

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NOTICE OF QUESTION

BY

Hon. Elma Dienda

Signature: _____)

I hereby give notice that on **Thursday, 24 February 2022**, I shall ask the Hon **Minister of Education, Arts and Culture**, Hon. Anna Nghipondoka, the following:

Honourable Minister,

As expected, the 2022 School Year commenced with the usual challenges and hiccups that have come to define the state of our basic education system since Independence. Firstly, there still remains a critical shortage of space at both our primary and high schools. It is concerning that this phenomenon is an annual occurrence, and it appears as though the ministry has no plan in place to mitigate the crisis. The ministry often tries to divert the narrative by blaming the shortage on parents who register their children late at schools, but we know that this is just a scapegoat argument for the government's failure to ensure that there is sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of learners entering our basic education system each year.

Furthermore, the start of the 2022 School Year has been compounded by the usual contradictions found in the implementation of free education that was

introduced in 2013 for primary schools and in 2016 for secondary schools. One would be tasked to critically interrogate whether we do have free education at the basic education level, or whether it simply serves as a smokescreen. Despite there being supposedly free primary and secondary education, parents and learners are being coerced into forking out large amounts of money as ‘registration fees’, stationery and other miscellaneous expenses being demanded by most schools across the country.

Last but not least, the ministry still continues to hire unqualified teachers despite the glaring reality that thousands of our education graduates are roaming the streets. There is no longer a shortage of qualified teachers. Hence, it is unjustified and irrational that the ministry continues with its practice of hiring unqualified teachers while the number of qualified and unemployed teaching graduates continues to spiral out of control.

I thus ask the Honourable Minister

1. Can the Hon. Minister kindly provide this August House with a comprehensive update on the state of enrolment in our primary and secondary schools for the 2022 School Year? How many students have been enrolled and how many are still awaiting placement?
2. Furthermore, will the Hon. Minister agree with me that there has not been an effective implementation of free primary and secondary education? If the Hon. Minister disagrees, then can the Hon. Minister provide this House with an acceptable explanation as to why parents and learners are still being coerced by schools across the country into forking out large amounts of money as ‘registration fees’, stationery and other miscellaneous expenses at primary and secondary schools across the country?

3. Thirdly, can the Hon. Minister please explain to this House why the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture continues to hire unqualified teachers while thousands of teaching graduates roam the streets looking for teaching posts?
4. Last but not least, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture for the period 2017/22 will end this year. Can the Hon. Minister please outline to this House whether the ministry has been able to implement all the key objectives listed in its Strategic Plan 2017/22? If not, can the Hon. Minister kindly explain why this is the case, and what challenges the ministry has encountered in the successful implementation of the key objectives in the Strategic Plan?

I so submit