



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

CONTRIBUTION BY JAN VAN WYK, MP, (PDM) ON THE MOTION TO DEBATE THE ISSUE OF FAMILY SEPARATION DUE TO LONG DISTANCE MARRIAGES AND THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS IT HAS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND FINANCIAL STATUS OF FAMILIES.

17 OCTOBER 2023

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members

Allow me to add my contributions to this important motion that aims to find solutions for the challenges of long-distance marriages many families in Namibia experience. Families are essentially the building blocks of every society, therefore family challenges must be addressed. Family units serve as the nursery for the citizens that become the population of a society. In other words, families are responsible for the development of children into the adults ^{with} will later collectively be the society.

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Honourable Members

Whether it's for work, family obligations, or another reason entirely, there may come a time in one's marriage when you and your spouse have to live separately. This separation may have a negative impact on the family, especially on the children. Long distance marriages are not the most favourable situation for a family unit as it impacts the entire household negatively.

Honourable Speaker Honourable Members

Having to relocate for work can be stressful for anyone. When it involves leaving your family behind, it surely is a bitter-sweet moment. No matter how excited one might be to have a new professional opportunity, moving away from family for a job is never a fully joyous occasion. Both the ones leaving and staying behind will experience a mix of emotions and a lot of guilt.

Honourable Members

If one is a parent, or caregiver, and work away from home, you will know how difficult it can be at times to feel fully connected and involved in your children's lives when you're not there physically. Many families across Namibia struggle emotionally when one or both parents live away from home for work.

Additionally, children can experience a range of emotions. They can easily misinterpret not seeing their parents as being ignored and could grow resentful towards them. Younger children may further struggle to remember life before one parent left and become shy and distant when the parent returns home. It is further difficult as children become distressed and many parents experience feelings of guilt and isolation even experiencing mental health problems.

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members

It is therefore very important for government, which is the largest employer to implement Workplace Deployment Policies, Family-Friendly Employment Practices and all the other suggested recommendations by the Mover of this Motion. I further urge the Public Service Commission to review and amend all regulations that are counter-productive to family values in Namibia. Lastly, I hereby fully support this Motion.

I THANK YOU.