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Media Statement

The NANGOF Trust, as an umbrella body for non-governmental organisations in Namibia, herewith voices its grave concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the Namibian Constitution and the manner in which they are being rushed through parliament. No meaningful consultations, beyond a handful of political parties, appear to have taken place on these substantive changes.

A number of the proposed changes are so far reaching that they require extensive, national consultations with citizens, stakeholders and civil society. Of particular concern are the proposals to increase the National Assembly (NA) seats from 72 to 96 and the National Council seats from 26 to 42; the proposal to increase the number of Presidential appointees to the NA from 6 to 8 AND to give these appointees full voting powers; and the proposal that only 27% of the NA would be required to be present to debate when no voting is to take place. Another cause for concern is the proposal that Regional Governors will be given a constitutional status which would effectively entrench their existence.

Several of the proposed changes appear to be an attempt to further centralise power and therefore undermine democracy. The changes proposed concerning parliament would have a cost implication that would have a negative impact on the national development budget and service delivery.

We therefore call upon Cabinet to place this matter on hold and to allow for a full consultation with interested stakeholders and the public. There do not appear to any justifiable arguments for rushing such amendments through parliament. Rather this course of action appears to have been taken for reasons of political expediency. In the interests of democracy, transparency and reaching national consensus, such major changes to the Constitution must be considered through a process of countrywide consultations following the upcoming elections.

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