



MEDIA RELEASE

29 November 2013

For immediate release

RE: "PARLIAMENT CRIPPLES POLY TRANSITION"

A story printed on the front page of the weekly **Windhoek Observer** newspaper dated **29 November – 05 December 2013** titled **"Parliament cripples Poly transition"** has reference. The story is inaccurate as it depicts and presents the Parliament as a failure because **"it went on recess without even tabling the Act to legalise the name change of the Polytechnic to the University of Science and Technology as it has promised the institution"**. This is not the case.

The fact is, the 8th Session of the Fifth Parliament ended on Wednesday 27 November 2013, because the National Assembly finalised all debate items that appeared on the Order Papers that day. The National Assembly's Calendar for 2013 was set from the 12 February to 28 November 2013.

In the Law-making process, there are two types of Bills that come to Parliament. These are the Government Bills and Private Members Bills. Government Bills are those that come to Parliament through Cabinet. These are Bills aimed at driving government policies and programs, while private members Bills come through Backbenchers.

Parliament believes that the Polytechnic of Namibia is a government institution and as such, any legislation about it should come through Cabinet. There is no Notice of Motion in our records for 2013 that are given to introduce such a Bill. Even the list of Bills that Parliament received from the Ministry of Justice at the beginning of 2013 did not contain a Bill dealing with the Polytechnic of Namibia in one way or another. It is not Parliament's responsibility to table Bills, it is governments' responsibility through Cabinet Ministers to draft and table the Bills in Parliament. Parliament only deals with Bills that are brought on the Table.

POLY TRANSITION': ONE

“Although Government has agreed to the transition of the institution to a university in principle, the Polytechnic’s hands remained tied without parliament passing the necessary legislation”. This has nothing to do with Parliament. This is an issue between the Government and the Polytechnic of Namibia. Parliament as an Organ of the State respects the separation of State powers amongst these organs, and cannot interfere in matters that entirely concern Cabinet. Unless such matters touch on the oversight and accountability responsibilities of Parliament towards Cabinet/Government.

“It remains unclear why the house did not continue with business for even an additional week or two, considering the number of adjournments it has had this year because of the lack of a quorum”. This seems to imply that the House adjourned in careless manner. The fact is that, the House adjourned a day before it’s official calendar ended. This is because, when the House adjourned on Tuesday 26 November 2013, there was only one item left in the Order Papers for the next day sitting. On Wednesday 27 November 2013, the House sat and dealt with that particular item on the Order Papers, plus few questions that needed reply. The Order Papers is where the agenda is set for the House sittings. When it contains nothing, the House cannot sit, as there is nothing to debate.

Parliament herewith put it to record that, **clarity was never sought from us about this issue, despite the fact that the newspaper has our contacts.** Thus, the story contained misinformations that have presented the good name of Parliament in bad light. As far as Parliament is concerned, there is no truth about that story!

The National Assembly individually and collectively thank you for the good work done this year, and we are looking forward to continue informing the public about the law-making process and promoting together the tenets of democracy in ensuring transparency and accountability in the process of governance.

POLY TRANSITION’: TWO

ENDS

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