

Parliament & Democracy in the 21st Century – A Guide to Good Practice

Presentation by Graham Hopwood
Capacity-Building Seminar for Incoming
Women MPs – March 10 2015



Institute for Public Policy Research

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- Democracy & Governance – Election Watch, Democracy Report
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Election Watch

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND NAMIBIAN ELECTIONS: IS NAMIBIAN POLITICS KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES?

In recent years, social media has become an increasingly important part of political campaigning and communication. In fact, in some cases – including the 2008 and 2011 US Presidential campaigns – social media has proved to be the 'make or break' factor for political parties and presidential candidates (Voting for 94).

Africa hasn't been left out in feeling the effect of technology at the electoral process. The 'revolution' knowledge has become prevalent and mobile technologies (text messaging and social media) have become prevalent across Africa. Technology has been used to mobilize voters, provide feedback from citizens on their needs and desires, and to manage crises that occur following election results. Ghana, which is considered Africa's 'model democracy', has used technology to its advantage. In the regard, IT News Africa reports that "in 2013 a national election process took place in key countries in Africa that technology – specifically social media and mobile phone services – played a major role in the process. Technology has been used to facilitate communication between voters and candidates, and to provide a platform for discussion. Today, as a result of the growing use of social media, it is becoming increasingly important for political parties to have a strong presence on these platforms." (Africa's Election Process: A Key Role for Technology, IT News Africa, 2013)

African Facebook Users in 2013



KEEPING UP WITH THE MILLENNIALS: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

In the pre-election period, social media has become a key tool for the engagement of youth – particularly in terms of political campaigning and voter mobilization. Younger audiences through social media (Facebook) have a higher engagement rate than older audiences. In Namibia, 2.1 million voters are aged 18-34, and the population has a high percentage of registered voters aged 18-34. This demographic is highly active on social media, and political parties are increasingly using these platforms to reach them. The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) has also recognized the importance of social media in youth engagement and has encouraged parties to use these platforms effectively.



Having an online presence is a key to success in the current political environment. It allows parties to communicate directly with voters, provide updates on campaign progress, and respond to concerns and questions in real-time. Social media can be used to spread the party's message, mobilize volunteers, and engage with the community. However, it is important to use social media responsibly and to ensure that the information shared is accurate and unbiased. The ECN has provided guidelines for parties to follow when using social media during elections.

CLAIMING A VOICE: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PLATFORM FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES

Opposition parties in Africa have struggled for decades in a media environment that favour incumbents. In Namibia, this has often been a subject of contention, with complaints from opposition parties that the media is biased in favor of the ruling party. Social media has provided a new platform for these parties to voice their concerns and challenge the incumbent's narrative. By using social media, opposition parties can reach a wider audience, mobilize support, and hold the government accountable. This has the potential to level the playing field and give opposition parties a greater voice in the political process.

ABOUT ELECTION WATCH
Election Watch is a project of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). It is produced with the support of the European Union, a grant from the 2009-2010 IPPR Africa Programme, and the support of the 2010-2011 IPPR Africa Programme. For more information on Election Watch, visit www.electionwatch.org.

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Political Parties and Gender Equality

South African Political Parties 2014 Promises to the Nation

Writing a strong Manifesto
The party manifesto is a key document for a political party. It outlines the party's vision, values, and policies. A strong manifesto is essential for attracting voters and winning elections. It should be clear, concise, and compelling. It should also be consistent with the party's history and values. The manifesto should be written in a way that is easy for voters to understand. It should also be written in a way that is inspiring and motivating. The manifesto should be a key part of the party's campaign strategy.

Political Parties and Gender Equality
Political parties play a crucial role in promoting gender equality. They can advocate for policies that support women's rights and equality. They can also promote the participation of women in politics and leadership. Political parties should ensure that they are inclusive and representative of all citizens. They should also ensure that they are transparent and accountable to their voters. Political parties should work to create a more equitable and just society for all.

South African Political Parties 2014 Promises to the Nation
The 2014 South African general election was a landmark event. It was the first time that a political party other than the African National Congress (ANC) won the majority of seats in the National Assembly. This was a significant victory for the opposition parties. The 2014 election was a testament to the power of the South African people. It showed that the people were ready for change and for a new direction for the country. The 2014 election was a turning point in South African history. It was a moment of hope and optimism for the future of the country.

Hints on Writing Manifestos
When writing a manifesto, it is important to be clear and concise. The manifesto should be easy to read and understand. It should also be compelling and inspiring. The manifesto should be written in a way that is consistent with the party's values and history. The manifesto should be a key part of the party's campaign strategy. The manifesto should be written in a way that is easy for voters to understand. It should also be written in a way that is inspiring and motivating. The manifesto should be a key part of the party's campaign strategy.

Indian Political Parties to Release Draft Election Manifestos
The Indian political parties are preparing for the 2014 general election. They are releasing draft election manifestos to outline their policies and vision for the country. The draft manifestos are a key part of the parties' campaign strategy. They are also a way for the parties to communicate with their voters. The draft manifestos are a key part of the parties' campaign strategy. They are also a way for the parties to communicate with their voters.

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PRODUCING EFFECTIVE PARTY MANIFESTOS

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The ECN Gets Social!

The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) has taken a significant step towards modernizing its operations. It has launched a social media campaign to engage with voters and provide them with the latest information on the election process. The ECN's social media presence is a key part of its communication strategy. It allows the ECN to reach a wider audience and to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions. The ECN's social media campaign is a testament to the power of social media in the current political environment. It is a way for the ECN to communicate with its voters and to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions.

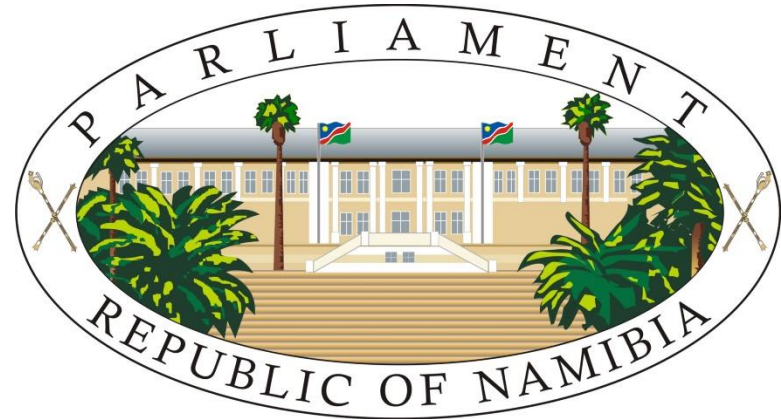
SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media has become a key part of political campaigns. It allows parties to reach a wider audience and to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions. Social media can be used to spread the party's message, mobilize volunteers, and engage with the community. Social media can also be used to provide voters with the information they need to make informed decisions. Social media is a key part of the current political environment. It is a way for parties to communicate with their voters and to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions.

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Functions of parliament

- **LAW-MAKING** – Not just receiving laws from the Executive but being actively involved in the policy- and law-making process
- **OVERSIGHT** – Ensure executive implements laws e.g. via Committees
- **REPRESENTATION** – Representing constituents, but also social issues. Focal point for democratisation



What the Constitution says



The Constitution
of the Republic
of Namibia

Includes First and Second Amendments



Article 45 Representative Nature

The members of the National Assembly shall be representative of all the people and shall in the performance of their duties be guided by the objectives of this Constitution, by the public interest and by their conscience.

Article 63 Functions & Powers

On top of lawmaking - budgets, defence of constitution, receive reports, international agreements



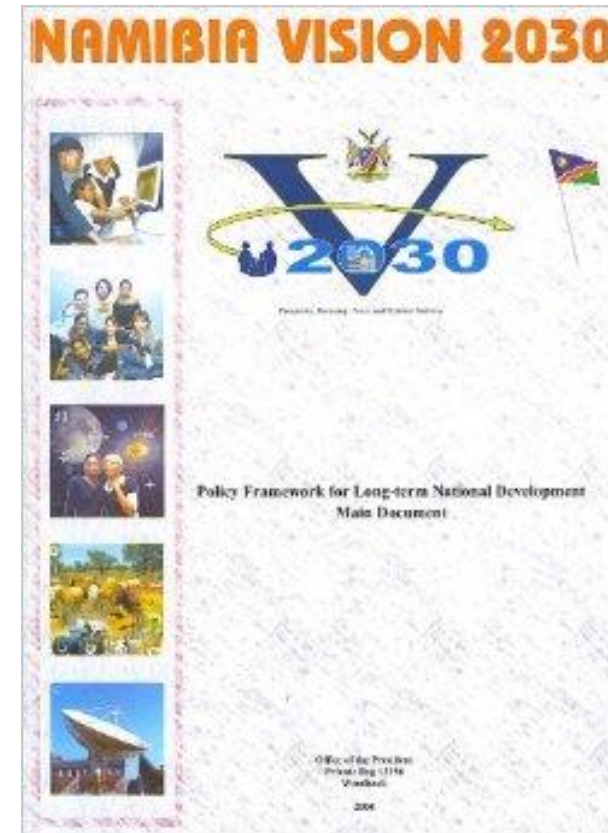
What Vision 2030 says

Vision 2030 has a very strong emphasis on participatory democracy throughout.

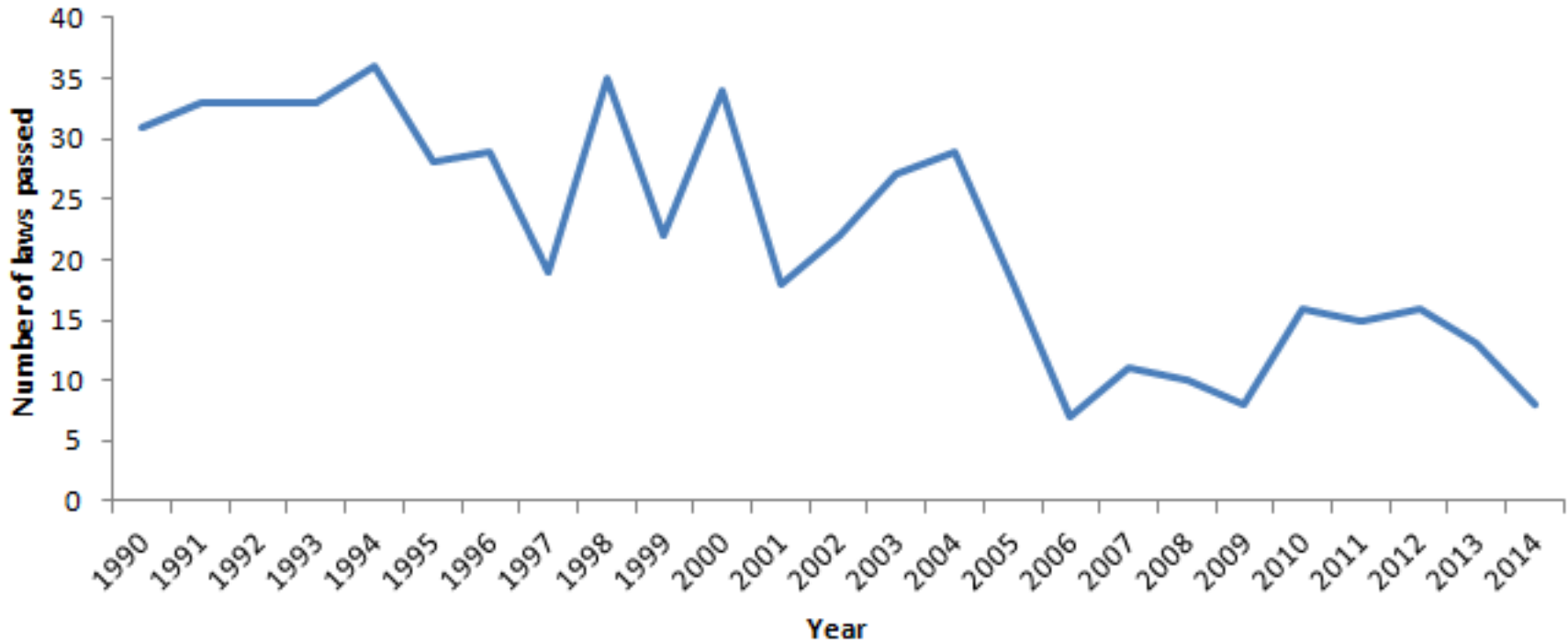
- By 2030: The multi-party democratic principle of popular participation is well entrenched in the Namibian society;

Where we want to be (2030):

- The Namibian people actively participate in decision-making through free, fair and frequent elections, as well as through other consultative processes.
- The government operates in an effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable manner at all levels, under accepted constitutional principles.
- The Namibian people and government continue to support and actively exercise their constitutionally guaranteed political rights.
- The Namibian people are continuously and effectively informed on their democratic rights



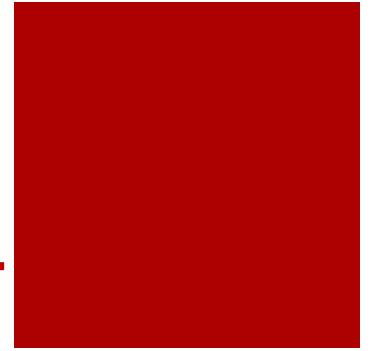
Laws Passed Since 1990



Namibia has passed 551 laws since independence. That is an average of 23 laws per year. The most laws passed in a single year was 1994 (36). The least in 2006 (7). Source: LAC



Parliamentary legitimacy

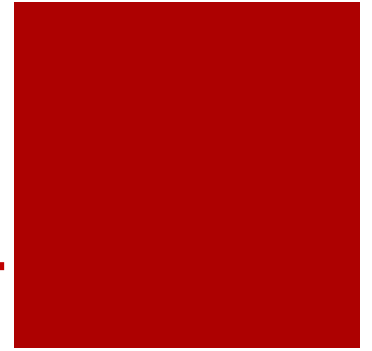


With the lower number of laws being passed other aspects of parliament's work take on greater significance:

- Standing committees
- Motions and questions
- Private member's bills
- Parliamentary outreach



Trends and standards

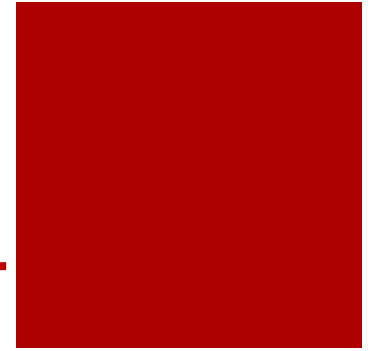


No one size fits all, but new standards and trends are emerging in 21st century.

- Open parliaments/access to information
- Communicating via multiple platforms
- Communicating in multiple languages/plain language
- Exchanging information about good practices
- Citizen engagement



Trends and standards #2



- **Declaration of assets and promoting integrity**
- **Ensuring parliament has a national reach**
- **Publishing parliamentary records**
- **Enforceable codes of conduct**
- **Enhanced research capacities**



Capacity issues

Country	No. of MPs	No. committees	No. Researchers
Benin	83	7	0
Ghana	230	27	3
Kenya	222	15	4
Namibia	78	7	3
Nigeria	360	84	6
South Africa	400	39	69
Tanzania	320	17	5
Uganda	350	22	15
Zimbabwe	204	20	14

Source: ALP, 2012



Possible ways ahead

- **Parliamentary commission**
- **Improved research component**
- **Agenda for 21st century**
- **Expanded parliamentary outreach**
- **Access and openness**



THANK YOU



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