



Electoral Commission of Namibia

MOTIVATION FOR BUDGET

**VOTE 28: ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF NAMIBIA
2016/2017 FINANCIAL YEAR**

INTRODUCED BY

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SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

WINDHOEK, 18 MARCH 2016

Check against delivery

HON. CHAIRPERSON OF THE WHOLE HOUSE COMMITTEE,

HON. MEMBERS,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the budget for Vote 28, Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) for the 2016/2017 financial year.

A total amount of **One Hundred and Ninety Three Million, Two Hundred and Fifty Four Thousand Namibian Dollars (N\$193,254,000.00)** is being requested for consideration and approval by Parliament.

As the Honourable Members of this august House are well aware, the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) was established by an Act of Parliament and has now become a constitutional body following the Constitutional Third Amendment Act of 2014. The Electoral Act, Act 5 of 2014, sets out clear objectives of the ECN - to organize, direct, supervise, manage and control the conduct of elections and referenda in a free, fair, independent, credible, transparent and impartial manner as well as to strengthen constitutional democracy and to promote democratic electoral and referenda processes.

In the fulfilment of this statutory mandate, ECN has just successfully concluded the 2015 Regional Council and Local Authority (RCLA) Elections in a free and fair manner. And lest we forget these regional and local elections come hot on the heels of the historic 2014 Presidential and National Assembly elections, which were a historic first, not only in Namibia, but for the entire African Continent. For the First time, an African country conducted national elections using Electronic Voting Machines (EVM's). It was also the first in Africa to incorporate paperless balloting into the voting process.

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In its quest to continually improve the Namibian electoral processes, the ECN has acquired and made use of the Election Results Transmission and Publishing System (RTS) during the verification and announcement of election results at the Central Election Results Centre (CERC) during the recently concluded local elections. The use of ICT has greatly enhanced the credibility of the voters roll since the introduction of the biometric mobile Voter Registration Kits (VRKs) system to digitally capture biometric data of applicants during the

registration process. The handheld Voter Verification Devices (VVDs) to authenticate voters at polling stations during the polling process has performed much better than during the previous elections. In this regard, we must congratulate the Electoral Commission of Namibia for a job well done.

In this year, the ECN has three crucial programmes under its budget, namely:

- (1) Voter Education and Information Dissemination,
- (2) Administration of Elections, and
- (3) Supervision and Support Services.

To this end, these three programmes have three major targets to meet, namely to:

1. Ensure that all by-elections are carried out within 90 days after the occurrence of a vacancy during the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period;
2. Register 90% of persons who become eligible voters;
3. Ensure that every eligible voter is afforded the information on elections and participate in the electoral processes.

The breakdown of the budget for the three programmes of the Electoral Commission is as follows:

1. Voter and Civic Education and Information Dissemination

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Voter and Civic Education is one of the core functions of the ECN and normally precedes all other electoral activities; therefore, the ECN has designed a comprehensive voter education and information dissemination campaign aimed at informing all eligible voters about these important events on the election calendar. In terms of Section 49 (1) (a) of the Electoral Act 5, of 2014, the Commission must, when supervising, directing, controlling and promoting voter and civic education - pursue the objective to make the meaning and purpose of elections well understood by the electorate. The ECN will continue to use the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in all the by-elections to be undertaken during this MTEF period. It is the mandate of this programme to ensure that all the eligible voters are accorded the opportunity to have all the required information on electoral processes. The voter

education sessions together with advertisements will complement each other to help give required information to the public in order to make the public aware of the EVMs and other electoral processes.

Thus, an amount of **Forty Five Million, Seven Hundred and Thirty Nine Thousand, Eight Hundred and Twenty Namibian Dollars (N\$45,739,820.00)** has been allocated for Voter Education.

The purpose of this programme is:

- 1) to conduct voter education and disseminate voter information,
- 2) to promote democratic culture and good governance so as to ensure credible election processes, and
- 3) Raising public awareness on elections, democracy building and political tolerance during elections.
- 4) Mainstreaming special focus groups in electoral processes

Next to the purpose of this programme the main activities to be carried out include:

- (1) Voter and Civic Education, Publications, Production and Publicity,
- (2) Conduct Regional Voter and Civic Education,
- (3) Regional Voter Education and Capacity Building, and
- (4) Research, Monitoring and Evaluation.

2. Administration of Elections

**HON. CHAIRPERSON OF THE WHOLE HOUSE COMMITTEE,
HON. MEMBERS,**

In terms of the provision of Section 49 (2) of the Electoral Act, 5 of 2014, the ECN is mandated to hold elections, be it national, regional, local authority or by-elections and to ensure good governance and the consolidation of our representative democracy. During the forthcoming financial year, the ECN must make contingency provisions for at least four (4) by-elections based on the number of by-elections held during the course of the previous financial year. In the real world, by-elections are a real possibility. They may emerge without a warning in case of a vacancy as a result of the resignation or death of any of the councillors of any Regional Council. Budget estimates based on a projection of four (4) by-

elections for the entire 2016/2017 financial year can be considered realistic.

An amount of **Forty Nine Million, Five Hundred and Thirty Eight Thousand Two Hundred and Forty Namibia Dollars (N\$49,538,240.00)** is being requested in order to successfully carry out all the planned electoral operations as highlighted under the following activities:

- a. Registration of Voters,
- b. Holding of Elections,
- c. By-elections,
- d. Update of Voters Register,
- e. Voter Verification Devices (VVD's) and Mobile Voters Registration Kits (MVRK's),
- f. Computerisation, Management and Maintenance of ECN Logistics
- g. Legal Challenges, and
- h. Electronic Voting Machines (EVM's).

As the Honourable members are aware, the new Electoral Act, Act No.5 of 2014 was promulgated on 8 October 2014 and implemented on 17 October 2014, but with the exception of Section 97 (3) relating to the utilization of a verifiable paper trail for every vote cast by a voter, whereby any vote cast is

verified by a count of the paper trail. The ECN is currently discussing the technical specifications for a voter verified paper audit trail with the EVM manufacturer. This will be followed by extensive consultations with Political Parties and all other stakeholders. Invariably, financial implications are to be expected in this regard.

3. Supervision and Support Services

The purpose of this programme is to provide administrative support to all the ECN's programmes to ensure the proper financial management, optimal utilization of the allocated resources and other administrative issues. Therefore, an amount of **Ninety Seven Million, Nine Hundred and Seventy Five Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty Namibia Dollars (N\$97,975,940.00)** has been allocated to ensure the smooth running of the day-to-day activities of the Electoral Commission of Namibia.

The major activities carried out under this programme include:

- a. Establishment of the Regional and Constituencies offices in all Regions in terms of the Provision of Section 19,
- b. Construction of regional Offices

- c. Minor renovation and maintenance of the ECN Head Office,
- d. Training & Development, Gender mainstreaming and Capacity Building,
- e. Acquisition and Maintenance of Information Technology (IT) Equipment and Systems,
- f. General Administration Costs,
- g. International fees and Subscription, and
- h. Wellness Promotion, Prevention and Mitigation of HIV/AIDS.

4. Conclusion

Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Hon. Members,

In keeping with its mandate, the ECN is obliged by law to conduct all possible by-elections as well as all the electoral activities highlighted above during this financial year. This presentation makes a case for the activities and programmes that the ECN wishes to undertake during the year. In order to discharge these duties successfully and thereby uphold the democratic principles and tenets of democracy enshrined in our Constitution and the Electoral Law of the Republic of Namibia, I urge all Honourable Members of this August House to support these motivations and approve the budget of **One Hundred and Ninety Three Million, Two Hundred and Fifty Four Thousand Namibian Dollars (N\$193,254,000.00)** for the Electoral Commission of Namibia for the 2016/2017 financial year.

I THANK YOU