

Contribution to the Appropriation Bill, 2016

HON AGNES MPINGANA KAFULA, MP

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Hon. Speaker

Honourable Members

Hon speaker, thank you for granting me this opportunity to make my contribution on the Appropriation Bill, 2016²⁰¹⁷. This time of the year the Namibian nation is expecting us with eager and higher expectation as to how they will benefit individually and in unison.

Allow me to congratulate Hon Calle Scheitwein, Minister of Finance, his Deputy Hon Nanatangwe lithete and his entire capable team, that managed to put together a well concerted Financial Year 2016/2017 Budget, a second under the Presidential administration of His Excellency, President Hage Geingob.

In the same vain, I wish to congratulate the Hon. Members of the Cabinet and their capable administrative teams for their support and common commitments which made it possible for us to have this Budget being finalised within ample time and further to implement spending allocation measures that support our fiscal consolidation stance.

Hon. Speaker
Honourable Members

I would like at this juncture Hon Speaker, to say that as Hon. Members of this August house, we are the representatives of our electorate; irrespective of which party we are representing and the electorate are looking upon us to serve them to the best of our abilities. I would like us all to note, with appreciation, that our Government have put in a lot of efforts to address economic factors that are within the Government's mandate. We all know and should understand that we are faced with a lot of challenges but bear in mind that with the limited resources, we will not be able to overcome these challenges overnight. Let us be mindful of the National Development Plan (NDP4) programmes that are guided by long term strategies. This well-constructed budget focused on the immediate core needs of our people namely: poverty eradication, education, Health, infrastructural development and the provision of civic services, to mention but a few.

Being appreciative of the national agenda of moving the country from poverty to prosperity, and having studied the Medium Term Expenditure, my focus has been attracted to the burning issues of limited resources the country is faced with. I have been following with interest keen on the allocation of most OMA's that could not meet their targets and indicated their challenges while at the same time provided solutions of how to move forward.

Hon Speaker
Hon Members

Since I am not going to be present when some of the Votes are going to be discussed at Committee Stage of this Bill, humbly permit me to touch on a few Votes that ^{are} closer to my heart. ^{Some}

VOTE 5, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration is faced with several challenges as stipulated under civil registration. While I have several other pressing issues at this Budget Appropriation time, I must hit the ground running on this particular urgent issue of the inaccessible areas e.g Kunene and Zambezi Regions. The birth and death registrations, issuing of ID documents to the citizens of this country is miserably incomplete.

Zambezi Region experiences the same challenges but with different dynamics, as the floods come unpredictable through rain or the overflowing of the Zambezi's river.

The inaccessibility because of lack of infrastructure network due to difficult mountainous terrain is hampering proper registration of our people in Kunene Region, and where there are roads available they are in such a bad state that they are more destructive for travelling on them.

In these far remote areas such as the cattle herders' villages beyond Opuwo, population numbers, both births and deaths, I believe demographics such as number of men and women, youth, the elderly, and therefore the levels of needs for these citizens, are not known to the planners and decision makers, especially for the budgeting purposes. I am acknowledging that this huge lack

of infrastructure and possible mobility resources challenging the country be resolved to include these remote dwellers that are still outside civilization.

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members

The Ministry of Works as duty bound constitutionally seen, and especially right now, as an urgency, in this powerful agenda of progress, prosperity, fighting poverty, and the well taken loud and clear `message of His Excellency the President, Dr Hage Geingob that **“No Namibian should feel left Out”**, to make those remote and almost forgotten areas accessible, by building proper sustainable roads, to make it possible for the State to record these unaccounted for citizens, and to bring them into the Namibian national fold.

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members

If you are not recorded in the National Register of Namibia, you are not a citizen of this country. If you are not a citizen of this country, you cannot participate and benefit in its resources. It would be illegal and criminal to distribute national resources to people who are not citizens of this country. The State has to officially recognise these people by registering them as Namibian citizens. The matter is urgent. The Ministry of Works needs to get the country and the people of these remote areas out of this dilemma by building necessary road infrastructure. Let's ^{construct} build these roads and let us make these far flung Namibians part of these great country.

VOTE 13, MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Members

The Ministry of Health and Social Services is one of the most important ministries of any given nation. They say, a healthy nation is a productive nation!

Having gone through this Vote 13 which summarised the assessment of the current vote situation and recent past performance^s and touched on the main challenges of the vote under each programme, there are pertinent issues that I would like to add.

In a few days' time, we will be celebrating our 26th years of independence, with peace and stability firmly in place. Each and every Namibian is appreciative of these accomplishments and is resolved to sustain both peace and stability for our next equally important leap away from poverty to prosperity.

A healthy Nation is an unquestionable prerequisite for growth, progress and prosperity. We are making strides in this regard, in that, we are a proud nation with our own medical school already producing our own medical doctors and pharmacists. This is a big laudable accomplishment. Namibia still needs to make further concerted strides in the medical field.

On my list of concerns today is the lack of resources both human and capital for our country to produce our own pharmaceutical products. One of the very glaring shortcomings lies in our medicines, where Namibia is still importing medications from outside in our pharmaceutical industry.

It is ^{unacceptable} perplexing that after almost 26 years of independence, Namibia still ^{imports its medicines from other countries} has not ^{instead of} start looking into its own natural resources potential for pharmaceutical

products ^{that are} available across the lengths and breadths of this country. ^{There is a need to build a pharmaceutical plant in Namibia} Namibia is virtually rich in its indigenous natural pharmaceutical products that are available

in abundance forms and are currently being applied for healing on a daily basis. ^{We can also research our own indigenous plants for medicinal purposes.} ~~many of these products and plants are known to be of medical value~~ Namibians as diverse as they are, are applying these powerful healing resources from the nature in their daily lives. They are known to heal even severe deceases, pains and discomforts.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services, ^{and other stakeholders should consider these plants for research purposes.} ~~needs to be truly aware of this potential of this country and we need a breakthrough in this field.~~ We need the medicines, we need the cures, we need relief, and it all can be accomplished. This field creates enormous amount of jobs and incomes, which we need so badly. Revenue creation is a must as our other revenue streams such as that from SACU may be drying up. Regional and international financial markets alike are in turmoil and we are hugely an importing nation. We have to respond to these external volatilities by investing in and upgrading our own production capacities in these areas.

With this budget of "Pro-growth Fiscal Consolidation" the Ministry of Health and Social Services is presented with a powerful opportunity by this untapped potential of Namibian pharmaceutical products. In cooperation with the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development, the private sector and other stakeholders, the Ministry of Health and Social Services is poised to make the best on these powerful indigenous natural gifts.

Let's save lives! Let's save the country!

VOTE 32, MINISRRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Members

Allow me to contribute to this very equally important Vote 32 for Higher Education, Training and Innovation. The mandate of the Ministry of Higher Education and Innovation is to promote, develop and coordination of Higher education; enhance access to skills through training, in particular technical vocational education and training; define and strengthen Namibia's National System of Innovation, including Namibia's Research and Development System. I highly appreciate the current intervention strategies in Higher Education field such as quality improvement, pro-poor funding to student and focus on assistance and National Council Higher Education (NCHE) public Higher education framework.

I would like to focus our attention that my specific focus falls on **Training & Innovation**. It is important to highlight some vital dynamics of Training and Innovation in our country, and at the same time have to draw attention of Namibians to the importance of Training and Innovation within our nation's needs, and capacities of our people and our current call for progress, poverty eradication, inclusion under the theme of **"No Namibian Should Feel Left Out"**.

In my observation, training Namibians should be focused on achieving progress, growth and prosperity in practical ways that needs to be geared towards achieving practical goals, in other words empowering entrepreneurs, producers and manufacturers.

Hon Speaker
Honourable Members

Namibia's manufacturing base and the product development field is vastly open and untouched. We are still importing over 85% of our products of daily application and consumption. Several of these consumables can be readily produced in Namibia. The raw materials to do so are available.

Training Namibians to fill the national need of consumables is possible. In fact, the present trend of importing can be easily reversed and can turn Namibia into an exporting rather than an importing Nation. For that reason training and innovation needs to be looked at totally differently and from a new perspective. **Training, innovation, job creation, SME development** go hand in hand and indeed belong together alongside entrepreneurship development. We need to put serious attention to these four power house platforms and backbones of socio-economic progress and sustainable prosperity. They are the driving forces of our nations' macro and micro-economics.

We have greatest possible members of Namibians from the ranks of the unemployed and the underemployed Namibians especially the youth. This demographic present an unprecedented pool of the workforce needed in entrepreneurship, innovation and manufacturing exactly what Namibia needs.

Namibia is a small market, this argument is a deterrent and an excuse to invest in product development and manufacturing does not hold any validity. Namibian should not be seen to be able to produce for the local market only. Their productions capacity and quality must be enhanced for export purposes. Just north of Namibia is Angola, a huge demanding market, which South African manufacturers, big and small take advantage of and gain valuable revenues for their country and great profits lines for themselves.

I would also like to request the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation to look into the matter concerning our youth with inborn talent who are creating or fixing things but have no formal training so that they are provided with official testimonials that shows that they can perform such work. This will enable them to secure work which is necessary for poverty eradication.

With these few remarks I support the Appropriation Bill, 2016.

Thank you,

