

GENERAL BUDGET SPEECH ON
APPROPRIATION BILL 2014

Hon. Priscilla Beukes

Deputy Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

I rise this afternoon to make my humble contribution on the Appropriation Bill in response to the Budget Statement by Hon. Sara Kuukongelva-Amathila, our capable Minister of Finance.

By way of preface, I want to comment the Minister of Finance for the firm yet gentle manner in which she has been handling this important and sensitive fiscal portfolio for the past number of years. She pays due diligence, is hardworking and succeeds every year to deliver a balanced budget. Well done Cde. Saara Kukongelva-Amathila, and your Deputy and staff of the Ministry of Finance for the excellent job.

The Founders of our Republic has given us a sound and safe Constitution. The foundation has been laid, the vineyard has been planted and we find ourselves, as a nation, in good places. We are to enter this year in yet another set of General and Presidential Elections for the 3rd smooth political transition under the SWAPO Party. As we walk in the park, in this journey of nation building, we walk in the shade of trees planted by the Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation, comrade Dr. Sam Nujoma. We are not in the sun.

Came our sitting President comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, he has moved forward and planted some fruit trees in our orchards. We are not hungry. Relief aid has been placed on the front burner reaching all parts of this country.

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

I am personally concerned by the division, enmity and hatred in our formally respected but now divided royal houses and tribes caused by the lack of well-defined succession plans in many cases. The Government of the Republic of Namibia is a sovereign, secular state not bound by religion and/ethnic preferences. Thus, we do not interfere in local clan and traditional matters and disputes trusting that internal processes will sort our differences amongst our people everywhere. In this unfortunate power struggles, the biggest loser is nation building as our people are fragmented and divided in their tribes and/or sub tribes.

I am also concerned about the increasing gender-based and domestic violence in our nation, especially the so-called passion killings. Coming out of the struggle against colonialism and out of the Liberation Struggle I agree that our communities still carry the scars of our national pain and hurt. Reading our newspapers, the impression is left that we are a violent nation. Without being a psychologist, I want to risk by saying that we deal with lot of anger and angry persons. The million dollar question is how education and relationship experts can help us, possibly including anger management to be made part of school curriculum. I know parents have a role to play; traditional and church leaders have a role to play in creating role models and to mentor today's young men and young women.

No single woman asks to be raped, to be killed but my plea today to men and women is to refrain from polygamy in pursuit of prosperity, wealth and positions of power. Cheating is a shameful practice associated in the past to only men, but nowadays I am made to understand, live and see for myself that some ladies need more than one boyfriend or husband to maintain unaffordable lifestyles. The flip side of the coin is true for men, that you can't have concubines and *tjriramues*, and expect your wife to be loyal and humble.

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

Turning my mind on fiscal matters, I am concerned that financial institutions and banks continue to rip off our citizens. The fees are exorbitant and many of our people are trapped by signing without reading and understanding the fine print. Banks are not forthright and open with clients explaining hidden penalty clauses and our people are enslaved to contracts without any breathing space.

The last word is not yet spoken on TIPEEG but we value and appreciate the gains, efforts and information released under Vote 26 Accountability Report. My concern here is that some local authorities still do not understand and appreciate the philosophy of TIPEEG aimed at creating new job opportunities. This program avails funds to create completely new jobs and is not meant as salary supplement to cash strip local authorities. In the past we have had no jobs because there is no money. In TIPEEG we find that money is availed but we lack innovation to create new job openings in our local and regional authorities. While funds are available, we find some Municipalities, for instance, do not undertake massive community projects to provide jobs to the locals. We definite will look into it.

In conclusion, Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

The theme of the budget is "fiscal sustainability and job-creating growth - doing more with less" and suggests prudence and discipline. It's simply a wake-up call that national coffers must be in check. Yes we have survived the international economic crisis, but we should think twice and use our resources wisely. However, we should continue to build infrastructures connected and associated with and to our Constitutional institutions and to our service delivery institutions.

With these few words, I want to congratulate our Finance Minister, giving her my support and vote. I thank you!