



APPROPRIATION BILL 2016/2017

BY

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Hon Speaker, Sir

Let me first and foremost thank the Almighty Heavenly Father, for making it possible for us to meet this afternoon knowing that the trust of the nation is on our shoulders to represent them and serve them.

Hon Speaker, Sir

Hon Members,

I raise to add my voice to the current discourse before this August House. But before doing that, Hon Speaker Sir, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon. Minister Calle Schlettwein for the job well-done.

The budget is tipped by pundits as a pro-poor, social yearning, austere, yet at the same time pro-growth. What a balancing act.

I have noted with a deep sense of satisfaction that you have reminded us the legislators, the executives in this August House and the nation at large in your budget speech about the strong message from His

Excellency, the President of the Republic of Namibia during the Opening of the 3rd Session of the 6th Parliament.

(I quote) **“In 2016, it is time to turn words into reality, it is time to implement and, therefore, this is the year of implementation”**
(unquote).

As a responsible party, the UDF will criticize where needed, yet give credit where credit is due. In that respect, Hon Speaker, Sir, I commend the Hon Minister for the following.

- For again allocating the biggest chunk of the budget to Education, followed by Health.
- Increasing old-age pension with N\$100.00 to N\$1100.00
- Reigning in government spending
- Keeping the budget shortfall in check
- Keeping a close eye on government debt

Hon Speaker,

Hon Members,

It is also commendable to note that the austerity measures implemented over the past financial year has generated savings of more than N\$6 billion.

I draw an analogy from the 2014 Bank Windhoek Quarter 2 financial results where the introductory statement read *(and I quote)*

“Growth was achieved through good revenue growth prudent expense management and effective credit management” *(unquote).*

Although this analogy is drawn from the private sector, it holds important Universal Principles of financial prudence and fiscal discipline, should we wish as a country to reach the economic growth that we intend to achieve as a nation we cannot keep on spending ad infinitum.

Hon. Speaker, Sir

In terms of Education, we may not realize the value of large spending on Education in the short term. I see the budget allocation on Education not as an expense but rather an investment in the future of our Namibian Youth. Given that Namibia is a very young nation, the

results of investing in Education may not be visible now, as I said, but over many years we will definitely see the results thereof.

As a word of caution, Hon Speaker, I should hasten to mention that the nation will not grow should the money allocated to Education and other sectors be spent on S & T and other non-core expenses which ends up being consumed, but rather on the intended purposes. Many of us can testify today that we are what we are because of Education and that education in itself is the biggest empowerment tool.

Hon. Speaker

Hon Members,

I was listening to the news the other day that Kenya intends to introduce free Education by 2021 and Namibia has already started a few years ago with Primary Education and subsequently with Secondary Education this year. Considerable allocations have visibly been proposed to make tertiary and Vocational Education more affordable. Once again, this is commendable.

Hon. Speaker,

Hon Members,

The increase in old-age pension speaks to the president's war on poverty and Social upliftment and to the call that no Namibian should be left out.

We need to be grateful to those that helped building this country in the nation that it is and we need to keep on supporting those fragile and needy members of our society through social grants. If we do not no other country in the world will do that for us.

It is widely known Hon Speaker that Namibia is among a very few countries in Africa and even in the world that pays old-age pension and social grant to its citizens and this is indeed a great achievement worth noting.

Hon. Speaker,

Hon Members,

The UDF takes a supportive view on the introduction of solidarity tax in which the intention is to tax wealthy and privilege individuals of our society in support for poverty alleviation initiatives.

The intended redirection of increasingly scarce financial resources to the priority areas of national development, with the objectives of unlocking potential economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication towards the achievement of shared prosperity for all should be pursued with all strength and vigor. As a responsible party, the UDF will vigorously monitor and remind the Hon Minister of that promise.

Hon. Speaker,

Honourable Members,

It is perhaps time, and that time is now that Namibia should start looking at a strategy to reduce our dependence on revenue from the SACU pool.

If I understand correctly, we owe SACU some money, now and that although SACU revenue is dwindling, revenue from SACU represents a considerable portion of our budget income.

We have seen nations like Saudi Arabia diversifying their economies looking at the day when oil revenue will not be there. As a country, we are not immune to geo-political risks that other countries face and there is a need to strengthen sectors like Agriculture, Vocational

Training and Manufacturing to increase our gross domestic products, decrease dependency on imports and increasing our export base.

Seeing that Namibia host the SACU Secretariat, Namibia should drive the agenda in helping SACU to increase its revenue base through increased trade volumes.

Hon. Speaker

I must mention that there is a need to streamline non performing SOE's and came up with a framework to monitor SOE performance as the intention of creating SOE's was not aimed for eternal dependence on government funding, but it was aimed for improve service delivery and revenue generation for its shareholder, the government.

Hon. Speaker

The new parliament building must not be taken as a political battle field. It is our obligation as leaders of the nation to send the right message across to the nation. The parliament and the state House is the mirror of any given country and the nation.

The Parliament buildings does not belong to the MP's, the MP's will come and go but the building will remain the national asset of the

nation, let us not denied the right of owning national assets to the nation.

In conclusion Hon Speaker,

”!Gâi tu bahe-hâ /Ninis gera //Gana.....

Ne !hub †gae-†guis ge !gâiba !oa ge daba tsî datse khao-oa tite, ai sa oa /gui ni /gei.

Ti hâ tsî tini hâ se i, Og!! Tarebe suriba!!!”

Hon. Speaker, Sir

Honourable Members, of this August House with that I support the tabling and introduction of this appropriation Bill of 2016/2017.

Thank you for having listening to me.

