

CONTRIBUTION BY
HON. CLARA/GOWASES (MP: RP)

ON SECOND READING
OF THE WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION BILL 2017

14 MARCH 2017

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members,

I rise to contribute to the discussion on the Whistleblower Protection Bill.

The Republic^{an} Party welcomes the proposed introduction of an office to protect whistle blowers. I believe such an initiative will go a long way towards discouraging corruption and abuse of resources.

I think we can all agree from the Minister of Finance's budget statement last week that Namibia is really not in a position where we can afford to lose valuable resources to corruption, fraud and other illegal or negligent activities which lead to the waste of resources.

This Bill is therefore very much welcome and comes at a time when it is needed most.

Having said that, this Bill will however only be able to have an impact on reducing corruption and waste of public resources if it is crafted properly. If not, we will just be fooling ourselves and it won't make any real difference.

Hon. Members,

I do not want to repeat what has already been said by other members.

Instead I would like to focus on one specific aspect which I believe will determine the success of the office. That is the independence of the Whistleblower Protection Office.

Currently, as stated in the Bill, the Whistle Blower Protection Office which I expected would be an independent body will form part of the public service.

Firstly, the Whistleblower Protection Office will fall under the Ministry of Justice. Secondly, the P.S of that same Ministry will also be the Accounting Officer of the Whistleblower Protection Office.

I do not have any problem with the Minister or the P.S, but I do wonder what happens in the situation where the issue that must be investigated by that office deals with that Ministry or even those specific people?

This is why the Whistle Blower Protection Office must not form part of the public service, but must be a completely independent body. Similar to the Ombudsman or the ACC (Anti-Corruption Commission).

Hon. Speaker,

I believe there are many other issues and concerns that have been raised by other members as well. Taking those and added with what I have contributed to the discussion today, I would like to support the suggestion made by Hon. Van den Heever that the Bill be referred to the Committee on Constitutional & Legal Affairs, so that they can address the concerns raised.

And thereafter go back for more consultations with the public and civil society before the amended Bill can return here for discussion again.

Thank You.

