

Hon: Limbo

Contribution to the Appropriation Bill

First of all, I would like to thank the Minister, her Deputy and Director General of National Planning and the entire staff of the ministry of finance, for coming up with this impressive 2011/2012 budget. From the theme of this Appropriation Bill, one can tell that the minister is having the Namibian Nation at heart. In my presentation I would like to focus on three areas such as: Unemployment/Poverty, Agriculture, and TIPEEG.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members:

- Unemployment/Poverty

Namibia is a country blessed with an abundance of natural resources, such as Diamonds, Uranium, Copper, Gold and fish to mention but just a few. Yet, we still see increasing number of under privileged poor Namibians on our street corners day by day. One wonders whether as a nation, we are planning to fail or we fail to plan. Due to high unemployment rate, we have seen a number of social ills on the increase. For the past years, the nation was inundated with continuous discussions on unemployment interventions strategies. Still the number of unemployment increases yearly.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,

The time to act positively is now. Lets join hands as a nation and confront this monster once and for all, otherwise peace and stability Namibia is enjoying today is going to be compromised, something that no Namibian want to see.

The most affected people by unemployment which leads to poverty are women and the youth. Due to unemployment, our women are forced to enter into prostitution, some have attempted to sell their babies, if not dumping them altogether, and others have gone to an extend of becoming drug mules. Is this what we have fought for?

Definitely not (if mothers are not in a proper state of mind because of poverty to guide their families, the future generation will definitely be affected).

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,

as leaders of this great nation, we need to think out of the box and come up with tangible solutions in order to save the future generations from the scourge of hunger, poverty and unemployment.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, with regard to:

Agriculture

For the past 22 years, we depended quite a lot on imported food stuffs from other countries for our own consumption. This is not a good thing for a developing nation. A nation which can't feed itself is doomed to failure. Every Namibian must be taught to go back to the land and produce their own food in villages, towns and cities should be encouraged to have small gardens around their houses. And all of us should be messengers of change by encouraging our people, to change their mind sets to produce their food instead of depending on imports. By relying on imports, Namibians should know that we are creating jobs for other people outside our own country.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,

The ministry of agriculture must see to it that the communal farmers are properly assisted by their extension officers on how to help them to move away from the outdated ways and Methods of doing things. In order for them to be able to produce quality and surplus produce for marketing. Extension officers should increase conduct of workshops and demonstrations, in order to equip farmers with skills and knowledge. Apart from the extension officers, there must be some mentorship programs offered to the farmers. Rural women should also be trained to preserve food in a hygienic and marketable environment.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,

The ministry of Agriculture should start to market the importance of Agriculture and encourage our youth to take up agriculture as a profession. During holidays, schools should visit different agricultural schemes, such as green scheme, dairy farms, Meatco, and many others, in order to expose their young minds to the possibilities that agriculture has to offer as a profession. There must be incentives for those who are interested to pursue agriculture as a profession and it should be part of the curriculum in the educational system. It is through encouraging the youth to study agriculture that we will be able to learn to harvest our annual flood water and preserve it for the dry seasons. Currently, the country is losing a much needed resource (water).

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members on:

TIPEEG

Last year (2011) when TIPEEG was introduced by the Honourable Minister of Finance, many Namibians were joyful hoping that their dreams of providing for their families would be realised.

Unfortunately, their hopes were short lived because TIPEEG money could not be accessed by the ordinary Namibians. Instead it benefited the already empowered and well to do individuals. Many people not only in the 13 regions didn't know where to go and how to go about it to get hold of this money. To avoid the repeat of last financial year, I would like to see a different approach of implementation of TIPEEG. Regional councillors must inform their

people in their constituencies, about where and how one can access this money.

It is about time for the Ministry of Finance to clarify one thing to the nation, if TIPEEG is targeting unemployed people, how are these unemployed men, women and the youth going to be assisted in order to create jobs? One should note that most of the unemployed people do lack the relevant knowledge to draft and or draw up a business plan. They don't have the necessary skills to run a sustainable business. The nation is eager to know whether TIPEEG is mainly created as a short term unemployment solution. If it is a short term program, then how would we expect TIPEEG to address the high (51.2%) unemployment situation in our country? This is a joke of the century.

I thank you Honourable Speaker