



SWAPO PARTY

SWAPO Parliamentary Office

Contribution By

Hon Eunice Iipinge

Maiden Speech On

Budget

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Hon. Eunice Ipinge

March 28, 2018

HONOURABLE SPEAKER;

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY;

I rise to contribute to the appropriation bill 2018|2019

Let me join others in thanking the Honorable Minister of Finance and his team for allocating the amount of 65 Billion Namibian dollars to this year's National development, during this difficult time of our economic performance. I wish to express my profound appreciation for the efforts he is making to stabilize the economy.

The budget creates an opportunity for us to have a sense of public ownership of economic policies and spending priorities. It also allows us to participate in the process of resource allocation and mechanisms to determine who gets what, when and how. It also gives us the authority to allocate values to resources we allocate. In this exercise consensus takes place.

I am pleased to note that, All Ministries and Government agencies are allocated financial resources to reduce poverty and inequalities, resources aiming at economic growth, Job creation and access to services. It is indeed very encouraging.

Honorable Speaker,

I've had the privilege to meet many committed and inspirational people (mostly the youth and women) since I started this job. But I can honestly say that the people I've met who have inspired me most have been women doing a wonderful job in taking care of families and ensuring that

the children goes to school each morning. I think, for those women who have gone before us, we can be proud of their achievements. We can be grateful. For so many of us, the LAND OF THE BRAVE is a place with so much more opportunity.

Today, as I stand here amongst you, I pray that we will be acting revolving around two things – hope and intent.

- Hope – because I do believe we can move the agenda on. Progress can continue.
- Intent – because I intend to effortlessly and relentlessly contribute on improving the lives of our people mostly the poorest girls and women around Namibia residing in the rural areas if we gender mainstream all policies and programmes and exercise

gender budgeting. The future is never fixed – it can be different.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members of the National Assembly,

His Excellency President Dr. Hage Geingob said in his foreword of the Harambee Prosperity Plan and I quote ***“Namibians have overcome tremendous historical obstacles in the past and through the Harambee Prosperity Plan, I am confident that we will rise to the challenges of the present and those we may encounter in the future”***.

I am no exemption to this clarion call, therefore I further applaud His Excellency for initiating Harambee Prosperity

Plan as an implementing tool to accelerate the implementations of government programmes and policies.

I come to this August House at a time when the Microlending Bill was debated and happy to see it approved. Access to finance has been and is a known challenge amongst women. As a Member of Parliament who raises from the background of the SWAPO Party women's council, I believe that the Microlending Bill will be another encouraging tool to unleash girls and women's potential, Namibia will be able to see incredible returns for girls and women themselves, for their families and communities, and for our economy.

In India, the states with more women in work have seen faster economic growth and the largest reductions in poverty.

In Pakistan, women entering the national parliament on a gender quota were able to work successfully across party lines on legislation against honour killing and acid crime control.

Countries with higher civic engagement and stronger attitudes towards equality and fairness towards women have significantly higher levels of per capita income in the long run.

Honourable Speaker,

Investing in girls and women isn't only the smart thing to do, but also the right thing to do. It is against that background that SWAPO Party found it necessary to initiate and implement the 50/50 gender representation policy. I call upon all political parties in Namibia to do the same.

Girls and women are also telling us loudly and clearly that their priority is jobs; taking control of their lives through education and getting skills, having access to credit, supply chains, support for their families and business so they can earn a decent wage and have control over how they spend their income.

The economic empowerment of girls and women is essential to achieve gender equality, women's rights and wider development outcomes.

However, women face a range of barriers. Some are often unable to own property, open a bank account, access credit, or register a business. Like any other women, I am saddened by the crimes and barbaric acts committed by men towards women. Therefore, Honourable Speaker

such barbaric acts must be condemned with all it deserves and the culprits MUST face the wrath of justice.

Honourable Speaker,

As a small and open economy, Namibia's best hopes lies in economic transformation, regional integration and leveraging regional and global value chains. We enjoy a relatively good enabling environment, with political and macroeconomic stability and a predictable policy environment.

It is, therefore, material and timely for policy interventions to improve the productive capacity of the economy, diversify economic activities, generate much needed jobs and bolster resilience to shocks. We need to improve the range of finished goods Namibia can trade with in SADC and the African continent.

The Harambee Prosperity Plan is reminding us that what is required is an understanding that it is no longer *“business as usual.”* We are not only required to act with more urgency to reform processes, we are also required to reform our minds and attitudes and pull in the same direction. A new culture of efficiency and accountability is critical to foster the change we wish to see.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the National Assembly,

We are one people, committed to work together to find jobs for our people mostly youth and women; to build factories and roads, houses and clinics; to prepare our children for a world of change and progress; to build cities and towns where families may be safe, productive and content.

For several years our economy has not grown at the pace needed to create enough jobs or lift our people out of poverty. Public finances have been constrained, limiting the ability of government to expand its investment in economic and social development.

Despite these challenging conditions, we have managed – working together – to achieve progress in improving the lives of our people. Even under conditions of weak growth, our economy has created jobs, but not at the pace required to absorb new entrants into the labour market.

Therefore, Honourable Speaker if we are to respond effectively to the needs of our people mostly the youth and women, it is essential that our people (youth and women) articulate their views and are able to engage with government at the highest level. This means that as we

pursue higher levels of economic growth and investment, we need to take additional measures to reduce poverty and meet the needs of the unemployed.

May I conclude my statement by expressing my profound gratitude to His Excellency President Dr. Hage Geingob for trusting and affording me an opportunity to serve in this August House.

Allow me to end with the quote from Adam Smith. He said ***“No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable”***.

I support the bill and I am thankful for your kind attention.