



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION

Contribution to the General Debate on the Appropriation Bill

By

Hon Itah Kandjii-Murangi

28th April, 2017

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members,

1.

I rise to contribute to the Appropriation Bill before this august House. And in doing so, I would first, like to applaud the Minister of Finance and his team for having crafted and presented a pro-growth budget that is anchored on sound fiscal consolidation.

2.

As we navigate our country out of the current economic crunch, we need to be strategic. We need to identify and exploit possible opportunities within and beyond the region and the continent of Africa, that can hasten and sustainably rekindle and grow Namibia's economy. Our government needs to redouble its efforts and position itself to reap dividends from possible growth points in the region and beyond.

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members,

3.

This economic downturn must have taught many countries, Namibia included, that buried in these hard times are challenges and opportunities. For instance, before the current recession, that has caused the drop in the oil prices, Angola has been a buying power in Namibia. The influx of Angolan nationals into Namibia boosted growth in sectors like trade, tourism, the property market, education and others. Today, these have dwindled.

4.

While Angola is trying to resuscitate and diversify its economy, Namibia could penetrate that market and use its competitive and comparative strengths to optimize in some economic niche areas in that country.

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members

5.

With our now expanded harbor at the coast, Namibia could further explore the possibility of teaming up with landlocked Countries such as

Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. The latter has just discovered coal. We could explore how Namibia could be part of the equation of marketing and transporting this commodity to countries where it is in demand. This could create a good window of opportunities for Namibia.

6.

I am glad that the Hon Minister of Finance is thinking of establishing an independent revenue collection unit - something that is commonplace in some countries in the region, already. A robust tax collection system will only augment the national cake and widen nation building prospects. Debt management is one area that the Minister, in my opinion, should be applauded for. If Namibia can be resolute, we could hasten to reverse the tide. Fortunately, unlike many other developing countries, our debt is manageable. The regime of prudent financial measures and our unwavering resolve should propel us towards a debt consolidation, soon.

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members,

7.

Namibia has every reason to intensify its drive towards diversifying the economy and adding value to local products, here at home. As Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, I say this, with a clear understanding that: this has to be done in tandem with skills development. And in this regard, the government has taken strategic steps to invest in skills formation; and diversify trades offered at our VTCs.

8.

Our collective efforts, coupled with properly negotiated and directed partnerships and investments, that lead to Namibia's targeted development agenda goals, should be our priority. For instance, the iron ore discovery in Opuuo could become a central pillar to Namibia's steel industry, and this could further put our country's industrialization vision on an unstoppable course.

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members,

9.

Our government has taken commendable strides to curb corruption, and is still hard at work in this regard. Stringent measures are put in place - Government financial watch dogs are put in place: the Auditor General and others. To give impetus to this resolve, Government continues to enlist the services of private auditing firms to ensure financial prudence. Government is pushing for the Whistleblower Protection Bill in this very same house, to make sure that those who bring to light these anomalies are not necessarily victimized.

Hon Speaker,
Hon Members,

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In conclusion, I call upon all Namibians in Offices, Ministries and Agencies to utilize their allocated budgets in the most prudent and optimal manner, to keep their spending their stipulated ceilings. I support the Bill.