



# **NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN & CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE**

## **What is the National Advisory Council on Children?**

The National Advisory Council on Children is a government-appointed body with the task of promoting the rights and interests of children in society. The purpose of the Council is to bring together key stakeholders from different government ministries and civil society to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation on children's issues, and to advise the Ministry responsible for child welfare on matters pertaining to children. The Council is modelled on Namibia's Labour Advisory Council, which advises on issues relating to the Labour Act.

## **Functions of the National Advisory Council on Children**

The National Advisory Council on Children has the following functions:

- ⑨ to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation on matters relating to children
- ⑨ to advise government on matters relating to the protection and care of children
- ⑨ to advise on the implementation of the Child Care and Protection Act, and other laws relating to children
- ⑨ to advise the Minister and where appropriate an organ of state on the need for law reform on any issue relating to children
- ⑨ to encourage the involvement of non-governmental organisations and communities in services and facilities to advance the well-being of children
- ⑨ to design and recommend programmes relating to the protection or care of children
- ⑨ to study, investigate and monitor the implementation of the Child Care and Protection Act and related laws
- ⑨ to perform any other functions assigned to it by the Minister.

The Council is required to meet at least twice a year. It will receive reports from all ministries involved with child protection issues, to facilitate co-ordination across ministries, and it is required to submit annual reports to the Minister on its activities.

## **Who are the members of the Child Welfare Advisory Council?**

The Council consists of the following 16 members:

- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for child welfare (Chairperson)
- ⑨ Children's Advocate (Deputy Chairperson)
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for health
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for education
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for youth
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for justice
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for labour
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for home affairs
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for foreign affairs
- ⑨ Executive Director of the Ministry responsible for safety and security
- ⑨ Registrar of the Social Work and Psychology Council
- ⑨ Executive Chairperson of the National Youth Council
- ⑨ Chairperson of the National Disability Council
- ⑨ one staff member from the Office of the Prime Minister (designated by the Prime Minister and appointed by the Minister responsible for child welfare)
- ⑨ two representatives of civil society who have expertise in children's issues (nominated by civil society and appointed by the Minister responsible for child welfare).

The Council may utilise external advisors, and it can co-opt non-members to serve on its subcommittees. The National Advisory Council on Children, through its Chairperson, also administers the Children's Fund.

## What is the Children's Fund?

The Children's Fund is a special fund established to pool resources from different ministries, donors and development partners for children's programmes that cut across ministries and may extend beyond a single financial year. It is audited annually by the Auditor-General. The Minister responsible for child welfare receives an annual financial report on the fund, and must table that report in the National Assembly.



## What is the Children's Advocate?

The Children's Advocate is an official in the Office of the Ombudsman who focuses on issues relating to children.

## What does the Children's Advocate do?

The Children's Advocate has five main roles:

- ① to investigate complaints about services provided to children under the laws of Namibia or the violation of children's rights under the Namibian Constitution or any other laws
- ② to monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other international agreements on child protection which are binding on Namibia
- ③ to monitor the implementation of the Child Care and Protection Act and any other law pertaining to children
- ④ to take cases to court as necessary to further the interests of children
- ⑤ to raise awareness about the Child Care and Protection Act and the importance of child protection in general.



The Children's Advocate is expected to resolve complaints through negotiation and mediation where possible, in order to minimise conflict.

The National Advisory Council on Children may request the Ombudsman to provide it with an annual report on the key activities of the Children's Advocate.

