



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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## MINISTRY OF LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION

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### OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

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Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

Response by Honourable Erkki Nghimtina, MP, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation on a concern/question raised by Honourable Clara Gowases, MP, on the lack of sub offices of Social Security Commission in informal settlement and townships, 07 May 2015.

#### Question 1

The plight of our women who walk on foot for kilometres in the rain and sun from different constituencies of Windhoek, particularly informal settlement and townships to receive services at Khomasdal main offices of Social Security Commission irks me. Women are the ones who fall pregnant and give birth and experience 90% of problems relating to sustaining their new-borns and families in this regard as well as domestic workers related scenarios.

Can the Minister look into the possibility of establishing sub offices in the highly densely populated areas of Tobias Hainyeko Constituency, Moses Garoeb Constituency and Samora Machel Constituency in order to make lives easier for our people and women folk, especially in accessing these services. I sincerely believe that in modern technology and cyber age, offices are linked to computerized databases and the decentralization of services to sub-offices will be an added value to current service delivery.

**Answer:** The Social Security Commission (SSC), which falls under the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation is committed to deliver social security services and will do so in ways that meet the changing needs and demographics of the Namibian public.

Although SSC is faced with significant challenges in accomplishing this, they plan to provide the Namibian public with the highest quality service.

SSC has identified number of strategic initiatives that are designed to serve the Namibian public.

SSC has adopted a deliberate policy to decentralize its services to the regions in line with the Government's Policy of Decentralization. However, the decentralization of service is done with the following consideration in mind:

- The economic activity within a particular region and town
- The socio- economic conditions of the residents and
- The distance to access the existing nearest SSC office

These factors are considered before a decision is taken for the permanent opening of a service point for SSC.

In Windhoek, SSC has two permanent offices in Khomasdal and the Central Business District. In addition, SSC intends to have offices in each regional capital that will serve as the nerve centre of SSC operations in that region. However, at present SSC does not have offices in regional capitals of Erongo (Swakopmund), Kunene (Opuwo), Kavango West (Nkurenkuru) and Oshikoto (Omuthiya).

For SSC to establish one permanent satellite office accommodating a maximum of six staff members, it incurs monthly running costs of about N\$ 350 000 translating into an annual total expenditure of about N\$ 4.2 million.

At present SSC has seven offices outside and further five branch offices in different regions. This high running cost results in some of the SSC offices being cross- subsidised, hence permanent presence requires not only a high density of members, but also economic activity to sustain the establishment of such permanent structures.

In areas like Tobias Hainyeko, Moses Garoeb and the Samora Machel Constituencies, where SSC does not have a permanent structure at the moment,

SSC services such areas on a periodical basis throughout the year with targeted inspections and mobile visits.

At this point in time these areas are being serviced by the mobile vans, which are fitted with the necessary equipment to ensure service delivery on the spot. Currently SSC has two vans which are being utilized extensively to reach the most remote areas where SSC does not have offices to provide services to its members.

As part of the SSC strategy, SSC intends to reduce travelling distance to its offices to less than 300 km radius. These offices will be empowered to render outreach services to the communities in all the constituencies, covering a range of social security services such as public education, registration campaigns, claims administration and compliance enforcements. Because of the vastness of these constituencies, the offices will only be able to rotate these services based on the needs identified in collaboration with these communities and other stakeholders.

An impression should thus not be created that each constituency will be served daily by SSC office, but this shall happen as and when it is desired. As a matter of fact, SCC has identified the need to improve national service coverage as one of its strategic priorities.

In relation to maternity leave benefit which is one of the leading benefit type offered by SSC, when SSC was established this benefit was paid at a rate of 80% of the female employee's basic salary with a maximum of N\$ 2400 per month then. As we are speaking today, the maternity leave benefit is payable at 100% of the employee's basic wage with a maximum of N\$ 10 500 per month. SSC has increased this amount to N\$ 12 000 per month with effect or as from 01 May 2015 and further improvement is anticipated in the next three to five years, when a possibility of removing the ceiling altogether will also be investigated.

Finally, SSC is committed to execute its objectives in alignment with its vision and mission, while adhering to its core values and to provide social security

benefits and associated services in a financially responsible manner so as to ensure the sustainability of the funds.

Improving benefits and introducing benefits for sections of the population not yet covered, subject to funding sustainability and ability to administer are key considerations. Access to services and benefits as well as innovative ways of collecting contributions are required to ensure maximum population coverage is achieved.

Alignment with community organisations to access rural areas, cell phone communication and benefit administration will increase the ability to deliver a quality service to the maximum number of people. In line with these global trend to embrace information communication technology, SSC is in the process to engage the virtual office solution that will ensure SSC's presence and improve access to service delivery in most of the areas where they do not have permanent infrastructure at the moment.

Therefore Honourable Gowases' concern of lack of permanent structures in these areas is noted and will be addressed as part of the long term decentralization strategy of SSC.

**I thank you!**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NOTICE OF QUESTION

BY

*Hen. Ciwases*

(Signature: *Ciwases*)

I give notice that 07 May 2015

I shall ask

The following question to the Minister of Labor and Industrial Relations and Employment Creation Honorable Erikki Nghitima the following.

The plight of our women who walk on foot for kilometers in the rain and sun from different constituencies of Windhoek, particularly informal settlement & townships to receive services at Khomasdal main offices at Social Security Commission irks me. Women are the ones who fall pregnant and give birth and experience 90% of problems relating to sustaining their newborns and families in this regard as well as domestic workers related scenarios.

*Can the Minister*

1. ~~My question that I want to ask is to~~ look into the possibility of establishing sub offices in the highly densely populated areas of Tobias Hainyeko Constituency, Moses Garoeb constituency, and Samora Machel Constituency in order to make lives easier for our people and women folk especially in accessing these services. I sincerely believe that in modern technology and cyber age, offices are linked to computerized databases and the decentralization of services to sub-offices will be an added value to current service delivery.

~~I so move honourable speaker~~

