



*Republic of Namibia*

## ***Ministry of Urban and Rural Development***

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### **OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**RESPONSE BY**

**HON. SOPHIA SHANINGWA, MP**

**MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**TO QUESTIONS POSED BY HON. ASSER G MBAI, MP**

**18 JUNE 2015**

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

I would like to thank Hon. Asser Mbai for the questions on the progress made in the implementation of the Decentralization Policy 1998 and Decentralisation Enabling Act (Act no. 33 of 2000) and the measures that are being deploying to accelerate the process.

I thank the Hon. Member for his interest in the decentralization process, and is my believe that the basic functions that impact on the lives of our citizenry should be considered for decentralization/deligation as a matter of urgency. As the Hon. Members of this August House are aware, sub-national government structures, namely regional and local authority councils, have been created in accordance with Article 102 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. This constitutional provision was reinforced through the enactment of the Regional Councils Act (Act no. 22 of 1992) and the Local Authorities Act (Act no. 23 of 1992 as amended), which saw the establishment of Regional and Local Authority Councils and the related executive and administrative structures.

While there is a shared recognition of the important role of subnational governments as transmission belts of service delivery by the Government to the grassroots, it is important to recognise that in a unitary system of government as it is the case in Namibia, the nature of Decentralisation should be understood in context.

Let me now respond to the specific questions posed.

#### **Question 1: Where are we as a country in respect to Decentralization?**

In response, I wish to report progress under the following headings:

To answer the question of the Honourable MP, I would like give a brief reflection on the progress made as follows:

- The level of readiness of the decentralizing line-Ministries;
- Ministries that are at an advanced stage of decentralization (delegation); and
- Other Ministries with functions that are earmarked for decentralization.

## **1. Readiness of Decentralizing Line Ministries**

The following line-Ministries have decentralised functions by way of delegation:

### Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture:

The identified Education functions (primary and secondary education, adult education and library services) were gazetted in May 2009 and delegated to the thirteen Regional Councils with effect from 1 April 2009. In line with Cabinet Decision No 3<sup>rd</sup>/17.02.09/007 and the Decentralization Enabling Act, 2000 (Act 33 of 2000), the delegated functions were handed over to the thirteen Regional Councils in 2009 and 2010. Special accounts were opened for decentralized functions by each Regional Council into which the Ministry transfers funds to enable the performance of the delegated the functions, on a quarterly basis.

### Ministry of Works and Transport

The identified Maintenance Function was gazetted in May 2009 and delegated to the thirteen (13) Regional Councils with effect from August 2009. In line with Cabinet Decision No. 3<sup>rd</sup>/17.02.09/007 and the Decentralization

Enabling Act, 2000 (Act 33 of 2000), the delegated functions were handed over to the thirteen Regional Councils in 2009, and special accounts opened for decentralized functions by each regional council into which the Ministry transfers funds for the delegated functions on a quarterly basis.

#### Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

The delegation of the Rural Water Supply by the Ministry to the twelve (12) Regional Councils (Khomas Regional Council excluded) was approved by Cabinet with effect from 1 August 2007 and gazetted on 17 September 2007. However, to date, the function has not been actually handed over to the 12 Regional Councils.

The implementation of the delegation process of Rural Water Supply function to the twelve regions (excluding Khomas) was temporarily put on hold by the said line-Ministry after discussions on operational mechanisms at various levels. The Ministry has however re-affirmed its commitment to the implementation of the decentralization policy.

## **2. Ministries at advanced stage of Delegation/Decentralisation**

#### Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT)

The functions of print media and audio visual production have been identified for decentralization, and their delegation to the regions was approved by Cabinet in 2014 and was also subsequently gazetted in February 2015. The ministry is currently busy conducting information sharing sessions with its regional staff members in preparation for handing of the said functions to regional councils.

#### Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGE CW)

The functions of Community Development, Early Childhood Development, Child Welfare and Gender Equality have been identified for delegation. The ministry undertook most of the preparatory activities and has since obtained approval of its regional structures and will proceed with a Cabinet submission once they have dealt with the remaining administrative modalities.

#### Ministry of Land Reform

The following functions of Management and Administration of Resettlement areas; Management and Control of Communal Lands; Land Acquisition and Land Use Planning, and the Provision of Valuation Services and Advice; and Cadastral Survey and Mapping, have been identified for decentralization.

The Submission to Cabinet for the delegation of the identified functions has been prepared as required in terms of the Decentralization Enabling Act, Act

33 of 2000. However further consultations are being undertaken before Cabinet approval is obtained.

### 3. Other Ministries with Functions earmarked for Decentralisation

These Ministries have not decentralized any functions to Regional Councils or Local Authorities but have only "de-concentrated" structures in the regions and report directly to the Ministries' HQs at the Centre. Some of them are just embarking upon preparations to decentralize but are far from delegating any functions.

These are:

- Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Service }
- Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry Rural water law passed and got gazetted. }
- Ministry of Health and Social Services }
- Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development }
- Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources }
- Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation }
- Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare }
- Ministry of Mines and Energy }
- Ministry of Environment and Tourism }

**Question 2: What does the Minister envisage to do in order for phases of decentralization to be implemented without further delay?**

The Government, through Cabinet and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, will continue to guide and facilitate the process and pace of decentralization in the country.

Following are measures that the Government, through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, is pursuing the following measures that have been sanctioned by Cabinet:

- The revival of the Taskforce of Permanent Secretaries on Decentralization, whose responsibility is to set and monitor targets on decentralization; harmonize activities of and between the various stakeholders, and conduct regular consultations with Regional Councils;
- Actively spearhead decentralisation by identifying by way of period (bi-annual) reviews and to identified constraints in the process; and
- To, in collaboration with the Office of the Right Hon. Prime Minister, to provide bi-annual updates on the progress of decentralisation to Cabinet. I wish to take this opportunity to renew to the former Prime Minister (now His Excellency President Dr. Hage Geingob) and the current Prime Minister, Right Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila) for their keen interest and steering role on matters of Decentralisation.

In conclusion, Hon. Members, I once again thank Hon. Mbai for the questions.

