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SWANU of Namibia contribution to the Mid-Term Budget

Honourable Dr. Iijambo, T.C.K.

Thursday, October 16, 2023

Hon Minister, let me commend you on the timely tabling of this Mid-term Review. Let me also comment on your attempt to curb spending and reign in public debt.

However, Hon Minister, let me remind you that two of your three budget policy pillars are pro-poor and pro-growth. This Budget Review falls short of telling this august House how these two pillars can be achieved in the face of the IMF fashioned austerity stance. Cutting spending to the bone and hence fail to meaningfully address poverty and stimulate economic growth. Poverty, landlessness and homelessness is skyrocketing. While economic growth is stagnated.

Hon Minister, the Development Budget is the vehicle through which the government can provide quality jobs and pull our people out of poverty. Whilst the Development budget is only a meager 8% of total budget. You, Hon Minister, still saw it fit to take \$20.1 million from it. If we want to create quality jobs and address poverty, we should increase the development budget at least to 20% of the total public budget. Plus, there is a very low execution rate of the development budget. Is it capacity or the culture of unaccountability that is so pervasive across the public sector? No one is taken to task for not implementing government projects. Such policies and practices will continue to jeopardize economic growth, ownership and sustainability.

Hon. Speaker, fellow Namibians

The geo-political volatility enhances and compels price hikes of all commodities. Consequently, increasing the cost of living and squeezing communities and families.

Let me Hon Minister finish by believing in you when you say that it "*won't be business as usual*" at Public Enterprises. Hon Minister. Government can easily cut by half Public Enterprises, without compromising service delivery. The funds so saved can supplement the Development Budget. Only by so doing can Namibia create quality jobs and pull our people who can hardly put anything on the table, out of the throes of hunger and deepening poverty.

While I loud Finance Minister, Honourable Shiimi for compulsorily having presented the mid-term budget timeously, the country's enormous challenges remain and escalates.

I so submit