



Thursday, 7 March 2024

No. 2 - 2024

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

# QUESTIONS

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**Question 3 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Hengari (PDM) asked the Minister of Urban and Rural Development:

The Ohangwena Regional Council is investigating the disappearance of N\$200,000, intended for flood victims and donated by the Road Fund Administration (RFA) last year. The funds were allegedly misappropriated during the tenure of the former regional Governor. The former Governor's personal assistant facilitated the transfer of the money to a company called Ethics Group Holding, ostensibly for purchasing flood relief items. However, documents reveal that only N\$60,000 worth of food items were delivered, leaving N\$140,000 unaccounted for.

I thus ask:

1. Can the Minister provide an update on the Ohangwena Regional Council's investigation into the misappropriation of N\$200,000 intended for flood victims, and what action is being taken to address this issue?
2. How does the Ministry plan to ensure accountability and transparency in the management of funds allocated for disaster relief at the regional level, given the reported discrepancies in the use of the donated funds?
3. What steps will the government take to hold individuals involved in the mismanagement of these funds accountable, particularly during the tenure of the former regional Governor?
4. In light of this misappropriation, how can the Ministry guarantee that ethical leadership and integrity will be upheld at local government level, especially when handling funds allocated for crucial purposes such as disaster relief?
5. How does the Ministry intend to implement improved oversight mechanisms and ethical training for personnel involved in handling public funds at the regional level, with the goal of preventing instances of corruption and mismanagement?
6. How can citizens trust that their donations and government allocations for disaster relief will be used appropriately, considering allegations of funds being diverted for personal gain within the Ohangwena Regional Council?

7. Will the Ministry take a stance on conducting regular audits and investigation into regional councils and local government entities to ensure that funds are used ethically, and if so, what specific measures will be put in place to reduce mismanagement?
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**Question 4 (2024-02-13) - Sine die**

Hon. Hengari (PDM) asked the Minister of Finance and Public Enterprises:

Meatco has reportedly been selling its products at significantly lower prices on the international markets such as Norway and South Africa compared to its local competitors. The company is facing financial challenges despite regular bailouts by the government. A report from the Bank of Namibia suggests that Meatco's revenue was N\$4 billion less than its local competitors that exported to the same market between 2018 and 2023. The bank highlights under-declaration of income by Meatco, despite holding 73% of the market share. The central bank further recommends a forensic audit into Meatco's affairs.

I thus ask:

1. What measures if any, is the government considering to address the financial challenges faced by Meatco, given the regular bailouts it requires?
  2. Can the Minister provide insights into the persistent discrepancies highlighted by the Bank of Namibia regarding Meatco's revenue compared to its local competitors between 2018 and 2023, and how the Ministry and Meatco intend to address these discrepancies?
  3. What steps is the government planning to take to investigate and address the alleged underdeclaration of income by Meatco, as indicated in the Bank of Namibia's report?
  4. How does the government plan to address Meatco's pricing disparities in international markets, such as Norway and South Africa, where Meatco's products are sold at significantly lower prices compared to its competitors?
  5. In light of the Bank of Namibia's recommendation, what actions will the government take to initiate a forensic audit into the affairs of Meatco to ensure transparency and accountability?
  6. The Bank of Namibia observed that Meatco obtains higher prices for its products from the local market as opposed to the international market. May you explain this anomaly and how it can be reversed?
  7. How does the current economic strategy of Meatco align with the goal of creating value, considering the potential long-term implications on cash flow?
  8. What considerations and assessments are being made to balance competitiveness within Meatco's current economic framework?
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**Question 6 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Vries (PDM) asked the Prime Minister:

48 000 households in the Ohangwena Region have been registered for drought relief food, however, only 16 000 stand to benefit as there is not enough food. Despite this high demand of drought relief food, the Ohangwena Region's Disaster Risk Management Unit has lost more than N\$600 000 worth of cooking oil, and other items from its warehouse due to theft.

I therefore wish to ask the Right. Honourable Prime Minister the following:

1. What is the number of households in the Ohangwena Region that stand not to benefit from the drought relief as a result of the theft?
2. How will the stolen drought relief items be replaced or redirected so that the intended households benefit?
3. What is the number of households per region that has so far benefited from the drought relief food?
4. What efforts are being made to ensure that there is enough drought relief food?
5. What strategies will be put in place to prevent such incidents of theft from occurring?

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**Question 7 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Iipumbu (NEFF) asked the Minister of Finance and Public Enterprises:

Honourable Minister, I wish to also refresh your mind of the latest figures showing that household debt in Namibia increased to N\$66,8 billion in December 2023, up from N\$64,7 billion in December recorded in 2022. People are borrowing because they do not have sustainable avenues to be gainfully employed. What measures does your Ministry have to bring these figures down?

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**Question 8 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Iipumbu (NEFF) Minister of Education, Arts and Culture:

I hereby give notice that on Thursday February 2024 I shall ask the Minister of Education Hon Anna Nghipondoka the following.

1. Honourable Minister, can you explain why we must be asked by your Ministry to celebrate subpar performance in the wake of the improvement of the pass rate by a very small margin? What exactly were your targets and again why did you not benchmark yourselves after the 2022 failure rate?
2. Can you explain to this House how your Ministry is currently dealing with the University of Namibia on their admission requirements, which are not only different but higher than those of the Namibia University of Science and Technology?

3. Can you outline what plans you have for the financial year in building and expanding rural school infrastructure and totally eradicating the old humiliating system of learning under trees?
4. You have failed to meet targets with August 26 to build hundreds of classrooms in 2023 and for this financial year explain why August 26 must continue to monopolize this project?

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**Question 9 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Mukwilongo (NEFF) asked the Minister of Health and Social Services:

1. Honourable Speaker, as we mourn the death of President Hage Geingob, we are quickly reminded that the President, may his dear soul rest in peace, had to be rushed to the USA for treatment. Honourable Minister, what is your Ministry currently doing to make sure that we buy ultra-modern cancer treatment machines in the country?
2. We are also aware that the state is funding cancer patients that are flocking to private hospitals. May the Honourable Minister inform this House how much we have spent thus far on cancer patients?
3. What alternatives are there to make cancer treatment more affordable in our country?

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**Question 10 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Katjimune (PDM) asked the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:

In 2014, a Namibian citizen, Mr. Junias Shomwele, found himself entangled in an ordeal beyond his control within the borders of the Republic of Zambia. Wrongfully arrested and imprisoned, Mr. Shomwele's life took a drastic turn. Mr. Shomwele was detained for a period of three years, without charges, costing him his businesses in Namibia and Zambia, as well as his car which he used to do his business in the two countries.

Mr. Shomwele's plight took a significant turn when, on 26 April 2016, the High Court in Livingstone, Zambia, rendered a judgment in his favour. The court ordered compensation of N\$600,000 or its equivalent in Zambian Kwacha, along with the return of his confiscated vehicle, or alternatively, damages equivalent to the value of the vehicle at the time. However, as we stand here today, the promise of justice remains unfulfilled. It is disheartening to note that despite the court's clear and unequivocal decision, the judgment remains unexecuted, leaving Mr. Shomwele in a state of distress. It is also concerning that the Zambian authorities seem to want to sweep this matter under the carpet.

Regrettably, the assurances provided during meetings with your Ministry have not translated into any tangible results for Mr. Shomwele. This situation is untenable, and it is imperative that we address the human cost of inaction. The consequences are dire. Mr. Shomwele has not only lost his businesses but struggles daily to provide for his family due to this prolonged injustice, and has contemplated suicide on a number of occasions.

I therefore ask the Honourable Minister the following:

1. Are you aware of the case of Mr. Junias Shomwele and the court order delivered by the High Court in Livingstone, Zambia?
2. If so, could you please enlighten this August House on the steps your office is planning to take to ensure the enforcement of the judgment?
3. Hon. Minister, can you provide a specific timeline for the implementation of measures to enforce the court judgment in Mr. Shomwele's case?
4. What are the monitoring and oversight mechanisms your office has in place to ensure the timely and effective execution of foreign court judgments involving Namibian citizens? How can we be assured that similar cases will be handled more expeditiously in the future?

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**Question 11 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Mike Venaani (PDM) asked the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform:

Sanitation remains a major problem in Namibia. The number of households with enough toilet facilities in rural areas currently stand at 13.4%. Many rural areas in Namibia currently still use the open defecation system, and Gam, in the Otjozondjupa Region is just one such example. The Namibian government is obligated to provide adequate sanitation to its citizens through its commitment to core international human rights treaties, as well as its own Constitution.

I therefore wish to ask the Honourable Minister the following:

1. Why has the Ministry revised the rural sanitation targets down to 50% by 2030, after initially targeting 100%?
2. Which Regions in Namibia have the least sanitation rates and why?
3. What are the current challenges in providing sanitation to the rural communities?
4. What is the government's progress in providing sanitation for the marginalised communities, such as the San Community in Namibia?

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**Question 12 (2024-02-13)**

Hon. Iipumbu (NEFF) asked the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:

1. Honourable Minister, I rise to get your attention on the question of the collective trauma that has been faced by the Nchindo family which is in the Zambezi region after the brutal massacring by the Botswana Defence Force of their sons along the Chobe river. After the courtesy visits that were made to the Zambezi area and those from the Botswana Head of State, can the Ministry inform this House what more has been done for the family to find closure?

2. Up to this point, Botswana Defence Force soldiers that pulled the trigger and shot the Nchindo brothers have not been brought to book even in the face of undeniable evidence that these Namibians and their Zambian cousin were not poachers? What diplomatic pressure has been put on the Botswana government in order to get justice in the matter?
3. A report has been published by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security on a visit to the region where an assessment of the security situation along the border of Namibia and Botswana was made. How far are you with the response to the seven recommendations made by the committee?
4. When shall we see the increase of border patrols by the Ministry of Defense and when will the International Relations Ministry establish a consulate in Kasane to provide general consular services?

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**Question 13 (2024-02-15)**

Hon. Moongo (PDM) asked the Minister of Health and Social Services:

Recent reports have indicated that Namibia is experiencing a shortage of materials and equipment for testing malaria infections in the northern regions of the country. It has further been expressed that since the beginning of the year, over 12 fatalities and the hospitalization of 133 individuals due to this mosquito-borne disease. The epidemic has hit at least 15 districts, surpassing epidemic thresholds and experiencing outbreaks. These include Eenhana, Okongo, Engela, Onandjokue, Omuthiya, Tsumeb, Oshakati, Oshikuku, Outapi, Rundu, Andara, Nyangana, Nkurenkuru, Ncamagoro, and Opuwo. Accordingly, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) has officially declared a malaria epidemic across the aforementioned districts.

The rapid spread of this disease is alarming and poses a significant threat to the health and well-being of our citizens. The destructive nature of malaria cannot be understated, as it not only causes immense suffering for individuals but also hampers economic development and stability in these towns.

I therefore ask the Minister the following:

1. What steps is the Ministry taking to address the shortage of materials and equipment for testing malaria infections in the fifteen districts where alarming statistics have emerged in recent weeks?
2. What metrics are being used to assess the effectiveness of these interventions in real-time?
3. What immediate steps are being taken to address any identified gaps in resources or coverage?
4. Are there any plans in place to increase the availability of testing materials and equipment to ensure timely diagnosis and treatment of malaria cases?
5. Considering limitations such as geographical reach and resistance issues associated with IRS and mosquito nets: What additional strategies are being considered or implemented to ensure a comprehensive response?

6. What measures are being taken to raise awareness among the population about malaria prevention, early detection, and treatment options?
7. How is community engagement being leveraged to enhance awareness and prevention efforts?

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**Question 14 (2024-02-15)**

Hon. Moongo (PDM) asked the Minister of Health and Social Services:

Honourable Minister, last year you informed this very August House that the Ministry has initiated the drafting of the Mental Health Bill. It is necessary to stress the urgency and importance of replacing the current Mental Health Care Act. By continuing to utilize an obsolete apartheid-era bill, we are subjecting Namibia's populace to insufficient and inadequate mental health services that fall short of international standards. The absence of the Mental Health Bill not only sidelines and disregards the urgency of mental health concerns but perpetuates the negative stigma surrounding mental health itself. By failing to provide adequate legal protection and support for those struggling with mental illness, we inadvertently reinforce the barriers preventing individuals from seeking the necessary care and treatment they require. This prevents effective intervention and exacerbates the mental health crisis that plagues our nation. To further emphasize the importance of immediate action, statistics report that just over a quarter of a million Namibians with mental illness have sought professional help between 2019 and 2021. Moreover, Namibia's alarmingly high suicide rate, currently standing at 9.7 per 1000 people, underscores the gravity of this issue. It is dear that implementing the Mental Health Bill is not only vital but essential for safeguarding the well-being and lives of our citizens

I thus consider it prudent to ask the Minister the following:

1. Can the Minister provide an update on the progress of the Mental Health Bill's implementation since its approval by Cabinet almost four years ago?
2. What obstacles or challenges have impeded the swift implementation of the Mental Health Bill?
3. What steps is the Ministry of Health taking to address these obstacles and accelerate the enactment of the Mental Health Bill?
4. Can the Minister shed light on how the continued use of South Africa's Mental Health Care Act of 1973 compromises the quality and effectiveness of mental health services in Namibia?
5. What measures does the Ministry of Health have in place to address the negative stigma associated with mental health, and how will the implementation of the Mental Health Bill contribute to reducing this stigma



**Question 15 (2024-02-15)**

Hon. Seibeb (LPM) asked the Minister of Mines and Energy:

Before I do so, I would like to give a preamble to give context to my questions as follow: Namibia has officially entered into unchartered territory with all these oil discoveries that have been made since the first quarter (Q1) of the year 2022. These discoveries have become the talk of the country on a daily basis. Namibians from all works of life are all trying to understand what opportunity these discoveries may have for them in the Upstream Oil and Gas Sector.

One of the entry point into this very lucrative industry is via the Application for Petroleum Exploration Licenses (PELs) in the upstream oil and gas sector. The majority of Namibians seem not to have a thorough understanding as to what the requirements are by law for the application for Petroleum Exploration Licenses.

It would be prudent to argue that no member of this August House would disagree with me that all the Namibian Laws have been deliberately crafted in such a way that they do not exclude or disadvantage Namibians and this is evident from all Government interventions including the following:

1. NDP1 to NDP5
2. New Equitable Economic Empowerment Bill (NEEEB)
3. Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP)
4. Namibia Investment and Promotion Act (NIPA)

I would like to inform you that our laws have evolved over the years through proposed amendments made in this very House whenever it was deemed necessary by the lawmakers as part of our democracy. The reason I am pointing this out is to let you know that if a certain provision is clearly legislated for in one Act (let's call it Act 1) and such a Provision is not legislated for in another Act (let's call it Act 2), such an omission is a deliberate one for various reasons ranging from avoiding excluding Namibians as well as disadvantaging Namibians by virtue of their inability to meet such a provision if it was to be legislated for in Act 2 where the cost of operating in such a space are exponentially higher than in the other space where its legislated for in Act 1.

On the 20th November 2023, I asked questions to the Minister of Mines and Energy and these questions were not answered. I hereby repost the same question so that the nation can have a better understanding of what the law requires of them to participate in this very lucrative industry.

**Questions**

1. In the decision-making process within a specific sector governed by a particular Act, what role does the Act play in shaping up your decisions as a Minister?
2. Do you concur with the distinction that guidelines are non-mandatory and non-statutory, while requirements are both mandatory and statutory as they are legislatively mandated for by this very August House?
3. Under section 68 of the Minerals Prospecting and Mining Act (Act 33) of 1992, and section 32 of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (Act 3) of 1991, could you please clarify the legislative provisions for each?

4. Hon. Minister, would you agree in a broad sense, that section 68 of the Minerals Prospecting and Mining Act (Act 33) of 1992 is analogous to section 32 of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (Act 3) of 1991, as they both deal with the requirements for applicants applying for similar licenses (Licenses to Explore) for different commodities in different directorates?
5. Notably, section 68 subsection (g) of the Minerals Prospecting and Mining Act (Act 33) of 1992 explicitly outlines the requirement for demonstration of financial resources by an applicant. Conversely, this expectation is absent in section 32 of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (Act 3) of 1991. Could you provide insight into this disparity?
6. Hon. Minister, in an event where your Ministerial Guidelines for the application for a Petroleum Exploration License deviates from the provisions of section 32 of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (Act 3) of 1991 (for an example, the expectation of Paragraph 6 in your Ministerial Guidelines is absent in section 32 of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (Act 3 of 1991), Does the Act takes precedence over your Guidelines or do the Guidelines take precedence over the Act?
7. Section 11, subsection 2 of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (Act 3) of 1991 clearly stipulates that your decisions are subject to the provisions of this Act and not of secondary documents like guidelines, so do you agree that this provision binds to take decision strictly in line with provisions of this very Act?
8. Hon. Minister, considering the fact that section 32 of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (Act 3) of 1991 does not prescribe the submission of documentary proof of financial resources, would you then agree that if there is an instance whereby you or your predecessors have refused any applicant's application for a Petroleum Exploration License (PEL) on the basis that they did not demonstrate financial capabilities by virtue of them not having submitted documentary proof of financial resources you or your predecessors would have acted in an *Ultra Vires* manner, implying a disregard for legal authority and being law unto yourself (i.e. above the law).

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**Question 16 (2024-02-27)**

Hon. Shekupakela (RDP) asked the Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation:

Honorable Members, education has never been described as being for the rich or poor, therefore no one should be limited to access education on the basis of their social strata.

Since the introduction of Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NASFAF), the country has seen a mass of students who were declined financial assistance on the basis of the salary brackets of their parents. Some of these students have to drop out of the institutions of high learning due to heavy financial obligations in terms of tuition fees, accommodation, transport, meals and general keep up. This is so because these parents even with a combined or single salary around N\$500 000.00 are paying even for 3 students or more at a tertiary institution.

The assumption that these parents can afford is farfetched as they have many children to look after especially at the tertiary level. There might be other factors, for example these parents are not staying together and the other party might not really take full responsibility. As a result, this arrangement can lead to uncontrollable debts that can be emotionally draining for both parents and students.

Honorable Minister of Higher Education is there no way that this clause in the NASFAF policy can be re-visited so that at least these parents can get a relief when child number two, three and so on are joining the tertiary institutions?

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**Question 17 (2024-02-27)**

Hon. Kauandenge (NUDO) asked the Minister Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare:

Hon. Minister, your Ministry is one of those critical ones in the fight against poverty eradication in our country. Namibians were shaken to the core late last year in June 2023 when we received the news that over 16 members of the same family have died because of food poisoning in the Kavango East Region.

Today various media outlets are reporting that two more kids have died in the same region again, while 8 others are admitted in the Rundu State hospital because of food poisoning, God forbids that we don't hear that the remaining 8 will die at all.

Let us not forget that last year when I questioned the level of poverty in the two Kavango Regions some Ministers and Deputy Ministers who are born and bred in those two regions were trying to literally kill me, when I stated as a matter of fact that "Poverty is rampant in the two Kavango Regions" Which to me remains the up solute, unfiltered, impure and native truth till this day.

Hon. Minister it is worth noting that there are two schools of thoughts when it comes to the issue of food poisoning. One is that this can occur when someone eat leftover food and fungi/where bacteria grows in the food. If left over food is taken it causes diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, which lead to dehydration and electrolyte imbalance and can result in death.

The other school of thought is that the food or maize meal is expired and not fit for human consumption, however hunger drove them to eat it anyway because they are starving, as a result germs or other harmful things are found in those maize meals.

My question then will be.

1. Hon Minister what has happened to the laboratory test carried out since last year to determine the cause of death of those 16 family members who died of food poisoning? When will this report be made public for us to know what has happened and why this 16 family members died?

The deafening silence from your Ministry to release that report is sickening, it is an act of concealment, but the immediate families of the deceased and by extension Namibia at large needs to know which of the two schools of thoughts is real. It is high time that this report be made public for the sake of the departed souls to eventually rest in peace.

2. In terms of your Mandate as a Minister, have you undertaken familiarization visits to the said two Kavango Regions to ascertain, what the underlining reasons are of why some residents there eat expired food?
3. Subsequent to the death of the 16 family members last year, what mitigating measures have your Ministry put in place to prevent another catastrophic event like that one in the future?
4. Are you aware of the recent death of two children in the Kavango East Region who equally died of food poisoning? And will you wait until others equally die of the same before intervening?
5. Are you using the money allocated to you Ministry effectively in as far as addressing the root causes of poverty in the two regions are concerned, food distributed to those most vulnerable people in the two regions, if yes where and can you provide statistics of how this food is distributed?
6. Will you agree with me that the level of poverty in the two Kavango regions is out of proportions, compare to other parts of the country and need drastic intervention from your Ministry?
7. Finally, how do you sleep at night Hon Minister knowing that there are Namibians dying every year because of hunger, while there is no excuse whatsoever on this rich prone Namibia for such to happen, if only this Government priorities were right coupled with humility and duty of care towards its citizens, irrespective of tribe, social status or political affiliations?

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**Question 18 (2024-02-28)**

Hon. Shekupakela (RDP) asked the Minister of Education Art and Culture:

As we are at the beginning of the year, I want us to look at challenges that are being experienced by the schools and also by parents and guardians of the school going children. Earlier I raised a concern of lack of text books in schools. The schools are expected to implement the new curriculum in the absence of important materials like text books. Could this be a contributing factor to high rate failure in the country? The question to the Minister of Education, Arts and Culture is:

What are the plans in place to address this problem that has been persisting over years since the new curriculum was introduced?

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