

Answered



Republic of Namibia

MINISTRY OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS BY THE HONOURABLE NENNY SEIBEB

NOTICE OF QUESTION NO. 171

RESPONSE ON: 26 OCTOBER 2023

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

I rise to respond to questions that have been posed by Hon. Inna K. Hengari, as follows;

Question 1

As a governing body with jurisdiction over Regional and Local Government affairs, what is the Ministry's responsibility in regards to monitoring the actions of Village Councils, including that of Okongo Village Council?

Answer:

The Ministry by virtue of its mandate and fiduciary obligation/duty exercises an oversight role over the Sub-National Governments and is obliged to monitor the actions of all Local Authority Councils.

Local Authority Councils are expected and directed to submit quarterly Management and Capital Project implementation reports to the Ministry in a prescribed format and not later than the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter. Not all Councils are fully complying and some of them have expressed that there are challenges such as lack of capacity especially at Village Council levels.

Some other measures that the Ministry employs to monitor the actions of Local Authority Councils are:

- i. Carrying out of periodic monitoring and evaluation missions/visits to the Local Authorities to check on compliance issues and to address, in a systematic way, the problems and challenges facing them and to provide some recommendations. Budgetary constraints however, do hamper the Ministry from performing this activity on a more regular basis at all Local Authorities.
- ii. Issuance of Circulars to all Local Authority Councils in general and in response to specific cases of noted non-compliance, urging them to submit quarterly management reports to the Ministry as well as other requisite information.
- iii. Issuance of Minister's directives to the political leaders (Governing Council) alerting them to noted governance risks (early warning) and / or of identified non-compliance and the need to take proactive or corrective actions.
- iv. In addition to the above, Chief Executive Officers are required in terms of Section 15 (2) of the Local Authorities Act, 1992 (Act No. 23 of 1992) as amended, to submit a copy of the confirmed minutes of every meeting of the

Local Authority Council within seven days of any confirmation, together with a copy of the agenda of such meeting and any other connected documents or reports as may be required to the Ministry for scrutiny. Not all Councils are fully complying with the above legal requirement.

QUESTION 2

The recurring incapacity of Municipal/Town/Village Councils to formulate and present the necessary financial reports for auditing is a matter of apprehension. What measures and tactics has the Minister implemented to ensure that Councils possess the proficiency to compile their records in accordance with global accounting standards, such as IPSAS?

Answer:

As part of the Ministry's oversight responsibility, we have consulted with the Office of the Auditor-General and directed Regional and Local Authority Councils on 13th September 2019, to adopt and implement the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) framework which is expected to enhance the quality of general purpose financial statements for auditing purposes. We are of the view that the adoption and implementation of the said framework holds greater potential for improved transparency and accountability as well as more coherent and uniform financial accountability.

Considering the persistent concerns by the Office of the Auditor-General on, amongst others, the quality of financial statements being submitted for audit purposes, timely submission of annual financial reports for audit purposes, LAs not having experienced staff to deal with their books of accounts and the use of various financial reporting frameworks that are not suitable for LAs in preparing Annual Financial Statements for audit purposes, the Ministry conducted a training workshop on the IPSAS reporting framework at the Namibia Institute of Public

Administration and Management (NIPAM) for the Chief Executive Officers, Finance Managers and Accountants from 14th June 2022 to 1st July 2022 and again from 06th – 09th September 2022 in reference to the above mentioned directive dated 13 September 2019.

Further training on the adoption and implementation of the IPSAS reporting framework at Local Authorities are required and will be conducted during the course of the financial year. Considering the high financial implications involved in appointing external consultants and limited shared resources, the Ministry can only avail funds for training to the extent resources permit.

QUESTION 3

Could the Honourable Minister provide an explanation for how a CEO is able to compose a submission for their own re-appointment? Additionally, were you consulted on this matter and if not, what justifies such a re-appointment?

Answer:

The process of appointing or re-appointing a Chief Executive Officer of a Local Authority Council is regulated by Section 27 of the Local Authorities Act, 1992 (Act No. 23 of 1992) as amended. If any appointment of a CEO has been made contrary to this provision, it should be regarded as unlawful. I am however, not aware of it.

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

I so submit.