



## Media Release

29 November, 2018

*For immediate release*

### **RE: Parly committees are 'deadwood'**

A story published on page three of Friday, November 23, 2018 edition of The Patriot newspaper under the heading "**Parly committees are 'deadwood'**", has reference. The story is said to have been generated from commentaries with local analyst(s), who attempted to comment on and "analyse" the work of the Parliamentary Standing Committees

1. The story contained misinformation and personal opinions exhibited as facts, which, if not addressed, may create confusion in the public domain.
2. The inferences and postulations made are nothing but mere personal opinion(s) of the 'analyst(s)' as there was no references made to any legal framework, parliamentary procedure and practices. Thus, they lack context! For example, at the very beginning of the story, it stated that "*A local analyst has indicated that the high level of corruption within the public sector can partly be blamed on the 'weak' and ineffective parliamentary standing committees that ought to provide oversight*". This is too general a statement.
3. The Parliamentary Committees as non-partisan bodies of Parliament are comprised of members drawn from all political parties represented in Parliament. Their powers and functions are prescribed by the Constitution and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Parliament. Committees do not function in the vacuum.
4. Since 1990, Parliamentary Committees have exercised their powers and functions in relation to the House, the public and the Executive by supporting the representation and legislative core functions of Parliament through fact-finding, oversight missions, inquiries and public hearings. In all these undertakings, Committees submit reports to the House and once the report is

adopted, it is forwarded to the relevant Offices /Ministries /Agencies (OMAs) for implementation.

As case in point, in this parliamentary term, the Committees summoned OMAs to answer to irregularities raised through the Auditor General's reports, such as that of NSFAF, New Era, Namibia Development Brigade, NBC, Ministry of Finance, National Assembly and many others. **In highlight**, the inquiry conducted by the Public Accounts Committee into the misuse of government houses which resulted in revamping the whole process of occupying and allocating those houses, is an important milestone.

5. In the fight against corruption, the Committee responsibilities, as legislative bodies, are limited **to scrutiny and recommendations** which are advanced to OMAs for execution.
6. **Investigation and prosecution of corruption** are not the responsibilities of Parliamentary Standing Committees. These function rest with other institutions such as the ACC, the Police and Prosecution Authorities. In a democracy like ours, the principle of 'separation of State power' or 'the checks and balances' is supreme, thus limiting the powers of Committees.
7. It is absolutely misleading to connote Parliamentary Committees as 'deadwood'. The Committees have been exercising their powers and functions exceptionally well and within the existing legal framework and parliamentary practices.

Perhaps, the 'analyst(s)' have missed all the many fact-finding, oversight missions, inquiries and public hearings undertaken by Committees over the years. However, as 'analyst(s) of note', they ought to be familiar with the existing relations between State institutions and the permissible legal and procedural frameworks. Thus, interpretations and analysis of institutional proceedings should take cognisance of the law(s) governing such processes.

*ENDS*

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