

HON. MARINA KANDUMBU CONTRIBUTION TO THE MOTION ON EDUCATION

Hon, Speaker,

Hon, Members,

First and foremost I would like to thank the mover Hon. Hamata for tabling this important motion regarding the issue of disparity in performance between government and private schools.

Hon Speaker,

Hon Members,

The future of a country lies in the quality of its education system and it is the torch bearer of our upcoming generation. In paragraph 1, the mover of the motion quoted Article 20 of the Namibia Constitution that prescribes the state and conditions of primary education in Namibia. In paragraph 2, the mover directly quoted from the education guiding document which is towards education for all. *where the emphasis was placed on access*

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members,

As much as I appreciate and value the motion, as of paragraph 3, the mover failed to link his motivation to the heading and to the article 20 which he mentioned in his motion. In my view, since the motion is about performance, I would expect the mover instead of focusing on access, the mover could have had more in depth discourse about the second and third major goals which are equity and quality. The question is why equity and quality? Because attaining good performance requires allocation of ^{require} requisite resources and effective and efficient implementation of educational programmes. ^{requisite} ~~requisite~~ ~~require~~ ~~requisite~~ ~~requisite~~ ~~requisite~~

requisite - a thing that is necessary for the achievement of a specified end

Hon. Speaker,

Hon, Members,

Patriotism and loyalty are vital or key for nation building. As a nation, we have to learn to give credit where it is due – in this case to our government and be proud of the achievements so far. Hon, Speaker, Hon members, I would like to remind the Hon member, the mover of the motion that when we talk about access, the gross enrollment rate in primary education is ^{above 95} 119% for both girls and boys combined, with a student transition rate to secondary school of 96%. ~~In Namibia the primary net enrollment rate is 97%. And the primary completion rate is 78%.~~ ^{IF I use my teaching experience and put this figure in} ~~This means we have achieved our first major goal which is access. Thus, equating access to poor performance in this regard highly disregards the good efforts of the government.~~ ^{grade scale it is an A+ symbol}

Hon Speaker

Hon. Members

My comments and views on paragraph 4 is that education is supposed to be a neutral ground. The danger of politicizing education is that it can lead to a decline in the standard of academic performance. This can have a long lasting consequence for our future citizens, who will be ill equipped to participate in the democratic process and governance. ^{Politicization} ~~Politicization of education is a dangerous trend that can have serious negative consequences for society.~~ Therefore, it is my view that when we discuss the challenges facing our education system we should create a neutral environment without attachment to any political party. In doing so, we will ensure our learners become critical thinkers and responsible citizens.

Hon Speaker

Hon. Members

In paragraph 5, the mover asks a relevant question which needed to be interrogated. However, the question lost focus when the mover became emotional and failed in his motivation to cite comparisons between public and private schools. Therefore, I believe that when we make comparisons, they should be comprehensive. There are differences and similarities between public and private schools. That is a fact everywhere in the world not only in Namibia.

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

In an attempt to separate the facts from the myths, the essay: "Why is there disparity in performance between public and private schools?" requires more rigorous analysis. The mover of the motion would have delineated differences and similarities between public and private schools. The following areas of comparisons would have been cited in this motion:

Admission criteria, class sizes, assessments, source of financial support, school choice, students/learners, school organization and management, additional resources availability, school size, teacher to student ratio, teacher motivation, student support measures, decision making for school and classroom, school climate, academic programs, passing criteria and extra mural programmes. From an educator point of view, these are the areas the mover of the motion would have been incorporated in this motion in order to be worth for deliberations.

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

In its current form of the motion it is difficult to unpack these issues. There are a number of sweeping statements in the motion which do not necessarily contribute to the poor performance. ^{Hon speaker, Hon members} For instance, if you give an essay topic to students to write about the rain bow, or climate change or road carnage, the teacher would expect learners to confine their discussion to that specific topic. If a student were to respond without focus guided by facts, that particular student will be penalized and consequently they would fail the examination. Thus, I ask the mover to reconsider this motion.

While I do agree with the mover on the disparity in performance between private and public schools, the focus should be on an in-depth analysis of the underlying causes and try to address these. Indeed education systems in countries such as Norway are designed to ensure equitable quality access to all learners and Namibia may have something to learn from them.

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

In the absence of the above mentioned focal areas, the motion in its current form lacks credibility for further discussion.

I so submit, Hon. Speaker.