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**DEFENCE MINISTER, HONOURABLE PENDA YA NDAKOLO,
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS BY HONOURABLE McHENRY
VENAANI, IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ON 02 MARCH
2017.**

**Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members**

I rise to answer questions by Honourable McHenry Venaani.

- a. In the first question, the Honourable Member asks why is it that despite the fiscal and economic uncertainty facing the country and the Ministry of Defence's spending is continuing unabated.**

To answer this question, one would need clarity as to what exactly the Honourable Member referring to by "the Ministry of Defence's spending continuing unabated". The money that is spent on the operations of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is allocated through the National Budget and approved by this august house.

The Defence spending is always done within the limit of the allocated and approved budget.

As a matter of clarity, the Defence Budget is prepared and presented before Treasury in accordance with Defence needs of our country and the allocation is done following the same principle.

Following the request by the MoD, Treasury uses its judgment to allocate funds to the different national needs taking into consideration available resources.

b. The second question the Honourable Member wants to know what were the costs associated with the order of items referred to in his introductory statement.

Defence assets and materiel, like any other assets, cost money. There is no other way to acquire them unless you pay for them. Now, for me to stand here and tell the Honourable Member what were the costs associated with a specific order of Defence assets would not serve any purpose.

In Government, there are processes and systems of accountability and transparency that guide the way Ministries account for the use of the resources allocated to them. There are specific bodies such as Auditor General and others that are responsible for ensuring effective governance and proper usage of resources.

Parliament too has bodies that hold Ministries accountable for the spending of public money and have access to our financial books as and when appropriate.

Thus, the costs of all orders for Defence assets, be they weapons, equipment or other materiel, are within the allocated and approved Defence Budget.

c. In the third question, the Honourable Member wants to know whether in light of current challenging economic times, is it required that the Minister of Finance or Cabinet have to approve Defence purchase orders. If not, why not?

Given the sensitivity surrounding the procurement of Defence items, specific systems and mechanisms have been put in place to approve Defence purchase orders. One of these mechanisms is the Cabinet Committee on Defence, Security and International Relation (CCDSIR). Depending on the type and magnitude of the order to be placed, Cabinet approval may be sought. The Minister of Finance, as an individual, does not approve Defence purchase orders but rather facilitate the execution thereof. He/She may get involved in approving Defence purchase orders as a member of Cabinet or relevant Cabinet Committees.

No need was identified justifying the change to the existing procedures and mechanisms responsible for approving Defence purchase orders.

In conclusion, Honourable Members, I must clarify that Defence assets and materiel are very expensive and not always readily available on the shelves. It must also be remembered that the procurement of weapons is a process that takes many years to complete.

I THANK YOU.

