

CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2016/17 BUDGET BY HON. BERNADETTE MARIA JAGGER (MP – SWAPO PARTY) ON 9 MARCH 2016

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Thank you Hon. Speaker.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, I rise first of all to make my contribution to the recently tabled budget by our Minister of Finance. I would like to congratulate the Hon, Calle Schletwein and his Deputy Hon. Ithete Natangwe and of course, his team for having again proved beyond any doubts that indeed, they have mastered the principles of good budgeting. Well done Hon. Minister on tabling the budget sufficiently well in advance of the beginning of the fiscal year. This will ensure timely approval and ultimate implementation.

Hon. Speaker, my intervention is simply because of the fact that Budgets affect all. Citizens of this country depend on the State to provide crucial services and infrastructure. Whether new roads will be built, whether our children will have schools to go to and whether clinics can cater for the health care needs of the population, depends, on a large extent, on the way Government raises revenues and allocates money to meet the various competing needs. **It should be known that it is and was never an easy task for any Government to raise adequate amounts of revenues while at the same time preserving equity and stimulating economic growth.**

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, since Budget documents comprise of thousands of pages, it is not always easily understandable and can take considerable time to analyze it. However, as a Legislator and as the representative of the Namibian populace, it is my sacred duty to ensure that the budget optimally matches the needs of the nation with the available resources. It is important that as Legislators we scrutinize the budget and ensures it addresses the needs of all groups and that it is supportive of particularly the vulnerable groups in society, including the poor; the people with disabilities, minority groups and the aged. Mentioning the aged, Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, it will go down the history of the old-aged that during the term of H.E. Dr. Hage Geingob, their grants made a leapfrog from where it was and is still adding on a financial year basis. Around every corner you will hear words of praise in appreciating for what the President and his Cabinet has done for the old-aged. *It is worth appreciating, Hon. Speaker.*

Hon. Speaker, the theme "Towards Pro-growth Fiscal Consolidation" speaks for itself. The adherence to fiscal discipline with emphasis on growth and development are key elements of this year's budget. We must therefore continue to pursue an aggressive pro-growth economic agenda.

The adoption of the Medium-term Expenditure Framework is commendable because it is to indicate the scope of the financial resources needed during the medium term in order to carry out existing policy. The MTEF enables Legislatures, the Private Sector and Civil Society to monitor government activities more effectively and thus provides a useful entry point for examining the budget for its impact on the society. The enhanced information a successful MTEF generates help the Legislature to exercise its oversight function. From the perspective of citizens, Hon. Speaker, more and better information on how taxpayers' money is spent is a right in itself.



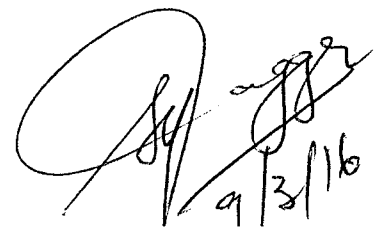
Bernadette Maria Jagger
9/3/16

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, I want to concentrate on the budget for the Social Sectors: It is pleasing to know from the budget that a considerable joint amount of N\$99.41 billion is allocated to the Social Sectors over the MTEF period. There are clear indications that strategies are planned and some already employed to transform the Education and Health Sectors in this country, hence the need to have allocated more funds and to invest more in these sectors. In my opinion, Social Sectors should be seen as the heartbeat of any country because without Education and Health Services a country can collapse. Education and Health are the two most important characteristics of human capital. The Value for Money-economic value, lies in the effects they have on productivity; both Education and Health make individuals more productive and have considerable impact on an individual's well-being. ~~It is~~ *It is therefore necessary to ~~interrogate~~ ^{step up and interrogate} programmes for both sectors to that benefit the ~~frontline~~ ^{frontline} beneficiaries,*

Hon. Speaker, Poverty is a major threat to the existence of human kind especially in the developing world and can hunt a country and its people down. It was therefore important that the Government was pro-active to establish the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and has properly budgeted for it under the Social Sectors in this 2016/17 Financial Year. Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, where it comes to Poverty, Education plays a very important role in getting the people of any country out of the scourge of poverty. It provides a foundation for the eradication of poverty and fosters economic progress and development. The more educated people we have, the better the possibility to escape and alleviate poverty. Of course, Hon. Speaker, Education alone, cannot transform a country's economy. It is therefore that many developing countries, including Namibia, are investing in diverse efforts in addressing poverty.

In conclusion, Hon. Speaker, I support the budget in its holistic form because it is comprehensive; it is predictable; it is contestable, and it is transparent.

I thank you.



A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by the date 9/3/16.