



The Association for Local Authorities in Namibia

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ALAN PRESIDENT, HON. KATRINA SHIMBULU, ENGAGED THE SPEAKERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO LOBBY FOR POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1. Background

Over the past years ALAN has been advocating for the enhancement of intergovernmental relations between all spheres of governments especially in the areas of policy and legislature review and how the local authority agenda can be advanced through structured engagement and consultations. It is against this background that the ALAN Executive Committee deemed it pivotal to engage and consult the Speaker.

2. Discussions with the Speaker of the National Assembly

2.1 Opening of the Meeting

The Speaker, Prof. Peter Katjavivi welcomed the ALAN team and invited the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Human Resources and Community Development to be part of the meeting.

The President of ALAN, Hon. Katrina Shimbulu thanked the Speaker for the positive prompt response on the request for the meeting and informed the meeting that

2.2 Introduction of ALAN &

Introduction was made that the Association for Local Authorities in Namibia (ALAN) is the representative body of all 57 Local Authorities and plays an advocacy role on behalf of the local authorities with the view to promote and assist its membership addressing socio, economic and political challenges at the local government level.

The meeting noted that ALAN has for the past years work in close collaboration with various Ministries, stakeholders and development partners in areas to enhance the local government developmental agenda for effective and efficient service delivery.

The meeting further noted that over the past years ALAN has been advocating for the enhancement of intergovernmental relations between all spheres of governments especially in the areas of policy and legislature review and how the local authority agenda can be advanced through structured engagement and consultations.

The ALAN President stressed that for the effective and efficient implementation of the local government developmental agenda requires policy reforms and interventions from all stakeholders for the attainment of Vision 2030, NDP 5 and the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

2.3 Submission of ALAN issues by the President

1. Legal Recognition of ALAN

The importance of an organised association for local government is to provide a consolidated forum through which members have an effective communication medium with central and regional governments and private sector. For the past years ALAN as the umbrella body provides a consolidated forum that protects, safeguard and enhance the image, interest, rights and privileges, of local authorities.

Local Government Association are common features in the sector with the main role of lobbying and advocating for the local government agenda. Like any Association around the globe, ALAN needs to be enacted and legally recognised as a National Association.

We visited SALGA in South Africa, BALA in Botswana and ZILA in Zambia to benchmark with our neighbouring countries in the SADC region so that we adopt guidelines on how best the Government of the Republic of Namibia can enact ALAN in the local authority act as the uniform voice of local governance.

2. Conditions of Service of Councillors

Local Government leadership is elected office bearers however are not recognised of as part of the national political officer bearers, e.g. lack of a pension fund, retirement recognition by the Commission on Office Bearers Benefits, leave days (many or most local government Councillors are fulltime employees elsewhere and can therefore not devote their time and service to the councils business and community on a full time basis and are hence forced to sacrifice their private employment leave days in order to attend to council business).

- Remuneration of Local Authorities councillor to be reviewed and increased
- Local Authority Councillors to be given special leave at work stations for council assignments
- Local Authority Cllr's still awaits for the VIP Stickers on official council vehicles.
- Too short Office term of the office-bearers (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Village Councils and Members of Management Committees) for strategic planning, introduction and implementation of policies and projects (one year).

As a sector responsible for development at the grassroots level, Local Authorities are still challenge with issues such as;

1. Inadequate Financial Resources

- Financial support for developmental purposed from central government is not predicable, reliable and adequate to plan according to the needs of our communities and to deliver according to those needs.
- Non – equitable distribution of development funds from central government to Local Authorities and channelling through regional council delays the implementation of development project.

2. Declining local Economies:

High unemployment rate and underdevelopment and stagnating economies make it difficult or impossible to effectively implementation of the required fees, tariffs and charges.

3. Capacity Constraints

- Due to limited financial capacity, many local authorities are unable to recruit certain key professionals, resulting in a skills deficit in Local Authorities
- Recently, conditions of service caused variety of financial challenges, which include: reduction in capacity to deliver services; increase pressure on salaries and limited finances to appoint qualified personnel.

4. Rural -to Urban Migration

The increasing levels of poverty, population growth and the lack of a sustainable housing mean that urban growth is often absorbed into informal settlement. This area is characterized by the residents by a lack of basic infrastructure and the ever – increasing poverty of the residents means that many do not have the ability to pay for services. Many urban residents cannot afford housing, and Council has few resources with which to improve or maintain infrastructure and services. Consequently the housing, health and environmental conditions in the growing informal settlements are extremely poor.

5. Dilapidated infrastructure

Significant part of the infrastructure in local authorities had exceeded their life span and were either dilapidated or in a state of grave despair.

This situation was further exacerbated by the rapid increase in population growth caused by urbanisation placing further strain on already deteriorating infrastructure resulting in power outages, sewerage overflows, and severe water losses.

6. Seeking Support for AMICAALL Namibia

AMICAALL Namibia is the lead agency supporting Local Authorities (LAs) in Namibia to implement Health and Wellness Workplace Programmes in Namibia in order to mitigate the negative effect of the HIV/ AIDS epidemic on the local authorities' workforce. The Association of Local Authorities in Namibia (ALAN) has mandated AMICAALL Namibia by way of a Declaration to support all local authorities in Namibia to implement HIV and Aids, Health and Wellness Programmes in line with the National HIV/ AIDS Policy, the National Strategic Framework on HIV/ Aids (NSF), National Development Plans and the Sustainable Development Goals. Health and Wellness Challenges including HIV/Aids epidemic is reducing the life expectancy of our people, deepen poverty levels, and limit our capacity to absorb and utilize resources for socio-economic development and increase vulnerability of our people and the economic amongst others.

Thus, the current mayors, councilors and municipal leaders (CEOs and heads of departments) continue to carry the torch which was lit by the African Mayors in Abidjan, Ivory Coast in 1997. The then African local government leaders' insightfulness enable us today to respond effectively to the epidemic at the local level using AMICAALL Namibia as a vehicle. Appreciation is expressed for the development partners and UN Agencies for their enormous technical and financial support such as the Global Fund, UNDP, UNAIDS, Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD), GIZ and many others.

The reigning mayors, councilors and municipal leaders in Namibia remains committed to protecting young people, identifying and mobilizing local capacity for prevention, care and support, providing leadership in establishing a supportive environment that makes prevention, care and support possible while developing local services. AMICAALL Namibia as the implementing agency of ALAN is strategically positioned and capacitated the local government to implement high impact intervention in line with the new global thinking such as the HIV/Aids Investment Framework spearhead by the MoHSS and UNAIDS to mention a few. These inventions include the training of political leaders, senior administrators, peer educators and local volunteers amongst others. In addition, community targeted programmes such as the Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) Methodology has strengthened most communities especially those that are living in the periphery of our towns and informal settlements to

engage and allow them to be part of development of their towns and settlements, for inclusivity and ownership.

The model of health and wellness workplace programmes in Namibia have been implementing HIV/Aids Workplace Programmes (WPPs) for quite some years now - not only in local government, but in government ministries lead by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the private sector spearheaded by NABCOA, a sister organization to AMICAALL Namibia. Due to the fact that HIV/Aids related meetings are associated with stigma and discrimination, AMICAALL Namibia has embarked upon a new concept known as “Employee Health and Wellness Programme” in line with the global trend. The concept is not new in theory; however, the approach is different in that it covers both non-communicable and communicable diseases alike, which affects employee productivity in the workplace.

The value AMICAALL Namibia created has improved health and wellness for employees and the communities in each LA resulting in improved productivity and service delivery, as well as enhance community health and wellness as a building block for socio-economic development.

With the current 57 Local Authorities (LAs), the AMICAALL target market can be quantified as follows:

- 355 Councilors, incl. 57 Mayors
- 57 CEOs
- Approximately 250 HODs
- Large and variable number of LA employees

With the above mentioned implemented by AMICAALL Namibia over the years, funding has dwindled after Namibia being classified as a middle income country resulting in funding agencies pulling out. Currently, Global fund has not extended its grand support to AMICAALL Namibia and we are now in the process of grand closure since 1st January ending 31st March 2018. It is against this background that we urgently seek support from Government agencies, stakeholders and development partners to solicit funding in order to continue serving the nation.

Further highlight was made that since 2007 ALAN in partnership with the Ministry of Urban & Rural Development and stakeholders developed the Local Authority Reform Paper that articulate the required legal reforms in order for the Local Authorities to effectively and efficiently carry out their mandate.

2.4 Conclusion &Way Forward

The Speaker concurred with the challenges raised by ALAN and pledge his full support and it was agreed that:

1. That the Speaker will engage and consult the Minister of Urban & Rural Development on the submission.
2. That ALAN prepares a full detailed submission for presentation to the full Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources and Community Development
3. That the secretariat arrange for an appointment for ALAN to present to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources and Community Development