

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee

Honourable Members

First of all I wish to thank the Honourable Minister of Finance, her Deputy Minister, the Director General of the National Planning Commission, and their teams, for the consideration made in the allocation of the requested funds to address the pressing needs of the health sector as per our priorities and targets.

Honourable Chairperson

I am presenting the budget at the time our country is facing several challenges in the health sector. During the course of this MTEF, Namibia had to deal with outbreaks of two (2) epidemics whose effects if not well managed could have been catastrophic.

In 2006, just on the eve of WHO declaring Namibia polio-free, we were confronted by the outbreak of poliomyelitis with its devastating consequences including severe forms of paralysis and death. This outbreak also caused widespread fear and panic amongst the people.

In response to this outbreak and with minimal support from outside the country, the Ministry of Health and Social Services supported by its development partners, WHO and UNICEF in particular, swiftly coordinated the national response, surpassing the WHO record.

Admittedly, the outbreak put to test the leadership and management skills of the Ministry. I am pleased therefore to say that my team rose to the challenge. Indeed, their hard work and tireless efforts in effectively curtailing the further spread of the polio epidemic have been exemplary and commendable.

According to the WHO, no country had ever before succeeded in containing the polio epidemic within such a short space of time. Furthermore, many observers both locally and internationally have commended Namibia and the Ministry on the exemplary leadership provided during the national efforts. Given this successful eradication of poliomyelitis, we have been informed that WHO will be sending an expert team of Commissioners in June of this year with a view to once again declare Namibia as a polio-free country.

Just as we were about to fully recover from the effects of the polio outbreak, we had to deal with the first-ever outbreak of a cholera epidemic in 2007. Once again, we succeeded in containing the outbreak without the support of any external experts.

Unfortunately, due to the terrible floods experienced in the north and north-eastern parts of Namibia, we experienced the second cholera outbreak this year with severe consequences for over one-thousand people and which claimed thirteen (13) lives. Indicators suggest that we have now reached the peak and the epidemic is now on the decline. With the technical support of our development partners, in particular the WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA, as well as three (3) SADC member states, namely RSA, Mozambique and Zimbabwe who sent in technical teams, we triumphed over the ordeal.

However, given the experience of our neighbouring countries, we may now have to prepare for cholera to become an endemic disease. This requires that our sanitation situation must be improved considerably over the coming years.

Over and above these challenges, we continue the battle against HIV/AIDS, and continue to deal with its devastating impacts on many affected families. However, I am pleased to note that with the support of many stakeholders both in the public and private sectors and civic organisations; we have now rolled out the provision of ARVs and PMTCT in all district hospitals, health centres, and are now in the process of rolling out these services to clinics across the width and breadth of Namibia.

Indeed, according to the United Nations Secretary General and WHO Reports, Namibia ranks amongst the top 5 countries who have to date, met the commitments made by the Heads of State and Government during the UN Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2006. I am grateful to report that in terms of our national targets to put 30,000 people on ART treatment by 2008 we have surpassed the target and currently have 43,000 people on treatment.

In fact, the nation will be pleased to note that, according to WHO, Namibia is leading the African region as far as the paediatrics treatment programme for HIV/AIDS is concerned.

It is my pleasure to inform this august House that in June of this year, the UN member states will meet in New York to assess progress made in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic since 2006. I am grateful that H.E. the President has delegated me to lead the Namibian delegation and in this regard will confidently report Namibia's achievements. As said earlier, Namibia is far ahead of its obligations in terms of those commitments.

For those of you who are interested and for ease of reference, we have described in greater detail the targets and achievements of the Ministry as a whole on page 57 of the Government's accountability report.

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Members

As the Hon. Minister of Finance conveyed to this esteemed House when she tabled the national budget, public health allocation has increased from 13.8% in 2007/08 to 14.2% in 2008/09. In absolute terms, this is a 27% increase in the health budget. Furthermore, this translates into an increase in the health budget from 4.3 to 5.0% of GDP from the previous financial year.

We are indeed most delighted that Namibia is therefore making very good progress towards the targets set by the African Heads of State and Governments to devote 15% of Government expenditure to the health sector.

The increases in budget allocation were motivated by the pressing needs in public health, and will support our efforts as we work towards fulfilling our mandate as custodians of health in Namibia. In particular, this budget seeks to fuel plans and programmes for infrastructural development, equipment upgrading, for the procurement of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, and transportation, especially, for ambulances and outreach service vehicles.

Honorable Chairperson, the Ministry has adopted six priority areas which are directed towards the fulfillment of our goals and targets as articulated in the MTEF and NDP3. These priorities are: Disease control (HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis), Institutional care, Family Health, Environmental health, Rehabilitation, Health Systems and Human Resource Development.

Honourable Chairperson,

For the past financial year 2007/08 my Ministry was allocated an amount of **one billion six hundred and eighty two million nine hundred and sixteen thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 1,682,916,000)** of which **one billion five hundred and sixty nine million two hundred and fifty two thousand Namibian dollars N\$ (1,569,252,000)** went to operational expenditure and **one hundred and thirteen million six hundred sixty four thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 113,664,000)** was for capital projects.

It is not possible within the time we have to fully account on how the money was used nor is it the objective of this presentation. However, I wish to inform this august House of some important milestones accomplished during the 2007/2008 financial year. Deserving special mention is the purchasing of 15 ambulances, and the completion of renovation and construction of 10 clinics and 2 health centres. In addition, continued renovation of hospitals took place.

Of further particular note are the consultations we as a Ministry held with our stakeholders. This inclusive engagement of civil society and the private sector, is inspired by the Primary Health Care approach, and has resulted in the pledging of much needed financial and material support to health care services and infrastructure. For example, I am pleased to report that as a result of these successful meetings, 9 more ambulances were purchased by the Ministry, giving us a total of 24 brand new ambulances which are now ready to be dispatched to all the district hospitals in the country. In total the sum of quantified pledges from our November 2007 Stakeholder Consultation amounts to **four million nine hundred and eighty thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 4, 980, 000)**.

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Members

I now have the honour and privilege to present before you budget Vote 13 for 2008/2009 for your consideration and approval.

An amount of **two billion, one hundred and thirty million eight hundred and seventy three thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 2, 130, 873, 000)** has been allocated to my Ministry.

This budget consists of the operational budget, amounting to a sum of **one billion, eight hundred and thirty one million six hundred and sixty seven thousand Namibian dollars (N\$1, 831, 667, 000) (85.95%)** and the development budget, of **two hundred and ninety nine million two hundred and six thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 299, 206, 000) (14.05%)**.

Allow me to address individual programmes.

### **Programme 1: Tertiary Health Care**

This programme deals with the provision of specialized clinical and diagnostic services for patients referred from regional and district hospitals.

This includes bulk provision of pharmaceuticals and other commodities, including blood products, and the transporting of goods and services. In addition, it addresses the infrastructural needs of the Ministry, as well as the development, supervision and training of staff (nurses, medical and pharmaceutical interns and paramedical workers) by strengthening the skills and knowledge of health workers through clinical training.

Accelerating training of health professionals is a priority area for mitigating the shortage of available skills and human resources. For this reason, I wish to inform the Honourable Members that as of January 2008, 23 new Namibian graduates in medicine have commenced their medical internship in Windhoek Central Hospital. In addition, 4 graduates have successfully completed their studies in Ghana and are expected to join their colleagues shortly.

The cost for operational activities under this programme amounts to **seven hundred and fifty four million, two hundred and forty eight thousand Namibian Dollars (N\$ 754, 248, 000)**.

Furthermore, the upgrading and renovation of the Katutura, Windhoek Central, Oshakati and Rundu hospitals are allocated a sum of **one hundred and five million two hundred and thirty five thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 105,235,000)**.

Much of the construction and renovation has already commenced, therefore these funds are supporting ongoing capital projects.

**Seventeen million Namibian dollars (N\$ 17,000,000)** is an additional allocation to the programme for the MTEF. The resources will be directed towards the oncology department which is the only radiotherapy centre in Namibia. The improvement of the equipment will result in greater access for treatment.

### **Programme 02: Regional and District Health Services**

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Members

This programme is designed to promote, protect and improve the health of families, with particular focus on improving the health of women and children, and with a specific aim to reduce maternal and infant deaths at the primary and secondary health care level within our health districts.

Activities include the provision and rolling-out of ART and PMTCT services, addressing Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) among under-fives, increasing access and coverage for family planning and reproductive health services and outreach services.

In addition the programme will address training of health care workers and community counsellors, in areas of rolling out of ARV, HIV Rapid Testing at public health facilities, and public health education.

Honourable Chairperson

For this programme to be realised a sum of **One billion two hundred and eighty one million two hundred and twenty four thousand Namibian Dollars (N\$ 1, 281, 224, 000)** is allocated for the operational expenditure.

For the upgrading, renovation and construction of clinics, health centres and district hospitals a sum of **one hundred and eighty seven million one hundred and seventy one thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 187,171,000)** is allocated.

I am grateful for the additional allocation of **Fifty two million, five hundred thousand and three hundred and fifty Namibian dollars (N\$ 52,500,350)** for the financial year 2008/09 to address the deficit on transport, Integrated Financial Management System, establishment of infrastructure maintenance units and improvement of conditions of services for employees of mission hospitals.

Under this programme, within the 2008/09 financial year, we expect to see every health district receiving 2 - 3 vehicles, including ambulances and outreach service vehicles.

From this increased allocation, we anticipate improvements in service delivery as relates to emergency and outreach services, better financial management, and the timely repair and refurbishment of health facilities.

### **Programme 03: Disease Control**

Honourable Chairperson, this programme is designed to manage and direct policy development, strategic planning, resource mobilization, co-ordination, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation of the national response across all sectors to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria.

The funds required for the operational activities under this programme is **Eighteen million six hundred and forty four thousand Namibian Dollars (N\$ 18, 644, 000).**

The development budget for this programmes amounts to **Three million Namibian Dollars (N\$ 3,000,000)** aimed at conducting the Biannual HIV Sentinel Surveillance and the procurement of medicines, Home- Based Care Kits and condoms.

Furthermore, as a SADC member state, we have adopted an HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and Plan of Action. Therefore, **Seven hundred thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 700,000)** is an additional allocation to the programme for this plan for the financial year 2008/09.

#### **Programme 04: Social protection**

Honourable Chairperson, the objective of the programme is to provide support and social relief services to families and individuals with special welfare needs particularly those living with disabilities. Developmental social welfare services ensure the provision of comprehensive social protection services. Although social welfare services is fragmented among three ministries, the Ministry of Health and Social Services will continue to provide services such as substance abuse prevention, rehabilitation programmes and the provision of care and services to older persons.

The funds for the operational activities under this programme are **Eighteen million six hundred and forty four thousand Namibian Dollars (N\$ 18 644 000)**.

The development budget activities under this programme have been allocated an amount of **three million eight hundred thousand three hundred Namibian dollars (N\$ 3,800,300)**.

### **Development partners' contributions**

Our development partners have committed an amount of **three hundred and thirty million seven hundred and twelve thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 330,712, 000)** towards the programmes in the health sector and which are funded outside the State Revenue Fund.

The funds received from various development partners continue to make a significant contribution to the development of the health and social welfare sector, including combating of HIV/AIDS, development of physical infrastructure, human resources, strengthening of health systems management mechanisms and other Family Health Services programmes. Indeed, we remain grateful for this continued support from our development partners.

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Members

I wish to sincerely thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Namibia, for his foresight, quality leadership and guidance. Furthermore, I wish to thank the Honourable Members of Parliament and the general public for their continued interest genuine and constructive criticisms. Their ongoing involvement and concerns regarding the performance of the health institutions has assisted in highlighting the enormous challenges the health sector faces.

Finally, I wish to thank my Team, the Honourable Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary, and the entire workforce at the Ministry of Health and Social Services for their tireless efforts made towards achieving our national goal of “*Health for All*”.

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Members

This concludes the motivation of budget Vote 13 for 2008/09 for the sum of **two billion one hundred and thirty million eight hundred and seventy thousand Namibian dollars (N\$ 2,130,870,000)**. I trust in your usual support.

I so move.

Thank you.