

**INTERVENTION BY HONOURABLE STANLEY SIMATAA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, BUDGET 2017**

I would like to commend the Minister of Finance for tabling a budget that adds momentum to our nation's arduous journey to prosperity. It is reassuring to note that spending priorities set in the budget, are perfectly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. And as has now become customary, substantial budgetary allocations to social sectors such as education and health, is applauded. These sectors are the bedrock of a vibrant, shared, inclusive and prosperous nation that we all cherish. The increase in old age pensions – although nominal, affirms government's long cherished desire to guarantee the livelihoods of our senior citizens.

Hon. Speaker. Hon. Members, our pitch to address poverty will get better traction if we at the same time tackle pervasive societal tendencies that threaten to derail our noble efforts. Such tendencies range from the low premium some members of our society attach to the advancement and wellbeing of fellow citizens, to the abnormally skewed spending patterns of the targeted beneficiaries on items that drive them deeper into the bowels of poverty. I am convinced that throwing more money at the poor without addressing deep rooted poverty drivers, will not yield lasting results. To avoid relegating some of our communities to eternal poverty, we must unpack the current poverty architecture in different segments of our communities and flex and our interventions accordingly.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, given the bulging unemployment rate and the imperative for skilled and entrepreneurial youths, the emphasis placed on TVET in the budget presented by the Minister, bodes well for our nation.

In view of the centrality of TVET to both the 2030 national and global development agendas, we must seize the renewed focus and revitalize the sector both in terms of reach and relevance of program offerings.

Pertinent issues such as articulation of TVET programs and recognition of skills and qualifications within and across borders, must be addressed.

In conclusion, Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, the intended partial listing of some SOEs on the Namibian Stock Exchange is a welcome development which once realized will not only provide fiscal relief to Treasury, Unleash investment opportunities to ordinary Namibians with investment appetite; but will also provide the much needed freedom to such entities to raise the requisite capital to pursue their strategic objectives.

Notwithstanding these laudable benefits, and is as much as government will still remain the majority shareholder, we will have to tread cautiously and guard against the likelihood of private shareholders diluting the primary objectives for which such entities were initially established.

I THANK YOU