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Towards a common vision: Pulling together or apart? A review of sub-national patterns of multiple deprivation in Namibia

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TOWARDS A COMMON VISION: PULLING TOGETHER OR APART?

A REVIEW OF SUB-NATIONAL PATTERNS OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION IN NAMIBIA

Working Paper number 92

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TOWARDS A COMMON VISION: PULLING TOGETHER OR APART?

A REVIEW OF SUB-NATIONAL PATTERNS OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION IN NAMIBIA

Ojijo Odhiambo *

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a review of deprivation at the sub-national (regional) level in Namibia in the material, employment, health, education, services and housing domains as well as constituency-level multiple deprivation, but aggregated at regional levels. The study provides a strong basis for interrogating the reasons for the existence of the wide inter- and intra-regional inequality and inequity with respect to levels of income and access to basic services and identifying priority sectors, at the sub-national level, for public investments. Further, the study provides a useful basis for initiating public policy discourse with regard to resource allocation and, most importantly, ring fencing and targeting those resources to areas or sectors where the particular regions are most deprived and linking development to the exercise of political and other forms of leadership, and accountability for results and impact at the lowest possible level.

Another possible contribution of this study could be the need for policy- and decision-makers in Namibia to consider institutionalising the Namibia Index of Multiple Deprivation-weighted Equalization Fund (NIMDEF), whereby regions—and subsequently constituencies—receive and apply development funds and other resources on the basis of the relative weights of their index of multiple deprivation and population sizes. The study is a useful addition to the existing collection of proposals for consideration by policy- and decision-makers to put the country on a new development pathway as it moves towards a green economy.

Key words: inequality, multiple deprivation, multiple deprivation-weighted index equalization fund, green economy.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE NATIONAL VISION

Namibia has a long-term development goal of being “a prosperous and industrialized Namibia, developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony and political stability.”¹ Adopted in May 2004, the Vision 2030, as the long-term development goal is popularly known, is a broad unifying objective which guides the country’s policy formulation and development planning processes. The vision is aimed at transforming Namibia into a healthy and food-secure nation, in which all preventable, infectious and parasitic diseases are under secure control, with its people enjoying healthy standards of living and a good quality of life and having access to quality education, health and other vital services. The vision, founded on six pillars— namely: education; science and technology; health and social development; sustainable agriculture; peace and social justice; and gender equality— is also designed to promote the creation of a diversified, open market economy, with a resource-based industrial sector and commercial agriculture and the promotion of competitiveness in the export sector. Additionally, the vision is aimed at reducing inequalities in income; access to and control of productive resources and basic social services, based mainly on race, ethnicity and gender; and moving the nation significantly up the scale of human development to be ranked among the developed countries of the world by 2030.

To realise this national vision, the government prepares successive four-year National Development Plans (NDPs), which outline the programmes, projects and implementation strategies that the country will pursue over a four-year period as well as the three-year resource planning and application framework (the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)). The current NDP (NDP3), on the theme ‘Accelerating Economic Growth and Deepening Rural Development’, was launched in May 2008, covering the fiscal years 2007/08–2011/12, and is implemented through the MTEF and the annual budgets. It addresses 10 Key Results Areas (KRAs) derived from the Vision 2030. In this way, the national vision is linked to and implemented through the medium-term plan, the NDPs, the MTEF and annual budgets. The KRAs identified in NDP3 and derived from the Vision 2030 are: equality and social welfare; peace, security and political stability; productive and competitive human resources and institutions; competitive economy (divided into macro economy and infrastructure); quality of life; productive utilisation of natural resources and environmental sustainability (divided into sustainable utilisation of natural resources and environmental sustainability); knowledge-based economy and technology-driven nation; and regional and international stability and integration. Each KRA or sub-KRA has a set of clearly stated targets, costed programmes and projects, and strategies for achieving those targets.

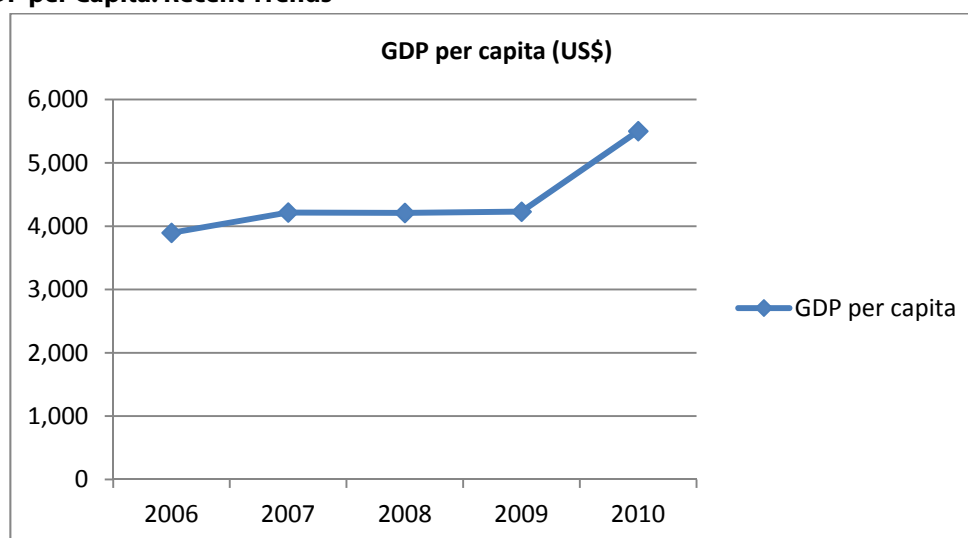
1.2 RECENT PERFORMANCE OF THE ECONOMY AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Namibia is classified as an upper middle-income country, with a steadily growing Gross Domestic Product (GDP)² per capita over the recent past as shown in Figure 1.

As the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draws near, there are mixed results across and within countries. And Namibia is no exception. According to the National MDG Report of 2010,³ with 27.8 per cent of households reported as being poor in

2003/04, Namibia is likely to achieve the set target of 19 per cent of households being poor by 2012 from the baseline (1990/93) figure of 38 per cent.

FIGURE 1

GDP per Capita: Recent Trends

Source: World Bank, 2010.

In the recent past, however, economic growth in Namibia, together with a number of other African countries, has been largely jobless, resulting in a significant decline in the employment-to-population ratio, an important measure of dependency, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

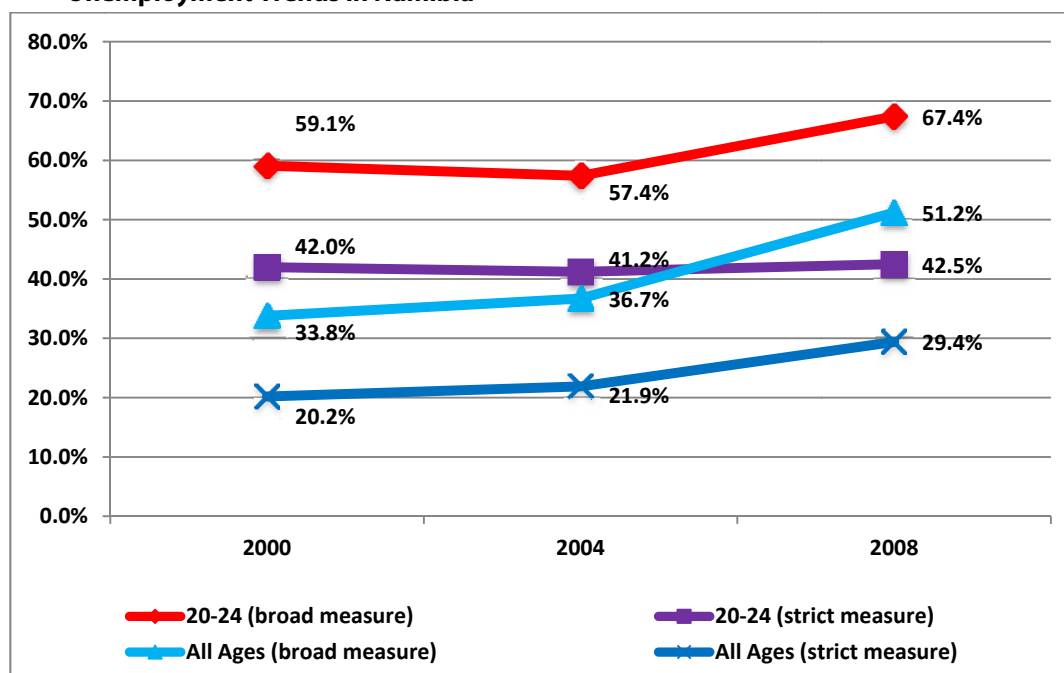
Changes in Employment-to-Population Ratio in Selected Countries 1991–2006

Percentage Changes in Employment-to-Population Ratio (1991–2006)			
Country	Percentage <u>Increase</u>	Country	Percentage <u>Decline</u>
Algeria	12.6	Lesotho	17.3
Libya	7.1	Botswana	12.5
Zambia	6.5	Namibia	8.3
		Ghana	6.3
		Cape Verde	5.8
		Rwanda	5.2
		Mali	5.1
		Senegal	5.1

Source: Adapted from Economic Commission of Africa computation based on United Nations Statistical Department data.

While the Namibian economy grew at an average of 4.5 per cent from 2001 to 2008, the rate of unemployment (broad definition) increased from 36.7 per cent in 2004 to 51.2 per cent in 2008,⁴ as shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Unemployment Trends in Namibia

Source: GRN (2008), Namibia Labour Force Survey.

Although the country has already achieved gender parity in education, especially at secondary level, grade 8 survival rate targets and is on course to attain 99.1 per cent net primary school enrolment by 2012, there are challenges with respect to the quality of education on offer and the impact of HIV/AIDS, especially on the youth. It is also noteworthy that the female literacy rate is slightly higher than the male literacy rate, and the proportion of women employed in the non-agriculture sector rose from 39 per cent in 1992 to 47 per cent in 2001. And with an adult literacy rate of 88 per cent, Namibia has one of the highest adult literacy rates in Africa, only comparable to South Africa (88 per cent) and just slightly below the highest ranked African country, Zimbabwe (91.2 per cent).

The 2010 national MDGs report also states that in the health sector infant mortality decreased from 56.6 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990/93 to 46 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006, and under-five mortality decreased from 83.2 deaths per 1,000 live births to 69 deaths per 1,000 live births, while the proportion of children immunised against measles rose from 76 per cent to 83.8 per cent over the same period. Maternal deaths, however, increased from 225 per 100,000 live births in 1992 to 449 per 100,000 live births in 2006, representing a 100 per cent increase despite an increase in the proportion of births attended by trained health personnel from 68 per cent to 81 per cent over the same period. Consequently, and together with the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the life expectancy at birth declined from an average of 62 years in 1991 to 49 years in 2001. In the recent past, the country registered a

reduction in HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15 to 24 years attending antenatal clinics from 14.2 per cent in 2006 to 10.6 per cent in 2008, partly due to increased condom use at last high-risk sex (sex with a non-regular partner) among adults aged 15 to 49 years from 42 per cent to 62 per cent in women and from 67 per cent to 78 per cent in men between 2000 and 2006 and an increase in the proportion of the population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS from 39 per cent among women and 51 per cent among men to 65 per cent among women and 62 per cent among men over the same period. The number of tuberculosis (TB) cases detected per 100,000 people increased by about 17 per cent from 656 in 1997 to 765 in 2010, while the proportion of cases of TB that were successfully treated increased from 64 per cent in 1990/93 to 76 per cent in 2006. A significant reduction of the incidence of malaria from 207 cases per 1,000 people in 1990/93 to 48 cases per 1,000 people in 2006 is largely attributed to sustained preventive interventions such as indoor spraying and provision of long-lasting treated mosquito nets.

With respect to ensuring environmental sustainability, the 2010 national MDGs report states that Namibia has made good progress in increasing the proportion of land in protected areas from 14 per cent in 1990/93 to 18 per cent in 2006, while the registration of new conservation areas has increased to about 14 per cent in the recent past. A large proportion of people living in urban areas have access to safe drinking water, although there has been a slight decline from 99 per cent in 1990 to 97 per cent in 2006, while in the rural areas the proportion has increased from 74 per cent to 80 per cent over the same period. Access to basic sanitation, however, remains problematic, as the proportion of people with access to basic sanitation in urban areas decreased from 86 per cent in 1993 to 58 per cent in 2006, mainly due to an increase in rural–urban migration, while an estimated 14 per cent of people in rural areas currently have access to basic sanitation.

National aggregate figures with respect to performance of the economy and progress towards the MDGs and/or access to basic social services as described above, however, often mask progress or the lack of it at the sub-national and local levels. It is for this reason that it is often necessary to disaggregate national-level data as much as possible—for instance, by gender and age—at the lowest administrative level possible. In international fora, debate has begun on the development agenda after the MDG deadline, with an increasingly large number of policy commentators and decision-makers calling for *inter alia* a new development goal focused on inequality, which has worsened over the past decade or so.⁵ Insights from the MDGs and the human development framework point to the inter-connectedness of the different goals, the importance of gender equity and social inclusion underscoring the importance of exploring sub-national disparities not only with regard to income and poverty levels but also with regard to various dimensions of deprivation.

This paper makes a case for looking at multi-dimensional deprivation. It presents the results of analysis of sub-national (regional) disparities with respect to multiple deprivations in Namibia. Specifically, the paper presents an analysis of deprivation in the following six domains: material, employment, health, education, services and housing. The paper is structured as follows:

- **Section 1:** introduction;
- **Section 2** presents a review of income inequality and introduces the concept of multiple deprivation, including the conceptual framework and methodological approach used in defining and estimating deprivation in the various domains;
- **Section 3** presents the results of analysis of the levels of deprivation in the various domains at the sub-national (regional) level;
- while the conclusions and policy recommendations are discussed in **Section 4**.

2 MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION IN NAMIBIA: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 UNDERSTANDING POVERTY, DEPRIVATION AND MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

In this section, an attempt is made to define and highlight the relationship and, more importantly, the distinction between poverty and deprivation, two concepts that are often used interchangeably. Indeed poverty is often defined in terms of relative deprivation. Townsend (1979), for instance, sets out the case for defining poverty in terms of relative deprivation as follows:

“Individuals, families and groups can be said to be in poverty if they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary or at least widely encouraged or approved in the societies to which they belong.” Townsend, 1979: 31

With respect to deprivation, Townsend (1987) states that people are deprived:

“if they lack the types of diet, clothing, housing, household facilities and fuel and environmental, educational, working and social conditions, activities and facilities which are customary.” Townsend, 1987: 131 and 140⁶

The condition of poverty refers primarily to not having enough (financial) resources to meet desired needs, whereas deprivation refers to unmet needs, which could be due to a lack of various types of resources, including, but not limited to, financial resources. This distinction is important because access to basic services is not necessarily determined, in the main, or exclusively, by one’s level of income or access to resources. If, for instance, the local municipal authority has a functioning refuse collection system, which is accessible for all the inhabitants of the municipality, then all of them— rich and poor—would have access to this critical basic service. Based on the same line of argument, deprivation with respect to access to waste disposal could exist even for individuals or populations with a reasonably high level of income, if the local municipal authority did not offer such services and private-sector players were either absent or provided services at uncompetitive rates. Additionally, while an individual with a high level of income would ordinarily be expected to have better access to health, such access would be conditional on the availability of functioning and easily accessible health facilities within his or her community, without which the particular individual in question would be (relatively) deprived in the health domain/dimension. Similarly, an individual

with a relatively high income may be materially deprived—for instance, having no access to a cell phone or television—if the propensity to acquire a cell phone or television is diminished due to lack of network coverage or source of energy for charging the cell phone or powering the television. The concept of deprivation is, therefore, much broader and more representative of the people's living conditions than (income) poverty *per se*.

It is also noteworthy that it is the experiences of people in an area with respect to the various domains of deprivation that give the specific area its deprivation characteristics. But the area itself is, strictly speaking, not deprived. And even though the presence of a high concentration of people or households experiencing deprivation in an area (constituency and region in the case of Namibia) may give rise to a compounding deprivation effect, deprivation is still measured by reference to those individuals or individual households. Individuals' or individual households' experience of a specific domain of deprivation may, however, be due to physical, ecological and geographic characteristics of an area, but it is the individuals and/or households, and not the area in question, that experience deprivation. Having attributed the aggregate of individuals' or households' experiences of deprivation to an area, however, it is possible to say, in general terms, that an area (constituency or region in this case) is (relatively) more deprived in that particular dimension or domain compared to other areas.

More importantly, an individual, group of persons or households may suffer from multiple deprivation, which, as a concept, refers to a weighted aggregation or accumulation of several types of deprivation or deprivation in several domains or dimensions.

This paper presents constituency-level, but aggregated at the regional level, scores for six domains of deprivation produced for Namibia, which are then combined to form an overall Namibia Index of Multiple Deprivation (NIMD).⁷ It presents the experience of people within the 107 constituencies of Namibia, but aggregated at the 13 regional levels, with respect to deprivation in particularly defined dimensions/domains on the basis of the proportion of people in the area experiencing the type of deprivation in question. Noble et al. (2009) have used a similar approach, based on the understanding that multiple deprivation is an accumulation of single deprivations (see Townsend, 1987) to construct the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation (2001) at datazone level.

A summary of the domains and indicators used in this paper, based on the 2001 National Housing and Population Census data and appropriate to the Namibian context, is presented in Table 2.

It is noteworthy that the choice of domains and indicators used in this study was guided mainly by the data availability and their relevance to the Namibian context and were arrived at through a consultative process. For instance, in arriving at these domains, a number of other domains including access to recreational facilities, level of participation in community services, crime, food security, provision of emergency services and availability of affordable transport services were also considered but were discounted, since 2001 National Housing Population Census did not capture data and information relating to them. Additionally, in identifying indicators for each of the domains, care was taken to ensure that the indicators are direct measures of the domain of deprivation in question and specific to that domain. Moreover, the domains used in this study were carefully chosen to allow different geographical areas to be distinguished from one another, as it would be unhelpful to identify a deprivation which is experienced by most people in most areas, since this would not enable the areas to be ranked relative to each other in terms of relative deprivation.

TABLE 2

Domains of Deprivation and Indicators Used

Domain	Purpose of domain	Indicators	Estimation method
Material	Captures the proportion of the population experiencing material deprivation i.e. lacking basic material possessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people living in a household with no access to a television or a radio; Number of people living in a household with no access to a telephone/cell phone 	Number of people living in a household with no access to a television/radio; or with no access to a telephone/cell phone divided by the total population)
Employment	Measures involuntary exclusion of the working-age population from the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people aged 15–59 who are unemployed. 	Those identified as unemployed and aged 15–59 (inclusive) divided by the number of people who are economically active in that age group
Health	Measures premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of <i>forthcoming</i> health deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years of potential life lost, which is inversely related to life expectancy in a given area 	This is the level of unexpected mortality weighted by the age of the individual who has died
Education	Measures deprivation in educational attainment for people aged 15–59 (inclusive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of 15–59-year-olds (inclusive) with no schooling completed at secondary level or above; Number of 15–59-year-olds (inclusive) who are illiterate 	The number of people aged 15–59 (inclusive) with no schooling completed at secondary level or above, or who are illiterate divided by the total population aged 15–59 (inclusive)
Services	Measures deprivation in basic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people living in a household without the use of electricity or solar power for lighting; Number of people living in a household without access to a flush toilet or VIP; Number of people living in a household without piped water/borehole/borehole with covered tank (but not open tank)/protected well inside their dwelling or yard or within 200 metres; Number of people living in a household without a regular refuse collection service 	The number of people living in a household without electricity or solar power for lighting or without adequate toilet or without adequate water provision or without regular refuse collection divided by the total population)
Housing	Measures those whose housing is inadequate in terms of construction and overcrowding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people living in a household that is a shack; Number of people living in a household with three or more people per room 	The number of people living in a shack or in overcrowded conditions divided by the total population

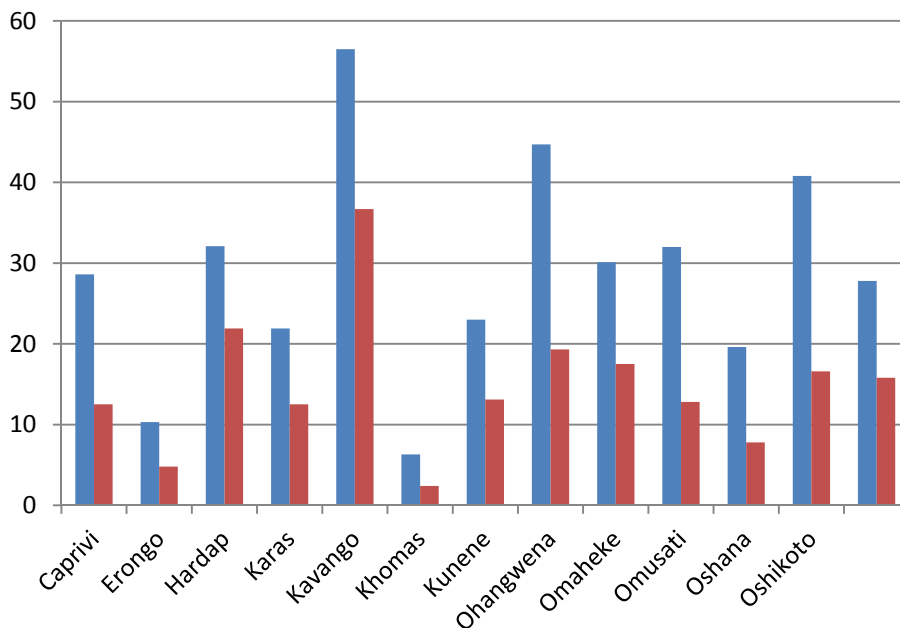
2.2 A REVIEW OF INCOME POVERTY IN NAMIBIA

To understand multiple deprivations in the Namibian context, it is first necessary to understand regional disparities with respect to income poverty. As noted earlier, with the exception of 2009, Namibia has recorded impressive economic growth, with macroeconomic stability, over the past decade. The impressive growth rates, however, have had little impact on the twin problems of unemployment and poverty (see Figure 2). Even with the many and diverse social protection programmes,⁸ household poverty levels have remained among the highest in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, and the country remains one of the most unequal societies in the world (UNDP, 2009).⁹

A recent review of poverty and inequality in Namibia (GRN, 2008), based on the 2003/04 National Household Income and Expenditure Survey, revealed that poor households make up 27.8 per cent of the population, with 13.8 per cent being severely poor—that is, not able to meet basic food and non-food needs—and that there are wide regional variations with respect to the incidence of poverty as shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3

Incidence of Poverty by Region, 2003/2004



Source: GRN (2008), A Review of Poverty and Inequality in Namibia.

The study also revealed that poverty has not only a distinct geographical (urban–rural) dimension, with the incidence of poverty being higher in rural areas (38.2 per cent) than urban settings (12 per cent), but also gender and demographic dimensions, with the poorest (rural) region of the country being Kavango, a region that also has a high percentage of women-headed households; orphans and vulnerable children; HIV infection rates; and maternal mortality. Among the elderly (those aged 65 and older), the incidences of poverty and severe poverty are 47.5 per cent and 22.7 per cent, respectively, while for households caring for

orphans, the incidence of poverty is 41.8 per cent, and of those, 21.1 per cent are severely poor. Poverty also has an ethnic dimension, with those households speaking Khoisan, Kavango or Nama/Damara being among the poorest. In terms of the share of national poverty, however, the Oshiwambo-speaking households—the majority of the population— comprise half of all poor households in the country. There is also a direct correlation between the incidence of poverty and educational attainment, with 83.5 per cent of all heads of poor households possessing either just primary-level or no formal education.

Other reports on poverty in Namibia, using different poverty definitions and thresholds, however, paint a grimmer picture of the situation. Using US\$1.25 per day, for instance, reveals that 44 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, while using the international poverty standard of US\$1 per day (purchasing power parity), would translate into 62 per cent of Namibians living in poverty. However, if the concept of a 'Household Subsistence Level', based on a basket of essential food and non-food items is used, the poverty line would be N\$399.80 per month, indicating that 82 per cent of Namibian households live in poverty.

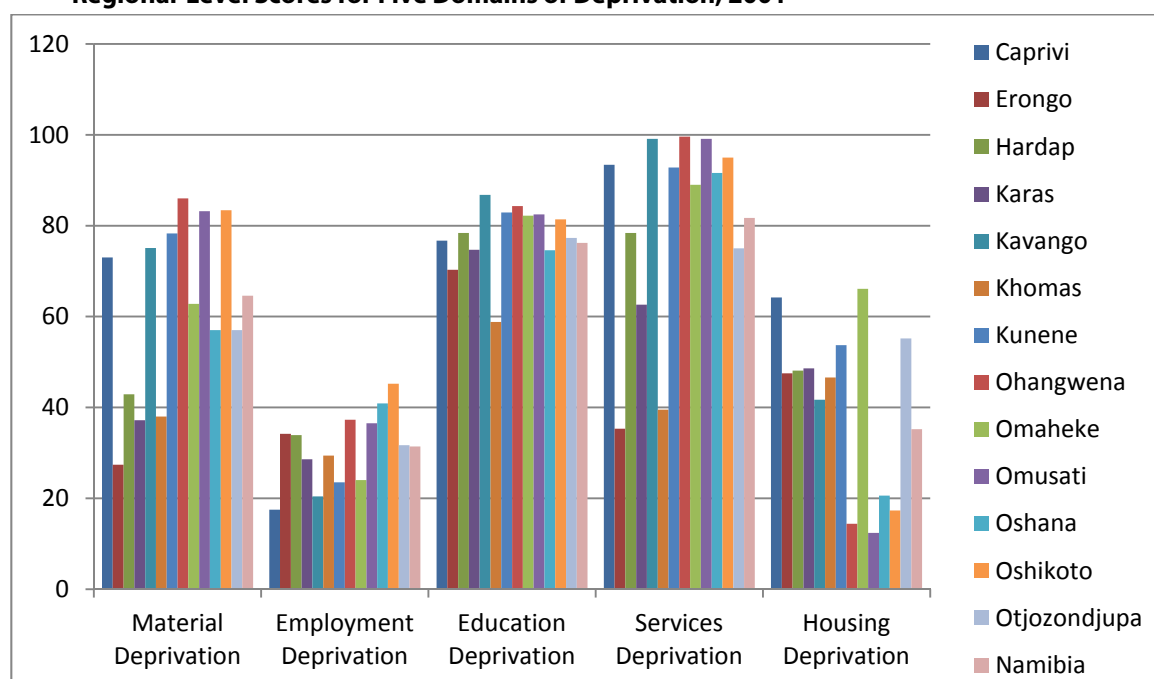
3 STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN LEVELS OF DEPRIVATION WITH RESPECT TO INDIVIDUAL DOMAINS

Figure 4 presents the rates of deprivation – that is, percentage of populations that are deprived with respect to material, employment, education, services and housing domains—in the 13 regions of Namibia.

FIGURE 4

Regional-Level Scores for Five Domains of Deprivation, 2001



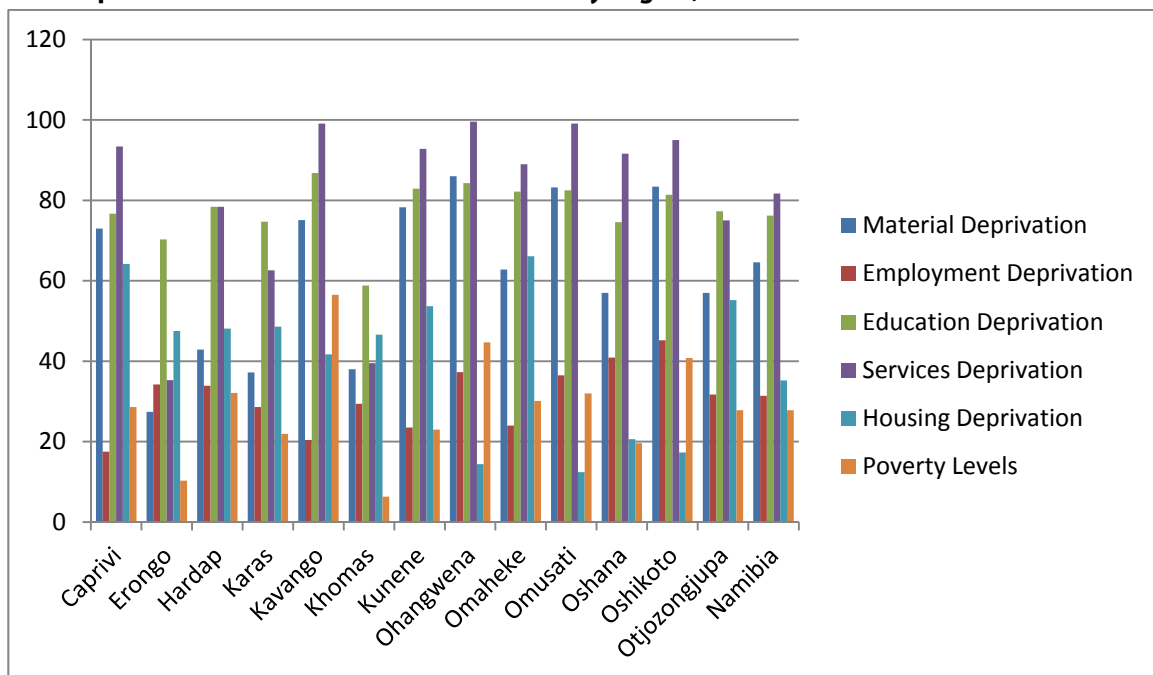
Based on the definitions of deprivation and estimation methods presented in Section 2.1, the following general statements can be made about the extent of deprivation in Namibia:

- 64.6 per cent of the total population experience material deprivation;
- 31.4 per cent of the economically active population experience employment deprivation;
- 76.2 per cent of working age people (15–59 inclusive) experience education deprivation;
- 81.7 per cent of the total population experience services deprivation; and
- 35.2 per cent of the total population experience housing deprivation.

However, given that national aggregate figures often mask inter-regional and intra-regional disparities with respect to level of deprivation, a sub-national analysis of multiple deprivations was undertaken.

FIGURE 5

Deprivation Levels in the Various Domains by Region, 2001



This analysis (see Figures 4 and 5) reveals that wide intra-regional and inter-regional variations exist with respect to the various domains of deprivation in Namibia. In terms of material deprivation, the most deprived region is Ohangwena, where 86 per cent of the population are materially deprived, with the next most deprived regions on this domain being Oshikoto (83.4 per cent) and Omusati (83.2 per cent), while the least materially deprived region is Erongo (27.4 per cent), followed by Karas (37.2 per cent) and Khomas (38 per cent), which hosts the capital city, Windhoek. With respect to employment, however, the most deprived regions are Oshikoto (45.2 per cent) and Oshana (40.9 per cent), while the least employment-deprived region is Caprivi, with 17.5 per cent of the population being unemployed in 2001.

When one considers education, the picture changes and largely mirrors the income poverty trends, with Kavango (86.8 per cent) and Ohangwena (84.3 per cent) the most deprived in that domain and Khomas (58.8 per cent) the least deprived, reinforcing the well-documented positive correlation between levels of education and income up to middle-income status. Likewise, the northern regions of Ohangwena (99.6 per cent), Omusati (99.1 per cent) and Kavango (99.1 per cent) are by far the most deprived in terms of services, whereas Erongo and Khomas, (35.3 per cent and 39.5 per cent, respectively) are the least deprived with respect to services. But deprivation in the housing domain exhibits a totally different picture, with Omaheke (66.1 per cent) and Caprivi (64.2 per cent) the regions with the highest levels of housing deprivation, whereas Omusati (12.4 per cent) and Ohangwena (14.4 per cent) are the least deprived in this domain.

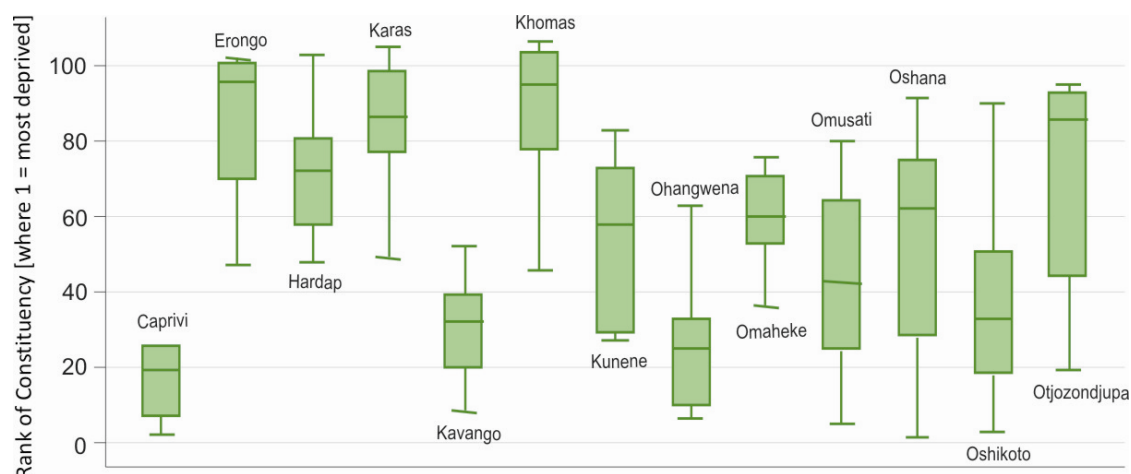
Although different data sources were used in determining the levels of poverty and deprivation in the various domains at the regional level, it is apparent that regions with relatively high levels of poverty— such as Kavango, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Omusati— also experience higher levels of deprivation, especially in the services, education and material domains, reinforcing the correlation between income poverty and the different types of deprivation that individuals and households experience. For instance, individuals, *ceteris paribus*, require income to purchase televisions, radios or a cell phone, which are the indicators of deprivation in the material domain; and, therefore, regions that have higher levels of poverty, such as Ohangwena and Oshikoto, also experience higher levels of material deprivation.

3.2 REGIONAL VARIATIONS WITH RESPECT TO MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

As stated in Section 2, in order to present the totality of the level of deprivation, as far as practicable, a composite index of multiple deprivation, the Namibia Index of Multiple Deprivation (NIMD), was calculated at constituency (sub-regional) level. Although the NIMD was calculated at the constituency level, for purposes of consistency in presentation, the constituency-level NIMD is summarised at regional level and presented graphically in Figure 6. It shows the minimum, maximum and median rank of constituencies in each region, and the inter-quartile range for the overall NIMD.

FIGURE 6

Namibian Index of Multiple Deprivation 2001. Constituency Level by Region: Interquartile Range



Explanation of Figure 6

The vertical green line for each region shows the range of the ranks of the constituencies in the region, thus the longer the line the wider the range of constituencies in that region with respect to multiple deprivation. The 'T' at the top of the green line shows the rank of the least deprived constituency in the region, while the 'inverted T' at the bottom of the green line shows the rank of the most deprived constituency in the particular region. The green box for each region shows the range of the NIMD ranks of the middle 50 per cent of constituencies in the region (the inter-quartile range), while the horizontal line within the box represents the rank of the median constituency within that region. Therefore, if the box is relatively short, the constituencies in that region are ranked in a narrow range, with nearly similar NIMD ranks (and, therefore, similar levels of multiple deprivation). If this box sits towards the bottom of the chart, the constituencies in the region are concentrated in the most deprived part of the national distribution of the NIMD. If the box sits towards the top of the chart, the ranks of the constituencies in the region are concentrated in the least deprived part of the national distribution.

As shown in Figure 6, in terms of multiple deprivation, Caprivi, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Kavango regions have their constituencies concentrated at the most deprived end of the spectrum, while Hardap, Erongo, Karas and Khomas—in that order—have their constituencies concentrated in the least deprived part of the national distribution, and Omusati, Oshana, Kunene, Otjozondjupa and Omaheke occupy the middle range.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Namibians suffer most from services deprivation, with 81.7 per cent of the total population being deprived in this domain. This means that a high proportion of Namibian households lack basic services of energy, sanitation and regular refuse collection. It also means that most Namibians live in households without piped water/borehole/borehole with covered tank within 200 metres of their dwellings. The next most important domain in which a majority of Namibians are deprived is education, with 76.2 per cent of Namibians aged 15–59 years (inclusive) being either illiterate or having not completed schooling at secondary level. In order of relative importance, the third most important domain in which Namibians are deprived is the material domain, with 64.6 per cent being materially deprived. Material deprivation exists when people do not have sufficient resources to purchase or obtain basic material possessions such as a phone, television or radio. Housing is the next most important domain in which many Namibians are deprived, with 35.2 per cent of the total population either living in shacks or in households with three or more people per room. The last, but nonetheless not the least important, domain in which a large number of Namibians are deprived is employment, with 31.4 per cent of people aged 15–59 years (inclusive) being unemployed.

While different data sets were used in determining the incidence of poverty and multiple deprivation in the 13 regions of the country, a consistent picture of wide variations with respect to income and multiple deprivation nonetheless emerges, pointing to entrenched inequality and inequity with respect to income and access to basic services and the ability of the people to live dignified lives, in sharp contrast to one of the aims of the Vision 2030—addressing inequality. With respect to income, Kavango, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Hardap,

Omusati and Omaheke—in that order—have the highest incidences of poverty. The picture with respect to multiple deprivation at the constituency level is, however, slightly different, with Caprivi, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Kavango and Omusati regions—in that order—having their constituencies concentrated at the most deprived end of the spectrum. On the other end of the spectrum, Karas, Oshana, Erongo and Khomas have the lowest incidences of income poverty, while Hardap, Erongo, Karas and Khomas—in that order—have their constituencies concentrated in the lowest end of the spectrum of multiple deprivation. This demonstrates that while income poverty remains an important consideration in the overall state of deprivation, it is certainly not a sufficient consideration in determining the ability of people to live dignified lives devoid of deprivation in its many facets. There are many other important considerations, such as provision of and access to basic social services, which are not primarily or necessarily dependent on income levels.

The present paper presents a first step at disaggregated sub-national (regional-level) analysis of multiple deprivation that could serve as the basis for a number of important policy- and decision-making initiatives. The following recommendations are presented for possible consideration by the relevant national authorities and stakeholders; they are classified into two categories: those requiring administrative actions only, and those requiring more elaborate policy, legal and/or institutional reforms.

Recommendations requiring administrative actions:

- The study provides a useful basis for deepening the work in this area to the sub-regional (constituency and small area) levels, since, as shown in Figure 6 in Section 3, it is possible to have wide intra-regional variations with respect to the various domains of deprivation. This kind of analysis would allow for better planning for and targeting of public investments aimed at poverty reduction, on the basis of relative deprivation, to the smallest possible administrative units. With such wide intra-regional variations, there will be pockets of small geographic areas experiencing deprivation in one or more domains even in otherwise less deprived areas. Priorities may thus need to be identified at the sub-national level that could be addressed through integrated area-based approaches, and, importantly, fiscal transfers to the sub-national level could be targeted to those sectors or domains in which the small geographic areas are particularly deprived.
- The analysis also provides a useful starting point for interrogating the reasons for the existence of wide inter-regional (and intra-regional) inequality and inequity with respect to levels of income and access to basic services. It is only when such causal factors—whether economic, cultural, historical, ecological, geographic or socio-political—and their inter-relationships and causal relationships are known and universally appreciated across the spectrum of development actors, including political leaders and policy- and decision-makers, that specific and targeted policies, programmes and interventions can be put in place to address them.
- The review also provides a basis for analysing changes over time in relative levels of deprivation in individual domains of deprivation and multiple deprivation. And since this study is based on the 2001 National Housing and Population Census, it is conceivable that a similar exercise would be carried out as soon as 2011 National Housing and Population Census results, which are expected to be out in the course of 2012, are available. A temporal analysis of changes in

relative levels of deprivation would be a useful basis for further interrogation of the causes of possible differential temporal changes and, importantly, the reasons, such as differential public and private investments, for any noted differential changes over time between and within regions.

- Although presented at a fairly aggregated (regional) level, the present study nonetheless unveils an objective assessment of levels of deprivation in various domains and provides a useful overall picture and appreciation of the extent of inequality and inequity with respect to access to income and a number of critical services at the sub-national level. This might be useful, not just for purposes of appreciating the totality of people's needs beyond income and the extent to which they are deprived in terms of the basic needs, but also to inform public policy discourse with regards to resource allocation and, particularly, ring fencing and targeting those resources to areas or sectors where the particular region or sub-national geographic area is most deprived or in need, as part of the national poverty reduction programme and in pursuit of the stated national goal of reducing inequality. This is also important for enhancing policy on and investment in multi-focus actions which can tackle multiple deprivations at the same time.
- Given the wide array of domains of deprivation examined in this report, it is conceivable that regions (and sub-regions) characterised by severe multiple deprivation could be targeted for integrated development/poverty reduction projects and programmes, covering a comprehensive set of contextually relevant interventions that are properly sequenced and implemented. Development partners, including the United Nations System in Namibia which is in the process of developing its cooperation framework for the support of national development priorities (the United Nations Development Assistance Framework – UNDAF), could take the lead in this regard. Such projects/programmes can then be scaled up to cover entire regions, with equity being an overriding consideration.

Recommendations requiring actions related to policy and/or institutional reforms:

- Following from the preceding sections, policy- and decision-makers, as well as political leaders, may find this study useful in initiating a process of redesigning the country's development planning and project/programme implementation processes to be more targeted and focused on peoples' needs and the extent of deprivation. The present study could be useful in providing a basis for meaningfully shifting the development discourse from the national to the sub-national levels and, particularly, to the realms of political agenda and local-level accountability for results and impact. Such a shift, however, ought to be accompanied by an increased flow of information about the availability of development resources and programmes to deprived populations and according them space and opportunity to actively and proactively participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of development projects in their localities within the context of devolved governance.
- Another possible contribution of this study, which is linked to the need for a meaningful redesign of the development planning landscape, could be the need

for policy- and decision-makers in Namibia to consider institutionalising the **Namibia Index of Multiple Deprivation-weighted Equalization Fund (NIMDEF)**, whereby regions and, subsequently, constituencies receive development funds and other resources on the basis of the relative weights of their index of multiple deprivation and population sizes and apply those (ring-fenced) funds to the identified areas or domains in which the region or constituency is relatively more deprived. One of the first initiatives that could benefit from such a resource allocation and application mechanism is the three-year, multi-billion-dollar public-sector-driven special job creation programme, the Targeted Intervention Program for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG), to be implemented over the medium term (fiscal years 2011/2012–2013/2014) and covering the sectors: agriculture; transport and logistics; tourism; housing and sanitation; and public works. The macroeconomic implications of the envisaged scale-up of public investments under the TIPEEG,¹⁰ though significant, however, are in conformity with the expansionary fiscal stance adopted by the government as a result of the 2009 global financial and economic crisis, whereby the government decided to relax the budget deficit ceiling from 3 per cent of GDP to 7 per cent of GDP and debt-to-GDP ratio from 25 per cent of GDP to 35 per cent of GDP in the medium term in an effort to enhance economic growth and job creation.

- While tackling most of the deprivations described in this report would require increased and/or better targeted public investments, including those outlined in the TIPEEG, the study also forms a useful basis for initiating and institutionalising innovative public–private partnerships which could help in improving access for poor and deprived populations to these critical services, both at the national and sub-national levels. A conducive policy environment and institutional frameworks for such partnerships, however, need to be in place to support such efforts.
- The study also adds to the existing wide range of proposals for consideration by policy- and decision-makers to put the country on a new development pathway as the country moves towards a green economy, which, by classical definition, would result in “improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.”¹¹ The concept of a green economy, which is fast gaining currency worldwide, is particularly useful for Namibia, the driest African country south of the Sahara, with very fragile ecosystems. Growth in income and employment in Namibia ought to be driven by a combination of public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Such investments, including those envisaged under the TIPEEG, need to be catalysed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and changes in regulation.

It should be noted, however, that given the reported high levels of poverty and deprivation across Namibia, even the least deprived areas will consist of large numbers of poor and deprived households and individual people. It is thus necessary for the government to continue addressing long-term barriers that currently prevent the economy from operating at its full potential and for the benefit of the citizens—a commitment that is articulated in many

policy papers, including the TIPEEG document. The policy recommendations made above, therefore, should be viewed as being only complementary to other policies and programmes aimed at addressing poverty and growing inequality in the country as it inches closer towards deadlines for the MDGs and the Vision 2030, and in unison, as opposed to pulling apart, as evidenced by regional variations in incidences of poverty and levels of multiple deprivation identified in this paper.

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NOTES

1. Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) (2004), Namibia Vision 2030: Policy Framework for Long-Term National Development: Main Document. Windhoek, Namibia, GRN: 38.
2. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products.
3. See GRN (2010), Namibia Millennium Development Goals, Third Report. Windhoek, Namibia, GRN.
4. This figure is, however, much higher for the age group 20–24 years, the age at which most people are expected to enter the labour market.
5. At the 2010 UN General Assembly, for instance, world leaders adopted resolution A/65/L.1 entitled Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which noted in paragraph 5: “We are deeply concerned, however, that the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger surpasses one billion and that inequalities between and within countries remains a significant challenge.” See <<http://www.un.org/en/mdg/sumit2010/pdf/mdg>>.
6. See <http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0001920/2-PIMD_SA2001_Mar2006.pdf>.
7. In determining the NIMD, individual domain scores were standardised by ranking and then the ranks transformed to an exponential distribution, which enabled control over cancellation and helped identify the most deprived constituencies. For a given constituency, its rank on the Domain, scaled to the range [0,1], by R (with R=1/N for the least deprived, and R=N/N, i.e. R=1, for the most deprived, where N=the number of small areas in Namibia). The transformed Domain, $X = -45.5 * \ln\{1 - R * [1 - \exp(-100/45.5)]\}$ where ln denotes natural logarithm and exp the exponential or antilogarithm transformation.
8. Namibia has seven types of social transfers. These are: old age pension, disability pension, war veterans’ subvention, child maintenance grant, special maintenance grant, foster care grant and place of safety allowance.
9. Even if a more conservative Gini Coefficient figure of 0.63 (see, for instance, GRN, 2008) is used, Namibia would still rank among the most unequal societies in the world.
10. Under the TIPEEG, the budget deficit is expected to increase to 9.5 per cent of GDP in the first fiscal year, averaging 7.2 per cent over the medium term, with the corresponding figures for total debt-to-GDP ratio being 27.3 per cent and 34.6 per cent, respectively. For a detailed discussion of the macroeconomic implications of the TIPEEG, see GRN (2011), Targeted Intervention Program for Employment and Economic Growth. Windhoek, Namibia, GRN.
11. For a detailed discussion on green economy, see <<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>>.



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