

**NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION BUDGET MOTIVATION SPEECH
BY TOM K ALWEENDO, MP
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
31 MARCH 2017**

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee
Honourable Members
Fellow Namibians

It is an honour to rise before this August House to motivate the budget request for Vote 26. As a Constitutional body established in the Office of the President in terms of article 129 of our Constitution to “plan the priorities and direction of national development”, the National Planning Commission takes the lead in informing our development agenda.

As we deliberate on the budget here today, it is important to note that economies are about people, and not just simply numbers and policies. It is thus incumbent upon us to safeguard the welfare of the Namibian people. To ensure that we provide certainty in an environment characterised by great economic uncertainty and to show taxpayers that government has adequate strategies to confront the challenges we face and sketch out a path towards prosperity.

Economic planning is a multifaceted and cross-cutting undertaking and it plays an important role in shaping our development goals and priorities. This is especially so when we face such enormous development challenges. Planning entails making decisions and informing action on what needs to be done and where it is to be done, when it is to be done, and how it is to be done. It enables realistic and achievable decisions to be taken. This is done to ensure the stability, development and growth of the economy and safeguarding the welfare of our citizens.

At the heart of planning is well-researched and well-reasoned plans that prioritises and synchronises activities given the scarce resources at our disposal. The aim of any national development planning should therefore be to utilise the available resources more effectively to achieve well-defined objectives.

As Honourable Members might be aware, our current five-year development plan, NDP4, is ending today. One of the most important lessons we have learned during the implementation of the NDP4 is that a plan is an effective development tool only when the potential beneficiaries have helped to shape such a plan. During NDP4, the economy grew on average by 4.7%. This growth rate was suppressed on account of the poor growth in 2016 of 0.2%. Poverty levels declined to 18% in 2015/16 from the levels of 28%

in 2009/2010. The Gini coefficient which is a measure of income distribution among the population reduced slightly to 0.57 from 0.59 in 2009/2010. The main national challenge is and remains that of high unemployment – the nature of the unemployment in Namibia is that of structural unemployment. This calls for unorthodox steps in terms of the interventions which includes resource allocation.

We are about to launch our next national development plan, NDP5. NDP5 is a product of an exhaustive consultation process with a wide variety of stakeholders, both within the Government and outside the Government. The formulation process embraced the concept of partnership in the pursuit of our national development goals. The document was also exposed to public scrutiny as a way to ensure that our fellow citizens' voices were heard and their contribution fully and properly considered in the achievement of our development goals.

There is a Haya proverb that says “two ants do not fail to pull one grasshopper”. It is a simple message that illustrates the importance of pulling together for the common good. Many times we forget that unity has an invisible influence in the betterment of our future.

The principle of sustainable development permeates throughout NDP5, and the plan frames the achievement of progress within a framework of ensuring the ability of future generations to thrive. In the same spirit, NDP5 has four key goals, namely:

- Achieve Inclusive, Sustainable and Equitable Economic Growth,
- Build Capable and Healthy Human Resources;
- Ensure Sustainable Environment and Enhance Resilience; and
- Promote Good Governance through Effective Institutions

NDP5 is informed by global, continental, regional and national development frameworks. These include the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030); African Union Agenda 2063, Southern African Development Community Regional Integrated Strategic Plan (RISDP) Vision 2030, Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) and the SWAPO Party Manifesto.

The implementation of our national development plans is very crucial, hence the National Planning Commission, in collaboration with stakeholders, have developed an Integrated Performance Framework. This document will guide the monitoring and evaluation of NDP5 and consecutive national plans. The framework commits the country to adopt and strengthen prudent and accountable practices that are result driven and performance-oriented for the benefit of all Namibians. In tandem with the development of NDP5 policy document, NPC is engaging stakeholders in developing NDP5 Implementation Plan to

ensure effective monitoring of progress and devise remedial actions in cases where progress is slow.

Honourable Members

Going forward, we need to prioritise our investment in those areas where we can have a maximum impact on our socio-economic development and be more selective with regard to what we spend our limited financial resources on.

His Excellency, President Hage Geingob, declared 2017 the year of rededication. In this respect the National Planning Commission will rededicate itself to strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of our development plans to ensure that public resources, including those that are sourced from our Development Partners, are properly utilised and promoting accountability and transparency.

Another important aspect of our development planning process is to ensure that we have consistent and timely data at regular intervals. As the central repository of all statistics produced in Namibia, the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) has filled our statistics gap and facilitated deeper analysis of challenges such as poverty and enabled us to develop evidence based development plans and policies.

While a lot has been achieved since the establishment of the NSA, more needs to be done to strengthen the national statistics system to ensure we achieve the highest standards possible in statistics management. Such capacity will guarantee our capacity to remain responsive to our developmental challenges and plan effectively.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee

It will be remiss of me if I did not thank the Deputy Minister of Economic Planning, Honourable Lucia Lipumbu for her support in implementing our mandated responsibility. My gratitude also goes to my whole team at the National Planning Commission for their dedication in the fulfilment of our mandate. A word of thanks also goes out to our development partners for their continued support.

Under the theme of "**Working Together Towards Prosperity**", we at the National Planning Commission will continue to embrace our Constitutional mandate of planning our economy earnestly, to secure a better future for all Namibians. For us to fulfil our important mandate during the fiscal year 2017/2018, the National Planning Commission will require an estimated budget of N\$176, 984, 000 (one hundred and seventy six million, nine hundred and eighty four thousand).

It is my pleasure to submit to this August House Vote 26 and implore all Honourable Members to support our budget request.

I thank you.