



Electoral Commission of Namibia

**REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ELECTORAL
COMMISSION OF NAMIBIA, MS. ELSIE NGHIKEMBUA - CLOSING OF
THE TRAINING PROGRAM OF POLLING OFFICIALS FOR THE
SWAKOPMUND CONSTITUENCY BY-ELECTION ON 10th August 2022,
*Swakopmund***

**ECN Management and Staff Present;
The Returning Officer, Mr. Nguaiko;
ECN Trainers and Support Staff;
Presiding Officers and Polling Officials;
Distinguished Members of the Media;**

Good afternoon to you all,

Today I am **privileged** to speak to you as we bring this training workshop for our polling officials to a **close**. Let me begin by **congratulating** each one of you for being selected to perform this **critical function** on behalf of the Electoral Commission. As we mark the end of the week long training, I further wish to **commend** you all for having **heeded** the call by committing to **serve** the residents of **Swakopmund constituency**, and by extension the entire **country**. As a

Commission, our **mandate**, wherever it is executed, is inextricably linked to the **destiny and future of our country**.

Therefore, your role in assisting the ECN **fulfill** its mission is of utmost importance. That is why you are called upon to carry out your **responsibilities** with **integrity, impartiality, transparency, fairness, commitment & professionalism throughout the process**.

It is important that from your **training** you **understand** the **position** you have been **assigned** and what is **expected** of you. The **training** provided you a platform to **learn, update, and sharpen your skills** and **exchange experiences** for improvement. It is therefore important that you **understand and appreciate** that **your individual actions**, and indeed **our collective actions**, can make or **break our democracy**. As such the responsibility on you and indeed all of us is enormous. It is not to be taken lightly.

You are well aware that the Electoral Commission of Namibia is **not an ordinary institution - Elections in nature are dynamic, sensitive & delicate, and could be detrimental if not handled effectively**. The increase in the competitive electoral environment has demanded of us to demonstrate **high-levels of competency and commitment to the process**.

You have **witnessed the competitive**, and the **campaigns** by contesting **political parties and candidates** for this by-election in recent weeks. This is testimony that **they expect superior service delivery** from each one of us, and therefore **your performance** will determine the **success** of this Election.

It is of utmost importance that you are **fully acquainted** with your respective roles and perform them with dedication. We require that you **perform your functions**

diligently and effectively. The Commission **will not condone mediocrity** in the performance of your duties.

Our mission is simple – it is to ensure that the Commission conducts **credible and transparent, peaceful elections.** These principles are the guiding lights around which we function, thus, in the conduct of your duties your decisions, actions must pass the three (3) tests of **Is it fair? Is it transparent? Is it done with integrity?**

Beware to **exercise impartiality at all times** in your dealings with others i.e. voters, election agents, observers, and you must not be seen, or perceived, as taking sides. Once you pass this you can confidently say that you are on the right track.

At this point **I would like to confirm that all preparations towards the** conduct the Swakopmund Constituency by-election are in place.

The ECN conducted the Supplementary Registration of Voters (SRV) in the constituency from **06th – 08th June 2022.** The final voters' register was published on the **27th of July 2022** with a total of number of 37,406 registered voters.

The nomination of candidates was concluded on the **02nd July 2022 and 7 political parties and 1 independent candidate** are going to contest this by-election.

The voter education campaign for the Swakopmund Constituency commenced on **18th July 2022** and will be concluded on **11th August 2022.** Face to face, digital media, posters and radio are currently some of the media employed to ensure the ECN reaches the electorate in the constituency.

The ECN completed the bidding process for the printing of ballot papers in terms of the provisions of the Public Procurement Act No.15 of 2015. The verification,

printing and distribution of the final Ballot Papers was done from **02nd to 03rd August 2022** in the presence of representatives of the political parties and the independent candidate and was successfully completed.

A total number of **145** polling officials have been recruited to make up **29 Teams** constituted as **26 Fixed** and **3 Mobile Teams** for the conduct of the by-election. The training of election agents and police officers was conducted on the **04th – 05th August 2022**, while training of polling officials started on the **06th August 2022 and will end today**.

As integral part of our **decentralization strategy** to bring services closer to the people, the ECN decentralized the issuance of **duplicate Voter Cards** to our Regional Voter Education Office in Swakopmund for this purpose. A voters' card is used to identify a registered voter during an election process. In the event that a voter might have lost or damaged their voter's card, the eligible voter can apply for a duplicate voter's card. In terms of Section 35(1) of the Electoral Act, no duplicate voter registration card may be issued on **any day** determined as a polling day in respect of any election. Hence, the issuance of duplicate voter cards to register voters for the Swakopmund Constituency By-election commenced on the **08th August and will end on the 11th August 2022**.

The twenty-nine (29) teams will be deployed on **11th August 2022** for the commencement of the polls on the **12th August 2022**.

In addition, the ECN took note of the allegations made by the Landless Peoples Movement (LPM), during its press conference of **09th August 2022**, that one of the ballot boxes was open upon arrival at the Mondesa Police Station.

ECN wishes to confirm that there was no ballot box open and that all ECN seals and seals of all political parties affixed to all ballot boxes in Windhoek were still intact at the time of offloading at Mondesa Police Station. This was verified and confirmed by all political parties' representatives present including LPM.

The ECN wishes to reassure all stakeholders including the electorate of the Swakopmund Constituency that all our processes including this by-election are transparent and credible. As part of upholding our value of inclusivity, all contesting political parties were given an opportunity to observe all key stages of the electoral activities for this by-election including the printing and final distribution of ballot papers. To attest to this, the LPM on their own accord was the only political party that followed the police escort convoy of sensitive election materials to Swakopmund on the **07th August 2022**.

The ECN remains committed to executing its sacred obligation of strengthening our constitutional democracy and the promotion of inclusive democratic electoral and referenda processes.

The Commission urges all political parties to refrain from spreading information that incorrect and might derail electoral processes.

Finally, the Commission encourages all registered voters to go out in numbers to exercise their democratic rights and VOTE on the **12th August 2022**.

Dear colleagues, we wish you well, drive safely to your designated polling stations – we will be visiting your respective teams and we look forward to a successfully concluded by-election.

**WITH THESE FEW REMARKS, I THANK YOU, AND MAY GOD BLESS
YOU ALL!!**
