



NATIONAL COUNCIL

MOTIVATION FOR THE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR VOTE 11

FOR THE

2018/2019 FINANCIAL YEAR

BY

HON. PROF. PETER KATJAVIVI, MP

SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WINDHOEK

12 APRIL 2018

Honourable Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House
Honourable Members

It is with profound gratitude that I once again present before you the budget estimates of Vote 11 of the National Council for the Financial Year 2018/2019.

INTRODUCTION

As you may all be aware, the National Council, as a Second Chamber of Parliament, was established in accordance with Article 68 of the Namibian Constitution with the major responsibility to review bills passed by this House.

Further, the Members of the National Council as we all know, are drawn from each region in accordance with Article 69 of the Namibian Constitution. Therefore, in addition to the responsibilities indicated in Articles 74 and 75, they also have their responsibilities as Regional Councilors as per Article 108.

The National Council has one programme namely, Legislative Support Services with three activities. Further, the National Council have set the following Ministerial targets for the MTEF period:

1. Progress made in scrutinizing the implementation of developmental agenda of government as per Vision 2030, NDPs and HPP by O/M/As by 2020:

In the past financial year, the National Council indicated that it will focus its oversight activities on the implementation of the government's development agenda as set by each OMA. In this regard, the following activities were carried out:

- Nineteen (19) Bills were reviewed of which 7 were passed with amendments. It is important to mention that twenty-five (25) substantive amendments were proposed and a large number of minor amendments.

- Committees planned to undertake thirty five (35) activities including participation at regional and international conferences. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the activities were implemented and 23 reports were tabled and adopted in the House. A total of 79 recommendations were forwarded to OMAs for their consideration and ultimate implementation. Thus far only 4% was implemented. We hope that the situation will change during the current financial year.

2. *Percentage of Auditor General's Audit reports on Regional and Local Authorities scrutinized within the year received from the National Assembly:*

- Reports of the Auditor General on Regional and Local Authorities are referred to the National Council and the National Council intended to deal with all reports within the year they are referred to it. In this regard around 108 reports were forwarded to the National Council Standing Committee Public Accounts and Economy. A number of hearings were held with Regional and Local authorities.
- It is important to mention that the National Council Committee has no control over the implementation of Recommendations emanating from Public Hearings on Auditor-General's Reports, due to the delegated function. The current referral motion on reports of the Auditor-General to the National Council does not allow the National Council PAC to directly make follow-ups on recommendations emanating from the review of AG Reports. As per the motion that is in force the task of sending recommendations to the OMAs and follow-ups rest with the National Assembly PAC. With the proposed Joint Rules of Parliament, once adopted, it is suggested that a Stakeholders Consultative Meeting be held that will look at re-engineering the processes of reviewing of AG Reports with the view of improving the parliamentary oversight function.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 2017/2018 FINANCIAL YEAR

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

During the 2017/2018 financial year, the National Council successfully implemented out the following activities:

- Consultations at grassroots level remain high on the agenda of the National Council. Therefore, as MPs and Regional Councilors, continuous interaction with the people in the respective constituencies is important. It is against that background that Parliamentary Outreach took place to enhance public participation in the law-making process.
- The National Council organized the Fourth Rural Women Parliament with Male as Partners and brought together 42 rural women and men to discuss issues that are affecting them in rural areas. The Fourth 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. The recommendations made has been forwarded to the relevant line Ministries.
- The National Council also realized that young people need to understand the principles that underpin democracy and thus held its first Junior National Council to reach out to the young people and share with them the work and values of Parliament. Eleven (11) recommendations were adopted and were also forwarded to the line Ministries for their consideration.
- The role and nature of internal audit has changed over the past years. It is expected that they deliver value through extensive focus on governance, risk management and internal control systems. In this regard, the internal audit unit has been capacitated and we are happy to report that we have approved the Enterprise Risk Management Policy. All Staff are being sensitized on this policy.

CHALLENGES OF THE 2017/2018 FINANCIAL YEAR

- The National Council like any other government office, faced serious financial constraints during the 2017/18 financial year and had to suspend some of its activities. As in the last budget statement, I highlighted that traveling should be seen as part of the mandate of the National Council because without traveling they will not be able to attend the National Council Sessions in Windhoek. Also, the carrying out of regional and constituency activities by Members of the National Council involves traveling. Some MPs have vast constituencies to cover. The MPs are not provided with official transportation when carrying out these responsibilities. Thus, this is a challenge that need to be understood by government that traveling is part and parcel of the National Council's programme to execute its core function. Therefore, the National Council should not be compared to other OMAs when it comes to budget cuts with regard to travel.
- The other challenge is the allocation of monthly financial resources. This decision by Treasury hampered the implementation of activities. We sincerely hope that this decision will be reviewed.

2018/19 REQUEST

Honourable Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House
Honourable Members

The National Council is requesting for an amount of N\$100 381 000 (**One Hundred Million, Three Hundred and Eighty One Thousand Namibia Dollars**) to cover for its operational activities during the 2018/19 Financial Year.

The National Council has only one programme namely: Legislative Support Services under which three main activities will be carried out as follows:

1. Strengthen capacity of the review and oversight function of the National Council - N\$11 656 000 (Eleven million, six hundred and fifty six thousand Namibia Dollars)

The National Council recently launched its Strategic Plan. Four (4) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been set to strengthen the capacity of the National Council's review and oversight function. Importantly, they are aimed at measuring the impact of the National Council's review function, with the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the Members of the National Council with the assistance of staff providing them with the required tools.

2. Coordination of parliamentary support services - N\$32 003 900.00 (Thirty two million and three thousand Namibia Dollars)

Under this activity, the implementation of the HPP Goals of Accountability and Transparency as well as that of Performance and Service Delivery will be monitored. The main objectives therefore would be to improve budget execution and financial accountability; improve the management and development of human resources; ensure the optimal utilization and control of assets and implement the Parliamentary and Public Service Reform Initiatives.

3. Parliamentary Committee Services N\$56,722,000 (fifty six million, seven hundred twenty two thousand Namibia Dollars).

Over the 2018/2019 Financial Year, the National Council plans to carry out its activities guided by its programme "Legislative Support Services". Parliament has an important role to play by articulating the needs of their constituents in the national debates in particular on poverty eradication. It is against that background that the National Council Committees see it fit to focus their oversight activities towards the implementation of the Blueprint on Wealth redistribution and Poverty eradication.

With regard to its theme of “Enhancing partnerships to strengthen good governance in Namibia”, the National Council through its Public Accounts and Economy Committee plans to continue to carry out public hearings with the Regional and Local Authorities. Oversight plays an essential role in enhancing transparency and accountability. Transparency and accountability are therefore central in improving corporate governance within the Regional and Local Authorities. Although complex and challenging, it will enhance partnership and at the same time be an efficient entry point to strengthen Regional and Local Authorities governance systems.

Parliament further plays a crucial role in improving governance and public service delivery. Participation of the underprivileged in the law making process remains a preoccupation of Parliament – National Council, given the good governance emphasizes 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 and the Junior National Council an annual activity on its agenda.

CONCLUSION

Honourable Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House
Honourable Members

The success of the implementation of the afore-mentioned programme, depends on the support from this August House. It is for this reason that I again request this August House to approve the amount of **One Hundred Million, Three Hundred and Eighty One Thousand Namibia Dollars** (N\$ 100,381, 000) for the National Council to carry out its activities during the 2018/19 Financial Year.

I thank you for your support and attention.

