

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**UPDATE TO THE NATION AT THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION CENTRE  
(GIC) BY DR KALUMBI SHANGULA, MP, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL  
SERVICES ON PERFORMANCE OF THE MINISTRY**

**8 JULY 2024**

**GRN INFORMATION CENTRE**

**WINDHOEK**

*\*Check Against Delivery.*

Fellow Namibians!

1. I am pleased to return to the Government Information Centre and share information on health matter with the people of Namibia. The information I will share relates to the work of the Ministry of Health and Social Services in providing, improving and expanding quality, accessible and reliable health care services for Namibians, ensuring that they live healthy lives. On the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024, I presented an extensive report at this platform on government activities in the health sector.
2. I wish to state again that more than 85% of the Namibian population depend on public health and social services provided through hospitals and other health facilities managed by the Ministry. These include 322 clinics, 56 health centres, 34 district hospitals, four intermediate hospitals and one national referral hospital. There are more than 1 150 outreach points across the country. In line with the costed plan to mobilize additional resources for the public health sector, the Government will also build Health Posts in different constituencies across the country. The services offered at public health facilities include health promotion, preventive and curative interventions, immunization, as well as tertiary and specialized services offered at our tertiary health care hospitals.
3. The Ministry has implemented and is implementing various projects to expand and improve access to public health and social services. These include the construction of new health facilities; maintenance of existing ones; procurement of medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and clinical supplies, ambulances and their accessories. I wish to frontload a number of priorities, programmes and interventions being implemented by the Namibian Government in the public health sector.

### **Provision of Pharmaceuticals and Clinical Supplies**

4. For the past three years, Namibia has faced challenges regarding the supply of medicines and clinical supplies for public health facilities. The reasons for these challenges are varied and multifactorial. These include legal challenges to procurement processes for medicines, lengthy procedures legislated under the Public Procurement Act of 2015, low procurement threshold as per the Procurement Act, poor performance by suppliers, shortage of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients for some products, adverse markets of scale and disruptions to international logistic channels.
5. The Ministry has addressed and continues to address these challenges, by introducing various measures. These include:
  - Obtaining exemptions for the Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises;
  - Direct procurements through Market Scans for suppliers with stock on hand;
  - Utilization of Pooled Procurement mechanisms;
  - Putting in place multi-year framework agreements,
  - Bilateral cooperation with other countries for joint procurement; and
  - Utilization of the SADC Pooled Procurement price database to inform benchmarking of prices, in order to achieve value for money.

6. These measures have started to bear fruit and we will pursue them in resolute matter. We are confident that in the next few months, the stock out of pharmaceuticals and clinical supplies, will be resolved.

### **Expansion of and Introduction of new Health Services in Public Health Facilities**

7. The Government has approved the introduction of additional health care services in state-owned Health facilities. These include the establishment of Intensive Care Units in all Districts Hospitals around the country; the establishment of dialysis units in several hospitals across the country; the expansion of dental services and the improvement of oncology services.
8. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were less than 25 Intensive Care Units in the public health sector. It is for this reason that the Ministry has decided to establish ICUs in all 34 Districts Hospitals around the country. This capacity is important for service delivery and ensuring that services are brought closer to our communities.
9. For a long time, Namibians had to travel long distances from different parts of the country to access dialysis services, mainly in Windhoek or the Government had to spend millions of dollars to refer state patients to private dialysis centres. The Government was spending up to N\$100 million per year for these activities. It has therefore been decided that dialysis services will be established at Katutura Intermediate Hospital, Keetmanshoop, Rundu, Oshakati, Otjiwarongo and Walvis Bay. The facilities at Katutura and Oshakati Intermediate Hospitals have been completed and will be commissioned for service in the coming weeks.
10. Dental services are also being expanded. The Ministry has procured medical equipment including 20 dental chairs, 20 dental x-rays, 20 dental autoclaves, and related accessories. They have been installed at various health facilities in the country, especially in localities where these services were not available. We are talking about places such as Eenhana, Nkurenkuru, Rundu, Tsumeb, Ondangwa, Outapi, Outjo, Otjiwarongo, Grootfontein, Rehoboth, Opuwo, Onandjokwe, Keetmanshoop. These services have been expanded at Katutura Intermediate Hospital.
11. High-end medical equipment have also been procured and installed at different health facilities. During the 2023/2024 Financial Year, 13 operating tables, 20 electro cardiographs, 97 infant incubators, 20 dental chairs, 20 dental x-rays, and 18 dental autoclaves were procured and installed at various public health facilities. We have also installed Ceiling Suspended X-ray Units and Digital fluoroscopy units at referral hospitals. In June last year, the Ministry commissioned the Picture Archive and Communications System (PACS) and Radiology Information System (RIS) at a cost of N\$19.3 million at the five referral hospitals to digitalize the storage and transfer of patient imaging records at these facilities.

12. Awards have been made for the supply of several other equipment including mobile examination lights, theatre lights, laparoscopic units, cardiotocography (CTG) machines, ICU monitors, patient monitors, and dental chairs for public hospitals. The Ministry's Quality Surveillance Laboratory (QSL), which tests and analyses medicines to confirm conformance to set standards, received the (International Organisation for Standardization (ISO/IEC 17025:2017) accredited by the SADC Accreditation Service (SADCAS).

### **Upgrading and Strengthening the Provision of Medical Oxygen**

13. With the difficult Covid-19 lessons in mind, the Ministry has installed oxygen-generating systems at different health facilities around the country. These include Onandjokwe, Mariental, Swakopmund, Okakarara and St Mary Rehoboth Hospitals as well as Keetmanshoop, Okahao, Eenhana, Okongo and Andara Hospitals, which were installed during February 2024. Most District hospitals and Health Centres have installed oxygen generating capabilities.

### **Capital Projects and Maintenance of Public Health Infrastructure**

14. Several capital projects were completed during the 2023/2024 Financial Year. These included the construction of Shamaturu, Gcaruhwa, Oshikulufitu Clinics; Keetmanshoop Hospital TB Wards; Windhoek Central Hospital Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) System for Theatres; Okakarara District Hospital Laundry and Kitchen; installation and commissioning of electricity backup generators at Andara, Okongo and Okahao District Hospitals; and installation of additional ground water tank reservoir for Omuthiya District Hospital. Construction is ongoing at Onamafila, Epupa, Linyanti, Okondjatu, Malengalenga, Onanghulo Clinics, and Aussenkehr Health Centre, which also includes staff accommodation. There is progress with the upgrading of electricity supply at Windhoek Central Hospital; construction of Onandjokwe Paediatric Ward Phase A and installation of Solar Water Heating System and Water Softening plant for Kitchen and Laundry at Okakarara District Hospital.
15. Katutura Intermediate Hospital is undergoing major renovation, upgrading and restructuring. On the 1 November 2023, the Late President, H E Dr Hage G Geingob, inaugurated the newly renovated Emergency Centre at Katutura Intermediate Hospital. Several wards at different floors in the Hospital are undergoing renovation which will improve the appearance, hygiene and service delivery at the hospital. The renovation work has necessitated temporary relocation of some patients to other areas of the hospital, including the Field Hospital that was used during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a temporary arrangement.
16. The Ministry is undertaking the development and construction of the Windhoek District Hospital. The new facility will provide general outpatient and inpatient care in order to reduce the work load and referrals to Katutura Intermediate Hospital. The project is being implemented on a fast-tracked basis.

## **Developmental Social Welfare**

17. The last time we informed you that Namibia is taking significant steps to address substance abuse and mental health challenges. We referred to the Etegameno Rehabilitation and Resource Centre that continues to provide essential treatment and psychosocial support for alcohol and drug dependency, with the expansion of outpatient services to more regions, reflecting a commitment to broader access to rehabilitation.

## **Responding to Outbreaks**

18. The Ministry is working around the clock to address diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB. Our surveillance and response teams are primed to and have intensified efforts to overcome these challenges. I have said it before and will say it again, prevention is better than cure. Therefore, good health must start in our homes, in communities and in our schools.
19. It is for this reason that I call upon all Namibians to cooperate with the public health authorities as we combat diseases that may occur in our communities. As a Ministry, as a Government, we will spare no effort, we will not relent in our endeavours to serve our people and to provide them with the best health care achievable. That is my undertaking to the people of Namibia.
20. Our efforts have been recognised both in Namibia and in the global health fraternity. We have received international awards especially in the field of HIV and Hepatitis B prevention and control. The Namibian delegation to the negotiations for the international instruments to manage health emergencies has attracted admiration of other health professionals. We thank the government of Namibia for creating environment and providing support system that make it possible for Namibia to shine.

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