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### **OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

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## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

### **INDUCTION WORKSHOP FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT OF NAMIBIA**

**30 March 2015**

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### **Members of the Media,**

I welcome you all to this Press Conference.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia has called this Press Conference to enlighten the country about the just concluded Induction Workshop for the recently sworn-in Members of the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Namibia. It is customary that after the constitution of a new parliament, Members are initiated with an induction workshop. However, it is important to note that each parliamentary induction exercise is designed to meet the needs and aspirations of the nation at the time, as assessed by

the parliamentary team organising and coordinating the workshop, in alignment with the traditional roles of the Parliament. The workshop is a capacity building initiative for the Members so as to sharpen their insight into the law-making process, as well as how to conduct their parliamentary responsibilities.

We conducted the Induction Workshop from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 till Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in the National Assembly Chamber. The workshop was organised by the National Assembly Secretariat with support from the European Union's Parliamentary Support Programme (PSP).

As the Speaker, I had the honour to officiate at the opening and closing ceremonies of the workshop. I commend Members of this 6<sup>th</sup> National Assembly for having enthusiastically participated in the Induction Workshop. It was remarkable to observe that throughout the week-long deliberations, the majority of the Members actively participated in the proceedings. On this note, I would like to commend the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister for having stayed throughout the duration of the induction workshop and even made various high level presentations.

This Induction Workshop was aimed at deepening the insight of the Parliamentarians into parliamentary affairs, including but not limited to the following; liaising with parliamentary staff, our oversight role as

parliamentarians, parliamentary discipline and privileges, the parliamentary committee system, parliamentary standing rules and orders, aspects of democracy and good governance, basic documentation of the Namibian Parliament, interaction with government institutions and the public and civil society organisations.

The workshop also analysed mechanisms through which the National Assembly liaise with the SADC-PF, the Pan-African Parliament, and the African Union Commission Secretariat, other national parliaments as well as the rest of the world individually and through joint forums like the European Union, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Inter-Parliamentary Union. It was stressed that we would always learn from each other.

The induction programme was structured in such a way that we were guided through the exercise by qualified and experienced resource persons. Members were reminded that Parliamentary debates include major issues of public interest, ranging from ideology, culture, religion, gender, generation, social class, internalised experiences and ambitions, the national economy, as well as defense and security in the national and global perspective. These debates manifest themselves in an ever changing world of globalisation, industrialisation and political economy. As MPs, Members were cautioned to be aware of them, to research and prepare accordingly as well as to know more about them, their

consequences, good or bad. On this basis, MPs were advised on the significance and necessity of this nature of induction training.

The workshop informed the participants that the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia is the Supreme Law of the country and it continues to serve as the Parliamentarians' main guiding principle in all their dealings inside and outside the House. Besides other salient points, the Constitution provides for the powers of the National Assembly and the representative character of Members of the National Assembly. Members were further informed that the second document that guides the proceedings of the National Assembly on a day to day basis is its Standing Rules and Orders. The inductees were reminded that the Standing Rules and Orders serve as the guiding and aiding manual which regulates the MPs' day to day conduct of business in the House.

The workshop also visited the amended Code of Conduct of Members of the National Assembly as well as the revised Standing Rules and Orders. Both documents are to be adopted in the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament, even if they had been finalised in the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The purpose of analysing these two documents was to encourage Members to study them and be conversant with their content, background and criticality. MPs were cautioned against raising irrelevant points of order in the House.

The specific topics that guided the discussions during the course of the workshop included the following:

- Separation of Powers: The Three Pillars of the State;
- Service Delivery: The Role of Parliament;
- Human Rights and the Namibian Constitution;
- Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures in Southern Africa;
- Understanding Poverty and its Dimensions in Namibia;
- Development Tools to Address Poverty;
- National Security;
- Namibia's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP-4);
- Linking the Budget to NDPs;
- Public Finance Management;
- Development Budget Cycle: Analyzing the Regional Development Budget;
- Effective Budget Debate;
- Role and Importance of Parliament's Oversight Function;
- Parliament and Civil Society;
- Enhancing the Role of Civil Society in Namibia;
- Standing Committee on Standing Rules and Orders and the Office of the Speaker;
- Proposed new amended Standing Rules and Orders;
- Law making procedures;
- Skills to analyse Bills/Plain Language Legislation;

- Parliamentary Committee Best Practices;
- Personal Wellness and Lifestyle Choices;
- Tour of Parliament and equipment in the Chamber;
- Office of the Secretary and Reasonable expectations from Staff;
- Table Office and Parliamentary Procedures;
- Committee Services;
- Legal Services;
- Library and Computer Services and IT Skills for Members;
- General Services and MP's Benefits;
- Member's Code of Conduct: Powers, Privileges and Immunities of MPs and Asset Declaration Forms;
- Protocol;
- Personal Financial Management;
- Research, information, Parliamentary Journal Publications and Editorial Services (RIPES);
- Medical Aid Scheme;
- Pension Fund; and,
- Public Office Bearers' Commission.

The presenters of these topics during the course of the workshop included amongst others, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, myself, the Governor of the Bank of Namibia, the Secretary of the National Assembly and senior staff of the Assembly, other Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries, the Ombudsman, Directors, Medical

Doctors, Professors, Legal Practitioners, a representative of the Secretary-General of the SADC Parliamentary Forum as well as the Head of the EU Delegation to Namibia.

The presentation of the various topics was punctuated with plenary sessions where the inductees shared and reflected in detail on the subjects under discussion.

In brief, the induction exercise did not only inform MPs about important issues of law-making but also to create an atmosphere where Members were able to interact and get to know each other. All of us in the workshop felt that the induction provided a wealth of information that would prepare Members for the task ahead. I once again congratulate our MPs for having successfully gone through the induction. It is my hope that the exercise will enable us to see robust debates and discussions in the National Assembly.

On behalf of the National Assembly, I appreciate you all for putting aside your busy schedules to attend this Press Conference so that you can enlighten the country about the aspirations of the National Assembly. I look forward to a good working relationship with members of the media.

I thank you all!