

**STATEMENT ON THE APPROPRIATION BILL 2016/2017 BY
HON. CDE USUTUAIJE MAAMBERUA PRESIDENT OF SWANU
OF NAMIBIA**

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Elected Representatives of the various Namibian constituencies
gathered in this august house,
Honourable Members
Fellow Namibians,
Invited and interested guests,
Members of the Media,

I greet you all with a passionate patriotic and progressive spirit.

Before I proceed let me note with a sense of appreciation achievements of two African Presidents who within their first year in Office had their countries' budgets presented ahead of the usual time. President Geingob of Namibia and President Buhari of Nigeria. To consolidate this gain I would propose a discussion sometime in the future, to determine a fixed Budget Day or cut-off date, when the budget will be tabled every year.

As the only member of Parliament representing the only political formation in this house still unwaveringly and compassionately committed to the socialist ethos and world outlook, my intervention would be three pronged: First, I will attempt to **locate the proposed budget ideologically**; Secondly, I shall share **specific comments and observations** on a **few selected respective budget items**; Thirdly, I shall comradely share my **party's vision** moving forward with regard to **budgeting appropriately, suitably and sufficiently**.

1. THE BUDGET IN PERSPECTIVE

Ideologically there are two aspects that need highlighting. One, the *overwhelming thinking shaping the formulation* of the budget, and the other one, its *disconnect with the National Dream (Vision 2030)*.

The ideological **ethos underlining this budget are not easily discernable** but it seems to be espousing loudly the **values of neo-liberal economic thinking**. It does not speak to the objective concrete dialectical material realities that the country and nation are facing and experiencing daily. It contains an interesting quotation from Stiglitz along the lines “...*macroeconomic policy can never be devoid of politics: it involves fundamental trade-offs and affects different groups differently...*”.

Somehow the budget conveniently shies away from specifying the fundamental **impact on the various social classes**. **We should not loose sight that ours is a class struggle, therefore the ultimate destination is a classless society**.

More interestingly, there is **hardly any mention of Vision 2030** which would have gone some distance to contextualise the proposed direction and interventions suggested in the document.

In short, with its apparent **delink** from Vision 2030 and, thus, qualifies it to be categorised as A STATUS QUO budget (Inherited wealth and the question of ancestral land)...Thousands of kilometers away from embarking on a development trajectory that will put the country and nation on the path of moving **“FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HER/HIS ABILITY TO EACH ACCORDING TO HER\HIS NEEDS...!”**

2. SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE A FEW RESPECTIVE BUDGET ITEMS

Honourable Speaker and distinguished members of this august house,

As a representative of a party that embraces socialism and preaches social and economic justice, I would dismally be dishonest if I did not commend the SWAPO-led Namibian government for having done a sterling job in prioritising Education, Health and General Welfare in its appropriation endeavour. Well done!

2.1 HEALTH SECTOR

However, it is one thing to allocate money to a sector while it is another matter to ensure which aspects of the sector concerned have been prioritised. Will the money appropriated for the Health Sector be spent to make our National Health System more **accessible and affordable to the majority of those living just on or below the bread line? Have we budgeted for the provision of interpretation services at our health facilities to address the language barrier problem?**

I do not detect any intention through this budget aimed at achieving a **socialised Health System, underpinned among others by a NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY.**

2.2 EDUCATION

As alluded to above it is remarkable and appreciable that the education sector has been prioritised in this Draft Appropriation Bill 2016/2017. Only hope is that the allocation would be buttressed by concrete practical action to yield the expected results such as the establishment of Vocational Training Centres in all the Regions.

2.3 DEFENCE

It is of course notable that the appropriation to the Ministry of Defence has been modest this time round compared to previous allocations.

Again one is left to ponder as to whether there is sufficient thought being put into the role the military may play in advancing our developmental agenda and industrialisation imperative? Examples abound around the globe, including the role, the **Industrial Military Complex** has played in the industrialisation of countries like Britain, France, the USA, Japan, the State of Israel, and China lately, to name all but a few. Is our Defence Ministry being utilised optimally?

Comrade Speaker, much as I appreciate the allocation to the Security Sector (Police & Defence), I still lament the dehumanizing living conditions in the barracks and quarters. Shall we speed up the renovations?

3. WAY FORWARD

We are hardly left with 13.5 years to go before the Vision 2030 deadline for attaining an **industrialised developed nation status**.

As such we need to learn to appreciate budgeting as an essential planning tool that we should optimise in order to attain the noble goals we had set ourselves.

The fight **to eradicate poverty** must be taken literally as a WAR SLOGAN in the manner the incumbent President of the Republic of Namibia has aptly articulated it.

In our context the scourge of poverty is fanned by mainly three things: **Lack of Skills** for people to be gainfully employed or become entrepreneurs; **Lack of access to financial resources; and Landlessness.**

In a similar vein I hope that the finalisation of the NEEEF will be accelerated in order to facilitate historically (class) disadvantaged Namibians join the mainstream economic activities.

Land Question must be become a **high priority budget item for the next decade if we are effectively to address the question of “landlessness” in this** country which is the major source of the poverty and concomitant squalor that surrounds us. Thus question of the 2nd National Land Conference is as urgent today as it was yesterday.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable members of Parliament,

In 2006, exactly ten (10) years ago, we in this august house adopted a Motion on Genocide and Reparation unanimously. The motion is very specific and identified certain actions and activities that should be embarked upon in order to facilitate a dialogue between the **concerned parties (that is the genocide victims, Germany and Government of Namibia).**

Our government brought their part to the table and the process has reportedly reached an advanced stage, if the appointment of Envoys by both governments are anything to go by.

In doing so, there are serious commitments on our government with regard to this issue.

However,
Honourable Speaker,
Honourable members,
I did not see a single mention of the GENOCIDE and REPARATION issue.
Was it a commission by CHOICE or an omission by CHANCE?

If the issue is so serious to deserve the appointment of an ENVOY and a plethora of Technical Committees **how do we intend to resource the activities and events related to this matter?**

At the end of this short statement I feel as usual so free that I would leave you with this quotation from Rosa Luxemburg: "Freiheit ist immer die Freiheit des Andersdenkenden" "Freedom is always, and exclusively, freedom for the one who thinks differently"

I THANK YOU!