



Online/live discussion on the proposed Spatial Development Framework (SDF) for Swakopmund

Thursday, July 16th, 14-15.30h, through a blended modality accommodating both live and online discussions in light of COVID-19 regulations.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

The session started with a short introduction by Mr. Winfried Holze, an urban designer who took part in the process of developing the framework. He noted this was the first SDF developed with the assistance of an urban designer.

The event was attended by professionals, organized communities, and local authority officials through Zoom and through group telephone call.

The video of the presentation and the discussions is online: https://youtu.be/8P55soXU_Og

Some noted that the provision for incremental upgrading, an approach adequate for urban development for the poor, did not emerge strongly from the document.

A concern on emphasizing land uses (i.e. residential, business) was raised. How creating large areas of - for instance - residential-only would be in detriment of urban life and local economic development.

Some expressed doubt on how the 'limit' that the highway establishes to the east would indeed be abided; as it appeared more as an incentive for developers to access land for speculation.

Some noted how the plan seems to encircle/fence off Mondesa and DRC (neighborhoods where the lowest income groups inhabit) rather than integrating these to other parts of the city.

Some remarked that the access to the beach for lower income groups remained unclear.

Others noted the lack of more appropriate references (e.g. Africa, Global South) for the design and spatial principles in the document.

Other noted the lack of inclusion of informal trade, the livelihood of arguably the majority in Namibia, within the plans.

A debate emerged on whether the new land use proposed ("shop house" and "house shop") represented indeed a new option, rather than requiring only current uses.

The economic opportunities seem to be localized to specific corridors, rather than widespread across the city.

Questions on how this document would influence actual development was raised.

Organized communities (Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia) noted they did not know about the document, and had questions on how this document would assist in the provision of services, security of tenure and other opportunities for the lowest income groups.