



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

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TO: ALL MEDIA

MEDIA STATEMENT

CLARIFICATION ON THE AWARDING OF TENDERS TO PUBLIC ENTITIES

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) of recent has been inundated with media questions relating to the concerns of the Construction Industries Federation of Namibia (CIFN) about the award of a works tender for the emergency construction of classrooms in various regions, to August Twenty-Six Construction Company (Pty) Ltd.

MoEAC herewith would like to clarify this matter as follow:

Following the release of the 2022 NSSCO and NSSCAS level examination results in early January 2023, the public criticised the Government for the weak academic results, insinuating that, this is due to the government's failure to provide decent and sufficient teaching and learning facilities to improve academic results. The results sparked a nationwide debate on the quality of education in the country on various platforms.

Consequently, the Ministry was summoned by the Head of State, His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob to provide reasonable explanation for the poor learner academic performance. The summon, culminated in the MoEAC compiling and submitting a comprehensive report to His Excellency Dr. Gage Geingob, outlining causes and factors that contributed to the undesirable state of affairs concerning the unsatisfactory performances of learners.

This report, supported by the outcome of the National Conference on Education highlights, the perpetual inadequacy of educational infrastructures mainly the lack of classrooms and the aging school infrastructure as being among the main attribute to the weak performance of learners and the overcrowding in most schools across the country. Year in, year out the citizens are confronted with disparaging video and audio clips on social media about the poor state of the country's

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education physical facilities, with some of our learners being shown attending school in some makeshift structures and in some cases under trees as classrooms.

The Ministry's report was favourably received by His excellency President Hage G. Geingob who made an immediate call to action for the acceleration of school infrastructure development.

It should be pointed out that, since the advent of COVID-19, the Ministry has been collaborating with some public entities notably; the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR), Namibia Correctional Services, August 26 Construction Company, and the Namibia Training Authority (NTA), concerning the provision of water supply infrastructure to schools, construction of ablution facilities and classrooms in various schools countrywide.

These collaborations have been initiated and made possible using the relevant provisions of the Public Procurement Act, 2015 (Act No. 15 of 2015) as amended. In particular, section 34 of this Act which allows for Execution by Public Entity (EPE). It should be noted that, through this initiative, the Ministry have made great strides in its endeavor to address the urgency of classroom shortage in the country. In the same vain, the engagement of these public entities have provided the Ministry with significant time and cost advantages which are difficult tot be realized through an open market approach.

While the ministry fully embraces the objective of the Public Procurement Act in its totality, it is a fact that the huge education infrastructure backlog that we are faced with in this country cannot be solely addressed through an open market approach alone. It requires deliberate and purposeful diversification of procurement approaches as provided for in the said statute to ensure full address.

It is public knowledge that at the inception of each school year, the Ministry is often besieged with complaints about children in some regions who are unable to secure placement in a school. The main reason is usually due to classroom shortages. Given this reality, the Ministry opted for EPE procurement method (as provided for in the Public Procurement Act) which was pursued to secure a short-term agreement for the emergency construction of additional classrooms and ablution facilities by August Twenty Six Construction Company.

This deliberate but purposeful intervention was decided upon, bearing in mind the current dire need of additional classrooms country wide, persuaded by the fact that, classrooms are considered special infrastructure which should be delivered timely, affordably and in the required quantity and quality for immediate deployment towards the educational development of the Namibian child.

Therefore, the use of the aforementioned public entities and in particular, August Twenty Six Construction Company was a well-considered choice for the Ministry to procure works for the emergency construction of classrooms and related infrastructure speedily, at affordable rates and with zero risk of project abandonment.

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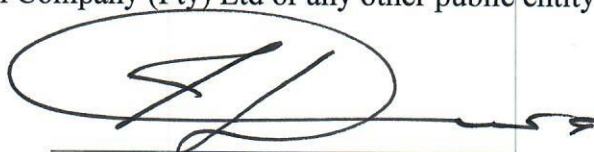
Through this particular engagement, a total of 510 classrooms and 74 ablution facilities were granted to the said company for a total amount of N\$ 255,411,834.65 with an agreement to construct and handover these facilities within a period of four months commencing the month of June 2023.

The ministry is contented to report its full satisfaction with the work of August Twenty Six Construction Company and its responsiveness to deliver within the agreed timeframe and within the Ministry's financial means. Given this achievement, the Ministry considers the Execution by Public Entities, as an ideal procurement method that it would like to pursue further in the short term in order to contain the infrastructure back log, while at the same time, employing the Open National Bidding (ONB) procurement approach for the medium to long-term needs.

In light of the above, we wish to further highlight that, the MoEAC is one of the several public entities which have steadily been procuring through the Central Procurement Board of Namibia (CPBN) using the ONB procurement method. To date, twelve (12) capital projects for the construction of schools and school hostels with the total value of **N\$936 million** have been procured or under pending procurement through the CPBN. Furthermore, the Ministry's procurement of food stuff for supply to all government school hostels and also for the school feeding programme mainly to primary schools countrywide which is valued at a combined total of **N\$2.7 billion** (multi-year for 36 months) has been procured and or is under the process to be procured through the CPBN.

It is therefore evident from the above outline that, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and all other well established/ bigger construction companies in the private sector still remain with more than a fair share of public works and services from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to compete for on the open market. Given this fact, it is our stance that the concerns of the Construction Industries Federation of Namibia about "the exclusion of Namibian Contractors" in public works by this Ministry is speculative and unjustifiable.

The Ministry would like to reiterate that all our bidding and tendering processes for works, goods and services are done in accordance with the provision of the Public Procurement Act, 2015 as amended. Therefore, we wish to assure the public, in particular the CIFN, to understand that there is nothing sinister with the manner in which the above stated works was awarded to August Twenty-Six Construction Company (Pty) Ltd or any other public entity for that matter.



Statement by Knox Otto Imbuwa
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Through the Public Relations Office (PRO)

