



UNITED PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

"A Political Party duly registered in terms of the electoral laws of the Republic of Namibia"

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27 March 2018

CONTRIBUTION ON THE 2018/19 NATIONAL BUDGET, HON JAN J VAN WYK, UPM PARLIAMENTARIAN

Thank you Hon Speaker

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, I rise to make a small and humble contribution, to the debate on the national budget as tabled by the Hon Minister of Finance. I need to point out, that I agree with my colleagues from the opposition, whom has made reference to the shortcomings of the budget.. Hon Speaker, Hon Members, I previously said, that debating our national budget is a waste of time as the debate and inputs will not have an influence on the budget as tabled. Requests for MP's to be part of the budget process to a certain extent had been ignored, yet it is expected from us, especially the opposition to approve the budget, without pointing out shortcomings.

Hon Speaker, hon Members, the hon Minister of his 2018/19 budget speech said the following " It is a budget anchored on the gains of the necessary but difficult decisions which we have taken since 2016, we had to make deep but necessary cuts to ensure fiscal sustainability, PROTECT macroeconomic stability" We do understand that the country is facing difficulties of various forms such as difficulties however not be seen as an opportunity to paralyze parliament.. Hon Speaker, Hon Members, Parliament could over the past three years not effectively do its oversight function, due to the deep budget cuts referred to by the Minister of Finance.



Hon Speaker, Hon Members, the current budget again shows a huge decrease with regard to the allocation to Committee Services. Committee Chairpersons were instructed by MP's of various Committees to urgently address to issue with regard to allocation to Committee Services. It is clear that such efforts has failed, as indicated in the budget to be approved by us. Hon Members, all of us complain about the money allocated to the Committees, when in our committee meetings. Let us for once be bold enough to speak out in this August House about our complaints instead of keeping our silence and complain when in committee meetings. It is required from us to approve this budget and any other national budget for the effective governing and administration of the country, the question Hon Members is, do we know that the budgets approved by us falls short of Article 63 Section 2 (a)? Or is it that we just approve the budget for the sake of getting rid of it?

Hon Speaker, hon Members, provision was made for an increase on old age pensions, which we appreciate, however there is an urgent to revisit the amounts for social grants. This amounts has remained the same for some years now.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, tax reforms are appreciated, the reforms are however re-active rather than pro-active. The idea of the NEEEF Bill as an instrument to promote economic empowerment will have a negative effect for direct investments. The 10% tax on dividends and taxation of religious and charitable institutions are also concerns.

Hon Speaker Hon Members, let me once again remind this August House that the resettlement programme has failed the masses of landless indigenous peoples of this country, as it continue to benefit the selected elite. It is clear that government is adamant to put through its efforts to allocate land to the elite before the second land conference. Further- more the mass housing programme has also failed. Research has highlighted poor communication between stakeholders as explanation for the mismatch between the demand and supply of housing in Namibia. Across the country houses build under the mass housing programme stands vandalized and without occupants, has

houses meant for low income groups become inaccessible to them, but easy to get to middle income earners instead,

Hon Speaker Hon Members, housing is a human right, and in order to have a house you first need to have land. Most local authorities use land prices and the costs in servicing of land as an excuse to avail land to developers at the cost of the poor and low income groups. Land prices had been inflicted by those who can afford it, and nothing has been done to attend to the problem at hand. Across the country huge portions of urban land is made available at high cost to generate income for local authorities to cover their running expenses instead of using funds generated for the servicing of land. Landless people has grown into beggars as they, on a daily basis seek help from local authorities without success.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, Namibia has become a nation of informal settlements, in short squatter camps. Hardap Region is presently cited as the region with the highest number of shacks. About 52% of households in the Hardap Region, consist of shacks. To avail urban land to the masses has become a challenge all over the country, and will remain a challenge as political will to attend to the issue is lacking. This failure has resulted in land grabbing, which again resulted in chaos and in death sometimes.

Hon Speaker, Hon Members whilst the poor is begging for a piece of land, the developers and we the politicians are making the deals, speculating with land in urban areas, making sure that we are covered. I am not saying that we should not become involved in business, no. Yes we have a right to do business, my question is just, should we not first think about the landless and advice where necessary instead of helping ourselves.

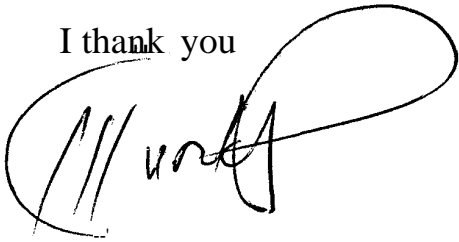
Hon Speaker, My Party, the United People's Movement has over the past seven years, requested government to give urgent attention to the lack of affordable, standard land to the poor. However, it seems that this issue is not taken seriously. Our people are tired of waiting for urban land, and is forced to squat in backyards, pay high rent, which

advances only the high income earners, and therefore demand land registered in our names or at least provide us with a permission to occupy (PTO) in terms of existing legislation, to allow us to erect permanent structures in our quest to provide decent housing to our families. When it rains we swim in our shacks, when it's windy its dust all over, even in the food we eat. For how long should we remain the beggars for land? Whilst the elite live in their comfort zones.

To conclude Hon Speaker, the Ministry of Land Reform has indicated that Government is doing its best to acquire suitable commercial land for distribution to previously disadvantaged Namibians. In the light of farms allocated presently to the well-connected Namibians, I would like to request Government to officially re-visit the word 'previously disadvantaged' as it is clear that the Ministry of Land Reform has no clue what the word means. Nearly 30 years after independence those who are or were part of Government cannot be classified as "disadvantaged" and Government therefore has a duty to bring to an end this madness.

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