development is taking place at Dordabis and Groot Aub. Here, again, is another function of the regional council that cannot be carried out due to, amongst other reasons, a lack of qualified manpower.

### 7.4 Absence of communal land and dominance of commercial land ownership

Other regions in Namibia, like the Karas Region, have large tracts of former communal land (Namaland), created as a result of the Odendaal Report (1962), which recommended that the homeland system be created. It is another function of the regional councils to devise plans and supervise the implementation of the development of these communal areas to their maximum potential.

Furthermore, in the Kunene and other regions in Namibia there are conservation areas, which need to be developed and managed. The Khomas Region has neither communal, nor conservation areas and instead was reserved for commercial farmland by virtue of the Odendaal Report. This is yet another sphere of responsibility

where the Khomas Regional Council is not in a position to exercise its function.

### 7.5 Involvement in local authority matters

The following serves as an example of unauthorised and unwanted involvement by the Khomas Regional Council in local authority matters. The Windhoek City Council resolved that a certain municipal-owned residential building, the Pietersen Flats, situated in a middle-income area in Windhoek, should be demolished as it had fallen into a state of disrepair. The building had structural problems and was considered to be a safety and health risk to its inhabitants. The upgrading of the building was not considered to be an economically viable option. Alternative accommodation in an adjacent township was offered to residents. This offer by the City, however, was declined, despite various attempts. Residents argued that the alternative accommodation was too far removed and dangerous, and that they did not want to be separated from their family members and schools (City of Windhoek, 2002b). As this building posed a threat to the inhabitants and in order to safeguard the City against future claims, evacuation notices were served on all residents.

Subsequently, the residents, without prior knowledge or consultation with the Windhoek Local Authority, approached the Khomas Regional Council and the Regional Council intervened with some incorrect and negative media releases. In an attempt to 'salvage' the building for use by either a welfare organisation or non-governmental organisation, the Regional Council met with the Mayor of Windhoek and made certain proposals (City of Windhoek, 2002b). The above example illustrates the fact that the Khomas Regional Council sometimes oversteps the boundaries of its jurisdiction.

Another example of unauthorised interference by the Khomas Regional Council in local authority matters was described in the Afrikaans daily newspaper, *Die Republikein* (2004: 5). In an interview, the Chief Executive Officer of the Khomas Regional Council was quoted as having said that

according to the national development plan, the (Khomas) Regional Council has the authority to encourage squatters in Windhoek to start small-scale agricultural projects on their even. Money will be made available for that purpose.



Obviously no consideration was given to the fact that the people residing in these areas cannot afford to pay the local authority for the increased water consumption. Furthermore, the City of Windhoek is situated in a very dry area with severe water shortages in dry spells, which means that the constant provision of water could pose a serious problem. The statement made by the Chief Executive Officer clearly illustrates that no consultation with the Windhoek Local Authority takes place, although, in the same interview, the CEO of the Khomas Regional Council emphasises the importance of co-operation between the two institutions (Die Republikein, 2004: 5).

Combined administration and the sharing of knowledge and expertise between the Local Authority and the Khomas Regional Councils, however, are an option, and avenues should be created for the correct application thereof.

## 8. City-regions

In an attempt to come up with proposals in order to address the situation of the Khomas region the city regions of Berlin, Hamburg and Canberra were studied. A 'city-region' can be defined as "a geographic area with a city at its centre that has a strong impact on the region's growth and development" (City regions, 2004: online). No attempt was made to compare any of the three structures to that of the Windhoek Local Authority or the Khomas Regional Council. The Berlin city region accommodates more than 3,3 million people and 12 districts. The administrative structure therefore has to be more extensive than for a region with only a fraction of that population.

Berlin is the German capital city in a federal state. In Berlin governmental and municipal administrations are not separated. The city-region of Berlin is subdivided into 12 districts and Berlin's administration is taken care of by the Berlin senate and 12 district administrations. The governing mayor of Berlin is the head of the government of Berlin (a city-state), and at the same time the head of the municipality of Berlin (Politics and Administration, 2004: online).

The city-region of Hamburg accommodates Germany's biggest port. Planning of the entire region, however, takes place in co-operation with the federal states of lower Saxony with Hanover as its biggest city and Schleswig-Holstein, with Kiel as its biggest city.

The committee structure consists of a planning council, a regional committee, steering committee, support committee and regional development committees (Metropolregion Hamburg, 2004: online). The planning council is responsible for the organisation of the co-operation between the three federal states. It continuously informs the federal government on the state of affairs of the trilateral co-operation in the region. The regional committee consists of representatives from the three federal governments, worker unions, economic committees and members of the planning council. The committee discusses the development of the region and recommendations are made to the planning council (Metropolregion Hamburg, 2004: online).

Canberra, the Australian capital city, is, as the Australian Capital Territory, a self-governing city-state. The National Capital Authority is the Commonwealth agency responsible for looking after the National Capital aspects of Canberra. The Authority administers and reviews the National Capital Plan, the object of which is to ensure that Canberra and the ACT are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance. On behalf of the Commonwealth, the Authority manages National Land. The Authority comprises the Chairman, the Chief Executive and three members appointed by the Governor General (Canberra, Australia's Capital, 2004: online).

Although the three regions that were studied have different backgrounds and are economically much more advanced than the City of Windhoek and the Khomas Region under investigation, it gave an idea of what the structure of a joint administration of a city and region could look like.

#### 9. Advantages and disadvantages of a City-Regional Council for the Khomas Region and the city of Windhoek

The aim of the Decentralisation Policy, which was introduced in Namibia in 1998, was to transfer political, administrative, legislative, financial and planning authority from central government to regional and local authority councils (Republic of Namibia, 1998b: 5). The Government perceives the potential benefits of decentralisation in terms of:

- promoting genuine democracy and political equity;
- enhancing management efficiency;
- showing flexibility and responsiveness;
- creating enabling conditions for entrepreneurs and development; and
- aims at improving public sector management.

As has been shown and discussed, the Khomas Regional Council currently is not in a position to effectively carry out some of its responsibilities, due to a lack of know-how and experience. The combined administration of the City of Windhoek and the Khomas Region by a city-regional council, as proposed in this article, could be beneficial in so far as it aids the planning process and thus enhances management efficiency.

Windhoek is the largest city in the country and is endowed with well-developed infrastructure. Most economic activity is concentrated in this urban area. The Khomas Region dominantly consists of privately owned farmland. With a strengthened and more experienced planning component, the city-regional council might be in a position to speed up the development of the existing settlements in the Khomas Region.

The Khomas Regional Council is not in a position to spearhead regional development as it is not yet able to generate its own funds. At the moment it is dependent on the Ministry of Local, Regional Government and Housing for their financial support, as well as on the 5% levy contribution, made annually by the Windhoek Local Authority Council. From a financial point of view, a combined city-regional administration would be beneficial for regional development, as available resources could be used more effectively.

The Khomas Regional Council is not always in a position to process planning applications, which leads to delays in decision-making. Furthermore, private consultants have been employed by the Khomas Regional Council to prepare town planning schemes for the settlements of Kapps Farm and Aris (De Kock, 2004). This type of work cannot be done in-house as the Regional Council does not have a functioning planning division. The Windhoek City Council employs qualified town planners and engineers who could assist with the drafting and management of development plans for settlements

in the Khomas Region. This could streamline the planning process and facilitate the prompt processing of planning applications.

## 10. Conclusion and recommendation

This article intended to illustrate that the Regional Council, although well aware of its functions, is not in a position to exercise some of them, mainly due to the absence of communal land and a limited number of settlement areas. Urban fringe developments are taking place on the boundaries of the area under the jurisdiction of the local authority council. Although these settlements fall under the jurisdiction of the Khomas Regional Council, the Council is not competent to fulfil this function, mainly due to a lack of qualified manpower and experience. The Khomas Regional Council, although in a position to advise on and assist with city matters, interferes with issues falling under the jurisdiction of the Windhoek Local Authority Council. This interference is perceived by city officials as being unauthorised as no consultation and co-ordination with city officials take place, which leads to the situation that the two councils give conflicting advice on city matters.

In order to overcome the constraints as mentioned above and to prevent further unauthorised interference in local authority matters by the Khomas Regional Council, it is proposed that a 'city-regional council' be created. Such a council, it is presumed, can be a joint venture between the city and regional councils to facilitate the combined administration of the Windhoek city-region in order to regulate administration and streamline the processing of planning applications.

A joined Windhoek City-Regional Council is believed to be a sensible and workable solution for the capacity and financial problems being experienced by the Khomas Regional Council. In addition, the Windhoek Local Authority Council could benefit greatly from such a new arrangement, as it would provide the opportunity to widen its planning vision and to plan beyond the present confines of the local authority area into the future.

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