



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON THE APPROPRIATION BILL

BY: THE HON. DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND
INNOVATION

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VENUE: PARLIAMENT

Food for Thought on the Appropriation Bill by The Hon. Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, I rise to support our Appropriation Bill put before the Legislature for scrutiny, criticism, constructive criticism and concurrence.

I commend the Hon. Minister of Finance, Hon. Calle Schlettwein and Team for the comprehensive Documents on Shared Prosperity Budget you put before us.

Much has been said about the Budget, both criticism and constructive criticism has been levelled against it. And also concurrence on it has been reached.

With specific reference to the allocation to the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, I wish to thank the Minister and Team, for the contingency provision of N\$50 million to the Namibia Students Financial Assistant Fund (NSFAF). This amount went a long way to resolve and pave the way for many, especially continuing Students to access higher education. Thanks.

We at the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, have been mandated with the responsibility to educate, and to train Human Resources for the entire nation, and we are most grateful when we are provided with the Teeth to bite into this huge responsibility

Further hereto, we also take note of the Total Budget allocation of N\$3.2 billion and about N\$9.8 billion over the The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). This entails N\$960 million that has been allocated to the University of Namibia (UNAM); and N\$600 million to the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST); and N\$1.45 billion for the Namibia Students Financial Assistant Fund (NSFAF).

We have heard over and over again that Education is the key. It is a key to both our cognitive potential to innovate, and bringing to birth ideas, that in turn work as an army to create and re-create new things. And, it is also a key to development. Perhaps Education is to Development as Mathematics is to Science. Just as you cannot study Science without Mathematics, you can similarly not steer development without educated, trained or upskilled people. Education is thus extremely important for nationhood.

We therefore, appreciate the support and indeed the constructive criticism we receive. It is but aimed at refining what we do with passion and we do take such ideas and turn them into an army to work for us.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, **a lot has been said about education and I shall not repeat that.** However, I shall throw **some Food for Thought:**

- **Education as key, is a continuum.**

Therefore, the door it opens today to nation building, it shall not be able to open tomorrow. **It** requires continuous upgrading.

- **Education System is not static, but dynamic.**

Therefore, what it was designed to do in 1990- such as widening Access; Equity; Democracy, Efficiency and Effectiveness, may not necessarily be the tenets that be today. Thereto, Education System requires continuous reform, in order to be refined, to be made target specific as per the newest needs of the Society.

Hence,

- The Presidential Commission on Education 1991;
- Education for All – Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training, 1993. (This encapsulated the tenets);
- The Education, and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) (This was our own assessment and critique of our Education System ourselves);

- We determined that our spending of $\pm 25\%$ of GDP on Education was not commensurate with the output; Hence, the pressure on Institutions of Higher Education to up Quality of Output;
- We determined there was a mismatch between the skills the Industry needed and the skills the system produced! Hence, setting up Namibia Training Authority (NTA) by an Act of Parliament, namely the Vocational Education Act No.1 of 2008 to help bring a cordial relationship between Industry and Ministry.
- The Harambee Prosperity Plan of 2015 with its emphasize on Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) Pillar, is aimed at addressing youth unemployment; to empower the youth through entrepreneurship training. Thereto, the MHETI launched SEP: Student Entrepreneurship Programme in 2017 to train Students in entrepreneurship while at Universities and to provide them with the paradigm shift, to be employment creators, than employment seekers.
- We at MHETI have resolved and started building Vocational Training Centres across the country with the aim that there shall be Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) in each Region.

There is a greater effort to contextualise VTCs to the specificity of each Region, and thereby to empower the youth in a particular Region to specific Traits that tap on existing knowledge. An example would be wood carving in Kavango, whereby experienced wood carvers are certified to assist and mentor the youth at the VTCs. etc.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, the thoughts, I am throwing at you is to demonstrate that we are on the same page, and more or less, are singing the same hymn that is to acknowledge that much has been done, since Independence in 1990; And much still remain to be done, and shall remain to be done in a continuum and when the convergence of congruence is achieved in a graduate at UNAM and/or at NUST, we rejoice. We then start grooming yet another graduand who needs resources to graduate in four years time, and so the continuum goes, until we somewhat succeed in achieving the celebrated convergence of congruence at a Graduation Ceremony.

When all is said and done, this Budget is an attempt ^{at} fiscal consolidation, and thereto fiscal prudence and discipline is a must, for each and every Office, Ministry and Agency. If we all commit to this, we shall succeed in helping the Ministry of Finance to consolidate the fiscus and with a healthy fiscus we shall have a wealthy nation that balances her books without qualified audits.

In conclusion with the allocated resources to different O/M/As, let us all attempt to consolidate; let us develop and adhere to fiscal discipline, apply fiscal prudence and stay within the stipulated ceilings.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, I thank you for your kind attention!