



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 7TH PARLIAMENT

**PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

REPORT OF THE MOTION ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN NAMIBIA

REPORT NO. 3 OF 2025

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MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

The mandate of the Committee is derived from Article 59 of the Namibian Constitution as well as Rule 74 (1) of the Standing Rules and Orders and Internal Arrangements of the National Assembly. The Committee must consider, examine and inquire on any matter it deems relevant to the following category of affairs, which includes, among others;

- Higher Education, Training and Innovation
- Education, Arts and Culture
- Urban and Rural Development
- Sport, Youth and National Service
- Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation

and may for that purpose consult and liaise with relevant institutions:

- a) liaise with NGOs, Agencies and Institutions to enquire and monitor programmes that are aimed at uplifting the social and economic conditions of communities;
- b) monitor and enquire into all matters related to human resource development;
- c) monitor and enquire into all matters related to the development of both rural and urban communities;
- d) monitor and enquire into all matters related to the needs of the youth;
- e) promote harmonious industrial relations in Namibia;
- f) review and advise the National Assembly on the housing needs of the people;
- g) enquire into and monitor international protocols, conventions and agreements that may affect the country's human resources and community development and where necessary make recommendations to the Assembly; and
- h) perform other functions, tasks, and duties relating to Parliamentary supervision of such Offices, Ministries, Agencies or State-Owned Enterprises and Parastatals as may be prescribed by the Assembly or in terms of an Act of Parliament.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Non Katjingisiua, MP

Committee Chairperson

Hon. Tjekero Tweya, MP

Hon. Bertha Dinyando, MP

Hon. Winnie Rauha Moongo, MP

Hon. Maximalliant Katjimune, MP

Hon. Gotthard Kandume, MP

Hon. Utaara Mootu, MP

Hon. Dr. Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, MP

Hon. Natangue Ithete, MP

Hon. Ephraim Nekongo, MP

Hon. Longinus Ipumbu, MP

Hon. Agnes Tjiramba, MP

Hon. Katrina Benz, MP

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Hon. Diederik Vries, MP

Hon. Hidipo Hamata, MP

Hon. Bernadus Swartbooi, MP

Hon. Loide Iipinga, MP

Hon. Aina Hanganeni Kodi, MP

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

The current status of unemployment crises in Namibia, particularly among the youth, has increasingly become a concern for many years. The latest data from the Labour Force Survey reveals that Namibia's unemployment rate increased from 33.4% in 2018 to 36.9% in 2023, while the total youth unemployment rate stands at 44.4% in 2023, a slight decline from 46.1% recorded in 2018. These figures point to a worrying situation and depict an immediate and urgent need to develop targeted programmes, strategies and interventions aimed at stimulating job creation and addressing the country's unemployment problem, with particular emphasis on youth.

Throughout the engagement with different stakeholders, it became clear that being young, educated or uneducated, with no skills, and unintentionally unemployed has serious effects on an individual's future and Namibia's broader economy. The primary responsibility is, therefore, on the government to prioritize and be determined to break down barriers to opportunities for young people and transform their life chances.

The motion to debate the youth unemployment crises in Namibia came at a time when Namibia is grappling to find durable solutions to address this difficult emergency and speed up efforts to curb the rising challenges of youth unemployment. The unemployment situation has particularly affected more postgraduate students than undergraduates. As a country, there should be a commitment and political will to tackle worklessness and create an environment in which citizens can thrive and prosper by investing in education, economic development, job creation, health, infrastructure, and other important sectors.

Although the government have certain youth programmes in place, the lack of coordination among various government departments, working in silos and lack of monitoring and evaluation had negative effects in addressing the employment needs of the youth. Thus, the Committee strongly believes that more can be attained through efficient, improved and stronger cooperation between all relevant stakeholders who trail in the same direction with commitment and dedication.

I therefore would like to share my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all the stakeholders who participated in the consultative meetings for their valuable information and contribution, my fellow Committee Members and the Secretariat, who made this work possible.

Thank you.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDF	-	Constituency Development Fund
HPCN	-	Health Professional Council of Namibia
HRDC	-	Human Resource Development Council
LFS	-	Labour Force Survey
NYC	-	National Youth Council
NYS	-	National Youth Service
NCHE	-	Namibia Council for Higher Education
NSA	-	Namibia Statistics Agency
NQA	-	Namibia Qualification Authority
NTA	-	Namibia Training Authority
OPM	-	Office of the Prime Minister
SME	-	Small Medium Enterprise
TOR	-	Terms of Reference
VTC	-	Vocational Training Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of 2018, Namibia adopted two definitions of unemployment, the broad and the strict definition. Both definitions were in line with the principles of the labour force framework, and the usage of the 'broad' definition had a higher impact on the rate of unemployment than the strict definition. A person was regarded as unemployed if they met the three criteria of: being without work, being available for work and looking for work. The broad measure of unemployment refers to all those without jobs, who are available for work and whether they attempted to look for work or not. The strict measure of unemployment considers those without jobs, who are available for work and are actively looking for work.

In the recent LFS of 2023, the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) used the new definition of unemployment which is in line with the strict definition, which excludes discouraged job seekers who have stopped looking for work after an unsuccessful period.

The unemployment rate is 36.9%, and the combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force now stands at 54.8%. In addition, the youth unemployment statistics are at 44.4% as per the census of 2023. Namibia Statistics Agency also indicated that only 24.3% or 455 030 youth were employed, while 1 008 875 or 53.8% of the youth have given up looking for jobs. This figure suggests the critical unemployment situation faced by the larger number of youths in the country.

The Namibian economy is facing challenges in job creation and struggling to generate sufficient employment opportunities for its fast-growing workforce, the youth. Despite economic crises and disruptions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, young educated Namibians face a greater unemployment rate, representing a mismatch between education and its labour market demands. Although the job market might have opportunities, the mismatch between the labour market demand, skills and qualifications has led to a high unemployment rate among youth. As a result, the country needs to create more jobs over the next years to accommodate the influx of new labour entrants, as the current rate of job generation falls short of meeting future demands and there is a lack of improvement within the labour market.

Some factors reveal that young people who are not in employment are either actively seeking work and not looking for employment, or they are discouraged job seekers. It was found that many postgraduate students were not in technical and vocational education, which means that the competition is on upper-level work compared to lower-level work. However, the job market

appears not to provide so many jobs in the foreseeable future, sowing fears that the problem will still increase in a few years to come.

Proposed measures needed to tackle the rising number of young people not in employment should include, among others, aligning higher education with labour market needs; developing a realistic national human resource plan to align education with career progression to meet the country's skills and competency needs at national, regional, and local level; better career advice at schools; access to fully-funded training, apprenticeships, internships, and back to work support programmes. Apprenticeships and internships help young people to gain work experience and prepare for employment, but many are unable to access them. It is a well-known fact that if young people drop out of school or take a while to find a job, they are much more likely to be out of work many years later. However, the above-proposed initiatives will help reduce the mismatch between labour supply and labour demand.

It was also found that other significant barriers are keeping some youth from easily accessing employment opportunities. Hence, there is a need to create an employment fund which offers grants, training and provides lessons in developing curriculum vitae and dealing with interviews. This special vehicle will provide more support for those young people who are not in full-time education, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

It is critically important to support interventions which deliver practical and focused programmes to boost skills and improve employability in the job market. This will also help to upskill and exploit the huge potential and unlock the untapped talents that exist among the youth.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Since Namibia gained independence in 1990, the country has experienced various economic and social changes, including variations in the unemployment rate. The trend of unemployment in Namibia has been highly unpredictable with improvements but also drawbacks. Hence, the youth unemployment challenge in Namibia should be seen in this broader historical socio-economic context.
- 1.2. Young people have been sharing their experiences of struggling with the pressures of finding jobs. These pressures and challenges left young people feeling trapped by the circumstances and dealing with mental health and anxiety. What they said was, that there is a lot of pressure to go out and get jobs that simply are not there, earn money that is not in the economy, or go and buy things that they cannot afford.
- 1.3. The Namibian economy has been developing slowly and the formal sector, which is the main engine of economic growth, only employs a minority of the labour force while a large figure of people who can work has been relegated to low-productivity activities in the informal economy. This led to Namibia's labour market to be more vulnerable with unemployment increasing over the years and employment decreasing.
- 1.4. In terms of Namibia's National Youth Policy, youth is defined as people between the ages of 15 and 34 years. The youth made up the majority of the total population. However, the 2023 LFS indicated the youth unemployment rate was high in Kavango East (60.4%), followed by Kavango West (58.1%), Ohangwena (51.2%), and Zambezi Region (50.4%), to mention a few, while Omaheke Region recorded the lower rate of youth unemployment at 35.5%. It also indicates that female youth experienced a high unemployment rate of 47.0% in urban centres and 51.0% in rural areas, respectively, compared to their male counterparts at 45.2% in urban centres and 34.7% in rural areas.
- 1.5. These statistics are alarmingly high, and it is a serious concern for the country as it indicates that a significant number of the young population is not gainfully employed which has negative implications for the country's economic growth and development.
- 1.6. As things stand now, a substantial number of workers depend on wage employment at 84.7% while only 9.2% are self-employed. This trend further complicated the unemployment problem in the country as it suggests a lack of entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for the youth.

1.7. The Motion to debate the Youth Unemployment Crisis in Namibia, and its ramifications both in the short, medium and long term was tabled and introduced in the National Assembly in 2022. It was subsequently referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources and Community Development for further scrutiny and report back to the Assembly.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

The specific objectives of the Motion were to explore and scrutinise the following aspects;

- 2.1. Current enabling legislation to address youth unemployment;
- 2.2. Educational system and structural challenges on unemployment;
- 2.3. Skills mismatch and labour market challenges;
- 2.4. Strategies and interventions needed to address youth unemployment;
- 2.5. Need to declare a state of emergency, and
- 2.6. To come up with recommendations to the Assembly

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. The Committee undertook regional consultations with relevant stakeholders such as;

- a) Ministry of Youth, Sport and National Service;
- b) Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture;
- c) Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation;
- d) Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation;
- e) Regional Councils;
- f) National Youth Council
- g) Regional Youth Forums and Organizations;
- h) Institutions of Higher Learning;
- i) Vocational Training Centres;
- j) Local Authorities;
- k) Traditional Authorities;
- l) Business People
- m) The Public

3.2. The Committee also met with the Namibian Chapter on African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and presented the Committee with important insights on this very important topic on the status of youth unemployment in Namibia.

4. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to submit the Committee's findings and recommendations to the Assembly for discussion and adoption.

5. CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

5.1. Regional Councils

- a) The Regional Councils noted that youth unemployment is not only a government responsibility but a shared and collective intervention by all stakeholders inclusive of non-governmental bodies. However, they argued that Regions are not fully capacitated to create employment due to the decentralization policy, which is not fully implemented. This has also impacted funding allocation to Regional Councils.
- b) Additionally, there is a Cabinet decision of 2022 which decided that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) should be in all constituencies, but currently no CDF at the constituency level as this could have helped to cater for youth employment projects in constituencies identified by youth themselves.
- c) They said the agricultural sector has the potential to increase job opportunities, including for the youth. The Zambezi Region, Kavango East and West Regions, being regarded as the food basket of Namibia, informed the Committee that they have allocated a sizeable piece of land to the government for agricultural projects, but to date, these projects are not off the ground. The current projects, they claimed, are not being used to their full capacity to assist with employment creation. This extends to the Etunda Irrigation Project in the Omusati Region. They expressed discontent regarding the lack of funding being allocated to the agriculture sector since it is not being prioritized. They called on the government to provide adequate funding and create industries that can help create sustainable employment, especially agricultural projects and green schemes as they have the potential to address the youth unemployment crisis and unemployment in general.
- d) Regions felt that little attention is paid to vocational training while more resources and high budgets continue to be allocated to basic and higher education only. They proposed that the government allocate 60% of the education budget to vocational training for practical and technical skills, and 40% to formal education. They stressed the need for the youth to be properly educated, trained and skilled if the country is to have the much-needed human resources, which is the backbone and asset of any country.

- e) Regions are overwhelmed by many government projects and Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Parks that are closed, dormant and abandoned such as the Crocodile Farm in the Zambezi Region, Mashare Agricultural Farm in the Kavango East Region, SME Park at Omahenene Border Post in Omusati Region, the Tannery Project in Ondangwa, and the Abattoir in Oshakati, among others. These projects too could have assisted with much-needed employment.
- f) Regions complained that the lack of infrastructural development has led to many youths suffering because some regions have many constituencies but only one town, and this made all seek jobs in one town. Some Regional Councils have agreements with the Ministry of Works and Transport to employ artisan graduates, but these agreements were not working. The government should assist young graduates with equipment and machinery or aid funds for business purposes.
- g) Approaches to cater for youth unemployment are too scattered and not well-coordinated, as such initiatives and strategies need to be under one roof or office instead of dividing resources amongst various ministries for the same purposes. This practice has led to the lack of monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes in the regions, including accountability.
- h) Regions cautioned that the high unemployment rate among youth, if not tackled with the urgency it deserves, has the potential to cause unrest and instability, which threaten the security of the country, including an increasing crime rate.

5.2. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

- a) Although formal education receives fair resources, the current education system is only empowering the minds, but no skills for employment since it does not speak to job creation. Life-long learning needs enough funding for skills training and vocational education to empower especially out-of-school youth so that they don't end up in the streets. There is a skills deficiency in critical sectors of the economy, and as such there is a need to reform the education system and curriculum to resolve youth unemployment. There is a mismatch between the skills of job seekers in terms of courses being offered and what is demanded by the market.
- b) Regional Offices of Education indicated that there is an oversupply of teachers in the country. It is estimated that over fifty-thousand (50,000) teachers are unemployed because the job market is not there, or it is too small. They claimed the oversupply was

caused by the mushrooming of training institutions accredited by the government, which at times offer more or less the same programmes.

- c) A concern was raised that more resources are centralized in Windhoek, and no economic markets to absorb graduates in the regions, and it is difficult for the youth to attend interviews in other regions due to lack of funds. They called for innovation in coming up with new industries for production to absorb youth as the current set-up only looked to offering services and that made the country to be consumer-based.
- d) They added that youth who drop out of school should be allowed to go to Vocational Training Centres (VTC) and do different trades to develop their talents. They called for the decentralization of entrepreneurship programs in the regions.
- e) Kavango East and West regions need agricultural and tourism courses due to the potential in the agricultural production and the tourism sector. The two programs are currently not being offered in the two regions.

5.3. Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service

- a) The Ministry has the mandate to empower youth and promote sport. It targets youth who are unable to meet admission requirements at universities, and offers the following mitigating programs, among others: skills development and training, youth entrepreneurship, youth exchange programs, research data and information, youth health and wellbeing, youth and gender disability, and environmental education and awareness.
- b) However, the Committee was informed that there is a general lack of projects for youth employment in the regions, especially at the constituency level. The few operational youth centres have no funds to sustain their activities. Although some youths received training in business skills and some were employed, the Credit for Youth in Business Scheme of 2007 – 2016 is currently dormant, hence many youths are losing out. These youth empowerment programmes were supposed to assist the youth to go out with practical skills and equip them with entrepreneurial skills to start projects and businesses.
- c) Regional offices complained that the head office is overlooking inputs and programmes from regions and at times comes up with its programmes. This led to a lack of adequate funding and investment to implement youth empowerment programmes. There is also a lack of collaboration and coordination within different structures, which affects the training and employment of prospective young people. Currently, the National Youth

Policy is coordinated by the National Youth Council (NYC) and this has also made its work complicated.

- d) They proposed that the role of the ministry needs to be reviewed and in particular, the sports office needs restructuring as the current set-up is not youth-friendly and it is challenging to carry out outreach programmes. Sport creates jobs for young people and needs to be marketed and commercialized, especially at the constituency level, but facilities are not there and if they are, they lack necessary ablution facilities.
- e) They further suggested that the National Youth Service (NYS) programmes need to be skills-based for self-employment to avoid youth going back home again and ending up in the streets. They pleaded with the government to acquire resettlement farms or land for youth projects. Interestingly, the Kavango West Regional Council offered 21 hectares of land to the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service to construct a multi-purpose centre and complex but to date, no progress has been made.

5.4. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation

- a) The Namibia Integrated Employment Services (NIES) was created under the Employment Services Act and captures the information and skills required, available or lacking in the country. It is a platform where job seekers and employers meet for employment services.
- b) The ministry argued that local institutions sometimes do not offer skills training that is needed in certain industries, and as a result, companies source these skills outside the country, which contributes to a high unemployment rate.
- c) Some of the challenges highlighted include a mismatch of criteria and requirements for employment, for example, some job requires grade 12 qualifications but do not cater for persons who acquire their qualifications through mature age entry. In addition, the internship period is only three (3) months but employers require one (1) year of experience. There is also a lack of regulations for the Employment Services Act.
- d) Regional offices informed the Committee that it was perhaps not right to put employment creation under the Ministry of Labour since the fund for employment creation is with social security.

5.5. Regional Youth Forums and Organizations

- a) Youth complained that the issue of youth unemployment has been politicized and little is happening on existing programmes for youth due to lack of leadership, monitoring and evaluation. Regions have many technical skills among the youth, but they are not

being challenged by the government in terms of tenders because they are viewed as unable to afford them.

- b) Youth are faced with multi-faced challenges such as lack of financial support and project funding by private banks due to collateral requirements, lack of government budget for youth entrepreneurship programs, high requirements for skills and experience, no youth forums at constituency levels, no advocacy to provide the opportunity for unemployed youth and no transport to mobilise youth in constituencies. In addition, it is difficult for youth to acquire land for agricultural projects, there is a general lack of sports facilities and activities in the regions, as well as a lack of multi-purpose centres and community development centres.
- c) Currently, youth are largely recruited in the Namibia Defence Force, the Namibian Police Force, and the Namibia Correctional Service. They claimed the practice is simply causing a burden on the government as it only increases salaries instead of addressing real unemployment problems. These institutions need to review their recruitment requirements as they only target youth who are still in school, what about those above 25 years, they questioned?
- d) They aimed at decision-making levels, saying they are not involved or represented when decisions are made on who should benefit from youth projects because decisions are taken by Regional Councils or in Windhoek.
- e) The youth said vacancies exist and are unfilled in many government ministries, and they plead with the government to fill those vacancies to address the lack of manpower. The government should also break the cycle of no experience and no job since most youth have no experience or skills. They also said no public advertisement of vacancies by public institutions at notice boards, radio or television, but that such information is only being provided to close families of government officials and excluding the rest of the community.
- f) They requested the government to decentralize the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service to the constituency level and revive youth scheme programs. The government should build factories in the region to employ young people, and provide funding, equipment and other aid. They also want to see more institutions of higher learning in the regions offer skills training so that youth do not have to travel long distances to other regions.

5.6. Tertiary Institutions and Vocational Training Centres

- a) The institutions proposed that proper need assessment should be conducted before a certain training institution is registered. They were responding to the outcry on the mushrooming of institutions of higher learning and that they contribute to the oversupply of graduates and the high unemployment rate in the country. They said a moratorium should be placed for the next ten (10) years on the registration of new or upcoming training institution providers. They called upon role players such as the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE), Namibia Qualification Authority (NQA), Namibia Training Authority (NTA), and the Health Professional Council of Namibia to enforce strict regulations in these regards.
- b) They also raised concerns over skills gaps versus curriculum reform and the oversupply in some courses such as Human Resources, Public Administration, Education, and Nursing, among others. In this instance, they called out institutions of higher learning to come together and review their curriculum.
- c) There are also claims that the vocational training courses are only up to Level 3 and NTA is not doing enough to address the reality on the ground. There is a need for technical courses that can help to create employment. NTA only funds a few students, hence intake is low, this also has forced many students to drop out, and this lack of vocational education contributes to unemployment.
- d) They implored the government to introduce a mandatory policy which will make it compulsory for the government to provide start-up capital to all VTC graduates. As quality financing is a major challenge for the youth, they also requested the government to introduce a national funding levy for young people to increase access to financing. The government should capacitate industries with incentives for internship programmes and entrepreneurial skills as they are key to youth unemployment possibilities. The government should also introduce business and entrepreneurial skills at the early stages of schooling starting from grade seven (7).
- e) The government should fund and offer support for training equipment to agricultural graduates as they find it difficult to start and practice what they learned for projects in the region, and also cannot export or transport their produce.
- f) They stated that the top-bottom approach is discouraging many youths as leaders are not consulting the youth on the ground on their needs. There is also a need to educate youth on financial literacy to prevent wastage of resources.

5.7. Local Authorities

- a) Many local authorities have indicated that although the allocation of urban land for agricultural purposes can be looked into, financing is a major problem, and they suggested that budgets and loans dedicated to the youth should be given to the line ministry instead of third parties. They also requested the government to do away with the loan concept and implement the grant system or collateral-free loans to create employment for the youth and to capacitate the youth with project management skills before projects are handed over to them.
- b) The government should come up with a strategy to assess collaboration between government institutions for employment purposes, as the current educational system does not support the employment needs of the youth. Resources should also be allocated for youth as per regional statistics for inclusivity purposes. They called on the government to consider owning shares and nationalizing the country's natural resources to grow local and benefit employment creation programmes.

5.8. Persons with Disabilities

- a) Persons with disabilities are most affected and complained that the Affirmative Action Policy and the Employment Equity Act did not do enough to assist them to be fully integrated into the system for employment purposes, not even for those who have qualifications.
- b) They said they are not invited to interviews even if they meet requirements, and are being subjected to the same treatment as able persons, although they are encouraged to apply. No equity is applied because persons who are not from the same footing are competing in an equal arena.
- c) They felt requirements for government schemes are not conducive to the needs of persons living with disability, especially the acquisition of land for projects. There are deliberate actions on land sale (expensive) and delivery in terms of allocation. They want the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare to be allowed to purchase or acquire land for disability projects.

5.9. Business People

- a) There is a lack of a database to access information to be used by businesses to assist with employment or to support entrepreneurship. Most information is with the Business Intellectual Property Agency (BIPA) and they have no office branches in the regions.

They also want BIPA to introduce a toll-free number because the current one is costly and you need data and smartphones to upload information.

- b) They said there is a lack of industrialization drive in the country and underfunding of Regional Councils. More people are trained to work but not to create jobs or employment, hence, there is a need for a mind-set shift in this entrepreneurship revolution.
- c) The government should provide financing schemes for graduates as start-up capital, allocate land to youth, and promote training and mentorship for self-employment. The government should introduce basic income grants for unemployed youth. Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade should also assist youth with projects and other programs, such as providing equipment.
- d) The Development Bank of Namibia (DBN) has no branches in all Regions and they are inaccessible to the locals. They also encouraged the government to consider procuring directly from individuals other than companies only, this will help support small businesses and the youth.

5.10. Traditional Authorities

- a) Traditional Authorities sympathise with the situation of youth unemployment in which many youths find themselves. They plead with the government to review the current formula or requirements to register projects or business plans before accessing financing or loans, currently, registration for business requires N\$800, which is expensive for the youth to afford. They also called on the government to stop offering empowerment opportunities to already well-established businesses. They implored the government to create active projects for youth in each constituency.
- b) Traditional Authorities are aware that some youths are not trying their best to find work or do business, instead, they sit at home after graduating, waiting for the government to employ them, hence there is a need to encourage them to do something for themselves and for government to create a conducive environment.

5.11. The Public

- a) Members of the public who attended the meetings felt that there was a need to move reliance on traditional agricultural and cultivating practices to factory and industry-based systems to add value to local resources for exporting and that the government should impose conditions on the export of the country's resources. Namibia needs to be a producer and investor market to create employment. They said industries are a

prerequisite to employment and prosperity for all. To achieve the above, the education system needs to be revised to complement the country's economy;

- b) They called on the education sector to coordinate and revamp the education curriculum so that it produces skills demanded by the market. Government should strengthen internship programmes so that students graduate with practical skills, and that career fairs are supported in rural areas where they are completely invisible. Incorporate digital and ICT in education.
- c) It was proposed that projects and programmes should be introduced based on the needs of the youth and not necessarily on the initiative of the government alone, and called on the government to host a national conference on youth unemployment.
- d) It was also proposed that pre-vocational school subjects should be taught or availed in all primary schools to nurture entrepreneurship. Thus, overhaul the education system to focus on skills training and manufacturing if the country is to be self-sufficient. The government should re-negotiate mining taxes to increase revenue and assist in creating employment, as many people are not employed due to a lack of funds.
- e) The requirements in terms of skills and experience contribute to an increased rate of unemployment, and it is discouraging youth because it appears the vacancies are only targeted for those who are already working. Government or employers should also remove the requirements for grades 11 and 12 and instead ask for qualifications because these requirements disadvantage youth who have qualifications but did not go through formal education. Universities should have technical levels to assist VTC graduates who wish to pursue studies at universities after graduation.
- f) Regions should create forums or platforms to unlock their potential so that they create employment for themselves and other youths.
- g) They finally called on the government to increase budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to enable it to fully implement agricultural projects in the regions.

6. BENCHMARK VISITS

6.1. United Republic of Tanzania

- a) The country has a National Youth Policy under the Office of the Prime Minister, Division of Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability. The division is responsible for creating a conducive environment for the promotion of youth involvement in social, economic and cultural development initiatives.

- b) The country has a youth labour force of 14,219,191, which is 55% of the total labour force, with an unemployment rate of 12.2% according to the labour force survey of 2022
- c) Main Causes of Youth Unemployment in Tanzania are as follows:
- (i) The imbalance between supply and demand for labour has been indicated as the main contributor to the increased unemployment rate for youth in Tanzania.
 - (ii) The inability of the economy to absorb a larger number of labour entrants
 - (iii) Lack or sometimes limited employable skills that are in demand in the labour market
 - (iv) Inability to access start-up capital to establish their own business, which leaves youths as job seekers and not job creators
 - (v) Lack of access to land, as in most cases, land has been traditionally owned by elders
 - (vi) Inadequate entrepreneurship education, life skills and competencies for business venturing
 - (vii) Poor infrastructure in rural and peri-urban areas to support enterprise development among women and men
 - (viii) The majority of youth are employed or working in the informal sector
 - (ix) Mismatch between the training of young people and the needs of the labour market
 - (x) Inadequate labour market information as well as dissemination mechanisms to reach all stakeholders, especially young women and men
- d) To address the above challenges, Tanzania embarked on social and economic reform measures that were ultimately given direction by the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, which is a five-year development plan 2021/22 – 2025/26. It emphasizes the need to reduce unemployment in the country through industrialization and promote the availability of requisite industrial and other production and service delivery skills. Several strategic interventions have been adopted as a means to promote employment amongst the youth. These measures include;
- (i) **Establishment of Tanzania Employment Services Agency** - The agency has the responsibility of providing job seekers with appropriate career and vocational guidance, placement services, cross-border placement, recruitment services and job creation facilitation.

- (ii) **Establishment of Youth Development Fund** - The purpose of the fund is to increase employment for youth. It is given as a loan with low rates to individuals of productive groups and funded by the government budget.
- (iii) **Loan from Local Government** -Local Government Finance Act provides that 10% of the local government's source should be allocated as loans for women 4%, youth 4% and persons with disabilities 2%.
- (iv) **Building a Better Tomorrow Programme** - This program addresses youth and women's challenges in the agriculture sector. It is being implemented through various agricultural value chain projects under the block farming model for youth and women. The government has the responsibility to identify arable land for crop production and train beneficiaries.
- (v) **Support National Skills Development Programme** - The programme is designed to enhance the employability and labour productivity of young people in the local and global labour market, and it is implemented through;
 - Internship programme. The programme is paid for by the government and aims to impart valuable skills to graduates of different education levels who are attached to employers to undertake an internship programme for 6 – 12 months.
 - Vocational guidance and employment counselling. The programme is provided to youth to help them make better career choices.
 - Job search skills training programme. The training provides specific skills to various job seekers aimed at imparting the necessary skills to enhance their employability.
 - Apprenticeship programme. Skills are provided to youth in fish farming and greenhouse farming. The government launched national guidelines for internship and apprenticeship for both local and cross-border labour markets.
 - Community Development Projects. Through the Tanzania Social Action Fund, the government rolled out a Community-Based Conditional Cash Transfer program as an effort to eradicate poverty for those who were not reached with existing social protection efforts.
 - Decent Work Country Programme. The program provides training to youth on matters concerning the Youth Development Fund.
 - Establishment and promotion of Vocation Education and Training

- Develop Action Programmes. The program is designed in key sectors to accelerate socio-economic development and job creation. These sectors include infrastructure, agriculture, energy, tourism, minerals, trade and industry.

6.2. Mauritius

- a) Mauritius has an estimated unemployment rate of 6.8%, while youth unemployment stands at 21%.
- b) Mauritius has a good collaboration between the government and private sector and ensures that the country produces people and skills needed for the local economy. The system offers life skills training for youth, institutional support, and promotes and facilitates investment. The country made powerful reforms on the ease of doing business, diversifying and streamlining sectors to create employment, especially for the youth. The country invested in various sectors such as information technology, pharmaceutical, manufacturing, textile, tourism, hospitality, agriculture, construction, and finance, to create local jobs. This investment diversification helped the country to avoid over-relying on one sector of the economy to create jobs over the long run.
- c) Mauritius also builds strong institutions for manpower planning and manpower requirements such as the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) to avoid misalignments of demand for human resources.
- d) The government has adopted the following schemes to assist the youth with education, training and employable skills:
 - i. Graduate Training for Employment, the employer selects young people and trains them in the identified fields;
 - ii. Job Training System, the company recruit and trains and makes placement after finding appropriate;
 - iii. Youth Employment Programme, youth aged between 16 and 35 years are trained for purposes of obtaining skills in different programs at vocational institutions;
 - iv. Service to Mauritius Programme for under 45 years, it is a government contractual scheme whereby inexperienced persons are trained for scarce skills in a specific job or skills to offer certain services for a maximum of two (2) years;
 - v. Secular Migration System, whereby people go to work outside for several years and come back in case there is a surplus in the supply of certain labour;

- vi. Small Medium Enterprise Graduate Scheme, for young graduates who are looking for jobs or to set up their businesses;
 - vii. Technical and Vocational Education and Training, the program provides school leavers with technical skills and training.
- c) Furthermore, the policies are directed to people or human resources of the country and ensure that no barriers prevent citizens from getting an education from primary, secondary, tertiary and technical education, for they believe that this is the only way to have skilled human resources and optimize the human potential.
- d) The HRDC and the education sector work very closely together with other ministries to ensure that human resource is capacitated through continuous learning and skilling. This can be achieved through;
- (i) Strong primary education;
 - (ii) Strong secondary education;
 - (iii) Strong teacher training institutions;
 - (iv) Good pedagogy-based education and not only knowledge;
 - (v) Professionalize education including secondary education;
 - (vi) Capacitate educators;
 - (vii) Ensure education is in comparison with the needs of the labour industry for progression and employment opportunities.
- e) The country has a 1% levy for all companies paid to the Human Resource Development Fund to contribute to youth skills training, and the HRDC utilize the levy to pay for the training. The fund also caters for those already working up to the university level.
- f) Interestingly, education from pre-primary up to university is free and it is compulsory for children to be in school for up to sixteen (16) years. Additionally, there is a compulsory teachers' training program (in-service) for five (5) years to be followed and fulfilled.
- g) The country has also invested in digital education to build capacity for youth for the digital economy and provided high-speed internet and connectivity.
- h) For the labour sector, the country ensured transformation from the traditional way of running the economy and skills training by developing a new sector of the economy and skilled labour force. There is also a paradigm shift from education to jobs, that is, from academics to vocational or technical skills.
- i) The government offers training for a practical experience, such as apprenticeships, to get the required experience. There are also employment schemes to give opportunities

for employment to those without qualifications to get skills and work in the country or outside. These schemes are managed by the HRDC and collaborate with the private sector on what is needed for the economy.

- j) Mauritius provides youth employment loans for a minimum interest rate of 0.5% under the Ministry of Finance without necessary collateral or guarantee of paying back.
- k) HRDC has a dedicated website, an online platform to which the private sector and other employers have access, and conducts campaigns to create awareness and accessibility of the website. As a result, people seek information on job profiles from employers and post them on websites, and prospective employees can be screened. The council also provides counselling services and career guidance, and every year conducts labour surveys.
- l) Both the University of Mauritius and the Polytechnics play a role in the diversification and development of the economy by complementing the government's developmental agenda. This is done by focusing on competence and learning outcome that ensures that knowledge imparted meets the needs of the industry by reviewing the programs to become learner-centred by paying more attention to digital technology.
- m) The internship and placement have become an integral part of the university's programmes, including hosting career and job fairs. The universities, in conjunction with the government, introduced the re-skilling program for graduates who can't find employment to find jobs in other sectors. There is a high-level consultative committee (advisory committee) to ensure graduates meet the requirements of the market demands. The committee encompasses public-private sector bodies and works together with HRDC. There is also an effort to invite industries to assess the programmes and curriculum.
- n) These institutions believe technical learning and studies can bear fruits for employment purposes compared to the academic system, as such, there is a collaborative way of launching programmes between institutions of higher learning to avoid duplication of courses and to ensure they produce what the industry and economy need.

7. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NAMIBIA

7.1. Below is the list of the National Strategic Policy Frameworks to create an enabling environment for youth employment;

- a) Vision 2030

- b) National Development Plans (NDPs) 1 – 5
- c) Harambee Prosperity Plans (HPP) of 2016
- d) Target Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG)
- e) Growth at Home Strategy
- f) National Labour and Employment Policy
- g) National Youth Policy
- h) National Youth Service Act

7.2. Despite the country having all the above policy frameworks, the current situation of youth unemployment remains deplorable.

8. EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NAMIBIA

- 8.1. 8.1 The inequality in income in the country has grown significantly, which breeds poverty and unemployment.
- 8.2. 8.2 Some youth who are facing the challenges of unemployment are more likely to turn to crime.
- 8.3. 8.3 Many youths who are unable to secure or find employment are depressed and are turning to alcohol and drug abuse.
- 8.4. 8.4 Unemployment negatively affects the physical well-being of the youth, and their skills development and can potentially cause youth hopelessness, lower output, loss of human capital and increased poverty, especially in rural areas.

9. CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NAMIBIA

The following are some of the main challenges experienced in the implementation of youth programmes:

- 9.1. The economic growth witnessed over the years has not produced enough jobs largely because the Namibian economy is resource-based with few processing industries and economic diversification is also weak. There is little investment in labour-intensive industries such as agriculture, and the youth are also not encouraged to participate or enter into agro-based industries.
- 9.2. National policy regulatory frameworks are well articulated on paper, but there is a lack of understanding of the need for youth empowerment and mainstreaming of youth involvement in different socio-economic sectors.

- 9.3. There is a general lack of an entrepreneurial culture and business skills for youth. Youth entrepreneurial networks do not exist at national or regional levels to promote mutual learning among themselves. In addition, entrepreneurship remains an optional subject in schools and training institutions.
- 9.4. The youth do not have access to financial support due to stringent lending requirements and costs imposed by lending institutions. Rules of banking and financial institutions are rigid and not tailored to provide solutions to the financial needs of young entrepreneurs. Additionally, those who provide or process loan applications are not always able to understand or relate to innovative business ideas submitted for support.
- 9.5. Youth lack comprehensive non-financial support in the form of business mentorship, coaching and incubation. They also lack exposure and access to available domestic and export markets. Some youths are engaging in business not because of sound and viable ideas but because it is what others are doing.
- 9.6. Employers often prefer experienced workers when recruiting. However, job preparedness such as school-to-work transition arrangements and placement programmes do not exist to prepare school leavers for the labour market. Even those with qualifications often lack soft skills such as communication, negotiation and critical thinking that are often required by employers. Hence, this places young people at a disadvantage when competing for employment with their experienced counterparts.
- 9.7. While they could make a difference, incentives such as youth unemployment subsidies do not exist in Namibia.
- 9.8. Some implemented programmes do not achieve the desired outcome and no accountability is demanded from those who fail to monitor and evaluate the implementation to ensure the success of the programmes.

10. FINDINGS

- 10.1. The education system in Namibia has many challenges including a shortage of teachers, inadequate resources, and a high dropout rate. This has resulted in a large number of young people with limited skills and education, while at the same time making it difficult for them to find decent jobs. In addition, the curriculum in tertiary education often lacks real practical and entrepreneurial content that can enable graduates to become job creators instead of job seekers.

- 10.2. The National Youth Policy is coordinated by the National Youth Council, while the National Employment Fund is administered by the Social Security Commission;
- 10.3. Access to entrepreneurial training is often constrained by a lack of access to capital after training.
- 10.4. Mismatch between the educational skills and the needs of the job market. Despite efforts to improve education and training programs, many youths lack the skills required for the available jobs, while others lack the necessary experience to find employment.
- 10.5. The Namibia economy heavily relies on the mining sector, which has been experiencing a downturn in recent years. This reliance has resulted in slow economic growth and limited job opportunities in other sectors.
- 10.6. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the economy, leading to job losses and reduced investment.
- 10.7. Structural challenges exist that make it difficult for small businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive, including limited access to credit and high transportation costs.
- 10.8. Corruption has penetrated the entire social structure of Namibia, and this has robbed the country of the means to develop a vibrant economic base;
- 10.9. Lack of monitoring and evaluation of government projects particularly for the youth;
- 10.10. Lack or no policy intervention that encourages youth to create employment for themselves;
- 10.11. Some career paths such as nursing and teaching are over-supplied, leaving many youths unemployed;
- 10.12. Sharing and access to information related to employment specifically in public service are kept within offices, and this prevents equal opportunity for all youth;
- 10.13. Lack of skills development centres in the regions and constituencies, and youth credit schemes are not functional;
- 10.14. No agricultural assistance schemes from the government for the youth;
- 10.15. The Development Bank of Namibia and Agribank have no branches in many regions;
- 10.16. Private Banks do not lend loans to youth due to collateral requirements. This systemic barrier is restricting access to funding due to high lending charges;
- 10.17. Rampant favouritism and nepotism across all regions when it comes to interviews for recruitment in government positions, and some job seekers are requested to pay for interviews;

- 10.18. Some regions have no Vocational Training Centres;
- 10.19. Recruitment policy in public service has many loopholes as positions can be reserved or kept until someone graduates;
- 10.20. Lack of regulations for the Employment Services Act;
- 10.21. Lack of full implementation of the Decentralization Enabling Act of 2020.
- 10.22. Limited budget and funding for youth programs;
- 10.23. Coordination of youth empowerment policies and programs between sectors is not very effective, there exists duplication of efforts;
- 10.24. Not all ministries decentralized or delegated their functions to the Regional Councils, and this made it difficult to coordinate activities and programs;
- 10.25. Lack of implementation of the recommendations of 2010 about youth employment programmes.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1. With the high rate of unemployment particularly among the youth, the country faces multiple challenges in addressing inclusive and sustainable economic growth in many years to come. Hence, the government, private sector and all stakeholders should work together and look at youth empowerment programmes and coordinate targeted interventions that create jobs and align skills with market demands.
- 11.2. It is further critically important to ensure that graduate programs are responsive to the market forces as this will enhance the employment opportunities for youth.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1. Office of the Prime Minister

- a) Ensure that all youth policies and empowerment programmes are administered and coordinated under one roof, including the national youth policy and the national employment fund;
- b) Develop a policy to incentivize mandatory internship and apprenticeship programmes;
- c) Create a special fund and grants for graduates and unemployed youth and provide start-up capital for self-employment;
- d) Ensure the government create a financing scheme such as cheap loans for youth graduates to buy production equipment;

- e) Ensure government invests in key growth sectors that have the potential to create mass employment, especially for the youth;
- f) Ensure government implements policies that reduce the high cost of living and commodities;
- g) Create a one-stop centre or an information-sharing platform where employment and funding opportunities, both local and global, are being provided and ensure ease of access for all;
- h) Ensure entry positions in the public service are reserved for local and regional youth, as many youths are forced to travel long distances to other towns or regions in search of employment;
- i) Ensure that all government ministries are decentralized to the regions for effective service delivery, decision-making and equitable resource allocation.

12.2. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

- a) Ensure that technical and entrepreneurship subjects are introduced and implemented in the school curriculum for primary education from grade 4 to grade 12;

12.3. Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation

- a) Ensure that the National Council of Higher Education properly regulates the establishment of institutions of higher learning to avoid the mushrooming of such institutions as they contribute to the over-supply of graduates. A national moratorium for the next ten (10) years should be implemented in this regard;
- b) Ensure that NQA and NTA do not accredit educational courses that are putting the youth on the streets;
- c) Ensure that education programs and curriculum for institutions of higher learning are aligned and adapt to the country's market demands, and reform the way students are being trained;
- d) Ensure that each region has a Vocational Training Centre and encourage entrepreneurship by providing funds to start small projects through competitions.

12.4. Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service

- a) The Ministry should organize and call for a national conference on youth unemployment within one (1) year;
- b) The Ministry should find innovative ways and strategies to develop, market, incentivise and commercialize sport, and make it a business industry to attract investment;

- c) Renovate existing sports and ablution facilities and build new sports complexes for each constituency;
- d) The Ministry should revive all youth empowerment programmes and projects in the region and constituencies and ensure sufficient budgetary provision;
- e) Allow civil society organizations to participate in policy formulation for youth employment.

12.5. Ministry of Industrialization and Trade

- a) The Ministry should assist youth with projects, business ventures, equipment and machinery, and ensure large-scale access to all youth;
- b) The Ministry should create production and manufacturing industries and establish marketplaces for small and medium enterprises and informal traders.

12.6. Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

- a) Ensure that the Decentralization Enabling Act is fully implemented in all the regions.

12.7. Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

- a) The Ministry should drill deep dams and boreholes countrywide and build desalination plants for agricultural and irrigation purposes, which can be operated by the Namibia Water Corporation (Namwater).
- b) The Ministry should empower youth with land, identify and purchase arable land suitable for growing crops and other agricultural products;
- c) The Ministry should modernize agricultural equipment and implements.

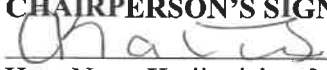
12.8. Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises

- a) The Ministry should re-negotiate and introduce new taxes on mining companies and mining activities to increase government revenue for economic growth and employment creation;
- b) Ensure adequate budgetary provision for youth employment programmes.


12.9. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation

- a) Develop and implement regulations for the Employment Service Act of 2020;
- b) Ensure that the employment data and information on the Namibia Integrated Employment Services are regularly updated and easily accessible to the majority.

CHAIRPERSON'S SIGNATURE



 Hon. Nono Katjingisiua, MP
 Committee Chairperson



 Date