DECLARATION OF THE MOST AND DIRECTLY AFFECTED OVAHIMBA, OVAATWA, OVAJHIMBA, OVAZEMBA AGAINST THE OROKAVE DAM IN THE BAYNES MOUNTAINS

February 7, 2012
Omuhonga

When Namibia wanted to build the Epupa Dam, we objected. Today, we object again, this time against the new plans of the Government of Namibia to build a dam, this time at Orokave in our Baynes Mountains. We, the most directly affected Indigenous Peoples say NO! We made in several meetings between us and the Government our refusal also to this dam very clear. At the most important big meeting in Opuwo end of 2011 with high level governmental authorities we again made our collective objection very clear. We don't understand why we have to repeat ourselves over and over again, and the Government of Namibia is not listening to us, and is continuing to push for the construction of the dam without our consent. We collectively refused the money offered to those communities and families that would have to relocate if the Government is going to build the dam they better kill us first before they do that. This is our land. We are the original inhabitants and true owners of the area that would be destroyed and flooded by the dam. But since independence, the Government has dispossessed us from our rights to our land, and our rights to decide what
what is being done with and on it. That is a direct violation of Article 4, 8 (26), 26, 27.
Our traditional leaders, our representatives that we choose, are not recognized by the Government of Namibia, violating again the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Article 1, 5, 18, 19, 20, 22, 32, 33, 34, 38. Because we are not allowed to choose our own representatives and they are not recognized, we are made voiceless. If they build the dam even so we strongly object to it, many of us will drown ourselves in the dam. Others of us will fight, and Namibia will have civil war in our area. We don’t want an influx of strangers that will come with the construction of the dam. Many will settle, taking away our grazing areas, as it happens already in other parts of our kaokoland. We don’t want to face the negative impact that comes with such a large-scale construction i.e.: tart roads, large trucks, shops owned by strangers, foreign traders, big town, prostitution, theft, crime, diseases, and the loss and destruction of land, and the flooding of our grave sites of our ancestors. We don’t want the river being blocked. Water is life. The fish, turtles and crocodiles will suffer. Some may die.
It is not only us objecting to this dam. The people in Angola that would also be affected by the dam strongly object to it as well.
We demand that the Government of Namibia halts immediately any further plans to construct the Baynes Site dam without our free, prior informed consent.

We request that Namibia allows the Special Rapporteur on the Rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples to visit us in Namibia.

We insist that the president of Namibia, the Minister of Mines and Energy, the Ombudsman and other relevant high level officials conduct a meeting with us, in our area, on our soil. But without police and military forces that we don’t want here (UNDRIP Article 30)

We have the right to be fully informed. (UNDRIP Article 13, 18, 19).

In the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that was adopted by Namibia, it is clearly stated in Article 10 that we should not be forcibly removed and relocated from our lands and territories. Article 32 states that the State must consult and cooperate in good faith with us to obtain our free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting us and our land.
This Declaration of the most affected tribes signed if the dam would be build is signed by us, the chiefs of the area in question, and their senior councilors and our respected community Elders.

Chief Hikuminae Kapika, Epupa and Omuhonga

Chief Tjinae Tjinge, Otjikojo

Elder from Omuhonga Kambiri ye Kapika KAPIKA

Elder from Omuhonga Motjimbika Mutambo

MUTABO

(Epupa) Senior Councilor Muhapika Munjombasa

(Omuhonga) Senior Councilor Matumbuyani Kapika

(Omuhonga) Senior Councilor yapimbryapo Tyambe

(Omuhonga) Senior Councilor yararci ke Tjinge

(Omuhoro) Senior Councilor Vatako Hembinda
(Omuhonga) Senior Councilor Vatundauka Ngambi

Ngumbi

(Omuhonga) Senior Councilor Mbaekama Ngombe

(Okanguati) Senior Councilor Mbyangue Tjiposa