



Republic of Namibia

**CONTRIBUTION TO THE BUDGET DEBATE BY ALPHEUS G. NARUSEB MP,
MINISTER OF LANDS AND RESETTLEMENT.**

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WINDHOEK ~~30~~ MARCH 2011

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members.

I take this opportunity to contribute to the on-going debate on the National budget before this August House by registering my unconditional support for the Budget that was presented by the Honourable Minister of Finance earlier in the House. I would further like to extend my gratitude to Honourable ~~Saara~~ ^{MINISTER} ~~Kuugongelwa-Amadhila~~ ^{the DG-NPC}, the Honourable Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary and the entire Team for a job well executed under very challenging circumstances, given the global economic environment.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, having said the above I would like to point out that the Budget is about the future of our people, all Namibians, in terms of their social, economic and political well being. It is expected that the aspirations of the people be articulated and translated through the just presented Budget, even though the prevailing economic challenges are still apparent, fragile and require to be nurtured.

Although the worst of the global economic crisis appears to be over, considerable risks to the global recovery remain, thus as a Nation we cannot allow ourselves the luxury of complacency. Such risks include the situation in North Africa and the Middle East, which is adding to the upward pressure on oil and commodity prices.

Further, the sovereign debt crisis in the Euro Zone could derail recovery in that region with spill-over effects across the globe. In turn food prices could escalate further, placing a burden on the most vulnerable in society.

Alongside global risks that could impact on the domestic economy, Namibia also faces many socio-economic and structural challenges, which need to be addressed urgently. These challenges include high unemployment, poverty, unequal access to ~~the~~ benefit from natural resources, labour skills shortage and a narrow industrial base.

It is also important to note that the Honourable Minister of Finance has availed noble funding to implement the Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG). A programme aimed specifically at addressing economic growth and the high unemployment levels in our country through support to strategic growth sector, this noble idea should be applauded and supported by all of us bearing in mind that almost 104,000 direct and indirect job opportunities is expected to be realized.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, allow me to quote His Excellency President Pohamba during the opening of the third Parliament he said *“This occasion is taking place at a time when our nation is looking to Government with great anticipation to provide answers to the pressing issues of the day. These include the question of unemployment; the needed improvements in the*

provision of quality education, health care, housing, access to land and other social amenities” He continued “I call upon all Namibians, in all our respective capacities, to employ all the means at our disposal, and to harness the available technical and financial resources in order to effectively fight and defeat the problems of unemployment”.

Based on that understanding it is my humble submission that Namibia will be able to ameliorate some of the stated challenges in that statement through the development of an education system that emphasizes skills transfer. I hasten to take note that, our people have given us great responsibility, placed high expectations on us in terms of bringing up and generating policies that lead to the socio-economic upliftment of their livelihoods. I am sure you will agree that the sectors of **Education, Health and Economic Development** remain pivotal and play an important role in bringing about immediate fundamental change in the lives of our people.

Development of Human Capital

An effective education and skills training system is important for generating prerequisite skills and knowledge that are critical for the country to grow and interact at the international arena. The current expenditure on education should yield results and be able to address the socio-economic needs of the disadvantaged in our communities. Our policies in this Sector should address the

well documented link between household poverty with low school attendance and failure. The current budget through the allocation of **N\$8,3 billion** has identified this Sector as a priority area and this should be applauded. The Ministry's target of increasing the enrolment in vocational education and training from 6,560 in 2009 to 24,944 in 2014, and the average completion from the current 75% to 90% respectively is commendable bearing in mind that these are the skills that can bring a multiplier effect to the growth of our economy.

Over the years enrolment at the Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Namibia has grown significantly. The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement is proud to be associated with the Polytechnic of Namibia after having contributed to the establishment of the Department of Land Management through the **Training and Education in Land Management in Southern Africa (TELMSA) Project**. Namibia is still to address the aspect of training of personnel in scarce technical fields where there are skills gaps.

The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement face a critical skills shortage in the areas of Survey and Mapping, Valuation and Land Use Planning. I urge our institutions of Higher learning to broaden the curriculum and introduce courses that address some of these specialised skills. The acquisition of appropriate skills and innovation will undoubtedly facilitate economic growth and ensure better service delivery in the public sector. Most developed countries have invested significant resources towards the attainment of education and relevant skills by their people

and our Government should be commended for its continued commitment to invest in education, health and other social sectors.

HEALTH SECTOR

The Health of our Nation is important as it is linked to development. The Health Sector is crucial as it strives to bring about quality medical services in the public and private sectors. The provision of quality health care and social services to Namibians is linked to the availability of a qualified human resource base. The 2011/12 budget sets aside an allocation of **N\$3, 3 billion** toward the different programmes in the Health sector, an allocation much higher than the **N\$2, 6 billion** allocated in 2010/11, and **N\$2, 4 billion** allocated for 2009/10 financial year.

While health care funding continues to shrink in most countries, health needs are increasing exponentially through the challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In comparison to other Sub-Saharan Countries, Namibia's health indicators are much better but our people expect an affordable and quality health care system, hence the need to applaud the current efforts in our country due to thorough planning and policy coordination in identifying priority areas where resources are channeled to have the greatest impact.

LAND SECTOR

Honourable Speaker, at this juncture, allow me, to focus on a key issue whose role is crucial and imperative in bringing about economic empowerment to Namibians, the key issue is **Land**. The Lands Sector received a total allocation of **N\$221.7 million** up from **N\$190 million** allocated in the last Financial Year to implement one of the most visible, and talked about policies in Africa. The Ministry targeted the acquisition of **534,000** hectares per year for the MTP period, at the same time **296** families are to be resettled annually under the National Resettlement Programme. The Land Reform programme is premised on the recommendations and resolutions of the **National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question** that took place in 1991.

It is with a sense of gratitude and humility that I recognise the legacy and sterling work done by my predecessors in laying down the respective framework under which the current Land Reform Programme is being undertaken. The Programme has been accorded priority as it is tasked with the prudent management of the land resources in a way that promotes equity and access for socio-economic development by all Namibians.

The Land Reform programme is one of the strategies adopted by the Government to empower the people through access to, use and secure land tenure systems. The Government has invested a lot of resources in redressing the skewed land ownership patterns. The process of Land Reform, to some, may seem slow and

ineffective but the programme is well defined and the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement understands the responsibility and is on course to deliver.

It is appreciated that the programme is dynamic and laden with continual challenges. Some of the current challenges are;

- **Lack of productivity on the resettlement farms:** most farmers are not performing well. This is due to challenges associated with inadequate post settlement support. The budgetary ~~allocations~~^{constraints} to address water infrastructural problems have to be addressed to respond to the request by resettled farmers for assistance in the rehabilitation of boreholes. Water is critical for farming in Namibia, and most of the farms are experiencing this challenge. The Ministry is aware of this challenge and is working towards a solution.
- **Land Offers:** The Ministry is happy that the rate at which land is being offered has increased. This is attributed to the introduction of new administrative arrangements within the Ministry and continual dialogue with the relevant stakeholders. However the price at which these properties are being offered is still high.
- **Greed:** I am disturbed to note that there is a development of a new phenomenon in our society. Our people, because of greed, are entering into illegal deals involving the circumventing of laid down legal systems in the acquisition of land. Our people are being paid large sums of money to enter into fraudulent land ownership deals. They acquire farms under false

pretences, get a loan from Agribank, default on the loan and wait for the farm to be auctioned. The real owner then buys the farm at the auction albeit at a profit. These criminal activities require a sectoral approach but the Ministry is using all available resources to contain the situation.

It is my humble view that this budget will address poverty and unemployment in our country especially among the youth, and ensure food security and the general socio-economic prosperity for our people, but it requires constant commitment to the agreed goals in Vision 2030. Once again I congratulate the Minister of Finance for tabling the 2011/2012 National budget and I fully support it.

God Bless and thank you.