

24-04-2024

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

No. 38

NOTICE OF QUESTION

BY

Hon. Utaara Mootu (LPM)

Signature: 

I hereby give notice that on Thursday, **25 April 2024**, I shall ask the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism Hon. Pohamba P Shifeta the following question on the approach on concessions. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has been perceived to take a classist approach when according concessions to through tenderpreneur, *inter alia*. The SME business owners of that sector have been complaining about the approach as it alienates their tour operations that have been conducted for years. The Sandwich Harbour is one of the unfortunate protected areas that are being made into a concession and being put up for tender bids. This is detrimental to the community and affects the 60 tour operators that have been conducting tour operations in that area. If Sandwich Harbour has to be made into a concession and is bidden for a tender, costs of permits may go up as the tender stipulates that exclusive rights will be given to the one who wins the tender to decide on the costs of permits etc. The Policy on Tourism and wildlife and land concession of 2007 states that the state can <sup>make</sup> protected areas into a concession and bid it for a tender to maximize state revenue, however tour operators and their clients contribute a minimum of 20 Million Namibian dollars to the state coffers, hence we argue that this is the government commodification of a protected area to the betterment of a handful of individuals.

Article 23(2) states, "Nothing contained in Article 10 hereof shall prevent Parliament from enacting legislation providing directly or indirectly for the advancement of persons within Namibia who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices, or for the implementation of policies and programs aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalances in the Namibian society arising out of past discriminatory laws or practices, or for achieving a balanced structuring of the public service, the police force, the Defence force, and the prison service."

Questions:

1. Concessions are made to primarily benefit the grassroots economy, however when it is accorded through tender bids, it benefits an individual. What is more impactful? Is it when the concession is given as a tender or to the communities?
2. Five German Nationals accorded exclusive rights to operate on the Dune Belt and no other tour operators are allowed to operate there, how is that possible for five individuals to get exclusive rights to operate on the Dune Belt and exclude other tour operators on these basis?
3. Is it the government's intention to give all concessions as tender bids?
  
4. What are the measures that the government has put in place to make sure that the grassroots economy benefits from these tender concessions given that the tender application for Sandwich Harbour stipulates that exclusive rights will be given to the tenderpreneur?

**I so submit!**