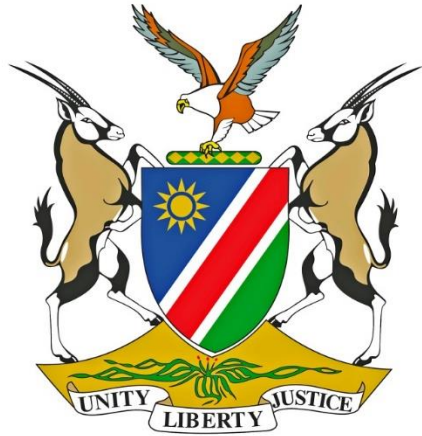




PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

BY

HON. TJEKERO TWEYA

**MINISTER OF INFORMATION,
COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY**

**REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE
ENVISAGED NEW PARLIAMENT
BUILDING PROJECT,**

09 JUNE 2016

I welcome all of you to my office and thank you for accepting my invitation to attend the Press Conference. I apologize to have invited you at such short notice.

You will recall that on 24th of May this year, Cabinet decided to extend the drought relief programme for three months starting from May until July this year, pending the finalization of the vulnerability assessment report.

The report was received and discussed by the Decision Making Cabinet on Tuesday, 6 June 2016. According to the report, 595,839 people face food deficit. This will mean that 83,369.79 metric tons of cereal will be required at more than three Hundred Million Namibia Dollars (N\$300, 000,000). In addition, water and other drought related assistance will be required in order to assist the affected communities. There is massive losses of livestock due to the drought situation. Against this background, Cabinet decided to extend the drought relief programme to March 2017.

It is, therefore, clear that substantial financial resources will be required in order to comply with the Directive of His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia that no Namibian must die of hunger as a result of drought.

Due to the seriousness of the drought situation that is affecting virtually the entire Southern Africa, and to which Namibia is not an exception, and taking all these factors into account and also the fact that we are facing a critical water situation, Cabinet directed that there should be an immediate action to mobilize financial resources. Cabinet further directed that a review of the current budget should be undertaken in order to review the current budgetary allocations to capital projects and vacancies in Office, Ministries and Agencies.

In this regard, I am pleased to report the outcome of the meeting on June 9, 2016, chaired by the Vice President, Dr. Nickey Iyambo as mandated by Cabinet regarding the envisaged new Parliament Building and issues pertaining to the project.

It was attended by the Right Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Saara Kuukongelwa-Amadhila, Hon Speaker, Dr. Peter Katjavivi, and Ministers of Works and Transport; Presidential Affairs; Finance, Economic Development and Director General of National Planning Commission; Information, Communication and Technology; Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chairperson of the National Assembly and the National Counsel respectively; and the Secretary to Cabinet.

The Vice President highlighted the main issues of concern for Government which are also currently in the media such as the food shortage (school feeding programs), water shortage, drought, poverty and others, within the context of the proposed Parliament building.

The envisaged Parliament building project dates back 20 years ago and has been postponed several times due to other national priorities. The need for this project is underscored by the inadequacy of space (due increased membership to parliament), and escalating maintenance costs due to old infrastructure (over 100 years).

In this regard, the Committee resolved as follow:

1. The Committee affirmed the principle that there is a legitimate need for a new Parliament building to be constructed;
2. The project is currently only in a planning and design stage for which only N\$12 million has been budgeted for in the current financial year of 2016/2017;
3. The Committee recognized the various competing national priorities and constrains such as the current drought situation, water shortages, and poverty in the country, as well as the current fluctuating currency situation.

In view of the above, and as a responsible government the Committee finally resolved to recommend that the magnitude of the project and the actual construction thereof, be informed upon conclusion of the project's planning and feasibility stage.

I thank you.