



(2) *Answered*  
*answered*  
*25.04.2024*

Republic of Namibia

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Ministry of Urban and Rural Development  
**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

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**RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS No. 20 RAISED IN PARLIAMENT**

**RESPONSE ON: 25 April 2024**

Hon. Speaker  
Hon. Members

I rise to respond to questions that have been posed by Hon. Diergaard of PDM.

**Question 1:**

*What challenges do the health inspector at the city of Windhoek and all over Namibia experience in fully carrying out their mandate?*

**Answer:**

**No representation at strategic level** - issues of public and environmental health significance in this case, the issue of adequate capacity at the local level is not well articulated and not well understood, and hence not given the attention it deserves. Consequently, the number of EHPs remains inadequate to address the diverse public and environmental health challenges faced by Windhoek residents, amongst other, responding to incidents of public health significance such as disease outbreaks, chemical spillages, compliance and law-enforcement, investigating and resolving health nuisances, inspectorate work.

Inadequate resources – due to the current setup, financial and other resources are shared with other divisions within a department, and therefore never sufficient to address the needs of the Public and Environmental Health Function.

**Shortage of vehicles** – currently, with a staff compliment of 15 EHPs (filled positions), there are only 4 vehicles in good working condition.

**Inadequate capacity (shortage of EHPs)** – In accordance with internationally accepted norms, the ratio of an EHP per population is 1:1000, meaning for public and environmental health services to be effective and efficient, one EHP should serve a population of 1000 people. Currently, in Windhoek there are only 15 EHPs serving a population of about 450 000 people, while a total of 450 EHPs are required.

**Competing priorities** – within the current setup, there are competing priorities which result in heavy budget cuts and the location of very limited resources to fulfill the public and environmental health mandate. The resultant is an inadequate workforce or staff compliment that is unable to cope with diverse challenges faced by Windhoek residents given the broad spectrum of the public and environmental health discipline.

- Lack of advanced ICT tools/software/programmer – technological advancements through the acquisition of latest ICT equipment/tools/software and programmes can a long way in ensuring effective and efficient service delivery.
- Food Safety Bill – delays in finalizing indelicately the enactment of the food safety bill present serious challenges to EHPs in the execution of their mandate. The acceleration of this process is critical to ensure the desired enabling environment within the food safety sector, and more so to strengthen the compliance and enforcement mandate of local authorities in this regard.

## **Question 2:**

*Is there a shortage of Health Inspectors at the each of the Municipalities and town Councils in Namibia? If yes, please identify the municipalities and town councils, with the number of health inspectors that are in shortage?*

**Answer:**

Yes, we are facing a shortage of EHPs in the Municipalities and Town Councils. This is due to non-attractive remuneration packages and lack of skills. The Village Councils outsource health inspectors from Ministry of Health and Social Services and Municipalities/Town Councils

Yes, in accordance with internationally accepted norms, the ratio of an EHP per population is 1:1000, meaning for public and environmental health services to be effective and efficient, one EHP should serve a population of 1000 people. Currently, in Windhoek there are only 15 EHPs serving a population of about 450 000 people, while a total of 450 EHPs are required.

**Question 3:**

*How often do Health Inspectors visit Namibian food outlets and shops for regular inspections?*

**Answer:**

Due to shortage of resources inspections can only be done annually and by request of special investigations by the community through the assistance of the Ministry of Health and Social Serviced to Municipalities and Town Councils.

**Question 4:**

*Do multi-national food stores also receive regular food inspection?*

**Answer:**

Considering the challenges highlighted under question 3, multi-national food stores are also only visited once year or as the need arise.

**Question 5:**

*What public awareness campaigns are in place to create awareness about food safety?*

**Answer:**

A public awareness campaign on food safety is planned to coincide with Food Safety Day during 2024, pending budget approval. Over the years, the annual health and hygiene promotion month commemoration campaign is utilized as a platform to target food preparation businesses, and to raise awareness about the importance of hygiene and food safety related issues.

**I so submit.**