



Republic of Namibia

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY HON MAXIMALLIANT
KATJIMUNE ON THE AMENDMENTS OF THE NSFAF POLICY,
2018**

Prepared and Delivered by:

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Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation

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Hon. Speaker, I rise to provide responses to questions raised by Hon Maximalliant Katjimune. Thank you, Hon. Katjimune, for asking these questions.

Hon. Speaker,

Hon. Members,

The Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) is an entity of government that was created to finance human capital development at tertiary level. Its primary function is to make higher and technical education accessible to needy eligible senior secondary school leavers.

Hon. Katjimune through NSFAF, the Government of the Republic of Namibia strives to respond to the higher education and training needs of needy learners from all the fourteen regions of our country. The pre-determined rate funding strategy that targeted to pay 100% tuition fees and 80% accommodation fees, of every awarded Namibian student, implemented in 2016, was noble, but not sustainable.

The aim of government has been and still remains to expand access to higher education and training. The short-lived 2016 funding strategy was an over ambitious model that left a huge number of needy eligible and deserving students not catered for, due to the limited budget that was further overstretched to cover non-core business of education provision.

Hon. Speaker,
Hon. Members,

The outcry of those who could not be sponsored then compelled NSFAP to review its awarding strategy. It was during that time that a close scrutiny was done regarding critical factors to expanding access. It was felt that for an expanded access to be maintained, NSFAP funding should aim to facilitate:

Expanded admissions; continued attendance of lectures; and graduation.

Therefore, commitment to payment of tuition fees and attendance of lectures - doing assignment, taking tests and examinations are important steps in access that lead to graduation.

Provision of higher and technical education is a partnership - parents- students- industry and government. The bulk fees at tertiary level go to tuition fees, and that is what NSFAP has decided to settle in full for all eligible awarded needy students. The annual flat non-tuition fee that every awarded student is given for upkeep is nominal, but it is something parents, guardians, relatives can add to and see the student through.

Hon. Speaker,
Hon. Members,

It must be understood that during the said two periods (2016 & 2017), our higher education institutions experienced a significant budget shortfall, as a result of the implementation of the then new funding model, coupled with the significant growth in the student population.

- In order to mitigate the re-occurring budget shortfall and to cater for more students the funding model was then revised to its current position.

Hon. Speaker,

Hon. Members,

- It is therefore the collective conviction of both NSFAP and MHETI that the current funding policy is the one that guarantees the long-term sustainability of the Fund. Thus, going back to the funding policy that was between 2016 and 2017 which proved to be limiting and exclusive is not a subject of consideration.

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Member,

- The commitment of the Namibian government through MHETI towards students and youth, in general, is demonstratively self-evident.
- Over the years the NSFAP budget allocation has been comparatively high and the 2023/24 budget is no exception.
- The above has been the case amidst- the economic recession.

- Therefore, the dream of the Namibian child remains central to the government's focus.

I so submit.