



NATIONAL COUNCIL

MOTIVATION FOR THE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR VOTE 11

FOR THE

2016/2017 FINANCIAL YEAR

BY

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WINDHOEK

18 MARCH 2016

Honourable Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House

Honourable Members of this August House

I have the honour and privilege to motivate before this August House Vote 11 of the National Council for the 2016/2017 Financial Year.

All National Council activities are guided by Articles 74 and 75 of the Namibian Constitution which mandate the National Council to investigate and report to this August House any subordinate legislation, reports and documents referred to it by the National Assembly. In addition the National Council is mandated to recommend legislation on matters of regional concern for consideration by the National Assembly.

The National Council is requesting for an amount of N\$146 533 000.00 ~~(one hundred and forty six million and five hundred and thirty three thousand Namibia dollars)~~ to cover for its operational and developmental commitments during the 2016/17 Financial Year.

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

During the 2015/2016 financial year, the National Council successfully implemented some of its operational activities as planned. The National Council has one programme *Legislative Support Services*, which has two main activities namely: “*Strengthening Capacity of Review and Oversight and Parliamentary Coordination and Support Services*”.

During the 2015/16 Financial Year the National Council held three sessions during which 15 Bills were reviewed. Two bills were confirmed with amendments and two bills were objected, to namely the Regional Councils Amendment Bill and the Local Authorities Amendment Bill. Also, two bills of regional concern were introduced in the National Council of which one provides for the establishment of the Constituency Development Fund and the second to amend the Regional Councils Act of 1992 (Act 22 of 1992).

The National Council lost three (3) dynamic Members of the House during the said financial year. As a result three new Members had to undergo training activities aimed at enhancing their skills and competencies in the lawmaking process and oversight functions. The forty-two new Members of the 5th National Council who were sworn-in,

in December were also inducted to equip them with the requisite skills on legislature, oversight, and budgetary functions as well as public relations.

The National Council through its Standing Committees and Select Committees conducted public hearings in all fourteen regions on various issues and a total of fifteen (15) oversight reports were tabled. Some of the reports with recommendations to be considered by line Ministries have been forwarded to them for consideration and implementation. We call on the Ministries to respond to these reports or engage the National Council Committees where they have difficulties. Honourable Members, the electorate expect feedback from Parliament on matters they place before it, as a result when Ministries do not respond, it is not just Parliament but the government that is failing them. Allow me to commend the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration for attending to the residents of Gam and Eiseb. I am doing so because they have ~~implemented some of the recommendations of the Select Committee on~~ the lack of National Documents for the residents of Gam and Eiseb.

The National Council hosted the Third Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners. The Third Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners focused on various social issues such as Combating Gender-Based Violence, the Importance of Rural Development, Gender Equality,

Women's Rights and Women Empowerment and Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security.

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

Again, allow me to highlight few of the achievements recorded by participants of the Rural Women Parliaments held:

- One of the participants from /Karas Region started a project to empower women and girls through income generating activities such as bead and needle work to ensure financial independence from their male counterparts. She mobilized a mobile clinic to go to her settlement area once a month to provide the community with the much needed health care. She also established a soup kitchen to provide one meal per week to the elderly and less privileged.
- Another participant from the Kavango Region formed a community based support group to share and educate other women on the dangers of Gender-based Violence and to strategize on how to curb it. She also organized a mass prayer against Gender-Based Violence in her region.

- Some rural women have started gardening projects in the Zambezi Region to generate income and to produce food for their families, and not only depend on Government to supply them with food.

As a member of the international community, the National Council participated at various meetings and conferences of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) as well as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). The Chairperson in particular participated at the 4th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, held every five years where they all declared that they “*need equally extraordinary efforts to build a world where every man, woman and child is safe from war and conflict, free from poverty and hunger, where they are able to meet their needs and realize their human potential while preserving the planet for future generations, and where their rights, freedoms and dignity are fully respected*”.

Further, the Chairperson also participated at the CPA Speakers and Presiding Officers Conferences for Africa and International, held every second year. These two conferences are aimed at

- maintaining, fostering, and encouraging impartiality and fairness on the part of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliaments;
- Promote knowledge and understanding of parliamentary democracy in its various forms; and

- Develop parliamentary institutions.

Bilateral Parliamentary relations and cooperation continue to be strengthened, two visits to the Councils of the Peoples Republic of China and France respectively took place, while the National Council welcomed the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security from the Russian Council as well as a Parliamentary delegation from the Canadian Parliament. The National Council produces its own Hansard, thus in order to stay current and with new parliamentary practices and strengthen its division, it subscribed to the Commonwealth Hansard and Editors Association – Africa Region to ensure we are not left behind. In this regard, the National Council hosted the 7th Biennial Conference of the Association which expects its members to prioritize on producing timely, accurate, unbiased records of proceedings of parliaments.

Regarding the capital project, the National Council had one capital project which is to extend and renovate the existing National Council Building. As you are aware by now, this project has been suspended so that both Houses can be accommodated in one Parliament building. Of the N\$43 260 000 (forty three million, two hundred and sixty thousand Namibia dollars) that was allocated to the National Council, N\$41 000 000 was cut during the budget review exercise. This budget cut left the National Council with unpaid invoices. It is against this background that the amount of N\$28 851 000 (twenty eight million eight hundred and fifty

one thousand Namibian dollars) was allocated to the National Council for the 2016/17 Financial Year to pay the outstanding invoices as well as to fix major leakages in the building and upgrade the security structures that could not be carried out.

Honourable Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House

Honourable Members

Over the next twelve months, the National Council plans to carry out its activities guided by its programme “Legislative Support Services”. Out of the forty-two National Council Members, thirty one are first time MPs. The legislative function has become dynamic and challenging, hence the need for skills for Parliamentary Standing Committees to efficiently function. As such, capacity building for Members and staff will continue to be one of the priority areas in the National Council’s quest to enhance its oversight and legislative functions.

Parliaments play a crucial role in improving governance and public service delivery. Participation of the poor should be a preoccupation of Parliaments, given the ‘good governance’ emphasis on furthering representation for all constituents and citizens. It is against that background that the National Council made the Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners, an annual activity on its agenda.

The Chairperson's outreach programme of "Taking Parliament to the People" to interact with the public on law making will also take place. Parliamentary Committees will also continue with oversight activities in various regions with the focus of ensuring that development projects are implemented accordingly. Further, the following activities will also take place:

- Promote inter-parliamentary cooperation multilaterally at the IPU, CPA and PAP and bilaterally to strengthen parliament to parliament relations;
- Strengthen the law-making process by conducting investigative activities, parliamentary hearings and outreach in all regions of the country;
- Hold the 4th Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners with participants from grassroots level;

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

The success of implementation of the afore-mentioned programme, depends on the support from this Honourable House. It is for this reason that the National Council humbly requests this August House to approve

the total amount of One Hundred and Forty Six Million, Five Hundred and Thirty Three Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 146, 533, 000) to cover its commitments during the 2016/17 Financial Year.

I thank you for your support and attention.