



STRENGTHENING SADC PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT IN THE BUDGET CYCLE

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR MEMBERS AND STAFF OF THE PARLIAMENT OF NAMIBIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Otjiwarongo, Namibia, 10 August 2016 – The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) is holding a focus group discussion with Members of the Namibian Parliament and secretariat staff on the project: *Strengthening SADC Parliamentary Engagement in the National Budget Cycle*. The focus group discussion is being hosted in Otjiwarongo, Namibia from 10 – 11 August 2016.

The project was initiated in response to the renewed appreciation amongst parliaments in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to examine their engagement at all stages of the national budget process, which is a move towards effectively executing their oversight mandate. As a partner in the project, the Parliament of Namibia invited AWEPA to delve into its engagement in the budget process and collect data on its unique political, economic and social experiences from a parliamentary lens early this year. The data collected will serve as the foundation for continued dialogue on the subject as the project unfolds.

The focus group discussion in Otjiwarongo constitutes the first step in this process, inviting participants to engage with the wealth of information gathered and critically reflect on how the institution of parliament can enhance, influence and create innovative strategies for engagement in the national budget process. The

conclusions and recommendations emanating from this reflection will be elevated to the regional level in early 2017, where Members and staff of the Parliament of Namibia will have the opportunity to further reflect on their engagement in the budget process from a comparative perspective alongside participants from Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and Botswana.

About AWEPA

The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) works in partnership with African parliaments to strengthen democracy in Africa, keep Africa high on the political agenda in Europe, and facilitate African-European parliamentary dialogue. AWEPA strives to strengthen African parliaments and promote human dignity. For 30 years, AWEPA has served as a unique tool for complex democratisation processes, from South Sudan to South Africa. With its roots in the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa, AWEPA now works in Africa from a development perspective to strengthen the core functions of parliaments: oversight, representation and legislation. AWEPA has some 1800 current and former European parliamentarians as members from the European Parliament, almost all member states of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland. AWEPA has two offices in Europe: Brussels and Amsterdam; and 8 African offices in Arusha, Bujumbura, Cape Town, Juba, Kampala, Kigali, Kinshasa and Maputo.

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