



SWAPO PARTY

SWAPO Parliamentary Office

Contribution By

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On

Budget Speech

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members

I would like to thank Hon. Calle Schlettwein and his team for successfully tabling of the National Budget for the 2018/2019 financial year, the fourth under the administration of His Excellency, the President, Dr. Hage Geingob.

We are convening in this House at a critical time in our nations' history. The global commodity crisis had a devastating impact on our ability to deliver for the majority of our citizens. The state of our fiscus and the budget tabled by the Honorable Minister of Finance attests to that reality. It has been our new normal for the past three years. As lawmakers, and from the vantage point of the Ruling Party Swapo, we have to ensure that we deliver in line with our electoral promise in the Swapo Party Manifesto of 2014, and its implementation tool, the Harambee Prosperity Plan. Government must fulfil the aspirations of the Namibian people, the reason why we are here in these chambers. ^{people's basic expectations} ~~Namibians want employment opportunities, and~~ access to housing, education and health to list but a few. ^{to} discuss the centrality and importance of economic welfare of the people, as the key indicator for the State in fulfilling and meeting the greater good of all members of the society.

The budget is one of the most important policy documents and instruments through which government can correct the ~~injustices~~ ^{injustices} of the past. It details Government's allocation of resources among competing priorities. The Government's limited resources require decisions about what policies and programs to fund and at what level. This decision-making process is inherently political, making the budget a political document.

Comrade Speaker
Honourable Members

In my contribution today, allow me to address three fundamental issues:

- **Youth Unemployment, and specifically among graduates**
- **Enhancing the economic empowerment of women**
- **The participation of the Private sector**

According to the Namibia Labour Force Survey, unemployment amongst graduates is recorded at 24.5 percent in 2016. Young people have been taught that education is the way forward and this is true. Nelson Mandela said that Education is a tool with which to change the world, Education is tantamount to growth. But youth unemployment in Namibia, and Africa in general, raises many questions as to whether universities adequately prepare students for the job market. Graduates are failing to find jobs due to growing mismatch between their training at tertiary level and the job skills required by employers in the country.

Honourable Members

Are we as leaders and parents encouraging our young people to study in fields critical to national development? Are we encouraging students to study in fields providing better employment opportunities? These are relevant questions that we should ask? We must agree today, that there are still frameworks and policies that meant to hold back previously disadvantaged Namibians

The Education Sector must focus on the implementation of our National Human Resources Plan to ensure that the training institutions offer courses that correspond to the demands of the labour market. It is encouraging to note that the budget under discussion aims at contributing to economic growth and “bringing about jobs”.

Hon Speaker
Hon Members

^{our} The Government of the Republic of Namibia has committed itself to combating Gender inequality. The Swapo Party Election Manifesto, The Harambee Prosperity plan, The NDP5 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) speak to empowering women economically.

Honourable Members,

It is essential that we continue to focus on women. Statistics show that the unemployment rate amongst females is 38.3 percent higher compare to the 27.9 percent unemployment rate amongst men. High level of unemployment amongst women has a negative impact on our social targets. Therefore, it is important that we strengthen and accelerate the implementation of programmes tailormade for women empowerment. I have taken note of the budgeted programme:

Programme 01 Promotion of Gender Equality and Empowerment Women under vote 12- Gender Equality and Child Welfare. That notwithstanding, I request the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to increase the scope of this programme to ensure that activities implemented and budgeted for under this programme contribute significantly to women economic empowerment. Other sectors should also strengthen the incorporation of women in their programs to ensure women economic empowerment. (Gender mainstreaming)

Former President HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMB once said: "It is of utmost importance for the Namibian Government to improve the status of women in society and to eradicate injustices of the past."

Before I conclude, Honorable Speaker and Honourable Members allow me to briefly touch on the participation of the private sector. As we all know businesses and entrepreneurs create employment opportunities that provide income to

citizens. It is the precondition for the socio-economic progress of our nation.

I should remind this chamber that achieving and sustaining our economic development aspirations will depend on the extent to which we can mobilise domestic and external private sector investment.

Notwithstanding the marvelous efforts of government and the President to eradicate poverty, the Namibian household income and expenditure survey indicates that more than half a million (568 418) Namibians, which represents 27.0 percent of the population are poor and 15.0 percent are extremely poor.

We are conscious that continuous growth in every sector and further reduction in poverty levels will depend on the active participation of the private sector. The private sector should do more for national development.

Hon Members

In strengthening the participation of the private sector in implementing our development programmes, the Government must continue to create a conducive environment to stimulate the economy.

We must also continue to improve the business environment and facilitate Public Private Partnerships in line with the policy we passed in 2017.

~~In conclusion Hon Speaker~~

~~Hon Members~~

With these few remarks, I support the bill.

I thank you.