

## Disclosure of assets

Namibians should demand the right to access information about the operations and performance of not only public institutions, but also of public servants, including all public and political office bearers.

This right should be protected in legislation so that transparency and public accountability can improve.

The accounts of political parties should be audited and publicly accessible because Parliament funded them with N\$80 million of taxpayers' money for the 2016/17 financial year. Donors of parties should be disclosed and the amounts donated - in excess of a threshold - published.

The latest initiative between the Electoral Commission of Namibia and the registered political parties is that the mentioned disclosure will most likely materialise. If it did, it will be a positive step forward. Such initiative will enable the public to monitor the influence of donors on political parties.

The same argument about disclosure of donations to political parties applies to political office bearers.

### OWN VS PUBLIC INTEREST

They should annually declare their assets and those of their spouses and family members and it should be accessible for public scrutiny. Public servants and political office bearers are appointed and elected to serve the public, not their own interests.

Both Houses of Parliament have adopted the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (MPs) during



**JOHAN COETZEE**

2015, a positive initiative by the Secretary of the National Assembly, Jakes Jacobs. According to the Code of Conduct, MPs must annually declare and disclose their assets, their business interests and shareholding in companies. MPs must also disclose the same information about their spouses and their dependants.

The Asset Register of both houses is accessible in the Parliamentary Library. However, nobody is allowed to make copies of the Register.

Such restrictive accessibility is restricting transparency and partially defeats the purpose of declaration and disclosure.

Not all MPs have met the 2015 deadline of asset disclosure, therefore the disclosure of 2015 is not available. Not meeting the deadline is not exemplary of ethical compliance.

jcoetzee@nust.na

#### • References

**Eigen, P. (2002). Controlling corruption: A key to development-orientated trade.**

**Klitgaard, R. (2008). A holistic approach to the fight against corruption.**