ATT: ALL MEDIA HOUSES

RE: MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC ON THE REVISED CURRICULUM

1. Firstly, please tell us what prompted the revision of the curriculum and what is the overall intended goal which it aims to achieve in Namibia?

Curriculum review is a renewal process which is regularly carried out to continuously adjust and improve the existing education practices in light of emerging national and global economic trends. Curriculum in most education systems is predicated on 5-7 year renewal cycle. The curriculum review was informed by the NDP 4, 2011 Education Conference and international trends in basic education. The overall goal was to meet the demands of the Namibian society and keep abreast with international trends.

The Basic Education reforms were initiated to contribute towards the realisation of Namibia Vision 2030. Vision 2030 sees Namibia as developing from a literate society to a knowledge-based society, a society where knowledge is constantly being acquired and renewed and used for innovation to improve the quality of life.

Furthermore, the reforms are informed by the Cabinet directives on the outcomes of the 2011 National Education Conference and the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4). The Cabinet directives tasked the Ministry of Education to: review the curriculum to respond to the challenges and needs of the Namibian society; reduce the number of subjects in the Junior Secondary phase; expand the subjects offered on Higher Level in the Senior Secondary phase; strengthen learning support; strengthen the teaching of Life Skills as subject and make provision for learners with special needs; review the curriculum and learning support materials for national languages; re-introduce technical/vocational subjects.
in the school curriculum; strengthen the teaching of English from grade 1 onwards and review the Promotion and Language in Education policies.

2. **The Ministry of Education Arts and Culture say that benchmarking was with other countries? Which were these?**

South Africa, Mauritius, Singapore, Finland, Germany and UK.

Since the first round of reform of the education system in independent Namibia. The Senior Secondary curriculum the school leaving qualifications are benchmarked on Cambridge International Education (CIE) curriculum and qualifications. The Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary Level is benchmarked against International General Certificate for Secondary Education (IGCSE). As the qualification of the NSSC-Higher level was benchmarked against HIGCSE but the latter does no longer exist, the NSSC-Advanced Subsidiary is benchmarked on the Advanced Subsidiary of UK.

It should be noted that research was conducted and comparative analysis were done on many other countries which also included countries in SADC and abroad to gain insight into international trends and learn about the aspects of good practice. Specifically, a team of officials from Ministry of Education (in some instances representatives from Higher Education and NTA) physically visited Finland, Germany, Singapore and Mauritius for fact finding missions on technical subjects with the late Minister Honourable Abraham Iyambo. Extensive research was also conducted on various education systems around the globe.

It needs to be pointed out that the curriculum for Singapore, to be specific, is also accredited and benchmarked on Cambridge International’s Education IGCSE, AS and A-Level qualification in terms of curriculum, assessment demand and practice. These research studies established the gaps in education system which was found still to be leaning to an examination driven recall of knowledge with understanding, but with lesser focus on fostering investigative, innovative and independent critical thinking skills, ability to handle information from various perspectives, analyse and synthesise which our Vision 2030 and other National high level documents would demand from education. In addition to the research methods, consultations were carried out widely.

The review of the Primary and Junior Secondary phases was based on local and regional research studies and were done to ensure proper articulation and progression, in terms of building knowledge and competencies in terms of continuity and coherence to prepare these same learners for the senior secondary phase where NSSCO and NSSCAS are to be obtained.

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We also integrated as of 2008 the pre-primary grade into the formal education stream, which meant that the grades that made up the phases changed: Pre-Primary together with Grade 1, 2 and 3 form now the junior primary phase followed by the senior primary stretching from Grade 4, 5, 6, to Grade 7.

The junior secondary phase comprises of Grade 8 and Grade 9. This also means that there is no more junior secondary certificate, but only a semi-external examination, set nationally and administered and coordinated but marked regionally with moderation for quality checks and controls. Learners who meet the necessary competencies at junior secondary need to proceed to the next grade, being Grade 10, which then marks the start of senior secondary leading to the NSSCO level qualification at the end of Grade 11.

The revised curriculum was phased in the way that in 2015 Pre-Primary, Grade 1, 2 and 3 were implemented followed by the senior primary in 2016 for the Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7. In 2017 only Grade 8 was introduced followed by Grade 9 in 2018 for that same cohort who completed the Grade 8 revised curriculum already. That marked also 2018 as the last year that Grade 10 Junior Secondary Certificate was offered on full-time bases in schools.

The year 2019 marked then the implementation for the first cohort who entered the revised senior secondary curriculum at Grade 10 followed this year (2020) by the Grade 11 which will finish with the NSSC-Ordinary level external examination. Alongside these Grade 11 in secondary schools are the old curriculum Grade 12 learners who will also write their external examinations on the old curriculum, for the last time as full-time learners in school to obtain their NSSC -Ordinary and NSSC-Higher level qualification.

The year 2021 would be the first year that the NSSC- Advanced Subsidiary (NSSCAS) level would be offered to those learners who managed to obtain a symbol C in at least three subjects of their NSSC-O level qualification. Learners at NSSC- Advanced Subsidiary (NSSCAS) level will study 3 to 5 subjects with in-depth subject content and key concepts introduced, higher order thinking skills fostered, less scaffolding in questions than at IGCSE providing more extended responses.

What we need to realise here is that the NSSC-Advanced Subsidiary level is a “build-on” on the NSSC-O Level qualification. It cannot be taken free standing from the NSSC-O and university admission for various courses could have a pre-requisite of a combination NSSC-O and NSSC-AS depending on the course of specialisation and institution offering it.
3. For the implementation of the revised curriculum a number of consultations were held. Can you elaborate on this?

The regional and national consultations ten years ago done under the leadership of late Dr Abraham Iyambo, the then Minister of Education brought out the call for a more responsive curriculum and education system that can allow for development of technical practical skills. This was strongly affirmed during the 2011 Conference on Education. Which recommended a comprehensive curriculum review. A proposal on curriculum framework was drafted to incorporate all the recommendations. With this framework the Ministry started to engage stakeholders at national and regional level through the media and physical presentation and interactions.

The Cabinet Decision (2//10.03.2014) approved the seven (7) years implementation plan for the revised curriculum. The process of curriculum review was rigorous, challenging and lengthy. At times it has been difficult to reach consensus within a short period, because the whole nation had taken a keen interest in education.

The curriculum review also aimed at identifying the gaps and weaknesses to ensure that the curriculum remains current and relevant to reflect new developments in the society to adequately prepare learners for life. The first stakeholder consultations on the curriculum proposal were done through print and electronic media and through presentations in the regions in July 2012 where stakeholders were invited to provide their views on the curriculum proposal.

The second rounds of regional consultations were held in July and early August 2013 (after consolidation of inputs). The Ministry received individual submissions; institutional submissions; submissions from teachers' unions and some political parties, focused group discussions were conducted with members of teachers' unions, student representatives; parents and learners; representatives from the private sectors and representatives from institutions of higher learning. Consultations in the SADC region were carried out in the following countries: Mauritius, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland. The Ministry also consulted internationally with the following countries: Germany, Singapore, Australia, Finland and UK.

4. How far did the Ministry ensure the involvement of the unions in the consultations and in trainings?

Unions were engaged at different levels just the same way as all stakeholders. On national level, Unions were invited to NIED and a presentation of the proposal was done and discussed. NANTU for example, annually requested for a presentations and updates on

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curriculum review to their National Steering Committee and the officials for Curriculum Development frequently presented at their Head Office in Katutura, Windhoek. All unions were invited and represented at various forums e.g. National Briefing on implementation of Junior Primary which took place at Chairman Mao Zedong Secondary School in 2015 and in 2017 as well as in 2018 and again in 2019.

On Regional level where presentations/ consultations and discussions were conducted, regions invited representatives from teachers' unions, student representatives; parents and learners; religious leaders, School Board - members and representatives from the private sectors as instructed by Head Office to insure inclusivity on regional level. In fact regional advocacy committees were established to ensure that communities are kept informed.

Unions and institutions were asked to further invite representatives from the ministry for updates and discussions at their appropriate time and NANTU and other institutions made use of that.

5. What number of trainings occurred over the years?

Nationally the number on trainings that could be reflected on are as follows:

In Pre-primary, one thousand, one hundred and twenty-two (1 122) teachers were trained nationally for two weeks per group. For Grade 1-3, eight thousand (8 000) teachers were inducted on the revised curriculum at regional level in six subjects. Regional Facilitators were trained at national level for two weeks and the duration of regional workshops was six days over the years of 2013 and 2014.

In addition to these the more than 1900 junior primary teachers who are enrolled in the specially designed up-grading programmes at UNAM are trained on the revised curriculum (INSET)

For the Senior Primary phase: One thousand, one hundred and forty-nine (1 149) regional facilitators were trained at national level for four (4) days in twenty-six (26) subjects during the 2015 and 2016 year. Nineteen thousand nine hundred and thirty five (19 935) teachers were trained in regions in different subjects. Note, that some teachers teach two-three subjects.

Junior Secondary: One thousand nine hundred (1 900) regional facilitators and teachers for small learner entry subjects (e.g. Setswana, Computer Studies) were trained on national level for four days on the revised curriculum. A total of nine thousand seven hundred and thirty-five (9 735) teachers were trained on regional level for four days. Also, the first group

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of twenty two (22) teachers for re-introduced Technical subjects received Skills Upgrading Training Course for two weeks at Namibia Institute of Mining Technology (NIMT) in Arandis in 2017 and the training programme continues.

NSSCO, Grade 10-11: Five hundred and ninety-five (595) regional facilitators were directly trained by NIED, including teachers for smaller learner entry subjects where direct training is possible e.g. NSSCO Fashion and Fabrics or Setswana. Four thousands two hundred and thirty-two (4232) NSSCO teachers were trained in regions.

The ministry followed the cascading training model in line with the decentralisation of functions to Regional Councils. Regional Education Directorates identified competent facilitators and two to three regions were grouped in order to have a larger pool of facilitators sharing teaching experiences and best practices. It should be noted that the revised NSSCO curriculum has a significant degree of continuity in terms of broad content outline, in line with what many teachers were teaching over the past years.

The Regional Education, Arts and Culture Directorates were obliged to continue training using the cascade model and a number of trainings per regions occurred through the number of national facilitators and capacitated teachers. In some subjects with low learner entry in Senior Primary and Junior Secondary, regions were grouped. In Senior Secondary (NSSCO), regions were grouped e.g. in Oshikwanyama or Biology (Kharas, Omaheke, Oshikoto together).

It is important to emphasise that the curriculum from Pre-primary, Grade 1 to 11 NSSCO-level was revised, based on the old curriculum. Majority of teachers are qualified with Diplomas and Degrees in these subjects. What teachers need to be teaching is predominantly what they were teaching already and based on that for which they were trained. The approach is slightly moved to more investigative and data analytical skills and techniques to discuss, critically engage with the learning content and evaluate under a variety of scenarios.

There could be few schools which extended their secondary phase to include the senior secondary offer to NSSC-O and these might need intensive support. We acknowledge that 3-4 days of induction workshop is not sufficient and the Ministry plans further Continuous Professional Development programmes to support teachers. These kind of re-fresher courses would be required even if there was no curriculum review, CPD is required as part of maintaining the professional status as / of a teacher.

Just to remind ourselves also of the close to 2000 teachers who were un/underqualified in old Lower Primary phase now referred to as Junior Primary phase. For these teachers the

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special diploma programme was developed as a Diploma in Junior Primary Education (DJPE) it has currently 1938 student teacher (year 1-3) registered and the first cohort of 734 student teachers who are in their final, fourth year are expected to graduate in April 2020. This programme costs close to N$ 16 million per year (covering administration, tuition, programme delivery, materials) and is expected to come to an end by 2021. The second cohort (currently in year 3) has 572 registered students and 3rd year (currently send year) has 537 students, and 95 learners were not promoted from the 3rd cohort.

6. The number of school principals and teachers who took part or who benefitted from the training?

In Junior and Senior Primary phases on 120 National facilitators were trained cascading to workshops in the regions.

Senior Secondary (NSSCO): Two national facilitators’ workshops for NSSCO School Principals and Inspectors of Education took place on 23-25 October 2018 and 29 October – 1 November 2018 at NIED. The aim was to capacitate them to be able to interpret and monitor the implementation of the revised curriculum. Besides this training there is a group of school principals who were trained on the “model school” concept and instructional leadership for schools to be transformed into hubs of excellence. Eighty (80) participants from all regions attended and they trained other Principals and Inspectors in regions. The training focussed among others, on changes to curriculum (learning areas/subjects), learning support and inclusivity, promotion policy, quality assurance in schools, principals as pedagogical and instruction leaders, induction programme for novice teachers, partnerships / networking etc. The training was rolled out to others since it was budgeted for and funds distributed to regions

7. There has been complaints from institutions such as the Teachers Union of Namibia, that only 1 school per region will offer vocation training subjects, while all children in lower and upper primary will have compulsory subjects in vocational training, what will happen to the rest in only one school can accommodate them?

Elementary Agriculture, Design and Technology and Home Ecology are offered from grade 5-7. A learners choose/do only one and the school, depending on availability of teacher may offer all of these. (But not all are compulsory)

The situation before revision was that central and southern regions offered Design and Technology and Home Ecology while northern regions (e.g. Ohangwena, Omusati, Kavango, Zambezi) only (95%) offered Elementary Agriculture.
The ministry made a deliberate move to encourage regions to identify trained teachers in subjects they did not provide at schools and expand on such subjects e.g. Zambezi identified 8 SP schools to start with Design and Technology or Kharas to introduce or expand by 7 schools offering Elementary Agriculture.

Pre-vocational technical subjects are offered in approximately 18 schools (14 with one per region was an initial target). The Ministry with the support of partners and stakeholders will be expanding. Teacher programme/Degree was introduced at UNAM in 2018 and first graduates are expected in 2022. These subjects require funds, in fact massive investments on specialised rooms, namely workshops, materials and equipment, consumables and other additional items. These cost intensive expansion depends on a joint effort from communities and the ministry to assist each other to accomplish a larger access to technical vocational subjects.

8. There has been an outcry that learners who passed Grade 10 through part-time schools such as NAMCOL, will not be allowed into formal schooling and they should instead must continue with their part-time studies and complete Grade 12 on the old curriculum before it is completely phased out.

The Ministry have noted with keen interest the concerns of the general public regarding the above matter and herewith would like to state the following in order to provide clarity or enhanced understanding to what we construe as misunderstandings of the intention of the said circular.

It should be noted that the implementation of the revised curriculum commenced in 2017 and 2018 for Grades 8 and 9, respectively, being the Junior Secondary Phase. The revised curriculum for Grade 10 was implemented in 2019 and subsequent thereof is the implementation of the revised curriculum for Grade 11 in the current year, 2020. Important to note is the fact that, the Senior Secondary Phase (i.e. the new grade 10 and Grade 11) is a two year course leading to the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary Level (NSSC-O).

The structure of the revised curriculum was wittingly set to minimise drop-out rates by removing the exit point which was the old Grade 10. Therefore the Grade 10 learners of 2018, were the last cohort of learners who wrote the external Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examinations (old curriculum). This implies that, 2018 was the last year that JSC / old curriculum was taught full-time at schools and thus the year 2019 was the first year of implementation of the Grade 10 (new curriculum), which is the first year of a two year course revised senior secondary curriculum.

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THE INTENTION OF THE FORMAL EDUCATION CIRCULAR, 1/2020

In light of the above, the Ministry issued Circular 1 of 2020 to provide guidance that, learner who completed Grade 10 part time in 2019 will not be eligible to re-enter mainstream schooling at Grade 11. This is because, those candidates who did not succeed in Grade 10 in 2018 and who attended part time centres in 2019 are still a part of the old curriculum. Therefore, these candidates cannot proceed to Grade 11 in 2020 as this is the second year of a two year course of the new curriculum where only 30 percent of the senior secondary curriculum content remains before learners commence external examinations. There is thus a colossal competency gap for these learners and they might find it extremely difficult in grasping the advanced basic competencies which were developed as from Grade 8 already.

AVAILABLE OPTIONS

OPTION 1

The Ministry strongly enunciates that, it would be more beneficial for the learners to continue with part time studies over the next two years because of the content gap between the old curriculum and the revised curriculum. It is for this purpose that the Ministry advises all concerned candidates to complete their education in the curriculum in which they started. This will provide them with a more competitive advantage as they will stand a better chance to complete their secondary qualification with their current knowledge base, as opposed to starting with a new curriculum that would require learners to master new content to which they have not previously been exposed to.

The Ministry also wishes to point out, that since the introduction of the Grade 10 external Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examination, the majority learners who enrolled in part time institutions were not re-introduced into the mainstream full-time schooling system.

OPTION 2

This option should only be exercised upon individual request through the Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture, to the Regional Examination Officer, REXO for consideration in instances where classroom space is available.

Candidates may return to the mainstream full-time schooling if they have been part of the 2019 cohort of candidates who sat for the Grade 10 part-time JSC examination to return to Grade 10 in 2020, as the first year of their Secondary Phase. However, this may pose a variety of challenges for both the candidates and the Ministry. Firstly candidates who were unsuccessful in full-time studies in 2018 could be 3 years senior to those learners of the current Grade 10 learners for 2020. This could pose a menace of serious psychological

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and social consequences for all learners involved. Secondly, due to the removal of forced exit points more learners are progressing and this places some considerable strain on the already limited resources.

Having stated the above and in consideration of the public outcry regarding the progression of part-time candidates and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture concussively guides as follows:

- Only Learners who were full-time Grade 10 JSC candidates in 2018 who did not meet the requirements of admission into senior secondary that time and subsequently enrolled in 2019 for part-time tuition and obtained a minimum of 23 points in six subjects may be allowed to apply for registration at their respective Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture in their regions for admission into Grade 10 revised curriculum for 2020.
- Individual candidates will have to report to the Regional Examinations Officers with their original Statement of Results for 2018 and 2019. Their cases will be looked into individually with care and handled in the best interest of the learner. Furthermore, the Ministry would like to emphasise that learners would have to commit to work hard with redoubled dedication and take up additional tuition and learning support to accomplish the desirable performance target.
- The Ministry wishes to re-iterate that it would be more beneficial for these part time candidates to continue in the curriculum in which they started in order to avoid learning disadvantages that would occur due competence gaps resulting from the non-exposure to the new curriculum. The Ministry will not be held liable for consequences of individual decisions in this regard. Should these candidates opt to continue in Grade 10 with new curriculum and possibly not meet the promotion requirements at the end of 2020 they would have to repeat Grade10 again in 2021 because they did not do that curriculum before and will thus be treated like any other candidate in the mainstream full-time school system.

9. **Educators suggest that majority of these learners will fail to reach Grade 12 if they are not taught full time, what’s your response to such claims?**

In cases where there is a lack of commitment, hard work and dedication, the likelihood for a learner to fail is always there. To have failed or erred and have made a mistake is not to lead be condemned, but rather a call for critical introspection and re-doubling all efforts to identify the mistakes and find the corrections and work towards success; this is what learning is all about. Every individual has the inner desire to succeed, this needs to be capitalised on and followed through. The opportunity given to complete the senior secondary phase within the old curriculum is a generous and cost-intensive offer to the repeaters. It should be embraced and the learners affected should give their very best. If hard-work underpins every action at every stage we should be able to succeed.

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10. Your Ministry’s directorate in Omusati region has ordered all Grade 9 pupils who were initially promoted to Grade 10 for the 2020 academic year, to repeat the grade.

This action was in contradiction to the Promotion Policy and necessary steps were taken to rectify this. Planning for the senior secondary phase occurred as of 2017 as well as annually. What we need to recognise that within the old curriculum only little more than half the learners in junior secondary managed to continue school in senior secondary whereas now in the new revised curriculum all junior secondary learners proceed to senior secondary, provided they met the promotion requirement. Besides that many learner had to repeat there is a challenge of opening twice as many places at senior secondary than has been there under the old system. This has been flagged at various levels and interventions for expansion as underway within the limited resource envelope.

11. There is a notion that says the new system is only reserved for children of the elites because high level subjects which are the prerequisite for learners to study for high paying jobs such as engineering are only offered at affluent Government schools. They say majority of Government schools in the country do not offer high level subjects and such learners will only end up in Grade 11 and do menial jobs because that’s what they will qualify for according your revised curriculum.

This is really not the case. The number of schools offering Higher level used to increase from year to year, but only at a slow rate. In addition to that comes that performance in higher level has actually declined, see the press release of the results. However the curriculum reform and in fact the revised curriculum is aimed to address the same concern and rather open up to give more opportunities.

This was the reason which necessitated the expansion of the duration of senior secondary from two to three years.

The parallel teaching of former NSSCO and NSSCH was one of the reason for not expanding in subjects and schools offering NSSCH. With the introduction of NSSCAS, regions identified schools which will be regional hubs offering the higher qualification. Schools will be supported and this will address access issue and increase the output across the country.

12. We understand that the new curriculum will has come into effect this year; how will it impact the way schooling is done in Namibia?

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The new revised curriculum is implemented already since 2015 through phasing it in as from primary through to secondary such that we are now with the first cohort taking the revised curriculum at senior secondary, which as explained earlier is as of Grade 10 and Grade 11 for Ordinary level and Grade 12 (for the first time in 2021) for NSSC-AS level.

13. Was it really a good plan?

The implementation comes a long way, as of 2015 and the planning for this implementation equally as of 2014. Education needs to be responsive as it builds the knowledge and skills for the future, a future that is ever changing and unpredictable. This requires more refined skills from the future inhabitants of the Global Village. Educators at all levels always have their learners' interest close at heart and so also their actions reach out for the Greater Good of the people. Change is the only definite thing in life and all of us need to embrace that fact. With this embrace and acceptance comes the questions to each one namely as to how we react to change as that determines every following step thereafter.

So the Ministry calls on all educators, school principals, heads of departments, learners and teachers to open up to the chain of events that marked this revised curriculum implementation as of 2015 and start closing the gaps that were identified already then years ago. We need to be progressive in order to achieve the goals and objectives we have set ourselves in the national high level documents, such as the Harambee Prosperity Plan, the National Development Plan 5, NDPV, the Vision 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Continental Strategy for Africa, CESA and Agenda 2063, transforming the Africa into "The Africa We Want", outlining the blue print and master plan for transforming Africa into the global power house of the future and therefore, yes it is a good plan.

At this juncture allow me to ask you to remember that ten years ago, part of Education and training improvement programme ETSIP, was even to introduce Mathematics as a compulsory subject up to senior secondary level. Contrary to the outcry of those days it is noteworthy that the performance in Mathematics since then improved.

14. Can the country afford to have young people aged 14/15 unemployed and unemployable, especially considering the current economic climate?

This question emanates from a misunderstanding.

Please note that the rational for the revised curriculum is to have a larger through-put to senior secondary and elimination of drop-out and repetition. This means it places a strong emphasis on getting the basics right, that is pre-primary and primary. There is a commitment from the Government to ensure that basic education is attained, through providing free access. So what you need to realise is that a child enters pre-primary being five years old turning six in that year of attending pre-primary. Any child who missed out the pre-primary Grade will still be admitted into Grade 1, being six years old and turning

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seven any day of that current year when they are in Grade 1. Following this trend the learner who would not have to repeat any grade at any given time in his or her schooling would then be 17 or 18 in their Grade 11 year, which is the first exit point of basic education offered at full-time formal schools.

When they are 14 / 15 years old they are in Grade 8 or Grade 9 which is only the junior secondary phase, but not the end of formal basic education.

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15. Should learners decide to leave school at that age and join the job market, is the curriculum then not incoherent with the labour law and are we encouraging child labour?

The Ministry has launched the National Safe Schools Framework in 2018 which obliges very school to become a child/learner friendly space where learner can develop to reach their full potential. Basic education has been extended to senior secondary and is to be completed with the NSSC-O level certificate as a requirement to leave school. The Promotion Policy makes provision for allowing learner who do not meet the promotion requirement to repeat only once per phase and the policy advocates for intensive learning support. This means teaching and learning should be tailored to the needs of the learner. The learner should be enabled to acquire the basic competencies rather than drop out of school due to not meeting the required standard.

Everybody and every entity should bring their part in this endeavour as education is a shared responsibility, it should instil hope and open doors!

ISSUED BY:
MoEAC CENTRAL INFORMATION OFFICE

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