

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, I hereby want to make a short contribution on the motion regarding the importance of Employee Wellness programs at OMAs, as tabled by the deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, Hon Muinjangué.

Workplace wellness refers to health promotion activities or policies that support positive employee health and behavior. There are plenty of ways that organisations can foster to create a culture of good health, from medical screenings and health education fairs to fitness programs and healthcare membership.

Hon Speaker, organisations that invest in human capital are clear about the benefits associated with workplace wellness, as articulated by the mover of the motion. One will find that happy employees tend to perform better, they actively take up work initiatives, they improve productivity, and manage time efficiently. **Workplace wellness is even more important today, given the social, economic, and political climate of the world in which we live.** Organisations must be willing to commit and invest the time, resources, and policies to support meaningful employee endeavors.

Why invest in the employee's health:

- Healthy employees tend to absorb less-exorbitant healthcare costs.
- Well-cared-for employees meet with fewer road accidents as they don't suffer from being stressed, sleep-deprived, or burnt out.
- When employees are healthier, they are less likely to take sick leaves.
- Talent acquisition and retention remain strong when employees are happy to work at a company.

Hon Speaker, with regard to the implementation of the Public Service workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS by OMAs, in some ministries the program started well and weakened through the years. At the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, it is from 2016 that there were no activities as no budgetary provisions were done, and the committee's term of office also lapsed. The ministry's Wellness and Occupational Safety Committee was only appointed in July 2022 and they received training from OPM in October 2022.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) on an Annual basis issues a wellness calendar which includes all the activities that the OMA's must implement during a specific financial year. Let me report what the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources has done in terms of implementing the wellness activities for the just ended financial year, after the committee was revived. I am therefore only reporting on activities planned for the 3rd and 4th quarters of the financial year.