

# HON. MUNDIA AGNES LIMBO, MP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL BUDGET 2014/2015 SPEECH IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

5<sup>th</sup> March 2014

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Honorable Speaker,

Honorable Members,

I rise to contribute to the appropriation Bill on the floor of Parliament.

Firstly, let me take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Finance, Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, MP, and her team for tabling an elaborative 2014/2015 National Budget.

My contribution dwells on mainly, three topics, namely: land, housing, and job creation.

## 1. Land

Honorable Speaker,

Honorable Members,

On the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1990, every Namibian, young and old, celebrated their new found freedom. A new national anthem was sung, and for the first time, Namibia proudly hoisted its National Flag while the apartheid flag was lowered, with all that it stood for.

Hope was restored to many Namibians, as at last their prayers had been answered with the end of colonization. On that day many Namibians believed that they could finally have access to land, private housing and good schools for their children. Both young and old began seeing the possibility of better jobs being available to them as apartheid drew to an end.

However, as the years have passed, the hopes of many Namibians have begun to fade. Why did Namibia go to war? When will we receive our share of land? These are some of the critical questions Namibians have started asking themselves upon seeing that the prices of land and housing have continued to escalate, making these resources only available to the few elite, and various foreign nationals.

The current government came up with the idea of land resettlement, an idea that was wonderful on paper, but failed to reach its full potential when implemented. Land was bought by government, but instead of giving it to the less fortunate, land was given to those individuals that are deemed well connected. Failure to adequately deal with the issue of land could result in an uprising by the Namibian people. Categories should be made with regards to those who have communal land and those who have lost their land entirely, and distributions made on these lines. It is worrisome that the City of Windhoek Municipality is willing to give national leaders, who can afford housing, gross discounts on land.

However the same Municipality has failed to provide free land to cater for low cost housing to the escalating poor population in the city.

## 2. Housing

Honorable Speaker,

Honorable Members,

During apartheid, Namibians complained about being segregated and forced to live in “match box houses”. With independence, one would think that the situation would change, instead it remained the same. The poor Namibian’s are forced to continue living in shacks, while the well-connected continue to exploit them by building cramped flats all over the country. The current housing scheme announced at the end of last year will not help in any way. This is because it does not address the issue of the high housing costs, nor are the houses big enough to accommodate the average Namibian family. The quality of these houses is under question. Many companies that won the tender to build these houses were only recently registered, none of them having a track record of the type of quality they claim to provide. Namibians now worry that these houses will not only be too small, but may also be of such a low quality that the beneficiaries might be required to seek alternative housing within the next few years.

For many years Windhoek has been considered the cleanest city in Africa. However recently it has been called the silver city due to the increasing number of shacks that are mushrooming all over the city. The beautiful image of the city has further been tarnished by the lack of open spaces or “green parks”. Tiny flats and dodgy houses are cramped into small erfes, thereby forcing children to play in the streets. Furthermore, the few parks that continue to exist do not have any greenery, leaving children that choose to go there playing in the sun and dry sand. Children are then pushed into engaging in inappropriate behavior such as drinking or drug abuse partly due to the lack of recreational parks and centers in the city, and country as a whole. I urge the Ministry of Local Government and housing to take all of this into consideration when developing new towns, cities and townships.

Many Namibians failed to benefit from the TIPEEG initiative, leaving only a few tenderpreneurs to enjoy the money that was meant for the masses.

Local people in various regions need to be empowered in order to make them self-sufficient, as well as to create more jobs.

Agriculture and tourism are two sectors that can aid in this quest for self-reliance. More people need to be encouraged to plant various crops, and not only maize and/or sorghum. The natural resources of the country should be put on display so as to attract tourists, whilst networking with the local community.

Communities need to own/identify with the investments amongst them so that they can cherish and protect such investments because they will be able to see the value in them.

## **5. Conclusion**

Honorable Speaker,

Honorable Members,

In conclusion, I would like to urge the Government of the day to ensure that solving the issue of land ownership and housing are national top priorities, in order to avoid a replica of the “Arab Spring”, in Namibia.

