



NATIONAL COUNCIL

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

I rise before this August House to motivate Vote 11 that of the National Council, which outlines the House of Review's expenditure estimates for the Financial Year 2015/2016.

The Namibian Constitution in Articles 74 and 75 empowers the National Council to investigate and report to the National Assembly any subordinate legislation, reports and documents referred to it by the National Assembly. The Constitution further mandates the House of Review to recommend legislation on matters of Regional concern for consideration by this very August House.

The National Council in the 2014/15 financial year had one programme Legislative Support Services, which had two main activities namely:

- Strengthened capacity of review and oversight.
- Parliamentary coordination and support services.

Under the activity “**Legislative Support Services**”. The Chairperson of the National Council conducted an outreach programme to both the Kavango West and Kavango East Regions from 21 June 2014 to 03 July 2014. During the outreach, he discussed with the communities on the provision of the following Acts:

- i. Married Persons Equality Act, 1996 (Act No. 1 of 1996)
- ii. Combating of Domestic Violence Act, 2003 (Act No 4 of 2003)
- iii. Combating of Rape Act, 2000, (Act No. 8 of 2000)

In the same financial year, the National Council took Parliament closer to the people in the //Karas Region, where it conducted its second Regional Session. The Session was preceded by several activities aimed at increasing public participation in the law-making process. During the Session the evenings were dedicated to community meetings as a platform for the community of //Karas Region to participate in the law-making process. The community meetings were presided over by the Honourable Chairperson of the National Council. The number

of attendees of the pre-session activities and evening community meetings in total were 812 and the number of interventions made was 680. This demonstrated the interest of communities' participation in the law-making process. As a result the National Council will continue with this activity.

During the 2014/2015 financial year the National Council reviewed 9 Bills, 3 were passed with amendments; 6 without amendments.

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

The National Council Parliamentary Standing Committees have developed a digital development budget tool which improved their oversight function on the execution of the development programmes in the MTEF. The tool links the development budget to the projects and their specific location, including the project milestones as stipulated in the development estimates expenditure. We appreciate the assistance rendered by the EU's

Parliamentary Support Programme in the development of this tool. It's worth mentioning that the tool has been shared with different Regional Councils.

During the oversight function by the Committees, a disturbing practice by Offices, Ministries and Agencies was discovered that of verimenting funds meant for specific projects to other activities, thus denying citizens of development which this August House would have approved during the appropriation Bill. The Ministry of Finance and National Planning Commission are called upon to address this concern. The National Council appeals to Offices, Ministries and Agencies to plan properly and stop diverting funds allocated to specific projects.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Honourable Members,

Over the years the National Council has requested this August House to fund its membership obligations to regional and international parliamentary bodies, for purposes of benchmarking on best Parliamentary practices, and to participate in forums that set Parliamentary agendas to contribute towards strengthening principles of Parliamentary democracy.

Furthermore, the National Council has continued to equip its members with the requisite skills and competencies to enhance their legislative and oversight roles. Training activities in the areas of budget execution, oversight and public relations were attended by both Members and support staff.

The National Council believes in the wellbeing of its workforce, hence a wellness center has been established to this effect. The center will promote employee wellness and educational activities on life style diseases and conditions.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Honourable Members,

The National Council plans to conduct its activities guided by the House's operating programme of "**Legislative Support Services**". This programme focuses mainly on two activities: firstly, that of "**Strengthened Capacity of Review and Oversight**", and the **Parliamentary Coordination and Support Services.**"

In total, the National Council is requesting for an amount of *One Hundred Fourty Six Million, Two Hundred and Seventy Two Thousand Namibia Dollars* (N\$ 146,272,000) to cover its operational and developmental commitments during the 2015/2016 Financial Year.

The activities related to "**Strengthened Capacity of Review and Oversight**" entails: The conduct of outreach programmes that the Presiding Officers undertake annually to educate the public on the law making process.

- To honour regional and international parliamentary obligations
- To strengthen the law-making process through the referral of Bills to Standing or Select Committees for further consultations with the citizens.
- The conduct of oversight activities by Standing and select Committees in line with the oversight function of Parliament.

The National Council is requesting a total amount of *Twelve Million, Six Hundred and Eighty Three Thousand Namibia Dollars* (N\$12,683,000) to fund the above mentioned activities for the 2015/2016 financial year.

The second main activity of the National Council is **Parliamentary Coordination and Support Services**". This activity focuses on the following issues:-

- Improved citizens' understanding and participation in the law-making process, through the conduct of civic

education programmes and the sharing of information through all media mediums.

- Conduct National Council sessions in the regions.
- Conduct capacity and competency building programs for Members of the National Council and staff members.
- Funding for Members of the National Council's planned constituency activities.

In total, the cost under these main activities will amount to ***One Hundred Thirty Three Million Five Hundred and Eighty Nine Thousand Namibia Dollars*** (N\$133,589,000). This amount includes operational and development budget as follows: Operational budget ***Ninety Million, Three Hundred and Twenty Nine Thousand Namibia Dollars*** (N\$90,329,000). Development budget ***Fourty Three Million, Two Hundred and Sixty Thousand Namibia Dollars*** (N\$43,260,000).

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,
Honourable Members,

I request this August House to approve the amount of ***One Hundred Fourty Six Million, Two Hundred and Seventy Two Thousand Namibia Dollars*** (N\$ 146,272,000) for both the operational and development budget of the National Council, for the financial year 2015/2016.

I thank you