



SWAPO PARTY

SWAPO Parliamentary Office

Contribution By

Hon Agnes Kafula

On

Budget Speech

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Honourable? \Speaker

Honourable Members

I rise to support and thank Honourable Calle Schlettwein for the tabling the Budget for the 2018/19 financial year, a fourth under the administration of Excellence President Dr Hage Geingob, in the same breath allow me to also thank those who contributed towards budget..

From the onset in his budget statement the Honourable Minister, rightly put it and I quote *"This Budget comes at a time after the Namibian economy had endured its most precarious phase. It is an economy at a turning point and this budget is a funding compact for growth, bringing about jobs, less inequality, less poverty and improved services delivery"*. My interest continues to be on the social sector, for we have an obligation to uplift our constituents.

Social Sector

According to the Statistics, unemployment stands at 34 percent with youth unemployment taking up 43.4 of the unemployment rate. More than 71.3 percent of unemployed in Namibia have not gone past junior secondary education.

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Members

1. The statistic presents a worrisome picture as the high level of young unemployment can lead to economically frustrated youth which can contribute to social instability. For that; I call upon the responsible institution to investigate the contributing factors to high level of drop out at junior secondary and strengthen the implementation of strategies that aims at improving and reducing the unemployment amongst the youth.
2. I would further like to draw your attention to how young ladies are being affected by unemployment, I would say perhaps the employers do it deliberately ignoring the

affirmative action policy or perhaps we still have to wait to see the results of government efforts in gender disparity. We are informed by the Namibian labour force statistics and demographics, that although women are the majority of our population by 51 percent the statistics indicate that only 47 percent of women are employed compared to 53 percent of males are employed. In other words, out of the 34 percent of the unemployed, the majority are females.

Honourable Speaker

It is an issue worth to be further researched on because the Employment to population ratio (EPR) indicates that out of the males employed, about 65% hold a university degree compared to the 59% of females who have a degree. I believe inequalities such as this are the root causes to poverty cycles and social ills such as gender-based violence, prostitutions etc. because women are depended on men for better livelihood.

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Hon Speaker
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Hon Members

3. His Excellency President Hage Geingob, encourages us all to be more inclusive, he always say's 'inclusivity spells peace and harmony, while exclusivity spells discord and conflict'. I use this quote with regards to private sector employers and even Government institutions which always ask young graduates for job experience. One of the factors mostly overlooked is the fact that practical experience is largely acquired from internships which can hardly be secured by students.

What is the real reason students find it so hard to secure internships? Are we denying students internship opportunities so that they qualify for poor wages as they lack skills?

Honourable Members

As law makers often blame the increase of Alcohol and Drug Abuse on youth however, after engaging social workers, I am reliably informed that young people do not opt for drugs and alcohol voluntarily. I also do not want to deny that alcohol and drug abuse is a problem in Namibia, however we need to put in an effort to save the young people.

With our population we cannot only have one state-owned rehabilitation center in which is Etegameno Rehabilitation and Resource Centre (ERRC) which only serves about 80 patients in a year of which none of them are young people. Let us call on the private sector, especially those who sell alcohol or at least part of the sin tax to be allocated in rehabilitating our young people.

In conclusion

Honourable Speaker

Honourable members

Let us all pull together in one direction in ensuring that we address these challenges facing our societies. I understand the ministry of labour has the database or at least encourage the unemployed to register with them, I would also like to believe the Namibia Training Authority and Namibia Qualifications Authority have a database on the graduates or perhaps we need to conduct a tracer study on which graduates found employment, this will help us avoid the future mismatch between training and the jobs skills required by the employer.

In view of these Hon Members, I support the Bill.

I thank you.