20.6 BESKRYWINGSPUNT VAN STREEKSINODE NOORDWES OOR 'N NASIONALE SINODE VIR NAMIBIË (Art 33)

20.6 POINT OF DESCRIPTION FROM REGIONAL SYNOD NORTH WEST REGARDING A NATIONAL SYNOD FOR NAMIBIA (Art 33)

A. Dr HM Zwemstra stel die Beskrywingspunt.
Dr HM Zwemstra tables the Point of description.

B. Die Beskrywingspunt word staande die Sinode afgehandel.
The Point of Description is concluded while the Synod is in session.

C. **Besluit:** Daar word aan die Beskrywingspunt gevolg gegee.
Decision: The Point of Description is accepted.

D. **BESKRYWINGSPUNT / POINT OF DESCRIPTION**

1. Versoek Streeksinode Noordwes versoek die Algemene Sinode:	1. **Request**	
1.1 Dat die kerke van Klassis Etosha in Namibië hulle as deel van die kerke in verband met die GKSA, in 'n Nasionale Sinode organiseer;	Our request is that the General Synod approves the Point of Description, and that Deputies be appointed to assist and advise the new National Synod Namibia to ensure that the practical and organisational aspects are carefully identified and satisfactorily implemented.	
1.2 Dat Deputate aangewys word om die nuwe Nasionale Sinode vir Namibië te help en te adviseer om seker te maak dat die praktiese en organisatoriese aspekte noukeurig geïdentifiseer word en bevredigend geïmplementeer word.		
Besluit: Goedgekeur.	**Decision: Goedgekeur.**	
2. Motivering	2. **Motivation**	
2.1 Daar is reeds in 2017 in Klassis Etosha Deputate aangewys om die saak van 'n moontlike "eie kerkverband" te ondersoek. Hierdie opdrag is in 2020 uitgebrei om 'n Beskrywingspunt in die verband vir die Algemene Sinode voor te berei (vgl. Notule van Klassis Etosha 2020).	2.1 Classis Etosha Deputies were already appointed in 2017 to investigate the matter of a possible "own church affiliation". This mandate was extended in 2020 to prepare a Point of Description in this regard for the General Synod. (cf. Minutes of Classis Etosha 2020).	
2.2 Die Deputate het onder advies van kundiges op die gebied van die Gereformeerde kerkreg, verskeie besluite uit vorige Handelinge van die Sinodes van die GKSA nagegaan om hulself te verwittig van prinsipiële sake rakende kerkbegrip, kerkverband en regskonstruksie binne die kerk. Ons is van mening dat hierdie Beskrywingpunt direk aansluit by hierdie sake soos reeds deur ons kerke goedgekeur is en daarom as ondersteuning dien vir die praktiese implementering van hierdie Beskrywingspunt (vgl Bylae).	2.2 The Deputies, advised by experts in the field of Reformed ecclesiastical law, reviewed various decisions from previous Acts of the Synods of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA) to inform themselves of principled matters relating to church understanding, affiliation and legalities within the church. We are of the opinion that this overture directly ties in with these matters, as has already been approved by our churches and therefore serves as support for the practical implementation of this overture (cf. Appendice).	
2.3 Alhoewel daar groot ooreenkomste in	2.3 Although there are great similarities in	

die konteks van gemeentes in SA en dié in Namibië is, is Namibië 'n eie onafhanklike staat en vorm dit nie deel van die RSA nie. Dit het bepaalde effek en gevolge wanneer kerke hulself in kerklike vergaderinge organiseer. Deur as 'n Nasionale Sinode te organiseer met 'n naam wat wys dat ons hier is om die plaaslike gemeenskap met die Goeie Nuus te dien, kan ons beter teenoor die regering en die gemeenskap getuig (NGB, art 36).	the context of congregations in SA and those in Namibia, Namibia is an independent state and does not form part of the RSA. This has particular effect and consequences when churches organise church meetings. When organising a National Synod under a name that shows that we are here to serve the local community with the Good News, we can better witness to the government and the community (Belgic Confession, art. 36).	
Besluit: Punte 2.1 tot 2.3 kennis geneem.	**Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.3 noted.**	
3. Oorwegings	**3. Considerations**	
3.1 Daar moet goed besin word oor die verhouding tussen die Nasionale Sinode van Namibië en die GKSA. Die innigste ekumeniese eenheid moet steeds met die GKSA behou word soos dit ook die gebruik met ander Gereformeerde Kerkverbande oor die wêreld is.	3.1 The relationship between the National Synod of Namibia and the GKSA should be well considered. The deepest ecumenical unity must still be maintained with the GKSA as is the custom with other Reformed Church affiliations around the world.	
3.2 Omdat daar bepaalde praktiese aspekte is wat bespreek moet word wat moontlik nie tydens die Algemene Sinode in detail afgehandel kan word nie, kan die Algemene Sinode oorweeg om indien nodig, Deputate aan te wys om die Nasionale Sinode in Namibië by te staan. Sake wat aandag moet geniet is onder andere die Admin Buro wat bepaalde regte en funksies het, oor die TSP, ramings, emeritaats-versorging ens.	3.2 Because there are specific practical aspects to be discussed that may not be dealt with in detail during the General Synod, the General Synod may consider designating deputies to assist the National Synod in Namibia. Matters that need to be addressed include the Administrative Bureau, which has certain rights and functions, about the TSP, budget allocations, emeritus care etc.	
Besluit: Punte 3.1 en 3.2 kennis geneem.	**Decision: Points 3.1 and 3.2 noted.**	
4. Aanbevelings	**4. Recommendations**	
4.1 Dat die Sinode die Beskrywingspunt ter tafel neem en bespreking toelaat.	4.1 That the Synod table the Point of Description and allow discussion.	
4.2 Dat die Sinode die saak tydens hierdie sitting van die Sinode op grond van KO, art 46 afhandel	4.2 That the Synod settle the matter at this session of the Synod on the basis of CO, art 46	
4.3 Dat Deputate aangewys word om die Nasionale Sinode in Namibië by te staan om alle sake spoedig en deeglik af te handel.	4.3 That Deputies be appointed to assist the National Synod of Namibia to finalise all matters expeditiously and thoroughly.	
Besluit: Punte 4.1 tot 4.3 goedgekeur.	**Decision: Points 4.1 to 4.3 approved.**	
Bylae Prinsipiële sake oor kerkbegrip, kerkverband en regskonstruksie:	**Annexure** Principled matters of church understanding, church affiliation and legal construction:	

Handelinge van die Sinode 1982, art 177 • Die kerk is ‘n vergadering van gelowiges en ‘n plaaslike openbaring van die volk van God. • Veelheid van kerke is in die sin van plaaslike kerke en nooit in die sin van “nasionale” kerke nie. Daar is in die Nuwe Testament geen enkele voorbeeld waar kerke (gemeentes) van een land of provinsie ‘n kerk genoem word nie. • ‘n Kerk bestaan nie uit gemeentes nie, maar uit gelowiges. Daarom kan ons wel na die kerk in ‘n plaaslike en universele sin verwys. • Die Belydenis en Dordtse Kerkorde praat daarom deurgaans van die universele kerk, wat haar op elke plek (plaaslik) organiseer. • Kerke wat met mekaar in kerkverband verenig word, is verplig om met mekaar ‘n kerkordelike ooreenkoms aan te gaan waardeur die plaaslike kerke mekaar in vergadering van kerke (meerdere vergaderings) kan ondersteun *om waarlik Kerk van Christus te wees*. • Die drie maatstawwe waarvolgens ‘n Kerk van Christus georganiseer word is: 1. Die plek waar die kerk sy roeping moet vervul. 2. Die getalle en ruimtelike afstand tussen lidmate. 3. Taal- en kultuurooreenkomste en -verskille.	**Acts of the Synod 1982, art 177** • The church is an assembly of believers and local witnesses of God’s revelation to his people. • Multiplicity of churches is in the sense of local churches and never in the sense of "national" churches. In the New Testament there is not a single example where churches (congregations) of one country or province are called a church. • A church is not composed of congregations, but of believers. Therefore, we can refer to the church in a local and universal sense. • The Confession and the Church Order of Dordt therefore consistently speak of the universal church, which organises herself locally in every place. • Churches united with each other in a church affiliation are obliged to enter into a church-order agreement whereby the local churches can support each other in an assembly of churches (major assemblies) to be truly Church of Christ. • The three criteria by which a Church of Christ is organised are: 1. The place where the church must fulfill its calling. 2. The numbers and spatial distance between members. 3. Language and cultural similarities and differences.	
Handelinge van Sinode 1985, art 103 • Die begrip **“kerkverband”** dra geen institutêre of institusionele karakter nie; dit kan nie as kerk bestempel word nie, maar moet beskou word as die geloofsgemeenskap waarbinne kerke met mekaar saamlewe. • Die uitgangspunt by die presbiteriale kerkregeringstelsel is altyd dat die plaaslike kerk selfstandig is en finale seggenskap in sy *eie sake* het. **Tog** staan die plaaslike kerk nie alleen nie maar altyd in noue verband met ander plaaslike kerke met dieselfde belydenis. • Die kerkverband is eerstens ‘n geestelike en onsigbare band wat uit die eenheid in die algemene kerk voortvloei, maar hierdie band neem ook ‘n gestalte aan wanneer die plaaslike kerke in meerdere vergaderings byeenkom. • Meerdere vergaderings is ‘n samekoms	**Acts of the Synod 1985, art 103** • The concept of "**church affiliation**" carries no institutary or institutional character; it cannot be termed as church, but must be regarded as the community of faith in which churches live together. • The premise of the presbyterian church government system is always that the local church is self-reliant and has final say in its own affairs. **Yet** the local church is not alone but always closely associated with other local churches with the same confession. • The affiliation is first and foremost a spiritual and invisible bond that results from unity in the general church, but this bond also takes shape when the local churches meet in major assemblies. • Major assemblies are gatherings of	

van kerke deur middel van wettige afgevaardigdes deur die betrokke kerkrade met die doel om *gemeenskaplike sake* te behandel en af te handel. **Handelinge van Sinode 1985, art 103** • Die plaaslike kerke is regspersone wat beteken dat elke kerk bevoeg is om sy eie eiendom (roerend en onroerend) te hê. • Daar is nie 'n groter liggaam wat afsonderlike draer van regte en verpligtinge is nie. • Die bindingskrag van besluite van meerdere vergaderings berus in die Skrif, Belydenis en Kerkorde en nie bloot in die wil van die meerderheid nie. • 'n Kerknaam wat beskrywend is van die kerkverband, kan die indruk skep dat die plaaslike kerke gesamentlik in 'n groter struktuur of liggaam byeengetrek is. Dit kan verwarring op juridiese vlak skep wat tot 'n verkeerde regsbegrip aanleiding kan gee. **Besluit: Kennis geneem van die Bylae in geheel.**	churches by means of legitimate delegates through the relevant church councils for the purpose of dealing with and settling common matters. **Acts of the Synod 1985, art 103** • The local churches are legal entities, which means that each church is competent to have its own property (movable and immovable). • There is no larger body that is a separate carrier of rights and obligations. • The binding power of decisions of major assemblies rests in Scripture, confession and Church Order and not merely in the will of the majority. • A church name descriptive of the church affiliation may give the impression that the local churches are collectively gathered into a larger structure or body. This can create confusion at the legal level that can give rise to a mistaken legal understanding. **Decision: Annexure in its entirety noted.**	