

CONTRIBUTION ON THE 2017 APPROPRIATION BILL

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UPM



**FROM OPPRESSION
TO TRUE FREEDOM**

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Hon Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation Bill 2017. Many Namibians are of the opinion that debating the budget is a waste of time as inputs made by opposition parties would have no influence on the budget, a statement I fully agree with. I am in agreement with remarks made by Honourable Members from opposition parties during their contributions on the budget and therefore would rather concentrate on a few issues in general.

Hon Speaker, since we have just celebrated 27 years of Independence, I would like to deliver a short message to this august house. The Hon Minister of Finance, on page 33 of his budget statement talks about the fight against corruption and further refer to the dance with the rattle snake. Hon Speaker, Hon Members, this statement or remark has a message, a message to important to ignore. It will take more than just a fight to stop the evil of corruption. As leaders, are we prepared to stop the gamble with the servants of the dark? The **dark side**, is very real, and every **Christian** must be on guard against that temptation. Leaders, defend the masters of the darkness and therefore the quest to stop corruption will remains a dream.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, Roman 3 v 23, says and I quote, ``for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God`` unquote. In our rush to satisfy our needs, we forget about the poor and the vulnerable. Boundaries had been sifted without consultation in a struggle to justify claims for unity and peace. Unity and peace so created by us. We claims to be a Christian nation, yet our deeds shows that we are a nation, led by leaders in denial. The dance referred to by the Hon Minister, does not only include corruption, but stretches as far as stealing the property of indigenous minorities and violating their rights. While we support the right of self-determination for other nations, we forget to respect the rights of our own. Therefor this land will not win the fight against corruption, and will continue the dace of the rattle snake as it has develop a desire to serve the masters of darkness.

Hon Speaker Hon Members, I will now come back to the point to address a few issues of national importance. Hon Minister, the reduction of the budget deficit and efforts to stabilize public debt is appreciated. Spending our resources where it matters most should drive us forward and I pray that this would not only be part of the talk show, but that as a responsible custodian of the electorate, we should pull together for brighter future. The allocation of over 47% of the national budget to the social sector is appreciated. Effective and proper administration is however required to ensure that the required targets are reach and that services are available to those in need. Allocations to the education and health sectors should be used to the last penny, and the return of funds to treasury should not be an option. It would be interesting to see what amounts from the different O/M/As will return to treasury after budgets cuts over the last two financial years.

Hon Speakers, Hon Members, Namibia struggles with a high unemployment rate, and it is expected that the unemployment rate would rise, looking at developments in the fishing, mining and some other sectors. Efforts from government to establish foodbanks should be appreciated, however I do not agree with the idea that it should eliminate or reduce poverty. One can only get yourself out of poverty by working hard and create opportunities for yourself. I have notice a huge number of

young people, who claims to be unemployed in order to benefit from the food banks. I therefore ask the question: How will these parents of tomorrow sustained and support their families?

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, after a prolonged drought, some part of the country has receive good rains with devastated effects in some regions. Some parts in the western and south -western parts of the Hardap and Karas Regions received under normal rainfall so far. The just mention events will require extra resources. Expectations are that we might experience yet another drought very soon. With this in mind, we should make every effort to ensure that the provision of water to the Nation is guaranteed. Harvesting of rainwater should become a top priority. All water storage facilities should be used to full capacity, including the Hardap Dam, which at this stage can only accommodate 73% off its total capacity, due to a huge crack in its wall. Hon Minister of Agriculture, this issue needs urgent attention.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members with regard to food production, I need to say the following: Efforts of Government to develop a desire by Namibians to provide food for own consumption and if possible supplement green schemes should be appreciated. There is however a need to financially assist upcoming commercial farmers who are interested in crop production in others parts of the country. Some requirements to obtained financial assistance from financial institutions such as Agri-bank, SME Bank, Development Bank make it difficult for farmers to become involved in the Agriculture sector and food production in particular.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members another concern is the unavailability of affordable urban land for the poor and low income groups across the country. Local Authorities, despite commitments from Government to provide affordable land, has failed the poor and low income residents in this regard, whilst the very same Local Authorities will always go the extra mile to avail land to developers. Residents of Osheto No1 and 2 in Okahandja, yesterday invited me (23/03/2017) to come and witness how developers prosper in Okahandja, while the Okahandja Municipality fails or refuse to avail land to over 2700 residents in informal settlements in Okahandja. Another example is the failure of the Rehoboth Town Council to execute a Cabinets decision of 1992 to provide un-serviced plots to over 3000 people in Rehoboth always using the excuse that no funds are available.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, in many occasions, poor and low income groups are subjected to discrimination and victimization as they are forced into land grapping which resulted in intimidation from Council officials. Many faced evictions and in some cases LA refuse them basic services, such as water. Local Authorities such as Okahandja and Rehoboth, receive funding from the National Budget annually, for construction of services, it however seems that such funds are aimed only at benefitting the rich.

To conclude, Hon Speaker: I would like to thank the Hon Minister of Finance, his Staff and the different role players in compiling this Budget. The Hon Minister has indicated that a few lessons were learned from experiences. I therefore trust that in future the midterm budget review will be tabled well before budget cuts comes to in effect to spare us confusion and move us to make inappropriate remarks.

I thank you

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