



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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04 JUNE 2024

**MOTION BY THE HONOURABLE TJEKUPE MAXIMALLIANT KATJIMUNE FOR THE HOUSE TO DEBATE AND CONSIDER MERGING THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL (NYC) INTO THE NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE (NYS), TO PUT AN END TO THE DUPLICATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES, PROGRAMMES, RESOURCES AND OVERLAPPING POLICIES AFFECTING THE YOUTH DEMOGRAPHIC**

### MOTIVATION

**Hon. Speaker**

**Hon. Members**

1. The National Youth Council (NYC) was established through a cabinet resolution in 1994 and was further cemented as a statutory body in terms of the National Youth Council Act, 2009 (Act No. 3 of 2009)<sup>1</sup>. The National Youth Service (NYS) is also a statutory body established in terms of the National Youth Service Act, 2005 (Act No. 6 of 2005)<sup>2</sup>.
2. The powers and functions of the NYC are outlined in section 3 of the principal act. The powers and functions are the following:

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<sup>1</sup> National Youth Council Act No. 3 of 2009

<sup>2</sup> National Youth Service Act No. 6 of 2005

- a) to foster among the Namibian youth a spirit of national identity, a sense of patriotism, unity, self-respect, and in depth awareness of social, economic, political, educational and cultural prospects and adversities;
- b) to develop the inherent abilities and capabilities of young people both individually and collectively;
- c) to encourage literacy and artistic activities among the youth;
- d) to establish and maintain relations with international youth bodies and national youth structures in other countries;
- e) to mobilize funds both locally and internationally for the cause of youth development;
- f) to initiate youth development projects, programmes and activities with
- g) the aim of encouraging the active participation of the youth in the process of their own empowerment;
- h) to facilitate, implement, monitor and evaluate youth development programmes;
- i) to pursue advocacy role with regard to the rights and opportunities for the youth with disabilities; and
- j) to liaise with and advise the Minister on youth matters.

3. In the current financial year, the NYC was allocated a total of N\$32, 900, 000 from the N\$679, 399, 000 that was allocated to the Ministry of Youth, Sport and National Service. The NYC runs the Youth Development Grants programme, which is earmarked at enhancing business productivity among young people. The NYC also administers various horticultural, mushroom and charcoal production across six regions<sup>3</sup>.

4. Section 4 (1) of the principal act of the NYS outlines the objectives, powers and functions of the NYC separately. The objectives of the NYS are similar, although not identical, to those of the NYC. They are outlined to be as follows, which is to:

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<sup>3</sup> Tjongarero, A. (2022, April 19). Budget Motivation Statement Vote 027: 2022/23. Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service: Windhoek, Namibia.

- a) serve as a meeting point for youth from various social and cultural backgrounds so as to enable the youth to share common experiences and to encourage notions of equality;
  - b) provide the youth with opportunities for further studies and training so as to enhance their opportunities of employment;
  - c) contribute to the socio-economic development of Namibia and the alleviation of poverty in the country;
  - d) provide opportunities for the youth to take part in national development on a voluntary basis; and
  - e) encourage patriotism, a sense of nationhood and commitment to Namibia's development.
5. Section 4 (2) and (3) sets out the distinct powers and functions of the NYS which broadly interpreted, indicates that the NYS plays an educational recruitment role for youth into various institutions in order to develop skills. The institution administers training to youth in three different stages. Phase one comprises of civic training, phase two is focused on national voluntary service while phase three inculcates skills training through various programmes accredited by the Namibia Training Authority (NTA) and the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA). In the current financial year, the NYS allocated a total of N\$96, 996, 000 to administer these programmes.
6. It therefore becomes clear that the powers and functions performed by these two bodies are similar, although not identical. We must question, from a public administration and governance perspective, whether these functions are so fundamentally different that it warranted the creation of two different bodies in order to execute them effectively. The answer we submit, is NO.

### **Honourable Speaker**

7. This is a clear duplication of responsibilities, programmes, resources and conflicting policies. There is simply no need to have three different bodies

which are serving the same strata of the population, especially for country with a small population like Namibia.

8. Moreover, it has become evident that the NYC is incapable of managing its own affairs. The Minister has recently launched an investigation into the (NYC) to probe allegations of corruption, mismanagement and non-compliance. The focus of the probe revolves around internal conflicts between the Executive Chairperson and the Director, causing significant disruption within the organisation. The Director further faces accusations of interfering in the procurement system, facilitating an unauthorized payment of approximately N\$300 000 to Jeovani Properties for renovations at the NYC's head office. She is also accused of committing the NYC to a contract exceeding N\$470 000 without budget approval.
  
9. In 2023, The NYC failed to convene the Annual Representative Council (RC) meeting as per the Act. The Representative Council (RC) as the second-highest decision-making body of the council when the General Assembly is not in session was to discuss issues of maladministration, insubordination, corruption and power struggles at the National Youth Council at the Annual Representative Council Meeting. The RC meeting for 2024 also collapsed due to infighting emanating from the power tussles between the Executive Chairperson and the Director and the absence of basic administrative documents such minutes of the previous meetings.
  
10. Worse, the NYC has not submitted any Audited Financial Report in the last three financial years being:

**2020/2021-**

**2021/2022-**

**2022/2023-**

11. Therefore, it becomes clear that this is a body that simply incapable of running its internal affairs, and the state continues to put large quantities of money into its operation without any tangible returns.

**Honourable Speaker**

**Honourable Members**

12. We need to make our government leaner by avoiding the duplication of bodies such as the NYC and NYS. The lean governance approach has proven effective in a number of countries, and contributes immensely to government's ability to provide higher quality, efficient, faster and more transparent services to citizens.

13. For example, in 2017, India merged 94 government departments into only 37 which saw a major increase in service delivery and structural cost output. Equally in 2017, the Singaporean government executed one of the most successful mergers of government agencies in 2017 when it merged two government entities, the International Enterprise (IE) and the Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING) into one single entity, which saw the rise of enhanced competitiveness and support for business.

**Honourable Speaker**

14. This motion makes the following recommendations:

- 1) The various horticultural, mushroom and charcoal productions run by the National Youth Council in the Erongo, Kunene, Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions should be merged with the already existing civic and skills training programmes being offered by the National Youth Service and be consolidated under one division administered by the NYS. This also includes all other programmes run by the NYS.

- 2) The affiliates of the National Youth Council comprising of Christian Youth, Political, Youth NGO's and Student Organisations should be consolidated into a department administered under the NYS.
- 3) Pursue any and all legislative reforms to facilitate the merging of the National Youth Council into the National Youth Service.

**Honourable Speaker**

**Honourable Members**

15. The effect of these reforms will result into one unitary, solid body administering youth affairs with synergy and efficiency and without no clash or contradiction, similar to the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) in South Africa.
16. I therefore submit that this House debates and considers this motion, and that the motion be referred to the relevant Parliamentary Standing Committee for further scrutiny and report back to this August House.

**I THANK YOU.**