



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, IMMIGRATION, SAFETY AND SECURITY

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26 October 2023

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Notice of questions by Hon. Vries - Question 167 (2023.09.26)**

Hon. Speaker, I rise to respond to the questions raised by **Honourable Vries** of PDM. I thank the Honourable Member for the interest shown in this matter.

**Question 1**

**People in remote and rural areas have to travel long distances at a high cost to obtain death certificates of their loved ones. When will the Ministry decentralize the issuance of death certificates to people in far rural and remote areas?**

**Answer:**

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security is mandated through the Births, Marriages and Deaths Registration Act, of 1963 (Act No. 81 of 1963) to, *inter alia*, be the "*custodian of all notices of all births and deaths, of all such returns as are required by any regulation*".

In order to effectively carry out its mandate and ensure broader coverage in the provision of its services, the Ministry has established footprints in all the fourteen (14) regions of our country. In addition to the Head office, regional offices (14), sub-regional offices (24), and hospital-based offices (25) all issue death certificates. I would like to inform the Honourable Member that there are certain services which are extremely sensitive, death certificates are some of such services. There are enormous legal implications in the issuance of death certificates, therefore, if not properly controlled, it can result into unintended consequences. It is a legal requirement that the cause of death of every person should be known, in some cases, there is a requirement to conduct a postmortem. It is against this background that a mechanism must be worked out in order to ensure that this requirement is not compromised. It is also common cause that certain deaths attract the involvement of the police, therefore, it is for this reason that we are currently working out a number of options in order to ensure that our communities, especially those in rural areas as well as hard to reach areas, are also served efficiently.

### **Question 2**

**Stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health and Social Services is a key player in birth and death registrations but is unable to issue death certificates. Why can the government not also allow hospitals, clinics and police stations to issue death certificates?**

### **Answer:**

As already stated in my response above, we are currently working out viable options, including legislative options in order to ensure that our rural communities also receive efficient service delivery.

Once again, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the interest shown in this matter.

I thank you.