



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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05 April 2023

**MOTION BY THE HON NICO SMIT MP THAT THIS HOUSE CARRIES  
OUT A COMPREHENSIVE INQUIRY INTO ALL ASPECTS OF THE  
PROCEDURES DICTATING THE TENDER-AWARDING PROCESSES OF  
THE CENTRAL PROCUREMENT BOARD OF NAMIBIA.**

**MOTIVATION**

**Hon. Speaker,  
Hon. Members,**

1. Namibia is a country often praised for sound and progressive policies. And yet we know our internationally lauded policies do not translate into tangible, meaningful benefits when it comes to the daily, lived experiences of many Namibians. This was clearly illustrated by the recent fiasco regarding the allocation and later cancellation of the so-called Health tenders.

One has only to consider the poverty and inequality rates, the slow and poor development in our regions, and the lack of trust and esteem attributed to public services provided by the state to be convinced of this. Our policies are a reflection of our noble aspirations - easy to put on paper. Between policy and

actualization, however, is the issue of execution and implementation, a fatal weakness of our government – and there is sufficient evidence of this. What, might you ask, does this have to do with the Central Procurement Board of Namibia?

**Hon. Speaker,**

**Hon. Members,**

2. It is globally accepted and recognised that public procurement is a key determinant of effective policy implementation and achieving national goals. In the domestic context, our own finance ministry recognises this. The public procurement process is one of few processes that acts to bring our national budget to life by deploying the funds necessary to execute plans and fulfil our national aspirations, across all sectors. We know by our most recent Appropriation Bill that the executive arm of government has been allocated over N\$72 Billion, of which a significant proportion, after salaries, will enter the market, via the public procurement process. It is my wish that more of this will circulate in the country than exit the local economy.
3. Nonetheless, whichever way one looks at it, the Central Procurement Board of Namibia is a gate of sorts, for taxpayers' money – for which we've been charged to act as custodians, to ensure value for every dollar and to meet the needs of the Namibian people. As such, it is absolutely imperative that the Board, which was established by the Public Procurement Act 15 of 2015, enjoys priority at the highest level, but is also regularly reviewed and fortified. It is no news to you, Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members that the Central Procurement Board has almost

consistently been at the centre of widespread public debate, concern and controversy.

4. The issue, however, goes beyond the institution, and extends to procurement culture in its entirety. We read of allegations of the manipulation of the procurement process to allow for emergency procurement, we hear of extensive and widespread non-compliance – *sans* consequence. It's not uncommon to hear of unnecessary provisions for middlemen. We hear all too frequently of negligence in the performance of due diligence, information going under the radar of the relevant institutions, such as changes in business names and ownership, and inadvertence regarding conflicts of interest. This list goes on to include insider trading, briefcase operators pursuing their loot through 'tender-preneurship', dishonesty, favouritism, elitism, and substandard goods and services provided to the government at grossly inflated costs. As a result, distrust, perceptions of procedural unfairness, corruption, and misappropriation are regular themes of public discourse as it relates to the tender-awarding process. These are the widely held sentiments of the very Namibians we represent.

**Hon. Speaker,**

**Hon. Members,**

5. Any compromise, any loophole, any threat to the integrity and efficacy of the CPBN is a weakness in the policy implementation infrastructure of this country, and poses serious threats to the socio-political fibre of our country, its economy, the delivery and quality of public services, the execution and actualisation of development plans, the standard of living of our people, national pride and even our place in the global village.

6. The national budget is still warm out of the oven and we had recently The State of the Nation Address. Both these events are afforded prominence, from the grass roots, right to this House, and neither event can be detached from a direct relationship with the Central Procurement Board – which to my mind, warrants closer, more concerted attention, particularly under the current circumstances.
7. I needn't remind this House that we are here to represent the people of this country, their interests and their concerns, in holding accountable the executive. I need only refer to the very recent furore regarding the allocation and subsequent cancellation of the so-called Health tenders that caused such a concerted outcry of rage and disbelief from all sections of the Namibian public. I believe there could have been no better example of the total incompetence and lack of integrity than that illustrated by the Procurement Board in this case.

It is against this background that I firmly believe that this House ought to carry out a comprehensive inquiry into all aspects of the procedures dictating the tender-awarding processes of the Central Procurement Board of Namibia - and identify where there are weaknesses that need remedying - particularly in the sphere of due diligence - to restore public confidence and trust. Further, I request that this motion be referred to the relevant standing committee for immediate action.

**I so move, Honourable Speaker. Thank you.**