

**Budget Speech
09 March 2016**

**By Hon. Asser G.Mbai- NUDO President
National Assembly: National Budget
2016/17**

Hon.Speaker, Hon.Members of this August House, allow me first of all to add my voice to that of the previous speakers on the International Women's day celebrated worldwide on the 8th of March. Women all over the globe in particular Namibia really need to be supported, empowered and encouraged in their social, economic, cultural and political achievements.

Coming to the point under discussions namely the Budget Proposals for the Financial Year 2016/17, may I use this opportune time to congratulate the Minister of Finance for a well-articulated Budget Speech delivered on 25th February 2016, in this House.

Right on the onset may I register my satisfaction regarding the overall Budget provision and those critical areas the budget allocations seems to address. Taking into concentration that despite the achievements in the macro-economic area, the government's effort to address development challenges facing our nation was constrained by the continued weak recovery of the Global economy, prolonged devastating drought, in addition, the shortage of water and electricity in many parts of our country, this are key inputs in driving economic activities and has also undermined domestic growth prospects severely.

What I am trying to say is that: It could have been worse if the Minister did not really propose such a budget that will carry the nation to the Next Financial Year under the current circumstances.

Hon.Speaker, with an overall budget of N\$ 66 Billion one will be optimistic that critical areas of socio and economic aspects will be addressed fully to the satisfaction of all our people.

From the look of things I must express my disappointment that the Minister did not inform us how he intend to service this growing debt, that has been raising from N\$35.95 Billion in 2014/ 15 to an estimated N\$ 59.79 Billion by 2015/16 financial year, it is a fact that the National debt is increasing while the economy is showing down.

Hon.Speaker, Hon.Mbembers of August House, I would also like to applaud the Minister for stating that there will be no more increases in the current size of the civil service. This is commendable in the sense that, our civil service is also bloded to the extent that productivity is no more a norm nor a standard, but a luxury.

Hon. Speaker, while it is true that government positions is a source of income to many people we cannot use government as a milking cow, we should also make it a more productive institution.

I would also like to applaud the Minister for his fiscal consideration path by announcing cuts to non-essential operational expenditure items, such as materials and supplies, travel allowance, overtime, furniture and vehicles.

Hon. Speaker, this gesture on his part is commendable as it seeks to curb public spending on non-essential services.

It is therefore very much essential for this House with the allocated resources to see to it that priority focus areas for the budget namely: economic growth, poverty eradication, improvement of social welfare and improvement of timely, reliable services delivery to the public are implemented. What this House approve must pass the test and aspiration of the public outside, ^{there} ^{it} ~~that~~ is a priority above priorities.

Therefore the construction of Parliament building for example need be to carefully considered.

Income inequalities

Yes Hon.Speaker, we recognize the income inequalities and skewed ownership of sources of income that we have inherited in this country, but we cannot continue blaming the past forever. Let us focus on addressing and correcting the wrong doing of the past. Really to be hournest addressing the gap between the rich and the poor is very slow.

Hon. Speaker ,Hon.Members , I agree with you that multi-pronged interventions, better targeting and more urgency are required to make a meaningful impact on this structural challenges-more specially on delivering affordable serviced land and housing.

Public Procurement regulation was the evil of all, because Tenderpreneurship some did not intend to advance the development strategies of Government but rather endeavor to self-enrichment and broaden the gap between the rich and the poor properly.

It is therefore very important for the Minister, now that the Public Procurement Act has been revised and promulgated, see to it that the local economic development contend will draw all enterprising Namibians into the mainstream of economic activities.

Hon.Minister it is true: that more and more funding of sectors does not necessarily guarantee greater success, but our political **Will**, genuine reconciliation peace and stability is the key to success.

Performance of Public Enterprises

Hon. Speaker, mixed to non-performance of SOE's in 2015/16 need to be addressed seriously.

Water and Electricity

Hon. Speaker, the importance of water and electricity, as key inputs into economic activities cannot be overemphasized. The country is currently faced with water and electricity supply

shortages due to the drought situation and continued technical problems related to power supply, respectively. Shortage of such critical utilities do not only inconvenience the general public, but also undermine growth in the economy; as they adverse effect business operations.

Hon. Speaker, in conclusion it is commendable that on the social front the Minister indicate that pensioners will get an increase of N\$ 100.00 more this year's bringing the total to N\$ 1 100.00 per month .It is indeed commendable however I would have loved to see additional allocation to Old Ages Homes as well as the building of additional ones for the benefits of our old people. Namibia range first amongst those countries that looks well after its Senior Citizens and this is commendable however there areas such as municipality's debts, and free access to health facilities that must be improved upon.

I thank you, with this few remarks I support the bill.