



Name of Press Contact: Nabot Mbeeli  
Capacity: Project Coordinator (NNF)  
Phone: +264 (0) 61 248345/ +264 (0) 81 3782214  
Email: [nabot@nnf.org.na](mailto:nabot@nnf.org.na)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Devil's Claw brings financial relief amidst Covid-19 economic despair for communities in Omaheke**

July 2021 | Community members from the **Eiseb conservancy** and **Omuramba ua Mbinda conservancy** in the Omaheke region were overjoyed by the recent realisation of monetary compensation for their hard work by collectively generating close to N\$ 300 000 from the sales of Devil's Claw at their second buying event.

The **Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)** with funding of N\$1.5 million from **Social Security Commission (SSC)** under the **Employment Creation Scheme** has sought to support and equip around 100 Devil's Claw harvesters from the two conservancies for 2 years in becoming self-employed and successful in generating an income from harvesting and selling the Devils Claw. Since the first buying event at Okatumba Gate in August 2020, where ca. N\$160 000 was generated, 2 storage units have been constructed at Eiseb 10 and Okatumba Gate to serve as established "Buying Points" and managed by the conservancies.

"In the midst of a global pandemic that has now had a prolonged economic downturn, investments in income-generating opportunities, especially within rural areas, remains of vital importance as unemployed people and those that have lost jobs retreat to the villages for survival as urban areas prove to be difficult to live in." Nabot Mbeeli – NNF CBNRM Coordinator

A second formal buying event was organised by Omuramba ua Mbinda Conservancy and Eiseb Conservancy with the support of NNF and was held on 9 and 10 July at Eiseb 10 and Okatumba Gate. Here, harvesters had the opportunity to sell their harvests at what they termed a "good price, worthy of their efforts and without needing to travel long distances to find a buyer".





Community members commented on the noticeable increase of participating harvesters and amount of Devil's claw at the events. Around 5 000 kilograms of Devil's Claw were sold to EcoSo dynamics at N\$58 per kilogram of which N\$6,00 is subsidised for the administration of the conservancy's "Buying Point". The administration of the conservancy plays a vital role in the selling price of Devils Claw by ensuring the quality of Devil's Claw sold at the Buying Points is of a high standard and best harvesting practices are adhered to. In turn safeguarding the natural resource by being harvested sustainably.

Devil's Claw (*Harpophytum procumbens*) is an indigenous plant to Southern Africa and is widely used as a medicine for treating arthritis, reducing pain and fever and stimulating digestion.. More recently, it has become an important product for export to the European market with the biggest exports to France and Germany. In Namibia, Devils' Claw is listed as a protected species under the 1977 Nature Conservation Ordinance of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, and may not be harvested or exported without the correct permits. A "Sustainably Harvested Devil's Claw (SHDC) Model" is being implemented in the Omaheke Region to ensure long-term use of this plant resource. Sustainable harvesting of Devil Claw involves only partially harvesting the plants underground tubers, therefore not killing the plant, but allowing it time to recover to be reharvested in future.

This in addition encompasses the Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) model which ensures that the natural resources that community members are dependant on for their livelihoods are managed in a sustainable manner. Moreover, the sustainable use of the Devil's Claw contributes the extensive generation of incentives and conditions for an identified group of resource users in such conservancies. In addition, under the same model, formal buying events are also organized by the conservancies to cut out the middlemen and ensure that harvesters receive a fair price for the Devil's claw.





The managers of the two conservancies Erwin Tjituka and Jacqueline Kandapaera echoed that should harvesters continue to harvest sustainably, Devil's Claws would continue to generate income for the community members, their families and generations to come.

#### *About Namibia Nature Foundation*

The **Namibia Nature Foundation** is a registered non-governmental organization founded in 1987. The foundation initiates, supports and promotes activities that conserve the environment, protect biodiversity, and that foster the sustainable and ethical use of natural resources. Since the 1996 amendment to the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975, which devolved rights to communities over natural resources, the Namibia Nature Foundation has steadily and systematically built up a knowledge base and expertise in supporting the managing of community-based natural resources alongside community organizations and members in communal areas.

#### *About Social Security Commission (SSC): Employment and Training Scheme of the Development Fund*

The **Social Security Commission** was established as an Act of Parliament under the Social Security Act, 1994 (Act No. 34 of 1994), currently read with the Employees' Compensation Act, 1941 (Act No. 30 of 1941) as amended with principal purpose to administer the Funds established by the aforementioned statutes, a Maternity Leave, Sick Leave and Death Benefit Fund (MSD Fund); a Development Fund (DF); a National Medical Benefit Fund (NMBF); a National Pension Fund (NPF); and an Employees' Compensation Fund (ECF). The Development Fund funds job creation ventures at community levels. Over 26 projects have been launched in 12 Regions were 383 jobs of which 265 are permanent have been funded.

Photographs: Contributed

Image1: The Buying Point Manager of Omuramba ua Mbinda Conservancy weighing bags of Devils Claw at the Buying Point stationed at the conservancy office in Okatumba Gate. Source: Mamico Tjituka





Image2: Bags of Devils Claw being sealed and packed away in the storage facility of Omuramba ua Mbinda Conservancy, constructed with funds from Social Security Commission to serve as a Buying Point at Okatumba Gate. Source: Mamico Tjituka

Image3: : Devils Claw harvesters from Omuramba ua Mbinda Conservancy arriving at the Buying Point using donkey carts as a mode of transport for their bags of Devils Claw to sell at the conservancy office

--End--