



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MOTIVATION FOR THE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR

VOTE 03

FOR THE

2014/2015 FINANCIAL YEAR

BY

HON. DR THEO-BEN GURIRAB, MP

SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2014

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WINDHOEK

KHOMAS REGION

Check against delivery

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Honourable Members,

I rise before this august House to motivate Vote 03 for your consideration. Permit me to thank Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila and all her collaborators for the well-articulated budget focusing on *“Fiscal Sustainability and Job-Creating Growth*. Hon. Minister, we advocate your concept of *“Doing More with Less”*.

Much has been said about the 2014/15 Appropriation Bill by numerous speakers in this august House and, as representatives of the people, we have the responsibility to work towards achieving the vision of building a united, democratic Namibia and improving the quality of life of all citizens.

The Namibian Constitution enjoins the legislative power to the National Assembly for passing laws and arranging for the review of such laws by the National Council. In a democracy, the budget process and debate on the Appropriation Bill, is one of the most important activities in our national life. Through this process, the Government of the day informs the electorate through the elected representatives on the programmes and activities of the Government and also explains the utilisation of resources for the benefit of the people themselves.

During the past financial year, the National Assembly successfully implemented most of its operational activities as intended. With regard to the development budget, I have to explain that although the first phase of the feasibility study on the new Parliament Building was finalised during the 2012/13 financial year, no funds were provided for this project during the past financial year due to the late completion thereof. Thus, we expect to commence with refining the feasibility study and completing some documentation during the 2014/15 financial year.

The construction of a new Parliament Building, Parliament as another Branch of State comes a long way. My predecessor started the process about twenty years ago after Cabinet had approved the construction of administration buildings for the three Branches of the State. It started with plans for the enlargement of the current building, but a good man as he was, my predecessor yielded funds allocated for this purpose to complete the building of a new National Council Building. Twenty four years down the line the construction of the new Parliament Building was shifted from first to last in the row. The Supreme Court Building and the Building that houses the Chamber of the National Council have been completed, as well as the new State House in order to complete the construction of buildings for the main branches of the State. The only unaccomplished mission is the construction of a new Building to house the National Assembly.

In the current MTEF it is reflected that an amount of **Six Hundred and Thirty Eight Million Two Hundred and Forty One Thousand Namibia Dollars** has been allocated for the project. For the MTEF period from 2014/15 up till 2016/17 amounts are allocated as follows: **Twenty Five Million** for 2014, **Twenty Million** for 2015/16 and **Twenty Million** for the 2016/17 financial year. The remainder of the amount of Five point **Seven Million** will be allocated as the Minister of Finance deems it fit, pending on the economic status of the country. Having said all above-mentioned I would like to inform the public out there, as well as some of my own colleagues here, that we did not receive the **Seven Hundred Million** once-off from the Treasury for this process, as has been alleged by some. This is an on-going project and we only receive what is needed for the particular financial year for this project from the Ministry of Finance.

There will be no reversal! We must and will have the Parliament and now is the time to set the process in motion. I expect His Excellency to add his weight when he joins us.

Regarding the operational budget, apart from the practical administrative activities of the Secretariat and the National Assembly, the Standing Committees have continued to conduct their oversight activities in different regions of the country. Exchange and study visits were also undertaken to other Parliaments in the region and

internationally to further strengthen inter-parliamentary relations. Financial assistance to political parties represented in the National Assembly remains an expenditure item and represents almost 21% of the operational budget. The IPU Strategic Plan 2012 to 2017 and SADC-PF initiatives aimed at capacity building and training are on-going and important undertakings in line with our vision.

For the financial year 2014/2015, the National Assembly is requesting an amount of **One Hundred and Seventy Seven Million, One Hundred and Twenty Six Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$177,126,000)** for both the operational and the development budgets. This allocation consists of **One Hundred and Forty Million Seven Hundred and Sixteen Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$140,716,000.)** for the Operational Budget, while **Thirty Six Million Four Hundred and Ten Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$36,410,000)** is earmarked for the Development Budget.

I would now like to give brief explanations on the funds required and allocated to the Development Budget, including the renovation of the SADC-Parliamentary Forum House, and concluding with the new Parliament Building.

Namibia, as host to the SADC-Parliamentary Forum Headquarters, has the responsibility of ensuring that the Forum is taken care of in

terms of office accommodation to enable the Secretary-General and his staff to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Currently, the SADC-PF is housed in a building that was originally designed as a Restaurant with a very big kitchen and not as office accommodation. Although various reparation activities have been undertaken over the years, the building now requires extensive renovations. An amount of **Five million Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$5,550,000)** is therefore requested for this financial year to create a conducive working environment for the Forum.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Honourable Members,

As a responsible institution, we have been constantly undertaking various reparation activities to maintain the Parliament Building in a satisfactory condition. However, we are constantly being plagued by recurrent pipe bursts, water leaks, as well as the loss in water pressure in this very Building where we are.

In consultation with the Line Ministry and consultants it has been resolved that the most viable solution would be to design a new water reticulation system, which should be connected from the Parliament Building to the existing Municipal connection points, whereby the ailing one would then have to be replaced completely.

Following a recent risk assessment exercise that was conducted by relevant service providers, we were advised to improve on the access control to the Parliament Building for obvious reasons.

Furthermore, the Administration has deemed it necessary to procure a number of vehicles to transport Members of Parliament to carry out their oversight duties. This, in turn, has created the need for a number of carports to be erected to protect these acquired vehicles from the harsh Namibian elements.

Therefore, an amount of **Five Million Six Hundred and Thirty Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 5,630,000)** is requested for this financial year to complete the aforesaid projects.

I have no doubt you will agree with me that it has become very clear that the current Parliament Building does no longer meet the growing requirements of Parliament in terms of current technology, size and functionality. It proves to be not only insufficient in terms of office space for both Members and staff, despite the fact that every single office is being utilised to its ultimate capacity, but also its structural design is no longer being supported by today's sophisticated technology.

It is, therefore, extremely important that this very important need must be fulfilled within a reasonable time to enhance the overall

working conditions for Members, staff and the public alike. Therefore, an amount of **Twenty Five Million Two Hundred and Thirty Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 25,230,000)** is requested for the 2014/15 financial year to continue with the preparatory work.

In line with its operations and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, the operational budget for Vote 03, National Assembly, has been subdivided under two (2) main programmes for which funds will be utilised, namely:

- Legislative Management; and
- Coordination and Support Services

Programme 1: Legislative Management: Seventeen Million, Four Hundred and Fifty Six Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$17,456,000).

The main aim of this programme is to provide leadership, guidance and support in respect of the National Assembly's proceedings and procedures and related administrative services to the Presiding Officers and Members of Parliament. The programme activities include *inter-alia* the timely and accurate processing of Session papers, legislation and the Hansards.

Programme 2: Coordination and Support Services: One Hundred and Fifty Nine Million, Six Hundred and Seventy Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$159,670,000).

The aim of this programme is to provide administrative support and legal advice to the Vote's programmes and to ensure proper financial management, optimal deployment of resources and capacity building. The programme ensures the implementation of the relevant requirements of Human and Financial Resources. It also focuses on staff training and capacity development for Members of Parliament.

This programme also has the responsibility of providing relevant and up-to-date information, research, library and ICT services to the Members and the Secretariat. It ensures the improvement of communication through innovative use of modern technology by providing adequate ICT services at Parliament.

Additionally, the programme renders on-going and effective services to the nine Standing Committees of the National Assembly in their quest to perform their constitutional oversight mandate. Parliament also pays membership fees to the SADC PF, IPU and CPA and thus participates in the activities of these Parliamentary organisations, including the PAP. The AU Commission and PAP are yet to do more than talking to enhance their competence. The IPU has raised the bar

and the UN expects our inputs as well. Given that, more resources will be required.

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

To conclude, I wish to thank you for your attention and support, and I kindly appeal to you to approve our request of **One Hundred and Seventy Seven Million, One Hundred and Twenty Six Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$177 126 000)** for Vote 3. I count on you all, Honourable Members, since this is our Vote.

I thank you