



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**BUDGET MOTIVATION SPEECH 2018/2019
FINANCIAL**

YEAR FOR VOTE 03

BY

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SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

WINDHOEK

12th APRIL 2018

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

In terms of Article 63 (2) (a) of the Namibian Constitution, the budget process and debate on the Appropriation Bill is a constitutional requirement and is one of the most significant events in the Calendar of Parliament during any Financial Year. This process continues to foster a culture of accountability and transparency within Government, as the public has to be enlightened on the benefits of the programmes and activities of the Government of the day.

**Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee, Honourable
Members of the National Assembly.**

It is with pleasure that I once again stand before you, Hon. Members, to present the National Assembly's budget estimates for the Financial Year 2018/2019.

Firstly, permit me to briefly review the work of our institution during the past financial year.

As you all know, the National Assembly, as the principle legislative body in the country, has continued to play its role in upholding the Constitution of the land. We have continued to make laws that uphold justice and the fundamental freedoms and human rights of our people. We have also ratified and acceded to international agreements, aimed at promoting peace and good governance. Furthermore, we have continued to diligently exercise our oversight function over the Executive, to account for government spending and related activities, in a bid to promote transparency, accountability and efficient service delivery.

Our oversight mandate covers public hearings in Parliamentary Committee sittings within or outside the premises of Parliament. And, extends to outreach activities in the form of consultations with communities on bills, motions and petitions as well as fact-finding missions in the regions.

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

Allow me to highlight some of our achievements pursuant to our Constitutional mandate during the past financial year, by briefly explaining how we have spent the money that was allocated to the National Assembly in the Financial Year 2017/2018.

For the Financial Year 2017/2018, the National Assembly was *allocated* an amount of **One Hundred and Ten million, Eight Hundred and Twenty Four Thousand Namibian dollars (N\$110, 824, 000.00)** for Operational expenditure and **Twenty Four Million Namibian dollars (N\$24, 000, 000.00)** for the Development Budget, which was specifically ear-marked for *Upgrading and Renovation of the Parliament Building*.

Unfortunately, due the national financial constraint, our budget was revised and ten million Namibian dollars (N\$10,000,000.00) was taken back to the National Planning Commission, leaving us with only fourteen million Namibian dollars (N\$14,000,000.00). In addition, a new law regarding public procurement was introduced in the country and it took time to train Procurement Committees in various OMAs and for suppliers to comply with the new requirements of the new system. This created a situation where a further N\$11,552,778.00 was returned to the Treasury. In the end, out of the N\$14,000,000.00, we used only N\$2,447,222.00 due to circumstances beyond our control.

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

With regard to the Operational Budget, the National Assembly has clustered its activities under three (3) main Programmes, namely; **Legislative Management, Policy Coordination and Support Services as well as Oversight.**

Programme 1: Legislative Management

This Programme caters for the Office of the Speaker as well as the Table Office.

An amount of *Eighteen Million Nine Hundred and Eighty Two Thousand Namibian Dollar (N\$18, 982, 000.00)* was allocated to this programme. The aim of this programme is to provide leadership, guidance and specialised support in respect of Parliamentary proceedings and procedures, and related administrative services to the Presiding Officers and Members of Parliament. The programme's activities include, among others, the timely and accurate processing of Session Papers, Legislation and production of National Assembly's Hansard.

During the past financial year the National Assembly considered 18 Bills which have eventually been processed into Acts of Parliament. These were:

Whistle-blower Protection Bill;

Witness Protection Bill;

Access to Biological and Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge Bill;

Usury Amendment Bill;

Education Amendment Bill;

Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill;

Nature Conservation Amendment Bill;
Namibian Time Bill;
Appropriate Bill;
Public Private Partnership Bill;
Regional Councils Amendment Bill;
Local Authorities Amendment Bill;
Controlled Wildlife Products Amendment Bill;
One-Stop Border Posts Control Bill;
Lotteries Bill;
Namibia Revenue Agency Bill;
Property Valuers Amendment Bill; and
Witness Protection Bill.

These important pieces of legislation demonstrate the commitment of both the National Assembly and the Government of the Republic of Namibia to succinctly address issues of national concern that fall under these legislations.

During the past budget year, the National Assembly considered and ratified a number of international agreements, pursuant to the provisions of Article 63 of our Constitution. These included among others:

- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material Amendment;
- Port State Measures Agreement to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated Fishing;
- World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement; and
- General Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Organization of African Unity.

In making use of the democratic culture of our Chamber, Members introduced and extensively debated various motions on issues that they strongly felt were of interest to the nation. Among these were:

- The high rate of teenage pregnancies amongst school-going children
- Child marriages in Namibia;
- High rate of alcohol, drug and substance abuse especially amongst the youth; and
- Poor sanitation and hygiene as well as lack of access to decent sanitation facilities.

Hon. Members,

Programme 2: Policy Coordination and Support Services

The aim of this programme is to provide, administrative support through proper financial management and optimal deployment of human resources and equipment, the provision of transport and legal advice to the Vote's programmes and, training and capacity development for Members of Parliament and Parliamentary staff. The provision of parliamentary office space for Political office bearers is also provided for under this programme.

During the period under review, the Speaker and the Senior Management of the National Assembly also spearheaded important policy initiatives and interventions. These for instance included, discussions between the two Houses of Parliament on how to finalise the Legislative Service Commission Bill, noting that we are in the final stages of having our Joint Standing Rules and Orders to guide all joint sittings between the two Houses of Parliament. Furthermore, we have winded up the Strategic Plan of the National Assembly and it is ready to be launched.

The draft Legislative Service Bill was completed and forwarded to the Office of the Attorney General for consideration and we are anxiously awaiting its operationalisation as a very important working framework. As we can all appreciate, the Judicial Service Commission caters for the unique role of the Judiciary. In equal measure, the Legislative Service Commission will cater for the unique needs of the Legislature.

Hon. Members,

The Office of the Speaker was also involved in the regional project: “Strengthening SADC Parliamentary Engagement in the Budget Cycle.” The programme was supported by the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA). The project was designed to empower selected SADC legislatures to create and implement development strategies for the budget process within the framework of a peer-to-peer learning process and reflective dialogue. Under this project, selected MPs and staff were jointly facilitated to attend the various training workshops and seminars. The project started in June 2016 and continued into 2017.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK, in partnership with the Parliament of Namibia, ran a workshop in Windhoek during the first quarter of 2017. It aimed at supporting effective parliamentary management and scrutiny of government policies, practices and budgets at the national level, as well as strengthening the skills of parliamentary staff. The occasion was also used as an opportunity for the UK delegation to meet with parliamentarians and other stakeholders in order to inform and to plan future engagement between the two Parliaments. To this end, the programme will continue, firstly, engaging the Public Accounts Committee and Joint Budget Committee (after it has become operational). Thereafter, it will engage the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee. This programme will also involve parliamentary staff exchanges.

An amount of *One Hundred and Fifteen Million Eight Hundred and Forty Two Thousand Namibia Dollars N\$115, 842, 000.00* was allocated to this programme.

This programme is sub divided into **five (5)** Main Divisions namely:

General Services including the Office of the Secretary, Committee Services, Library and Computer Services, Research and Information Services, as well as Legal Services.

Parliamentary Support Services received a budget allocation of *Forty Four Million Two Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Namibia Dollar (N\$44, 285, 000.00)*, of which *Twenty Four Million Namibia Dollars (N\$24, 000, 000.00)* was, as indicated above, earmarked for the *Development Budget*. The aim of this Main Division is to provide administrative and financial support to the Vote's programmes.

Research and Information Services was allocated an amount of **Eleven million and forty seven thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 11, 047, 000.00)** for the provision of relevant and up-to-date information, research, library and modern ICT services to Members of Parliament and the Secretariat. Provision of non-partisan and timely research services to Members of the National Assembly, which is a key function of this main division. The other mandate of this main division is to promote public knowledge on the role of Parliament and law making process so as to enable the public to appreciate the democratic process so that they can engage their elected representatives in a meaningful way.

The programme *“Taking Parliament to the People”*, is an important platform to educate and sensitize the citizenry about the parliamentary democracy and processes. During the period under review, public education was undertaken to twelve senior secondary schools in Oshana and Kavango East Regions. The National Assembly was represented at the Annual Ongwediva Trade Fair. Through our programme *“The Open Doors of Parliament”*, seventy-one (71) schools and thirty eight (38) other groups of visitors visited parliament. During the 2018/2019 Financial Year, the Research and Information Division of the National Assembly will undertake civic education in Erongo, Kavango-West, Karas, Omaheke and Ohangwena regions. These programmes have

continued to strength the interaction between Parliament and the people by enhancing communication, visibility and the image of Parliament to its stakeholders.

Committee Services with the ultimate aim to provide operational, administrative, secretarial, clerical assistance and guidance to Committees, was allocated an amount of ***Fifty Seven Million Four Hundred and Thirty Six Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 57, 436, 000.00)***

Apart from administrative activities of the Secretariat, Standing Committees conduct their oversight activities in different regions of the country; especially to assess the implementation of capital projects.

Hon. Members,

The Oversight role is one of the key functions of the Legislature. This mandate is mainly entrusted with Parliamentary Standing Committees. The National Assembly has eight Parliamentary Standing Committees, whose role as provided for in Standing Rules and Orders, is to oversee the work of various OMAs and SOEs. This role extends to outreach activities in the form of Public Hearings and consultations with communities on Bills, Motions and Petitions. This is in keeping with the principle of participatory democracy in the law making process.

In line with their stated mandates, Committees carried out a wide range of activities both at local and international levels, which were aimed at addressing specific national, regional and global issues and challenges.

All together over sixty (60) public hearings were conducted on various motions the Time Bill as well as on the Motions. Whereas some Motions were finalised and reported on, others have been referred to Committees for further scrutiny and consultations during the current financial year.

Legal Services' main objective provides legal advice to the Office of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Secretary and Members of Parliament via Committee Services. It also advises Parliamentary Committees with interpretations during the course of their work.

An amount of *Three Million and Seventy Four Thousand Namibia Dollar (N\$3, 074, 000.00)* was allocated to *this Main Division*. This Main Division played a key role in the finalisation of the Draft Parliamentary Service Commission Bill and the drafting of the Joint Rules that would govern joint Sessions of both Houses.

We are also looking at strengthening the role of our Legal Services in summarising Bills for Members of Parliament so as to better our understanding and interpretation during our law making process. This is indeed a very important service in our mandate as the Legislature.

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

As part of our international commitment and obligation, both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, as well as Members of Parliament attended various meetings of the SADC-Parliamentary Forum, the Pan African Parliament (PAP), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) and other parliamentary groupings.

The cost for annual subscription to these statutory obligations and attendance has since gone up because of international inflation and our contributions had to be adjusted accordingly.

Our challenge here is that Parliamentary Committee work is a core function of Parliament under our oversight mandate and therefore I would like to appeal to the Minister of Finance to always favourably

consider our budgetary ceilings in this regard. As patriots, we are all conscious of the current financial constraint in the country.

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

In line with our parliamentary democracy, an amount of **Ninety One Million Nine Hundred Seventy Five Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$91, 975, 000)** was allocated to Political Parties, but only **Thirty Nine Million Two Hundred and One Thousand (N\$39, 201, 000)** came from our initial budget allocation while **Fifty Two Million Seven Hundred and Seventy Four Thousand (N\$52,774, 000)** came from the Contingency Fund.

I should hasten to add that an amount of **Six Hundred and Twenty-Four Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$624, 000.00)** was deducted from our original Operational Budget and **Ten Million Namibia Dollars (10, 000,000.00)** from the Development Budget.

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

For the **Financial Year 2018/2019**, the National Assembly has been allocated an amount of *One Hundred and Twelve Million, Five Hundred and Thirty-Eight Namibia Dollars (N\$112, 538, 000)* for both the Operational and Development budget. Out of that total, only **Five Million Namibia Dollars (N\$5, 000, 000.00)** has been allocated to the Development Budget.

With regard to the Operational Budget, and as I indicated earlier, the National Assembly has clustered its activities under two (2) main Programmes, namely; **Programme 1: Legislative Management and Programme 2: Policy Coordination and Support Services.**

Programme 1

An amount of *Seventeen Million, Four Hundred and Twenty-One Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$17,421,000.00)* has been allocated to this programme. As indicated above, this programme is the one that drives the legislative agenda of Parliament as well as providing secretarial support to the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

Programme 2

An amount of *Ninety Million, One Hundred and Seventeen Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$90, 117, 000.00)* has been allocated to this programme.

As indicated earlier, this programme is sub-divided into five (5) Main Divisions namely:

General Services including the Office of the Secretary, Committee Services, Library and Computer Services, Research and Information Services, as well as Legal Services.

Parliamentary Support Services has received a budget allocation of *One Hundred and Twenty Two Million, Nine Hundred and Twenty Two Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$23, 222, 000.00)*. The aim of this programme is to provide administrative and financial support to the Vote's programmes as well as capacity development for Members of Parliament and the Parliamentary staff. The provision of office space for Political office bearers is also undertaken under this programme.

Research and Information Services is allocated an amount of **Eleven Million, Nine Hundred and Sixty Eight Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$11, 968, 000.00)** for the provision of relevant and up-to-date information, research, library and ICT services to Members of

Parliament and the Secretariat, as well as to continue with the outreach activities.

Parliamentary Committee Services with the ultimate aim to provide operational, administrative and clerical support and guidance to Committee Services, has been allocated an amount of ***Fifty One Million, Nine Hundred and Fifty Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$51, 957, 000.00)***.

Legal Services, which provides legal services to Parliament and its Standing Committees, has been allocated an amount of **Two Million Nine Hundred and Seventy Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$2, 970, 000.00)**.

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

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your attention and kindly implore you to approve the budget request of ***One Hundred and Twelve Million, Five Hundred and Thirty-Eight Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$112, 538, 000.00)***, for Vote 3.

I thank you!