



STATEMENT BY

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SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

DURING THE

MOTIVATION OF THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL'S BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

FOR 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR

TUESDAY, 20 APRIL 2021

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
WINDHOEK
KHOMAS REGION**

Check Against Delivery

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

I am profoundly honoured to introduce the budget estimates for Vote 11, National Council, for the Financial Year 2021/2022.

The National Council has a constitutional mandate for the review of legislation as referred to it by the National Assembly in accordance with Articles 74 and 75 of our Constitution. In terms of this mandate the National Council must convene sessions throughout the year to review bills referred to it.

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

During the year under review the National Council has recorded the following achievements-

The National Council has, in terms of Article 75(2) of the Namibian Constitution, reviewed seven (7) Bills of which five (5) were passed without amendments and two (2) without amendments. These Bills are the *Appropriation Bill; Gaming and Entertainment Control Amendment Bill; Communication Amendment Bill; Post and Telecommunications Companies Establishment Amendment Bill; The*

Control of the Import and Export of Dairy Products and Dairy Product Substitutes Bill; Financial Institutions and Markets Bill; and Appropriation Amendment Bill;

The Council further considered and debated several reports that dealt with oversight work implemented by the Council Committees such as:

- *Visit to correctional facilities at selected prisons and capital projects by the Standing Committee on Security, Constitutional and Legal Affairs;*
- *Review of the Reports of the Auditor-General of Regional Councils and Local Authorities for Various Financial Years by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Economy;*
- *Visit to obtain feedback on land servicing, human wildlife conflict and the provision of potable water in rural areas, investigation on the use of drought relief fund by the Standing Committee on Habitat; and*
- *Visit to Green Scheme Irrigation Projects by the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development.*

The National Council Standing Committees as part of expanding their knowledge and experience in review and oversight undertook visits to selected Parliaments, notably the Parliaments of Rwanda and

Zambia, and attended specific conferences outside the country. Reports in that regard were tabled before the House, debated and adopted. The recommendations contained therein are being implemented progressively. The institution's Annual Procurement Plan was developed, approved and implemented. Bill Summaries were prepared for Members to enhance better understand of the Bills. The Annual Statements and Accounts for the report of the Auditor-General have been compiled and submitted to the Office of the Auditor General.

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

During my motivation speech for the National Council's budget for the last financial year on the 8th June 2020 I said the following "It is important to note that the National Council will attract new Members of Parliament at the end of November 2020 Regional Councils' Elections. Consequently, budgetary provision has to be made for intensive Induction as well as Post-Election Seminars which will cover broad topics on oversight and review function of MPs, relationship between the three organs of State, the law-making process, legislative scrutiny, protocol, diplomacy, public speaking, speech drafting and many other relevant subject areas. Such earlier capacity building

interventions are intended to put the new Members in a better position to kick-start their parliamentary career as effectively as possible.”

I am delighted to inform the Honourable Members of this august House that Members of the 6th National Council took their oath and affirmation on the 15th December 2020 which was administered by the Chief Justice. The swearing-in ceremony was preceded by a brief induction pertaining to the taking the oath and affirmation and associated formalities and resulted in a remarkably smooth ceremony.

I am further delighted to report that in order to ensure that Council Members have a good understanding of the operations of the National Council Secretariat, an in-house induction was organized from 15th to 19th March 2021 during which the various Directorates made presentations on their functions and responsibilities.

Challenges during the 2020/2021 Financial Year

The National Council budget was cut resulting in several activities being suspended. The Standing Committees’ oversight activities were cancelled as a result of travel restrictions occasioned by Covid-19. Funds were that were earmarked for the cancelled trips were redirected towards efforts aimed at combating and complying with

Covid-19 measures and regulations. Understaffing in the Finance Division which has the potential to compromise checks and balances within the system.

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

For the 2021/2022 Financial Year Budget the National Council is requesting an amount of ***Eighty-Eight Million Three Hundred and Sixty-Seven Thousand, Namibia Dollars*** (N88,367,000) to cover its operational activities during the 2021/2022 Financial Year under the **Legislative Support Services Programme** which is divided into three main activities, namely:

- 1. Strengthen capacity of the review and oversight function of the National Council – Eight Million, Eight Hundred and Fifty-Two Thousand, Namibia Dollars*** (N\$8,852,000)

Under this programme activity the National Council will embark on policy formulation, review of the Standing Rules and Orders, the Chairperson's Outreach Programme, and strengthening relations with regional councils.

2. *Coordination of Parliamentary Support Services - **Twenty-Seven Million Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three Thousand, Namibia Dollars*** (N\$27,973,000)

Under this programme activity the National Council Secretariat will ensure proper budget execution and financial accountability; improve the management and development of human resources; ensure prudent procurement of goods and services and the optimal utilization and control of assets of the institution as well and implement parliamentary and public service reform initiatives where appropriate.

3. *Parliamentary Committees Services - **Fifty-One Million, Five Hundred and Forty-Two Thousand, Namibia Dollars*** (N\$51,542,000)

The Standing Committees are the workhorses of the House because most of the detailed examination and scrutiny of government programmes, as outlined in MTEF, is taking place in Committees. It is important that Council Members are prepared for this critical legislative function in the first year of their parliamentary career. In this regard, capacity building interventions will focus on laying a solid knowledge base to enable Members to review legislation and execute oversight work optimally.

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

In conclusion, I am requesting this August House to approve an amount of ***Eighty-Eight Million, Three Hundred and Sixty-Seven Thousand, Namibia Dollars*** (N88,367,000 so that the National Council can cover its operational activities during the 2021/2022 Financial Year. This amount represents a reduction of ***Twelve Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety-Six Thousand, Namibia Dollars*** (N\$12,896,000) from the 2020/2021 Financial Year. This reduced budget is in keeping with the current economic realities.

Finally, I wish to thank my counterpart and colleague, the Honourable Chairperson of the National Council for a well-crafted Motivation Speech which highlights the achievements and challenges of our sister House during the 2020/2021 financial year.

I thank you