



Statement by Hon. Dr. Albert Kawana, MP

Minister of

Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security

On The Occasion

Of The Launch Of The Online Application for

Passports And Employment Permits

“Efficient and Effective Service Delivery to the Public”

15 March 2023

**Ministry of Home Affairs,
Immigration, Safety and
Security Head Office,
Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba
Building**

Director of Ceremony,

Hon. Cabinet Ministers,

Hon. Laura McLeod-Katjirua, Governor of Khomas Region

Esteemed Dr. George Simataa, Secretary to Cabinet,

Distinguished Executive Directors,

Commissioner-General of Correctional Service,

**Major-General Nainda, Deputy Inspector-General for
Administration,**

Members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, allow me to welcome most sincerely our colleagues, staff members who travelled from the Regions to come and witness this very important event. I am also very pleased to see representative of my senior colleagues, Hon. Ministers who are our main stakeholders in our midst. Once again, you are most welcome. The invited Ministers are attending a Cabinet Committee meeting that is why you are not seeing them here.
2. Many years back, the Ministry of Home Affairs used to be one of the most unpopular public institution. Members of

the public had very little confidence and trust in the Ministry. There were a number of factors for this. Factors such as lack of transparency, poor service delivery, especially in the issuance of national identity documents, birth certificates, passports, study permits, and work permits, were the main contributing factors to the mistrust. Our citizens used to queue for several hours, in the some cases, from early hours of the morning, especially here in Windhoek our capital city, to access some of the services mentioned above.

3. Today, with the required documents, it takes two (2) to three (3) days to process a passport. If it is an emergency, it takes about three (3) hours. It takes one (1) to two (2) weeks to process a national identity document. A duplicate takes only one (1) to two (2) weeks. You will agree with me that most of the national documents are used for various purposes. For example, a national identity card will enable a citizen as proof to vote at all levels of elections upon attaining the age of eighteen (18) years as per the provision of Article 17 (2) of the Namibian Constitution. It enables a citizen to stand for a public office at the age of twenty-one (21) years as per Article 17 (2) of the Namibian Constitution. It enables a citizen to stand for the highest public office, that of the President, at the age of more than

thirty-five (35) years as per the provisions of the Namibian Constitution. It enables a senior citizen to access a social grant or a pension upon attaining the age of sixty (60) years. It enables civil servants to retire from the civil service at the age of sixty(60) years as per the requirements of the Public Service Act of 1995.

4. It is clear, therefore, that some of our services are linked to the benefits of our citizens. As such, we are at the front line. It is our duty to render efficient service to our citizens. In this manner, we will be in a position to contribute to the comfort of life which our citizens are entitled to enjoy.

5. We are delighted to share with you our **RECENT SUCCESSES** that we have achieved nationally, regionally and internationally. This include the introduction of the e-Passports in 2018 which are compatible with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); during 2019, we launched the Visa-on-Arrival to further improve the facilitation of movement of persons; on 17 November 2022, we inaugurated the state-of-the-art Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security Head Quarters; on 07 December 2022, we launched the National Migration Policy; and less than a month ago on 24 February this year, we launched the usage of ID-cards as

Travel Documents between the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of Botswana. All of these achievements were made despite severe economic headwinds which were mainly attributed to COVID-19 Pandemic. Despite the successes that we have achieved, we are determined to even improve further the services we render to our citizens. We are constantly benchmarking our services with those countries which are regarded as advanced in efficient service delivery.

6. We must answer the call of our President, His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, who directed that Namibia must utilize the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4th IR). It will be recalled that the President appointed a Task Force on the 4th IR which submitted its report to the President and subsequently endorsed Cabinet. We engaged the Task Force and are now able to implement some of its recommendations, especially those which do not need change of legislation. At the same time, we are currently busy drafting legislation in order to give effect to some of the changes which will be introduced in the near future.
7. I am pleased to inform the nation, as well as the general public that with effect from today the Ministry has introduced online applications for employment permits and

passports. The Work-Visa (or Short-Term Employment Permit) which is valid for a maximum period of six (6) months is normally issued to non-Namibians (foreigners) who seek approval to work temporarily in Namibia for donor funded projects, Multi-National companies, as well as Namibian companies under certain conditions. This applies mainly to scarce professional skills. In addition to short term employment permits, the Ministry is also launching the online passport applications. In so doing, we are embracing technology as a catalyst and enabler in order to achieve Global Best Practices as well as the Namibian Government Reform Initiative by embracing e-Governance.

8. We believe that by introducing these measures, we will reduce wasteful cost to our clients thereby achieving more with less. Thus, having devised and deployed online technology, we will add more services online in addition to work-visa and passport applications. With escalating and exorbitant cost of IT-Service providers, we have harnessed and capitalized on our own internal capabilities from our IT-Units to realise this vision. We have internally developed, tested, rolled-out web-based software for online work-visa and passport applications. Therefore, I extremely pleased to note that through engagements, wide-range consultations and technical contributions, the web-based

application was developed, tested and is now fully operational and finally rolled-out and available for public use.

9. With the Work-Visa application, applicants will have the advantage of completing all relevant forms online and upload all the required documents by the press of a button. All completed and submitted forms and documents will be received, considered and responded online; payments will also be done online via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) in short. With regards to Passport application; applicants will have the advantage of only completing the application form, while all other required documents, such as IDs and Birth Certificates, will automatically be imported through system integration. Furthermore, applicants will also have the advantage of choosing their own booking-time-slot for self-representation for the collection of biometrics-data such as the facial image and fingerprints. Furthermore, applicants will be able to follow progress through various processing steps via SMS notifications. Payments can also be done in cash or via EFT, although EFT is the most preferred method of payment in order to avoid tempering with cash. We remain confident that the greater public will derive immense benefits by utilizing the online web-based application from the comfort of their homes, whether in

Namibia or abroad, through desktops, laptops and other mobile devices.

10. I believe that there will be enormous collective benefits derived through this technological innovation of online work-visa and passport application. This will include, but not limited to:

10.1 Shorter queues; through the online application and booking of preferred time-slot, queues will be drastically reduced at our counters countrywide;

10.2 Less Paper-Work; the high volume of papers such as application forms and other required documents will drastically be reduced;

10.3 Improved Service Delivery, the online service provision will ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness by removing bureaucratic “red-type”;

10.4 Optimal Utilization of Staff, with the removal of cumbersome manual processes, staff can now easily be re-deployed to other operational areas and thereby be exposed to greater career-path mobilities;

10.5 Direct Service Delivery; applicants will, henceforth, directly liaise with the Ministry, instead of operating through an “Agent” or office officials whom in the manual processes remain prone to making mistakes. In most cases, money will be paid to the State Revenue Account by means of EFT thereby protect State resources;

10.6 Effective accountability, through direct service delivery, we will be able to cut-out the “middle person” dealings and save our customers from some scammers and unscrupulous individuals, who at many a time charge exorbitant fees to their clients. In addition, illegal dealing in national documents will be minimised and in the long run, eliminated altogether;

10.7 Ease of Doing Business; by embracing this technology, we will improve Namibia’s Global Ranking in terms of speed of processing visas and passport applications. In future, it will be possible to link it through the Namibia Single Window Portal for doing business; and

10.8 Improved Economy of Scale; with the removal of the “middle-person” associated with exorbitant charges, the public will be the greatest winner.

In conclusion, allow me to express my appreciation and gratitude to all my Predecessors for their tireless efforts in ensuring that our nation receives efficient service delivery. These are the efforts which started many years back by our pioneers who adopted innovative methods towards effective and efficient service delivery. I therefore also recognise the efforts of present and past staff members for achieving this remarkable success.

It is now my singular honour to launch the Online Work-Visa and Passport application systems, and request the Executive Director to make the demonstration.

I thank you.