

Frontiers

Zimbabwe's chaos prompts Namibian move to LVT

NAMIBIA HAS OPTED for a land value tax to avoid descending into the chaos and civil unrest Zimbabwe is experiencing as a result of disputed land rights. Implementation of the tax was due to begin on 1 April. The aim is to seek to redistribute farmland to 243,000 landless people.

Rather than forcing white landowners off their lands, the Namibian Government is planning to buy 9.5 million hectares of land from white farmers, while heavily taxing those who own large tracts to encourage them to sell. The state could also repossess under-utilised commercial land.

There are over 4,000 white farmers owning almost 30.5 million hectares of Namibia. A further 2.2 million hectares are owned by an estimated 200 black commercial farmers. Namibia's president Sam Shafishuna Nujoma said: "Starting this year, increased efforts will be made to resettle our landless people in a speedy manner. I also call on those who own excess land to co-operate with the Government in its efforts to address and resolve the present imbalances in land redistribution."

Through land tax the Government hopes to enhance the release of under-utilised

land for this redistribution. Revenue from the tax will be used to finance the land reallocation as well as development projects and community programmes.

The predominantly white Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU) and the Government have formed a committee to thrash out how excess land will be determined. NAU spokesperson, Oliver Horsthemke said that farmers wanted the land tax to be implemented in a fair and cost-effective manner. He added that the land tax should not hamper production and in times of disaster, such as drought, producers should be exempt from paying tax. Farmers have not paid tax on their land since Namibia's independence from South Africa in 1990.



Namibia does not want the same experience as Zimbabwe

Back to the future

AMONG THE INITIATIVES Afghanistan dispensed with when it collapsed into civil war in 1978 was a form of land value tax.

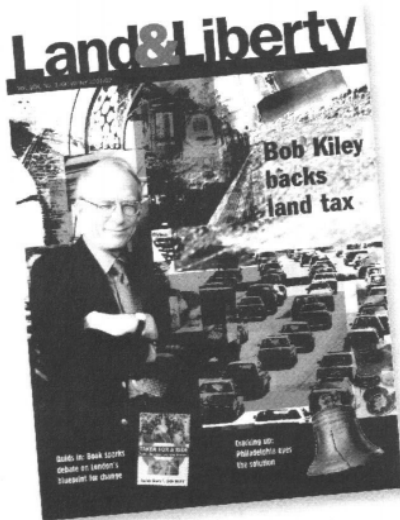
The war-ravaged country is starting to return to peace and democratic rule, and it is hoped that the new governors will revive some of the country's lost conventions.

In spring 1969, Afghanistan had a land value tax. A comprehensive survey of its land was embarked on and reported in *Land & Liberty*. The intention was to identify boundaries, minimise disputes, improve the administration of their land tax and provide statistics for development programmes.

Today, Kaye Stearman of development charity Care International, says: "We have secured clean water for 450,000 people. The government is still very much in its infancy, with tribal elders providing the only form of authority in many areas. The priority now is to restore livelihoods and a stable government."



LVT to repair war's ravages?



L&L's interview with Bob Kiley fuelled the press

Land & Liberty leads the way

IN THE WAKE of the exclusive L&L interview with Bob Kiley in the last issue of *Land & Liberty*, there was widespread press coverage of the London Transport Commissioner's admission that he sees a land levy as an "ideal way to go" to fund the Crossrail project.

Although Kiley is not fully behind LVT, he conceded in the interview that a form of land value tax should be one of the tools in local government's fiscal toolbox. *The Times City* Diary first picked up on the revelation. The

Evening Standard
Kiley plans public talks to fight PPP

THE TIMES

Tax on the line

IS BOB KILEY. London's

Press Association and *Evening Standard* were soon to follow. Later, London's Mayor, Ken Livingstone, was reported by *Estates Gazette* as backing plans for a land levy to part-fund Crossrail, which aims

to link east to west London, and north-east to south-west London. Speaking in February