



NATIONAL COUNCIL

MOTIVATION FOR THE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR VOTE 11

FOR THE

2019/2020 FINANCIAL YEAR

BY

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WINDHOEK

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**Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,
Honourable Members,**

It is with profound appreciation that I introduce before you the budget estimates for Vote 11, National Council, for the Financial Year 2019/2020.

INTRODUCTION

As it is known to you all, the National Council, is a Second Chamber of Parliament, established in accordance with Article 68 of the Namibian Constitution with the mandate of reviewing bills passed by this House.

The Members of the National Council are drawn from each region in accordance with Article 69 of the Namibian Constitution. Therefore, in addition to the responsibilities indicated in Articles 74 and 75, they are also elected as Regional Councilors, as per Article 108.

The National Council has only one programme called, Legislative Support Services with three activities. The National Council has set the following Ministerial targets for the MTEF period:

1. Progress made in scrutinizing the implementation of the developmental agenda of government as per Vision 2030, NDPs and HPP by O/M/As by 2020:

In the previous financial year, the National Council pledged to focus its oversight activities on the implementation of the government's developmental programmes, as set out by each OMA. In this respect, the following activities were carried out:

- Twenty (20) Bills were reviewed, three (3) of which were passed with amendments. It is important to mention that 17 substantive amendments were proposed and a large number of minor amendments.
- Committees planned to undertake 45 activities including participation at regional and international conferences. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the activities were implemented and eight (8) reports were tabled and adopted in the House. A total of 41 recommendations were forwarded to OMAs for their consideration and ultimate implementation. Thus far only 2% was implemented. In order to work towards ensuring that more recommendations are implemented, the National Council requested the various OMAs to designate Parliamentary Desk Officers to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations.

In this regard, good cooperation was received from several OMAs and 16 OMAs have appointed Desk Officers. These Desk Officers serve as liaison between the National Council and their respective offices with regards to implementation of recommendations from oversight activities undertaken by Committees as well as from regional and international forums which committees attended and whose reports are adopted by the House. By December 2018, 46 recommendations of Committee reports were forwarded to 17 OMAs and 3 Regional Councils for consideration and implementation.

2. *Percentage of Auditor General's Audit reports on Regional and Local Authorities scrutinized within the year received from the National Assembly:*

- As Honourable Members are aware, audited reports of Regional and Local Authorities, by the Auditor General, are referred to the National Council to scrutinize such reports and give feedback to the National Assembly. In this regard, around 74 reports were forwarded to the National Council Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Economy. The National Council intended to deal with all reports within the year of referral. Accordingly, a number of hearings were held with Regional and Local authorities for which the AG's Office issued disclaimer and adverse reports. Public Hearings were conducted on 22 of these reports based on the re-engineering workshop's resolutions.
- Furthermore, the Public Accounts and Economy Committee held stakeholders' consultative meeting on 25 – 29 June 2018 to re-engineer and streamline the process of reviewing the AG's Reports so as to increase and strengthen parliamentary oversight functions. The Committee report was tabled and adopted in the House during the Session of December 2018. The report was sent to stakeholders and the Committee has started to implement the resolutions of the workshop; for example the Ministry of Finance has assigned a resource person to the PAC; and the Committee is primarily focusing on disclaimer and adverse reports of regional and local authorities.

- It is important to mention that the review of the audited reports of regional and local authorities is a delegated function by the National Assembly to the National Council in terms of Article 74(1)(b) of our Constitution. As a result the National Council PAC cannot directly make follow-ups on recommendations emanating from the review of AG Reports. However, once proposed Joint Rules of Parliament have been adopted by both Houses it is envisaged that this matter could be revisited with the view of strengthening and improving the oversight function of Parliament.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 2018/2019 FINANCIAL YEAR

**Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,
Honourable Members,**

During the 2018/2019 financial year, the National Council successfully implemented the following activities:

During the year under review the following achievements have been recorded:-

- The Strategic Plan of the National Council was launched on 11 April 2018 and the strategic objectives are currently being implemented.
- All staff members developed, signed and reviewed their Performance Agreements for the financial year.

- The Vacancy Plan for the financial year was approved by the Secretary to Cabinet on 29 May 2018 and implementation is in progress.
- The Annual Procurement Plan was developed, approved and has been implemented.
- The training of 16 Members of Parliament (MPs) on **Parliamentary Conduct and Practice** has been facilitated in collaboration with the University of Namibia's Faculty of Law as part of implementing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the two institutions. The Members attended the Graduation Ceremony on 12 April 2019 in Windhoek during which those who successfully completed the Course were conferred with their Certificates.
- Refresher training for MPs was conducted on the first day of the session in May, August and December 2018 to remind MPs on the Rules and Procedures of the House and what is expected of them during the session. Similarly, the Members were refreshed on the Privileges and Immunities of Members of Parliament and Code of Conduct of Members of the National Council, focusing on the disclosure of financial and business affairs.
- The Occasional and Annual Stock Taking was conducted and Treasury approval was granted.
- The Annual Statements and Accounts for the report of the Auditor-General have been compiled and submitted to the Office of the Auditor General.

- The National Council realized that the homeless people's plight needed to be addressed. The National Council saw it fit to initiate a session where issues of shelter and housing, unemployment and human rights would be discussed. Therefore, the first Homeless People's Parliament was facilitated by National Council under the Theme: *"Voice of the Voiceless, dignity restored"* on the 17th May 2018. A total of 7 resolutions/recommendations were adopted for submission to OMAs.
- To foster a better understanding of principles that underpin democracy by the youth; the National Council again created a platform for youth to debate issues that are of concern to them. As a result the NC Secretariat facilitated the second session of the Junior National Council from 30 – 31 August 2018 in Windhoek to reach out to the young people and share with them the work and values of Parliament. The theme for the Junior National Council Session was *"Enhancing Partnerships to strengthen good governance in Namibia"*. A total of 9 resolutions /recommendations were adopted and submitted to OMAs.
- The National Council organized the Fourth Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners on 10-12 September 2018 which brought together 42 rural women and men to discuss issues that are affecting them in rural areas. The Fourth Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners was held under the theme: *"Positioning rural women for economic inclusion and prosperity"*. Rural Women and Men as Partners deliberated on critical issues to enable rural women and their communities to have a seat at the economic table and prosper. The recommendations made have been forwarded to the relevant line Ministries.

- A total of twenty (20) Bills were considered and reviewed of which three (3) were passed with proposed amendments. A total of 35 proposed amendments were made to the three Bills namely the Seed and Seed Varieties Bill [B. 1 – 2018]; Public Enterprises Governance Bill, [B.5 – 2018] and Basic Education Bill [B.4 – 2018] were sent to the National Assembly for consideration.
- Nine (9) reports from Standing Committees covering oversight work on the inspection of MTEF projects were tabled in the House. Similarly, delegation reports on best parliamentary practices learnt at regional and international forums were also tabled.
- The Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Economy Committee had conducted a working session on re-engineering and finalisation of public hearings’ draft reports from 25th – 29th June 2018 at Roof of Africa in Windhoek.
- The Namibian Parliament: National Council also hosted the 2018 SOCATT AFRICA REGION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR under the **Theme** “*Capacitating Parliaments towards realizing Agenda 2063: The role of Parliaments in the age of knowledge based economy*”. The deliberations of the Seminar took note of the overwhelming flow of information and the work of Parliaments that is becoming more complex. Further stated that we stand at the brink of a technological revolution that will primarily alter the way we do things. Importantly, the Seminar observed that The Fourth Industrial Revolution was signaling a new world order and

African Parliaments should move faster towards transforming their operations and work methods into e-Parliaments.

CHALLENGES OF THE 2018/2019 FINANCIAL YEAR

- The National Council like any other government office, faced serious financial constraints during the 2018/19 financial year and had to suspend some of its activities. For example, the financial limitations saw the number of Members and staff that could have attended workshops, seminars, training and conferences for capacity building both locally, regionally and internationally *reduced*. The reduction of participants meant that the exposure of many Members and staff to crucial capacity building initiatives was negatively impacted.
- I wish to emphasize that traveling for Members of the National Council forms part of the mission to achieve the mandate of the institution. I must say that, without travelling, Parliamentarians from the National Council will not be able to attend National Council Sessions in Windhoek, be present at national events and meet their parliamentary obligations in the country and abroad.
- Some MPs have vast constituencies to cover and that in itself requires traveling by the Members. The MPs are not provided with official transportation when carrying out these responsibilities. Thus, this is a challenge that needs to be understood by Government, that traveling is part

and parcel of the National Council's programme to execute its core functions and achieve its mandate.

- The Annual Human Resource Development Plan for staff members has been developed, approved and submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister. However, due to financial constraint, the plan could not be implemented fully.

2019/20 REQUEST

**Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,
Honourable Members,**

The National Council is requesting for an amount of N\$94, 763, 000 (**Ninety Four Million, Seven Hundred and Sixty Three Thousand Namibia Dollars**) to cover its operational activities during the 2019/20 Financial Year.

The National Council has only one programme namely: **Legislative Support Services** under which three main activities will be carried out as follows:

- 1. Strengthen capacity of the review and oversight function of the National Council - N\$9, 505, 000 (Nine Million, Five Hundred and Five Thousand Namibia Dollars)**

The National Council launched its Strategic Plan during the 2018/19 financial year. Four (4) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been set to strengthen the capacity of review and oversight functions of the National Council. The

KPIs are aimed at measuring the impact of the National Council's review functions by setting annual activities and targets designed to achieve the strategic objectives.

2. Coordination of parliamentary support services - N\$29, 211, 000.00 (Twenty Nine Million and Two Hundred and Eleven Thousand Namibia Dollars)

Under this activity, the implementation of the HPP Goals of Accountability and Transparency as well as that of Performance and Service Delivery will be monitored. The main objectives therefore would be to improve budget execution and financial accountability; improve the management and development of human resources; prudent procurement of goods and services, ensure the optimal utilization and control of assets and implement parliamentary and public service reform initiatives.

3. Parliamentary Committee Services N\$56, 047, 000 (Fifty Six Million, Forty Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars).

In 2019/2020 financial year, the National Council plans to carry out its oversight activities guided by its programme "Legislative Support Services". Parliament has an important role to play by articulating the needs of the constituents in national debates, in particular, on poverty eradication. It is against that background that National Council Committees will focus their oversight activities on the Blueprint on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication; Green Scheme Projects; Provision of Low Cost Housing; Sanitation and Registration and Immigration Control amongst others.

With regard to its theme of *“Enhancing partnerships to strengthen good governance in Namibia”*, the National Council through its Public Accounts and Economy Committee plans to continue to carry out public hearings with Regional and Local Authorities. Oversight plays an essential role in enhancing transparency and accountability. Transparency and accountability are therefore central in improving corporate governance within Regional and Local Authorities. Although complex and challenging, it will enhance partnership and at the same time be an efficient entry point to strengthen Regional and Local Authorities governance systems.

Parliament further plays a crucial role in improving governance and public service delivery; and regional and local authorities are best positioned to provide such services; hence the need to ensure that these authorities have systems in place that are capable of delivering the required services. Participation of the underprivileged in the law making process remains a preoccupation of Parliament. The National Council hence places emphasis on good governance and representation of all constituents and citizens. It is against that background that the National Council made the Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners and the Junior National Council an annual activity on its agenda.

IN CONCLUSION

**Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,
Honourable Members,**

The success of the implementation of the afore-mentioned programme, depends on the support from this August House. It is for this reason that I request this August House to approve the amount of **Ninety Four Million, Seven Hundred and Sixty Three Thousand Namibia Dollars** (N\$ 94, 763, 000) for the National Council to carry out its activities during the 2019/20 Financial Year.

Finally, I wish to thank my counterpart and colleague, the Honourable Chairperson of the National Council for a well-prepared Motivation Speech which highlights the achievements and challenges of our sister House during the 2018/2019 financial year.

I thank you for your support and attention.
