



## OPENING REMARKS

BY

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CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

AT THE

2018 SOCATT AFRICA REGION  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

### **Theme**

*Capacitating Parliaments towards realizing Agenda 2063:  
The role of Parliaments in the age of knowledge based economy*

2 JULY 2018  
SAFARI HOTEL, WINDHOEK

**Director of Ceremonies,  
Hon. Bernard Songa Sibalatani, Vice Chairperson and CPA Senior  
Representative for Southern Africa  
Honourable Kasuto, Chairperson of the CPA Namibia Branch  
Honourable Members of Parliament,  
Advocate Eric Phindela, Chairperson of SoCATT,  
Members of the SoCATT Steering Committee  
Clerks and Secretaries of Parliaments,  
Esteemed Presenters and Penallists,  
Distinguished invited Guests,  
Staff of Parliaments,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great pleasure to officiate at this very important seminar of the Society of Clerks at the Table for the CPA Africa Region. Although you have been welcomed already by the Secretary, I would like to warmly welcome you all on behalf of the Namibian Parliament. I am happy to see so many parliamentary staff attending this 3<sup>rd</sup> SoCATT Professional Development Seminar whose deliberations are expected to add value, yet again, to our efforts aimed at accelerating the implementation of our continent's development agenda 2063.

Let me reiterate the importance of parliamentary reforms as a way of continuously improving the performance of parliaments in their

functions as the supreme representative institutions in any democracy. These reforms are aimed at making our parliaments more accountable, transparent and more responsive to the electorate's needs, and serves as beacons of good governance. Therefore, this seminar is taking place at the right time as the electorate expects more from their elected representatives.

As a Presiding Officer, it is proper to take a brief look at the purpose for your presence here in Windhoek. Parliament's role is to ensure accountability in the way our nations are governed, to provide that essential scrutiny that ensures that policy and plans are geared to the wishes of the electorate. Your being here is therefore important to examine the role of Parliaments in the age of knowledge based economy to ensure effective support to Members of Parliament as they discharge their responsibilities unhindered

This Seminar is taking place under the Theme **“Capacitating Parliaments towards realizing Agenda 2063: The role of Parliaments in the age of Knowledge Based Economy.** Knowledge in this global village we live in, is recognised as the driver of productivity and economic growth. Critical components of building a highly knowledge-based economy lies in skilled human resources and effective national systems of innovation. It is therefore, imperative that parliaments in Africa are on par with the rapid change where knowledge is acquired, created, disseminated and is used effectively to

enhance economic development. For parliamentarians to effectively execute their legislative functions, they need to be served and advised by human resources that is up to date with the knowledge revolution. Parliamentary staff members need not only to be experts in their respective fields but likewise they need to be pro-active when serving Members. This means that follow ups on recommendations as proposed by standing committees to line Ministries, Agencies and Offices are taken seriously and ensure these institutions are held accountable.

Distinguished participants, it is at this seminar that I expect the participants to dissect what really is the role of parliaments in the age of knowledge-based economy? How do we ensure that Agenda 2063 is achieved? What resolutions are we bringing to the African round table as parliaments to ensure that we achieve goals and objectives set out in Agenda 2063? Are our parliaments equipped with ICT infrastructure that will enable both staff members and members of parliament to continuously upgrade and adapt new skills? It is a fact that not only some members of parliament are resistant to technological changes, there are staff members that are also finding it difficult to adapt to new technologies. What is SoCATT doing to ensure that these staff members are capacitated in this regard?

I leave these questions up to you to respond and if your responses are that we are far as a Continent in addressing these issues, then I suggest,

your resolutions emanating from this seminar should address these issues.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the SoCATT Steering Committee for organising this event.

Honourable Members,  
Distinguished participants,

I believe that this seminar will not only enable you to acquire skills, but will also offer you the opportunity to interact with others, and share views and experiences. I urge all to contribute and participate fully to ensure that as staff of parliaments, your work is measurable. With this, I reiterate my best wishes to you and declare this seminar officially open.

I thank you.