

CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE BUDGET

BY

HONOURABLE HAMUNYERA HAMBYUKA

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (MP)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members

I raise in this august House to make my contribution to the 2016/2017 National Budget as tabled by Hon. Calle Schlettwein, Minister of Finance. I wish to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to the entire SWAPO Party leadership for steering the Namibian house in the right direction as entrusted by the Namibian people. In all the elections, which were conducted in our country since independence SWAPO Party emerged victorious and legacy continues.

It is my sincere hope and expectation that this session of the National Assembly will be a session characterised by common purpose, team work, hard work and demonstrate commitment to our noble responsibilities as Parliamentarians namely, to represent the Namibian people to the best of our abilities.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Parliament should be the centre of democracy. Indeed it should be the heartbeat of democracy in Namibia. In the 21st Century, there is growing interest, more than ever before, on issues related to democracy and good governance around the world. This is a reflection of the increasing acceptance of the fact that democracy and

good governance are not a luxury, but fundamental requirements to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, Parliaments as one of the key state institutions in a democratic system of governance have a critical role to play in promoting democracy and good governance. As democratically elected representatives of the people, Parliaments have the noble task to ensure that government is by the people and for the people. In the performance of their key functions of legislation, representation and oversight, Parliaments must actively engage in the development and implementation of laws, policies and practices that promote democracy and good governance. In order for us as lawmakers, to continue to advocating for democracy and good governance, we should embrace the spirit of unity under the banner of “One Namibia, One Nation” which is accompanied by inclusivity in terms of gender and age. I am hopeful that the output and impact from this Parliament will culminate in the betterment of our Nation of which, we as Members of Parliament and our institution can justifiably and be proud of. This would be an achievement, which will bring about radical change in the Namibian socio-political and economic landscape of our Nation.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Like in any other institution, our Parliament is also faced with challenges and I single out some of those as follows:

- ✓ The shocking level of youth unemployment, particularly among young women and men aged below 35, which is a source of

desperation and hopelessness that constitutes a threat to our democracy.

- ✓ Adequate provision of basic goods, services and amenities like housing, water, electricity, schools, hospitals, to mention a few, still calls for our attention. We are a nation of 2.3 million people and should win this battle during our time rather than defer it to the next generation to solve.
- ✓ Slow pace of the implementation of capital projects, that hamper the pace of development in the Regions;
- ✓ Disturbing reports of corrupt practices by those entrusted to facilitate service delivery, especially through public tenders;
- ✓ Skills shortages in critical areas of our economy;
- ✓ Recurrent drought, which calls for a long term strategy;
- ✓ Gender based violence, that do not seem to abate;
- ✓ Carnages on our roads which requires not only road safety campaigns, although important, but a serious analysis and introspection of unprecedented proportion in this country;
- ✓ The persistent inequality between the rich and the poor, are all reasons why we cannot allow ourselves to rest on our laurels in this august House.
- ✓ Reliable and long term supply of the much needed and essential energy/electricity on which our lives so much depend;
- ✓ We need to have protection measures on infant and local industries. We should also relook at the flooding of the local market with cheap retail products, which has made it impossible for the local retailer to survive.

✓ The astronomical growth of our national budget from mere N\$8.67 billion to more than N\$66 billion at the moment will require prudent management and strict fiscal discipline.

I think there should be an agreement across all party lines on the need for a formula to distribute resources equitably across Regions in order to address inequality that exist among Regions.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Particular attention should be paid to infrastructure development for the Regions: road network, water supply, electricity supply, agricultural projects, telecommunication, training institutions, recreation facilities, fish farming just to mention a few. These are the projects-ready areas that can assist the Regions to address the issues of unemployment, poverty, under-development and food security.

On separate note, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the men and women in uniform for their relentless effort to root out crime in the country. Namibian Police often operate on a tight budget but despite their limited resources, they have demonstrated the ability to execute their duties with diligence and in an effective way. I urge the NAMPOL and other securities operatives to continue maintaining peace and stability in the country.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Following poor rainfall throughout the country, I would like to equally encourage all the residents of this country to work hard and help out the needy people affected by drought. Let us extend our helping hands to those in need. We should look out for each other, as neighbours. No Namibian should starve as a result of hunger. We should help one another in the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood. In this context, I would like to extend my word of appreciation to the Office of the Prime Minister for putting mechanisms in place to provide drought relief food to the affected citizens as well as the Minister for Poverty Eradication, Hon. Zaphania Kameeta for their efforts to the cause.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

In conclusion, I will fail in my duty if I do not appreciate the visionary role that the former Presidents of SWAPO Party, comrade Dr Sam Nujoma, comrade Dr Hifikepunye Pohamba as well as the President of the Republic of Namibia and the SWAPO Party Comrade Dr Hage G. Geingob played and continue to play in this country. I therefore, congratulate them and give them my assurances through them to the Namibian Nation that I shall do my level best in my national duties as a lawmaker.

I feel delighted to hear and see that our current President has declared war against hunger and poverty. This is the ideal that our brothers and sisters died for during the liberation struggle of this country. Their hope was that we build a nation in which every Namibian gets equal

opportunities. This is what makes us who we are; what we are; who we shall be.

Finally, I wish to thank all the electorates for exercising their democratic rights to choose leaders and parties of their choice during the November 2014 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections and the subsequent Regional and Local Authorities elections of last year (2015).

To those who doubted if Namibia would achieve 50/50 representation; those who doubted if Namibian Parliament would field more young people and those who doubted if the state of our democracy is strong, their answer today is - Democracy is alive in our Parliament, gender equality is at work and youth empowerment is the motto.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, God bless you.

I thank you!

