Healthcare was the privilege of a few. Thousands of people had little or no access to health services in the rural areas to which they were restricted. The SWAPO Party government built new hospitals, clinics, health centers and renovated existing ones, thus providing a broad spectrum of healthcare services to the people.

“The SWAPO Party focused its attention on addressing the challenges facing the majority of our people,” he said. “We focused especially on the previously disadvantaged groups.”

“We therefore adopted policies to address labour issues, introduced social safety nets and increased access to land through resettlement. We enacted the Labour Act. We set up the Social Security Commission, SCC. We adopted a land reform policy. Today, our nation enjoys greater prosperity and equity than at independence. The benefits of our hard-won independence slowly but surely reaches all corners of our country.”

Oshana now has 132 schools, of which 59 are primary schools and the other 64 are secondary and combined schools. There are also six private schools. Most of those schools were built after independence.

“I urge all of you to vote for SWAPO Party and for Hifikepunye Pohamba as SWAPO Party Presidential candidate,” said President Pohamba.

All the cars were handed over to the traditional leaders by the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing and Rural Development, Jerry Ekandjo, who cautioned them to properly take care of the cars. “These cars remain the property of the government,” said Minister Ekandjo. “They are given to you by the SWAPO Party government to carry out your traditional responsibilities in the communities you serve.

“You should not abuse them. You should not load cattle or goats or crates of beer in those cars. That is not what you were given them for. You are given these cars to administer the affairs of your subjects.”

Only 48 cars could be handed out to traditional authorities. The one that belongs to the Ovambanderu Traditional Authority could not be handed over because there is still a dispute in that authority regarding the succession issue which had seen the matter being brought before court.

The dispute revolves around who should succeed the Ovambanderu Chief, the late Chief Nguvauva Munkiyu II, who passed away a few years ago. Two of his sons, Kilias Nguvauva, current Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, and Kiarahunjo Nguvauva, are fighting for the position that was left vacant by their late father.

The car would therefore remain with the Ministry until that dispute is resolved and the authority unananimously agrees amongst itself as to who the true successor should be. The Ovambanderu Traditional Authority is recognized by the government. The dispute is only about the succession issue.

“It is not the responsibility of the government to tell traditional authorities who their chiefs should be,” said Minister Ekandjo. “Traditional authorities themselves should resolve such issues and come up with one traditional chief. We as a government cannot dictate to any traditional authority as to who their chief should be.”

The drivers of the cars were given a one week basic training in Windhoek on how to use government vehicles. Each traditional authority has one driver who will now receive an allowance of N$1000, 00 per month. The maintenance and the running cost of the cars would be borne by the government, like any other government cars.

The cars would bear the name of the traditional authority to which it is attached. They will also be fitted with bull bars and tow bars. The Minister told the smiling chiefs that these cars had already been ordered.

The chiefs, visibly overjoyed, clapped hands as the keys were handed over to the drivers, who were equally excited. Not all the chiefs had cars before and this gesture would make them mobile and efficiently attend to the problems of their communities.

Since not all the chiefs could receive their keys directly from the Minister, a special arrangement was made for the King of Ondonga, who is also Chairman of the Council of Traditional Leaders, King Immanuel Kauhabua Elipias, to receive his keys on behalf of the other chiefs.

Speaking on behalf of all the recognized traditional authorities in Namibia, King Kauhabua commended the government for the offer, saying that it confirmed that the government appreciated the important tasks traditional leaders were performing in their communities, such as land disputes, cattle theft and many other problems.

“Again,” said Petrus Kauhabua, Senior Headman and Advisor to King Kauhabua, who read the King’s speech, “it is well known that in most cases, the traditional authorities are eager to do much beyond their expectations, but it is not always possible because of the vast areas, long distances and also sandy roads they have to travel, sometimes on foot.

“Let me assure you that these vehicles really came at the right time and I want to draw your attention to the fact that the government is trying in level best to ensure that our traditional authorities do their work effectively and efficiently without any problem.

“Therefore, I wish to urge everyone of you here today to join me in giving a round of applause to the government, for the job well done. Keep it up and wish to urge our government to continue doing so.”

King Kauhabua cautioned his colleagues to use the cars for the purposes they were intended, which, he said, would motivate and encourage the government to allocate more funds to traditional authorities. The King also appealed to the drivers to keep the cars clean and obey traffic regulations and other relevant laws governing the use of government cars.

“We don’t want to see you disapproving our traditional authorities,” said King Kauhabua. “Please keep the vehicles clean, take them in for regular service as indicated in the service books. Let me assure you that this is just the beginning. We have a long way to go. Rome was not built in a day. Please, let us go and make use of these cars wisely in fulfilling our duties in order to keep Namibia a peaceful country.”