



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**INTRODUCTION OF VOTE 21**

**OFFICE OF THE JUDICIARY**

**IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR THE 2024/2025 FINANCIAL YEAR**

**BY**

**HONOURABLE YVONNE DAUSAB, MP**

**3 APRIL 2024**

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

1. It is with a profound sense of responsibility and honor that I rise today to introduce **Vote 21**, the budget for the Office of the Judiciary for the fiscal year **2024/2025**.
2. At the outset, allow me to express my deepest appreciation to the Honourable Minister of Finance and the Director-General of the National Planning Commission. Their expertise and dedication have culminated in a well-crafted budget, laying a solid foundation for our nation's prosperity and the effective administration of justice. Their work reflects a deep understanding of the intricate balance required to propel our country forward in an economic environment marked by limited financial resources.
3. I also extend my gratitude to this august House for its guidance and oversight. Your dedication to ensuring that the programmes and activities of the Office of the Judiciary are fully implemented is invaluable. This collaboration, alongside the support from other stakeholders, is pivotal in the Office of the Judiciary's quest to deliver world-class judicial services to all corners of our nation.
4. It is with pride that I report that the Office of the Judiciary continues to receive unqualified audit reports. This achievement speaks to the Office of the Judiciary's commitment to transparency, accountability, and excellence in its operations. It reaffirms the Judiciary's dedication to managing the resources entrusted to it with the utmost integrity and the highest standard of fiscal responsibility.
5. However, it must be acknowledged that the last fiscal period in which the Judiciary received an allocation sufficient to meet all its operational needs was in 2017/2018.
6. For the recently concluded fiscal year, the Office of the Judiciary received a budget allocation of **N\$421,464,000**. The proposed allocation for the upcoming year is **N\$445,473,000**, which is an increase of **N\$24 million** compared to the previous year's allocation.

7. The sum of **N\$24 million** will, in effect, solely cater for the implementation of the **5%** salary increase for staff members.
8. The ongoing expansion and rising demand for judicial services nationwide, without a concomitant increase in the operational budget, will inevitably lead to a deleterious effect on service delivery.
9. Despite this challenge, our courts continue to make significant progress. The Supreme Court has made strides in expanding its capacity, boasting a case disposal rate of **93.5%** in the previous financial year. This is commendable, especially considering a **59%** increase in its caseload.
10. Similarly, the High Court Main Division demonstrated notable efficiency, with a **78%** on-time case disposal rate.
11. The Lower Courts have not been left behind; they have extended their reach by declaring new seats in Okahao, Ohangwena, Gochas, Stampriet, Witvlei, and Impalila. These advancements, coupled with increased remuneration for magistrates, signify the Office of the Judiciary's commitment to improving access to justice. However, challenges such as understaffing and heavy caseloads persist, underscoring the need for further financial support.

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

12. The essence of our democracy lies in the balance and separation of powers, a principle enshrined in our Constitution. This separation ensures that no single branch of government overreaches, maintaining a system of checks and balances vital for our democracy.

13. However, as the African proverb goes, *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"*. This wisdom underscores the indispensable nature of our interdependence. While judicial independence is paramount, the Judiciary's effectiveness is inextricably linked to the support it receives from the other organs of the State.
14. To continue its mission of providing speedy and equitable justice, the Judiciary requires adequate budgetary provisions. The Judiciary's infrastructure needs are pressing, and without significant investment, its capacity to serve will be hindered. The achievements of the Office of the Judiciary, underscored by its unqualified audit reports, demonstrate its capability and commitment to judiciously utilise the resources allocated to it.
15. As we reflect on the journey and the strides made thus far, it is clear that the path ahead requires bolstered support. The Judiciary's infrastructure, the heart of its operations, needs urgent attention to keep pace with the demands placed upon it. This investment is not merely a matter of convenience but a fundamental necessity to ensure that justice is accessible to all.
16. I therefore appeal for this august House's support in allocating the necessary resources for the Office of the Judiciary to continue its critical reforms and infrastructure maintenance.

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

17. I now present the budget allocation for the Office of the Judiciary, **Vote 21**, in the amount of **N\$445,473,000 (Four Hundred Forty-Five Million Four Hundred Seventy-Three Namibia Dollars)** which comprises the following Programmes.

**Programme 01:**

**Supreme Court Adjudication and Administration –**

17.1 **N\$25,740,205 (Twenty-Five Million Seven Hundred Forty Thousand Two Hundred Five Namibia Dollars).**

17.2 The main functions of this Programme are to hear and adjudicate appeals from the High Court including appeals which involve the interpretation, implementation and upholding of the Constitution and fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed thereunder.

17.3 In addition to the above functions, the rendering of quasi-judicial and administrative functions is also key to this Programme.

**Programme 02:**

**High Court Adjudication and Administration –**

17.4 This Programme has been allocated an amount of **N\$99,759,474 (Ninety-Nine Million Seven Hundred Fifty-Nine Thousand Four Hundred Seventy-Four Namibia Dollars).**

17.5 This Programme is responsible for the adjudication of civil and criminal matters as well as labour appeals, including cases which involve the interpretation, implementation and upholding of the Namibian Constitution as well as the hearing and adjudication of appeals from the Lower Courts. This Programme further includes the performance of quasi-judicial and administrative functions.

**Programme 03:**

**Lower Courts Adjudication and Administration –**

17.6 This Programme has been allocated an amount of **N\$200,774,896 (Two Hundred Million Seven Hundred Seventy-Four Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety-Six**

**Namibia Dollars).** This Programme caters for the adjudication of cases within the jurisdiction of the Lower Courts, as well as the conducting of judicial inquiries.

**Programme 04:**

**Policy Supervision, Coordination and Support Services –**

17.7 This Programme has been allocated an amount of **N\$119,198,425 (One Hundred Nineteen Million One Hundred Ninety-Eight Thousand Four Hundred Twenty-Five Namibia Dollars).**

17.8 The objectives of this Programme are to ensure an enabling environment and a high-performance culture; to provide administrative, technical, and technological support to the Programmes of the Office of the Judiciary; to ensure proper financial management, gender mainstreaming, capacity building as well as an equitable distribution and effective utilization of resources.

18. With that background, I now seek the indulgence of this august House to approve the allocation totaling **N\$445,473,000 (Four Hundred Forty-Five Million Four Hundred Seventy-Three Thousand Namibia Dollars).**

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

19. Your united support, and approval of this proposed allocation will serve as an affirmation of your commitment to justice for all in Namibia.

**I thank you.**