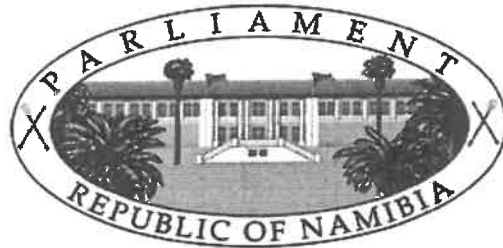


*Wednesday, April 24, 2024*



**MOTIVATION SPEECH BY HON NATANGUE ITHETE,  
MP  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**BENCHMARKING STUDY VISIT TO THE  
PARLIAMENT OF SWEDEN AND VARIOUS  
GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND AGENCIES**

**STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN**

**SEPTEMBER 2023**

**April 2024**

**Parliament Chamber**

**WINDHOEK**

## **Honourable Speaker,**

The Committee's choice to embark on a benchmarking study visit to Sweden was motivated by the high ranking of the public administration performance system in Sweden.

During the visit, the Committee focused on understanding the drivers for improved public sector performance including inter-agency coordination in Sweden. In addition, the Committee was briefed in parliament on effective practices and procedures of parliamentary administration and standing committees.

The report extensively outlines the best practices observed with regards to governance systems, processes and procedures in Sweden; and valuable lessons for the Namibian Parliament and the Committee; and **some of the observations and findings of the benchmark study visit are as follows:**

- The people of Sweden value social equity, inclusiveness, a strong work ethics and mutual trust;
- The State Secretary to the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade was extremely interested in improving and strengthening the relations between Sweden and Namibia. He mentioned the unfortunate closure of the Swedish Embassy in Namibia and referred to the many common interests between our two countries and the need for increased cooperation including the economic, commercial sectors and companies of the two countries. **I Quote the State Secretary “*We must come back to Namibia and there are different ways of being present*” he stated. Unquote.** He stated that Sweden is also interested in connecting with other countries of southern Africa.
- At most meetings, the need for strengthening the bilateral relations between Namibia and Sweden was discussed. The Ministry of International Relations and

Cooperation should therefore fast-track the anticipated visit of the Swedish delegation of the Sweden-Namibia Working Group to Namibia comprising of potential investors, to strengthen bilateral relations. The visit should include strengthening economic and trade relations, industrialization, public transport (railway infrastructure), communication, mining, renewable energy and public administration sectors in Namibia;

- The Parliament of Sweden established an independent Parliamentary Service and Board with an Independent Parliamentary Budget, to capacitate parliament and its committees to perform their parliamentary functions.
- The delegation observed the wide-ranging powers and functions of Swedish parliamentary committees that speak to the doctrine of separation of powers, checks and balances; and parliamentary supervision.
- Some members of Swedish Parliament assured the delegation that they are interested in networking with other Parliaments, including the Namibian Parliament.

Therefore, the National Assembly leadership and management should establish a Parliamentary Friendship Group with the Swedish Parliament and apply the lessons learned on the parliamentary committee system in the Swedish Parliament.

- In Sweden, the national budget stands automatically referred to Swedish Parliament Committee on Finance and to other Standing Committees that report back to the House;
- **Researchers of the Swedish Parliament Research Service** have specialist knowledge and experience in various disciplines including law, economics, statistics, political science and natural resources.
- The Swedish National Audit Office is an independent auditor of the State and an important authority under parliamentary control.
- Although not having punitive powers, the Legal Department of the National Audit Office may refer audit findings evidently criminal in nature directly to

the authorities responsible for criminal prosecution, a practice that our Office of the Auditor-General could learn from.

- The Swedish Government's Work Environment Authority plays a critical role in ensuring a sustainable working life, healthy and safe working environment for its citizens. It provides a labour market and industry free from work-related crimes, free from human and labour rights violations, corruption, abuse, workforce exploitation, bullying, human trafficking and modern slavery. The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and Social Security Commission are encouraged to benchmark and learn best practices from the Swedish system.
- The Swedish National Financial Management Authority provides efficient financial management services to the central government agencies, analyses and forecasts of central government finances. The

Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises is also encouraged to benchmark from the Swedish system.

- The history of the Swedish Institute for Water and Air Conservation Research largely coincides with modern environmental work in Sweden and the Swedish industry. For over 50 years, the Swedish Institute for Water and Air Conservation Research has contributed to an improved environment with research and development - and continue to do so. The delegation highly appreciated the Smart City Sweden project that supports the Kupferberg Landfill Waste-to-Energy Project with the Municipality of the City of Windhoek. There are certainly some best practices that the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism could learn from the Swedish system.
- Our Parliament should establish possible cooperation with International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance on the following programs namely: Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative

and Parliament Inter Pares Programme, which is an EU Global Project to Strengthen the Capacity of Parliaments on the key pillars and functions of Parliament i.e. legislative, oversight, representative and budgetary and administrative functions.

The exchange of ideas and experiences with the Secretary of State, First Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Members of parliamentary committees and senior officials of Parliament as well as senior officials of government offices and agencies in Sweden, have provided some valuable insights and lessons that can significantly contribute towards Namibia's economic development, public administration, and overall social progress.

**Hon Speaker,**

I now submit the report of the Standing Committee for consideration, discussion and approval.

**I SO MOVE HONOURABLE SPEAKER**