



NATIONAL COUNCIL

MOTIVATION FOR THE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR VOTE 11

FOR THE

2017/2018 FINANCIAL YEAR

BY

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WINDHOEK

11 APRIL 2017

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 2017/2018.

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:*

The National Council will focus its oversight activities on the implementation of the government's development agenda as set by each OMA.

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 intends to deal with all reports within the year they are referred to it.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 2016/2017 FINANCIAL YEAR

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

During the 2016/2017 financial year, the National Council successfully implemented some of its operational activities as planned. The National Council have one programme namely, *Legislative Support Services*, which have two main activities:

1. *“Strengthening of the Review and Oversight Function; and*
 2. *Parliamentary Coordination and Support Services”.*
- During the 2016/17 financial year the National Council held six sessions during which nineteen (19) Bills were reviewed of which two (2) bills were confirmed with amendments and two (2) bills were rejected.
 - According to the Standing Rules and Orders of the National Council, each region will table a report on their activities. Fourteen reports were thus tabled and discussed, from which a consolidated report was compiled and adopted.

This report was forwarded to the respective line Ministries for their consideration. Eight oversight related activities were also carried out in some parts of the country. The Members also attended conferences of the IPU, CPA, CEDAW and AWEPA while various Standing Committee Members attended Capacity Building workshops of which 3 reports were tabled for information sharing. In this regard, I thank those Ministries that have responded to the various recommendations contained in the reports forwarded to them for consideration. To those Ministries who have not yet responded, I call on them to engage the relevant National Council Committee where they have difficulties.

- 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 takes place to enhance public participation in the law-making process. Further the introduction of the Constituency Week was launched to ensure access by citizens to their leaders and to offer them opportunities to show case their talents within their constituencies. We say thank you to our partners and donors for their support in this regard.
- Participation of MPs in Parliamentary activities, national or international is very imperative. However, due to the shortfall of research staff at the National Council, and the demand to equip MPs adequately with relevant information, the National Council signed Memorandums of Understanding with UNAM and NUST respectively, to strengthen the Secretariat's research capacity.

- With regard to ICT, the National Council made itself visible on all social media platforms available. Soon, the National Council Hansards will be made available on the Parliament Website too.

CHALLENGES OF THE 2016/2017 FINANCIAL YEAR

- The National Council like any other government office, faced serious financial constraints during the 2016/17 financial year and had to suspend some of its activities. However, I would like to make it clear that the National Council in some way should be looked at differently particularly when it comes to travel. At the beginning of this statement Hon. Members, I referred to the mandate and responsibilities of the National Council and its Members. Unavoidably, the carrying out of the mandate of the National Council involves traveling from various Regions to Windhoek. Again, the carrying out of regional and constituency activities by Members of the National Council also involves traveling. Some MPs have vast constituencies to cover. These MPs are not provided with official transportation when carrying out these responsibilities. Thus, this is a challenge that need to be understood by authority that traveling is part and parcel of the National Council's programme to execute its core function. Therefore, the National Council is responsible for payment of regional and constituency travel activities for its Members by virtue of their positions.
- The other challenge is the late receipt of invoices from the line Ministry with regard to payment of capital projects and transport services that now have to be paid in the 2017/18 financial year.

2017/18 REQUEST

Honourable Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House

Honourable Members

The National Council is requesting for an amount of N\$115 177 000 (**One Hundred and Fifteen Million, One Hundred and Seventy Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars**) to cover for its operational activities during the 2017/18 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\$14 835 000

As some of the capacity building activities had to be suspended in the previous financial year, these will be facilitated to ensure that all Members are adequately capacitated. Public participation through outreach activities in some of the regions, the holding of the Junior National Council as well as the 4th Rural Women Parliament with Male as partners will also be held during this financial year. In order to strengthen bilateral parliamentary cooperation, the National Council will be hosting three parliamentary delegations this financial year. On the multilateral front, the National Council will participate at the meetings of the CPA, IPU and PAP.

2. Coordination of parliamentary support services - N\$36 809 900.00

- 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.
- Additional provision has also been made for the payment of outstanding invoices for the capital project and transport services. Provision has also been made for the maintenance of the National Council buildings.

3. Parliamentary Committee Services (N\$63 532 100.00).

- We all know that the Parliamentary Committees are the heartbeat of each House of Parliament. Under this activity provision has been made for the support of MPs participation in Committee activities and other National, Regional and International activities. Further, to enrich the work of MPs, the National Council planned to intensify ICT related training and provide Members with the required equipment to give them access to the National Council Documents where ever they are to enable them to respond in good time to issues requiring their attention.

- With regard to the maintenance of records of the House and to respond to the demands of the 21st Century, the Hansard will be published on the Website although, fewer hard copies will still be made available.

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 humbly request this August House to approve the amount of **One Hundred and Fifteen Million, One Hundred and Seventy Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 115,177, 000)** for the National Council to carry out its activities during the 2017/18 Financial Year.

I thank you for your support and attention.