



NATIONAL COUNCIL

MOTIVATION FOR THE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR VOTE 11

FOR THE

2013/2014 FINANCIAL YEAR

BY

HON. DR. THEO-BEN GURIRAB, MP

SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WINDHOEK

APRIL 2013

Honourable Deputy Chairperson of the Whole House Committee
Honourable Members of this August House

I rise before this August House to motivate Vote 11 of the National Council, which outlines the House of Review's expenditure estimates for the Financial Year 2013/2014.

The Namibian Constitution empowers the National Council to investigate and report to the National Assembly any subordinate legislation, reports and documents referred to it by the National Assembly. In addition, the Constitution mandates the House of Review to recommend legislation on matters of regional concern for consideration by this very August House.

Against the above background, the National Council takes this opportunity to account for the Fifty Four Million, Three Hundred and Ninety Four Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$54,394,000) that was allocated for its operational and developmental budget during the Financial Year 2012/2013.

During the Financial Year under review, the National Council implemented two programmes. Programme One: "Enhance Public Participation in the Lawmaking Process" and Programme Two:

“Strengthening the Review and Oversight Function” of Members of the National Council.

Under “Enhance Public Participation in the Lawmaking Process”, the National Council had targeted 55 percent of citizen participation. However, it actually attained 58 percent of citizens’ participation, thus exceeding the target by three percent.

The main contributing factor to this success was the effectiveness of civic education programmes that the National Council conducts at public events such as career fairs at educational institutions and at local trade fairs. For example, communities of the Endola Constituency in the Ohangwena Region and those of Khorixas Constituency in the Kunene Region benefited greatly from similar programmes that the Chairman of the National Council conducted there during the year under review. The topic of discussions was the importance of citizens’ participation in the law-making process.

Under “Strengthening the Review and Oversight Function”, Members of the National Council went through several training activities aimed at enhancing their skills and competences in lawmaking and oversight functions. Parliamentary Standing Committees undertook study programmes to sister parliaments in the region and beyond. The objective was to study the implementation of such Houses’ national

policies, gender protocols, oversight roles, and the legislative framework that governs their gender equity programmes.

Honourable Deputy Speaker

Honorable Members

The National Council has diversified the capacity building initiatives for its Members, complemented by exchange visits to other parliaments and organisations. Members have participated in training on budget formulation, bills scrutiny, the oversight function, climate change and its impact on the environment.

Through its Parliamentary Standing Committees, Members of the National Council have conducted oversight visits in different regions of the country. The objective was to acquaint themselves with the progress made with regard to programmes implementation as per the MTEF provisions; utilisation of funds as per the approved Appropriation Act; and to establish whether intended beneficiaries were indeed benefitting from programmes. The Standing Committees tabled reports in this regard in the Chamber which, upon approval by the House, were referred to the relevant Offices/Ministries/Agencies (O/M/As) for information and action.

The National Council has an active Women Caucus which, during the year under review, conducted outreach programmes to Caprivi,

Kavango, Oshana, Omusati and Kunene Regions. The programme focused on assessing the effectiveness of implementation of HIV/AIDS treatment, the treatment of expectant mothers at health facilities, and the registration of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). In accordance with the UN Bangkok Rules, the Women Caucus also visited prisons and rehabilitation centers around the country to acquaint itself with the conditions under which juveniles and female prisoners live.

The development budget was spent as projected on a feasibility study to construct all outstanding office accommodation needs of the National Council. The actual construction work on this project is scheduled to commence during the 2014/2015 Financial Year.

Over the next twelve months, the National Council plans to carry out activities guided by its new operating programme, titled “Supervision and Support Services.” This programme focuses on two main activities, namely: “Strengthened Capacity of Review and Oversight” and “Coordination and Support Services.”

The activities under “Strengthened Capacity of Review and Oversight” entail the conduct of outreach programmes that the Presiding Officers undertake annually. The aim is to create legislative awareness among members of the public and to explain what their benefits are from the laws enacted so far. The programme also encourages citizens to actively participate in the lawmaking process.

Honourable Deputy Speaker

Honorable Members

The National Council remains committed to honouring its regional and international obligations. These include affiliation to the Pan-African Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and other parliamentary organisations. The National Council is convinced that such affiliation will enable Members to strengthen their legislative capacity through exchange of best parliamentary practices. Equally important is the conduct of public hearings during which Members solicit public inputs into the legislative process.

The legislative function has become dynamic and challenging, hence the dire need for skills for Parliamentary Standing Committees to efficiently scrutinise bills. As such, capacity building continues to remain one of the priority areas in the National Council's quest to enhance its oversight and legislative functions.

In order to fully implement the objectives of Main Activity Two, the National Council requests an amount of Ten Million, Six Hundred and Three Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$10 603 000) during this Financial Year.

The second main activity relates to “Coordination and Support Services” which aims at improving the citizens’ understanding of the role of the House of Review. As a result, civic education programmes will remain geared towards sensitising citizens on the extent of their democratic rights to participate in the lawmaking process. To this end, civic education programmes shall continue to feature prominently in the National Council’s annual activities as outlined in its Strategic Plan.

Since 2010, the National Council has undertaken to conduct one session in one of the 13 regions of the country each Financial Year. The objective is to meet our stated commitment of “taking parliament closer to the people”. During this Financial Year, the National Council shall conduct a Junior National Council session. Its objective will be twofold: firstly, to create an opportunity for Namibian youth to debate current issues which affect their lives; and, secondly, to sensitise the youth on how laws are made and their importance.

In fulfilling its international obligations, the National Council feels privileged to host the 44th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Africa Region Conference from 19 to 27 July 2013. The conference will take place in Windhoek where over 500 delegates are expected to participate.

The National Council requests an amount of Sixty Four Million, Three Hundred and Ninety Four Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$64,394,000.00) to meet its commitments under Main Activity Two.

Honourable Deputy Chairperson

Honourable Members

The success of implementation of the afore-mentioned programme, and its two main activities, depends on the support from this Honourable House. It is for this reason that the National Council humbly requests this August House to approve a total amount of Seventy Four Million, Nine Hundred, Ninety Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$74,997,000) to cover its operational commitments during the 2013/2014 Financial Year.

I thank you for your support and attention.