

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of this August House**

I rise to join Hon. Members who spoke before me to make my contributions on the appropriation Bill. It is again that time of the year when the expectations of our citizens is on high alert in anticipating good news from this national cake.

Allow me to first and foremost extend my word of gratitude to the Minister of Finance and the entire team who prepared this budget. It was not an easy task though, but yet you managed. Let me thank you for that!

I would also like to further call upon fellow Members to acknowledge the fact that this budget was put together at the backdrop of very difficult economic times. Low commodity prices, volatile exchange rate and most importantly, the global economic slowdown.

As we are all aware, the impact of the global economic slowdown, varies from one economy to another depending on the extent of their exposure and the strength of their economic fundamentals. In Namibia, we know that it is of no consequence to complain about factors beyond our control. There are visible and notable efforts by the Government to address economic factors that are within the Government's mandate and to ensure that it returns this country's economy to a more inclusive growth path. There is consensus on the challenges that are confronting this nation. The Government programmes are guided by the long term strategies, the National Development Plan (NDP4) put in place to address these national challenges.

**Hon. Speaker, Hon Members**

The NDP4 and Vision 2030 provide overarching objectives around, which the nation can come in unison. It builds consensus on the major hindrances on the fast approaching vision 2030 where this nation is expected to be among one of the industrialised nations of the world by outlining steps that needs to be taken to overcome the said hindrances. At the same time this National Plan provides a common framework for detailed planning and creating a basis for making informed choices about the best way to use limited resources at our disposal.

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members**

It is my conviction that the government needs to be commended to the efforts taken thus far to identify wastage and non-essential spending in order to do away with such services.

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members**

Notably, to mention is an observation on disparities between the Operational budget expenditure put at eighty five (85%) versus the development budget at fifteen (15%). Looking at these figures, one asks a question as where are the National Development priorities in the NDP4 lies. It is worrisome to note that, development budget is less than 30%

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for a country that is striving towards industrialisation by 2030. It is fourteen (14) years from now onwards. The question that comes to mind again is, is this Vision realisable at the current allocations or it should remain a dream for the future generations.

The envisaged expenditure for goods and services is said to be enormous. It is my view that if we want to mitigate economic wastage and non-essential spending, we should revisit the allocation to goods and services and if found to be prudent, the reduced funds to be redirected to the development budget.

According to the Strategic Plan or our national development goals NDP4, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tourism and Logistic are the areas of economic priorities. One is made to understand that when you have priorities that are the areas your focal point should be. Manufacturing or value addition to our raw materials from our country to various destination in the world does not advance the economic stability of our country. This leaves me believing that as a country we are creating more economic activities outside this country than inside the country. Embarking on vigorous and value addition to our minerals and products could contribute immensely to our GDP.

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members**

Allow me to reflect a bit on education as a sector that has more to contribute towards the realisation of Vision 2030 an industrialisation nation and beyond this said vision. I have been following with keen interest on the allocations of the two Ministries i;e Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation responsible for imparting knowledge and skills to our learning fraternity.

I think it is imperative to allocate funds to these Ministries in accordance with their given mandate. My observation is that Ministry of Higher education is the pilot of skills transfers and technological innovation and as such this Ministry that should account to the nation as to whether we are well positioned with our previous and current intakes of our high learning and vocational institutions for the nation to enter with hope in the Namibian house, which is vision 2030.

**Hon Speaker, Hon Members**

It is with this in mind that proper and adequate allocations for this ministry to carry its Mandate. VTC activities are not fully supported through adequate funds so that the most needed skills are available to employment markets of this country. With current allocations I see no movement towards a skilled nation.

Namibia as a country we cannot even produce a stick of a matches, candles and most of our office furniture are Imported from our neighbouring countries and even beyond. We are informed that these items we come and buy some expensive are raw materials from our country and made finished products by VTC graduates in those countries.

## **Hon Speaker, Hon Members**

It is my firm believe that Ministry of Higher education, Ministry of Industrialisation and SME development among others should be prioritised in order of skills development and factories establishment by the mentioned public sectors. By so doing these sectors will compliment what the Agriculture sector is busy doing in most of our regions and subsequently job creation will be granted to our nation.

In conclusion, Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, growing an economy of this country does not centre on Government alone, but it brings all economic role players in both public and private sectors as economic partners. It is my plea that these stakeholders add up the government to cub the possible wastages and non-essential spending from our budget or estimates beforehand in order to pave way for developmental or economical programmes.

Lastly, the 2016 budget represents the beginning of the fulfilment of our vision of transforming our national economy and providing a good life to all Namibians. Through our spending priorities, we have shown a desire to tackle the key and pressing problems of the society bridging the divide between the rich and the poor, investing in traditional and new industries, setting the conditions for private sector growth and job creation; spending to repair a broken education system; improving the health and wellness of the population; and caring for the elderly and vulnerable sections of the population, amongst others.

This budget shows that we are prepared to take the tough decisions needed to secure a better and brighter future for our people. I am confident that we, as a nation, united in a common cause, will leave behind the acrimony, partisanship and division that still persist in our society.

With this, I move that we approve this Bill

I thank Hon. Speaker.

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