



EIGHTH SESSION, FIFTH NATIONAL COUNCIL



MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Monday, 08 May 2017

(09:30 - 13:00)

No.4 - 2017

The Council met pursuant to adjournment.

1.0 The Chairperson took the Chair.

2.0 The Chairperson recited the Prayer and Affirmation.

3.0 MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairperson announced to the National Council that the National Assembly has passed and referred the following Bills to the National Council for review in accordance with Article 75(1) of the Namibian Constitution:

1) Appropriation Bill [B.7 – 2017];

2) Nature Conservation Amendment Bill [B.22 – 2016];

3) Access to Biological and Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge Bill [B. 4 – 2017]; and

4) Witness Protection Bill [B. 2 – 2017].

The Chairperson then called upon the Secretary to read the Bills a First Time.

The Secretary read the Bills a First Time.

The Bills stood referred to a **Second Reading**.

4.0 OPENING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

Honourable Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council made a Statement to the House at the opening of the Eighth Session of the 5th National Council on 08 May 2017. The Statement is reproduced hereunder:

“HONOURABLE BERNARD SONGA SIBALATANI, VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL;

HONOURABLE BOOIS, DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE RULING PARTY IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL;

HONOURABLE HILMA NICANOR, DEPUTY MINISTER OF VETERANS AFFAIRS & MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL;

HONOURABLES CHIEF WHIPS OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL;

HONOURABLE MEMBERS;

SECRETARY TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AND STAFF;

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

Welcome back once again to this august House from your respective constituencies across the length and breadth of this beautiful country Namibia. We praise God for his grace and for bringing all of us back safely as a team. We have assembled with the aim of fulfilling our constitutional mandate as the legislative branch of the State. I appreciate your continuous commitment when called upon to serve the nation time after time.

Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen

The National Assembly has passed and referred the following Bills to this august House for review:

1. Appropriation Bill [B.7 – 2017].
2. Nature Conservation Amendment Bill [B.22 – 2016].
3. Access to Biological and Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge Bill [B.4 – 2017], and
4. Witness Protection Bill [B.2 – 2017].

Honourable Members,

Besides our work here inside the Chamber, our schedule over the next three weeks or so is very busy. We will have the Media Open Day right after this, which is aimed at strengthening our relationship with the media. Also upcoming, respectively, are the launches of the Customer Service Charters and the National Council's Strategic Plan.

Furthermore, I have the honour of announcing, to the public, that we will be hosting the first ever session of the Junior National Council from 24 to 26 May 2017 under the theme "Parliament engages Youth Perspectives on the SDGs". In this regard, I call upon you Honourable Members to render your support to our youth counterparts and mentor them into parliamentarians of the future.

Honourable Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Economy, Hon. Peter Kazongominja and his team for a job well done in examining and scrutinizing the Auditor General's Reports of various regional councils and local authorities during the recent public hearings. It is not an easy task but they did it exceptionally well and I once again pass on my sincere thanks to you.

Honourable Members,

I reiterate, Parliament's theme this year is: "Parliament Working Towards the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

The general public is aware of our theme and is following the debates in both Houses of Parliament to listen if parliamentarians are sticking to the theme. People also want to know what individual Members of Parliament are bringing to the table to ensure that indeed Parliament is working towards the attainment of the 17 SDGs.

Therefore, as individual lawmakers, we have to come up with strategies on how we will incorporate the SDGs, which by the way are also addressed by the Harambee Prosperity Plan, not only in our contributions towards the bills but also to be incorporated in our soon to be launched Strategic Plan and into our Annual Activity Plans. This is the task and challenge we have been given and entrusted with by those we represent.

The National Council has a crucial role to play in the successful implementation of the SDGs in Namibia. Through our oversight function, we can monitor and ensure that Government at all levels incorporates SDGs into its developmental projects and public services. I am therefore requesting the National Council Standing Committees, when implementing their annual activities, like conducting public hearings and outreach programs to the regions to both bring the SDGs to the attention of the Government officials on the ground and ensure the implementation thereof in line with Government priorities.

The task ahead of us may seem daunting; however, I have full trust and confidence that we are fully equipped and committed towards delivering on our mandate for the benefit of the country.

Honourable Members,

I also want to use this opportunity to inform the House and the public of the upcoming Fourth Session of Rural Women Parliament with Men as Partners which will be held

from 28 to 30 June 2017 in this Chamber under the theme “Parliament Partners With Rural Women to Attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

In this regard, Honourable Members, I request your kind support in assisting the Office of the Chairperson as well as the Governor's office in your respective regions to facilitate the identification and election of the most suitable women and men to represent your region here next month.

Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen

As you can see from the above, National Council regards the agenda of the SDGs as a worthwhile programme; which is why, this year, we will eat, breath and live the SDGs through our work. May I also say, some people think the budget has already been passed because it was passed by the National Assembly; this is far from the truth! They should know that it has to be passed by this Honourable House and only thereafter will His Excellency the President sign it for publication in the Government Gazette as an Act of Parliament.

Honourable Members,

With these few words, I wish you all fruitful deliberations ahead, especially during our budget debate.

I thank you”.

5.0 Hon. Boois seconded by Hon. Nicanor adjourned the Council at 10:00 until Tuesday, May 09, 2017 at 09:30.

Emilia Mkusa

Secretary of the National Council