



STATEMENT BY

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SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

DURING THE

MOTIVATION OF THE

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'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,**

The budget process and debate on the Appropriation Bill is a constitutional requirement which foster a culture of accountability and transparency within government. Through this exercise the public is enlightened on the activities and spending on the programs of various Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As).

I feel deeply honoured to introduce the budgetary allocations for Vote 03, National Assembly for the 2021/2022 Financial Year, to this august House for support and subsequent approval.

One cannot be oblivious to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy and revenue sources. The containment measures that our government, and wisely so, has put in place has brought our economy to a halt for more than two months at the onset of the pandemic. The economy is still operating at about half of its capacity. The National Statistics Agency (NSA) reported the worst contraction of 8% in three decades during 2020.

It is my belief, that only through the containment and defeat of the pandemic will our economy start to operate full-steam on its way to recovery. At least growing at 2.7% this year (2021) as predicted by the

Bank of Namibia. Despite positive predictions from the IMF about global economic recovery, forecast of 6% in 2021 and 4.4% in 2022 riding on the back of vaccine roll-out, is without its own challenges.

Amidst these trying times, the fight for the betterment of the lives of our people continues, as has been witnessed by the launching of the Second Harambee Prosperity Plan on the 18th March 2021 by His Excellency, Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia. As clearly articulated in the HHP2, we will leave no stone unturned to revive our economy, and bring about an end to the triple scourge of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Honourable Members,

Let me now turn to my task for this afternoon, that of motivating the budgetary allocation for Vote 3, National Assembly. Good governance, transparency and accountability are one of the main pillars of our governance. This underlines what is enshrined in our Supreme Law, the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia and reiterated in all its policy documents.

The recently launched HHP2, I referred to earlier has “Good Governance” as its first Pillar. I deem it worthy to remind you about the mandate of this August House. The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, Article 63 (2) clearly detailed our functions as the National Assembly.

As I informed this august House during my motivation speech for Vote 3, National Assembly during the 2019/2020 Financial Year, I bemoaned the difficulties we have had in trying to make staff members of the Ministry of Finance to understand that the National Assembly and Parliament in general is not like any other O/M/As. For example, what would be classified as ordinary travel function in other O/M/As is in our case, obligatory travel for oversight as our core mandate.

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

With your permission, allow me to briefly review the work of our institution during the year under review. The past year witnessed the National Assembly, as the principal legislative authority in and over Namibia, discharging its constitutional responsibility to the best of its abilities under the prevailing circumstances.

We have the constitutional mandate to legislate, provide oversight and be representative of all the people of Namibia. It extends to outreach activities in the form of public hearings and consultations with communities on Bills, Motions and Petitions to maintain the principle of participatory democracy in the law-making process.

I will highlight some of our achievements, pursuant to our constitutional functions, during the financial year under review by briefly explaining how we spent the money that was allocated to the National Assembly during the 2020/2021 Financial Year.

National Assembly was initially *allocated **One Hundred and Thirty-One Million, One Hundred and Twenty-Four Thousand, Namibian Dollar (N\$131,124,000)***. Out of this allocation, ***One Hundred and Twenty-Four Million, One Hundred and Twenty-Four Thousand, Namibian Dollar (N\$ 124,124,000)*** was for operational activities while ***Seven Million Namibian Dollar (N\$7,000,000)*** was allocated for the development activities.

However, during the Mid-term Budget Review, the operational budget was reduced by ***Three Million and Forty Thousand, Namibian Dollar (N\$3,040,000)*** which represents **2.5%** reduction. This reduction was necessitated to cover shortfalls in other government sectors that were critically affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In terms of the budget execution rate, out of the total operational budget allocated, ***One Hundred and Eighteen Million, One Hundred and Eighty-Eight Thousand, Six Hundred and Thirty-Eight, Namibian Dollars (N\$ 118,188,638)*** **98%** execution rate was achieved. While the development budget allocation of ***Seven Million, Namibian Dollars (N\$ 7,000,000)*** was **100%** executed.

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

The Operational Budget is clustered under two (2) main Programmes:

- ***Programme 1: Legislative Management which*** consists of one (1) Main Division that accommodates the Offices of the Presiding Officers and the Table Office Division; **and**
- ***Programme 2: Policy Coordination and Support Services*** that accommodates four (4) main divisions namely; Parliamentary Coordination & Support Services, Information Services; Committee Services and Legal Services.

Programme: 1 Legislative Management

An amount of ***Eighteen Million Seven Hundred and Forty-Six Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-Eight, Namibian Dollars***

(N\$18,746,858) was allocated to this programme. This programme provides political leadership and guidance to the institution in respect of parliamentary proceedings and procedures, and related administrative services to the Presiding Officers and Members of Parliament. The programme's activities include, among others, the timely and accurate processing of session papers, legislation and production of National Assembly's Hansard.

As alluded to earlier, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the National Assembly was able to pass two (2) Bills (Appropriation Bill & Appropriation Amendment Bill), during the financial year under review. During the same period, eight (8) international instruments were tabled of which seven (7) were ratified.

Pursuant to the democratic culture of this august House, Members introduced and extensively debated Motions on issues of national interests and concerns. Furthermore, a number of petitions were also received from concerned citizens and groups.

Similarly, a number of O/M/As and SOE's annual reports were tabled and a number of questions put to the Members of the Executive with regard to service delivery as part of the oversight function.

During the reporting period, the Presiding Officers participated in virtual meetings of various regional and international parliamentary forums. We also had engagements with various bilateral and multi-lateral partners to promote parliamentary diplomacy.

Programme 2: Policy Coordination and Support Services

Programme 2 is sub-divided into four (4) main divisions namely:

- *Main Division 02: Parliamentary Coordination and Support Services;*
- *Main Division 03: Information Services;*
- *Main Division 04: Committee Services and*
- *Main Division 05: Legal Services.*

This programme provides administrative, secretarial, security, professional and technical support to the Members of Parliament. To enable this programme to perform the afore-mentioned important functions, an amount of ***One Hundred and Two Million, Three Hundred and Thirty-Seven Thousand, One Hundred and Forty-Two, Namibian Dollars (N\$102,337,142.00)*** was allocated for operational budget, while ***Seven Million, Namibian Dollar (N\$ 7,000,000)*** was allocated for development projects.

During the financial year under review, the following activities were successfully executed:

- ✓ Induction training for Members of the 7th Parliament;
- ✓ Budget oversight training for Members;
- ✓ **Select Committee Mission was dispatched to the Kunene Region to assess the drought situation;**
- ✓ Acquisition and installation of a new digitized chamber system;
- ✓ Upgrade of parliamentary network infrastructure;
- ✓ Acquisition and installation of virtual meeting systems;
- ✓ Roll out of live streaming of parliamentary proceedings;
- ✓ Acquisition and installation of security equipment; and
- ✓ Acquisition of additional office furniture and digital equipment for Members.

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

Having stated our past performances, allow me to present the 2021/2022 Financial Year budgetary allocation for Vote 3, National Assembly:

We have been allocated an amount of ***One Hundred and Seventeen Million, One Hundred and Eighty-Seven Thousand, Namibian Dollars (N\$117,187,000)*** of which ***One Hundred and Twelve Million, Six Hundred Thousand, Namibian Dollars (N\$112,600,000)*** is for

Operational Budget, while ***Four Million Five Hundred and Eighty-Seven, Namibian Dollars (N\$ 4,587,000)*** is for Development Budget.

With regard to the Operational Budget, and as indicated earlier, the National Assembly has clustered its activities under two (2) main Programmes, namely;

Programme 1: Legislative Management which is allocated 9% of the total budgetary allocations while Programme 2: Policy Coordination and Support Services is allocated 91% of the allocation.

For Programme 1:

An amount of ***Ten Million, Five Hundred and Thirty-Seven Thousand, Namibia Dollars (N\$10,537,000)*** has been allocated. This programme drives the legislative agenda of the National Assembly and provides support services to the Presiding Officers.

For Programme 2:

An amount of ***One Hundred and Six Million, Six Hundred and Fifty Thousand, Namibian Dollars (N\$106,650,000)*** has been allocated. The following are the total percentage allocations to the four (4) main divisions under this programme:

- Parliamentary Coordination and Support Services **24%**;
- Information and Computer Services **16%**;

- Parliamentary Committee Services **57%**; and
- Legal Services **3%**;

Funds allocated under the 2021/2022 Financial Year will be used for oversight functions; continuous digitization and modernization of the required parliamentary systems to enhance democracy through e-parliament; provision of administrative and legal services to the institution; continuous maintenance of the parliamentary infrastructure and security upgrades. We will also continue to honour our obligations under regional and international parliamentary forums during the year, thereby promoting multilateral parliamentary engagements.

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

As an institution we have embarked on a process, alongside our development partners, to develop a comprehensive e-parliament strategy. The strategy will seek to transform the legislature into a paperless institution, while providing enhanced access to relevant parliamentary documents and information to the members of the public and our stakeholders. The core objective of the project will be to;

- Enable our Members to have easy access to a wide range of information and knowledge resources in order to make informed

decisions; e.g. access to parliamentary committee reports online, tracking tools to monitor all legislation in the enactment process and web based equipped Parliament Library.

- Equip parliamentary standing committees with appropriate technology to undertake public hearings remotely, while allowing the public in different regions to submit inputs via video conferencing facilities.
- Revamping and digitalization of the Parliament Library.
- Capacity building of our Members and Parliamentary staff.

The European Union in collaboration with the National Planning Commission have rolled out a five year Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Programme. The objective of this programme is to strengthen the collaboration and coordination between Civil Society Organization's (CSOs), Government and Parliament in the implementation and oversight of public policies and programmes, particularly but not restricted to the sectors of education and skills and rural development, thereby enhancing participatory democracy in Namibia.

Effective parliamentary oversight is key to ensuring the judicious use of budgetary resource by ascertaining that appropriations are used for intended purposes and within the law as well as guaranteeing value for money and eschewing corruption in budget implementation.

We have also embarked on a process to establish a Select-Committee on the Budget, as I have already stated, in line with the mandate of the legislature to provide oversight on the Budget process in the National Assembly. A Task-Force comprising of five (5) Members has been set-up to look at all modalities with regard to the establishment of this Select Committee. They will report back to the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders when they complete this assignment. This proposed committee will start as a Select Committee focussing only on the National Assembly's budget. As we move on it will later become a fully-fledged Budget Committee for Parliament and later give birth to a fully-fledged Budget Office as is the case within most of the Commonwealth democracies.

The Parliamentary Service Commission Bill, is a work in progress, which I am positive will be completed during the current financial year. I will call upon all Members to support this Bill when it's brought to the floor of the House.

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

While cognizant of the harsh economic conditions, both in Namibia and across the world, exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the

constitutional mandate of the National Assembly remains crucial to the functioning of our democracy. It is therefore imperative that the legislature is adequately funded to fulfil this mandate in oversight and legislative management.

The current allocation to the National Assembly limits our capacity to carry out this constitutional mandate, as entrusted by the Namibian people. Thus, I will continue to appeal to the Minister of Finance to really relook at the budgetary allocation to the National Assembly to ensure that it meets the expectations of the Namibian people. If we are to fully appreciate and realise the principle of participatory democracy in the law-making process and the oversight role of the Assembly, we need to adequately finance the activities of the National Assembly.

Before I conclude, allow me to express my appreciation to our long term development partners, in particular the European Union Delegation to Namibia, UNICEF Namibia, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) as well as other development partners, who have over the years supported the activities of Parliament in general and National Assembly in particular in terms of capacity building for our staff members and Members of Parliament.

To conclude, I would kindly implore you Honourable Members, to support and approve the budgetary allocation of ***One Hundred and***

Seventeen Million, One Hundred and Eighty-Seven Thousand, Namibia Dollars (N\$117,187,000) for Vote 3, National Assembly. This is our Vote, Honourable Members.

I thank you.