



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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Office of the Minister

Response of Hon. Dr Nickey Iyambo, Minister of Veterans Affairs on the Question by Hon. Peya Mushelenga during the Budget Debate on Vote 31.

1. Altering Date of Birth by Some Former Members of SWAPO while in Exile

The issue of altering or changing dates of birth by Namibians who were in exile under the care of the SWAPO Liberation Movement can be attributed to three factors, firstly changing the date of birth because a person did not know when he or she was born; secondly, many children joined the liberation struggle at tender age and unaccompanied by parents and only depended on their sisters, brothers, friends or fellow villagers, thirdly and this is the most important thing for better education.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members of this august House

We all know that Namibians were deprived of better education by the apartheid South African regime. SWAPO as was entrusted with the mandate by the United Nations to be the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people had a responsibility to make sure that Namibians received quality education world-wide. In this regard, scholarships were solicited from peace loving nations. Since most of the Namibian youth did not complete their secondary education and they were

above the required entry age, SWAPO was left with no option but reduce their ages to facilitate their entries into those institutions.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, after independence people who had their birth date changed they were required to go back to their congregations and rectify their date of birth. In fact many of them had been issued with identification cards before they left the country and only needed to approach Civic Offices to collect their cards after independence.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members

It must be pointed out here that not all institutions required a particular age for one to be submitted. For example Cuba did not have any age restrictions. If there are those Namibians who were in exile and were required to change their dates of birth for educational purposes, they are free to approach their congregations confirming their actual ages. They are also required to provide proof of educational records from those institutions, and finally. **If they are employed, they should provide proof from their employers that they have also changed their dates of birth with their employers. This is very important not only to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs but also to other Government institutions to avoid double payment and also to curb against people having two identification documents.**

2. Alleged Koevet Benefiting from Veterans Programmes

Here, I can only request Honourable members of this house and the public at large to provide information of the alleged Koevoet to my office. Section 39 of the Veterans Act, 2008, explicitly addresses this issue.