



Republic of Namibia

RESPONSES BY HON. DR. ITAH KANDJII-MURANGI (MP)

**MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATION**

TO

**QUESTIONS RAISED BY HON MAXIMALLIANT KATJIMUNE
ON THE FUNDING OF AVIATION STUDIES**

16 NOVEMBER 2023

Hon. Speaker, I rise to provide insight on the efforts made by the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation, and then answer the questions raised by the Honorable Maximalliant Katjimune, concerning the sustainability and growth of the domestic aviation industry in Namibia.

Hon. Speaker,
Hon. Members,

Mobility and its pillars of aviation, (air, inland, maritime)

* underlie social connections;

* facilitates access to goods and services; and

* is at the center of countries' trade and socio-economic advancement. The aviation industry plays an important part in our country, too. As a Ministry that is tasked with the national human capital development function, we look at this important function with two critical lenses: **the nation building lense** and **the social upliftment lense**. Therefore, to us, every profession, career or trade is important and our desire is to see every eligible Namibian student funded. Notwithstanding this, we are cognizant of and constrained by: exponential growth of applicants in the face of limited funding and the national priority fields of study.

Hon Speaker
Hon Members

Some few years back, the Ministry of Higher Education Technology and Innovation (MHTI) detected that our student pilots who were pursuing studies in the aviation field in Namibia and in South Africa were experiencing problems. At first, we tried to attend to individual cases as they came, with NSFAF. However, we later realized that the problem was bigger, for there were many student pilots affected. Also, the Namibia Aviation Training Academy (NATA) approached our Ministry presenting pressing management, operational and students related challenges, at time.

As a result,

1. In November 2020, I appointed a Task Team comprising of the Namibia Aviation Training Academy (NATA), Namibia Training Authority (NTA), and NSFAF, to determine challenges that were affecting training in the aviation sector, and to come up with recommendations to optimize training output, in line with the sectoral demands and equitable access to training by all Namibians.

2. An important finding of that investigation was that there was a significant number of students dropping out, or not completing their license training on time. NATA, for example, recorded an average dropout rate of 77% (Private Pilot License) and 80% (Commercial Pilot License) per annum for the last 5 years, then. Signa Aviation Services recorded a 5% (PPL) and 2.5% (CPL) average dropout over the same period.
3. Dropouts and backlogs have been mainly due to the student pilots not having sufficient money to complete their training at all or without interruptions, due to inadequate financial assistance to cover the full training fees.

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members,

4. The report recommended that NSFAP should develop a plan to address the backlog of PPL and CPL student pilots at various aviation training institutions in the country.
5. It is for that reason that, NSFAP revised its funding rates accordingly, to assist students to complete their aviation training on time.
6. It was recommended that the Fund should provide adequate financial assistance covering both the PPL and CPL training, to a few students (about 15-20) per Flight School in the country (3 of them at that time) and about 6 students outside the country, at two-year intervals.
7. The revised NSFAP rates are as follows:

A NSFAP funded Namibian student pilot studying at any of the

- a) **Namibian Flight Schools: N\$ 790,000** to cover the fees for both the PPL and the CPL (*N\$ 210,000 for PPL and N\$ 580,000 for CPL*) on two years intervals; and

A NSFAP funded Namibian student pilot at an international

- b) **Flight Schools, for instance,** in the Republic of South Africa or elsewhere the rate is **N\$ 590,000** to cover both the PPL and CPL (**N\$ 150,000 for PPL and N\$ 440,000 for CPL**) on a two year interval.

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members,

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS

- 1. What steps are you taking to address the NSFAF funding backlog and the cessation of funding until 2025 particularly in the context of aviation students, to ensure that these students are not further disadvantaged?*

The steps have already been taken, as per the elaborate background I have given above. To address the backlog, consideration was first given to students who were finding it difficult to complete their Private and Commercial Pilot licenses, due to scarce funding. NSFAF has provided financial assistance to 82 in 2022 and 24 students in 2023. Furthermore, the last cohort, consisting of 18 students, will be assisted in 2024. This will bring a cumulative number to about 124 students.

It is expected that going forward, and also **as recommended through stakeholder engagement**, the student pilots will be funded at two-year interval, to ensure successful completion of each cohort.

- 2. In light of the exorbitant cost of aviation training, what measures in the government considering to alleviate the financial burden on aspiring Namibian aviation professionals, making this career path more accessible and equitable?*

While it is common knowledge that aviation training is costly, **we believe that the current adjusted funding system, to a large extent covers the cost of training.** The main factor here is the commitment of the beneficiaries to fully apply themselves to their academic work (theory and practice), and complete the required hours on time.

- 3. Are there plans to collaborate with stakeholders to establish financial assistance programs or scholarships specifically tailored to support the aviation training needs of Namibian students?*

The Fund (NSFAF) was established to provide financial assistance to students in need and continues to provide this assistance (subject to

availability of funds). Furthermore, this provision of financial assistance is extended to those aspiring to become **aviation technicians, I am reliably informed that courses** in these areas are offered by some of the local Flight Schools.

Engagements with stakeholders, such as the NCAA, local Flight Schools, and any other organization willing to extend funding or provide scholarships in aviation training, are considered important and therefore ongoing and as work in progress, always.

I so submit!