



S W A N U

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**Contribution by SWANU of Namibia MP, Honourable Dr. Iijambo, T.C.K
to the 2024/2025 National Budget**

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Fellow Namibians, allow me to comment on the 2024/25 National Budget that was recently tabled in this August House by the Honourable Minister, Ipumbu Shiimi. In a nutshell it was a commendable budget.

Allow me too, Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Fellow Namibians, to state from the onset that even though the current budget exceeded N\$100 billion mark, it remains still small to cater for all our pressing national developmental needs. It is true that there was an improvement in the collection of revenue especially on the VAT part, but still revenue collection was not enough at all. That is what necessitated the painful borrowing and raising debt to unsustainable levels. Debt servicing cost, which in this current financial year stands at N\$12.8 billion or 14.2% of total revenue will displace crucial national development priorities and service delivery to our people. This untenable state of affairs - begs the question: ***"How can a country rich in natural resources (uranium, diamonds, lithium, copper, gold and the list goes on) struggles so hard to have an adequate budget to fund its development priorities and objectives"***? I should state that government should avoid our country falling into debt trap. **Hon members, Hon Minister; SWANU proposes that we in this August House revise our mineral policies and legislation to work for the greater good of our people.**

It is good news that Namibia's SACU receipts shows an increase in the current financial year. However, it begs the question as to how long are we going to depend on the SACU revenue source in this volatile world? The big brother, South Africa might change the revenue sharing formula in their favour and where does that leave us? **Our trump card are our own mineral revenue sources!**

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Fellow Namibians, my second area of concern relates to food security and/or self sufficiency. Hon Minister too little funds are appropriated to Agriculture (N\$1.9 billion or 1.9 % of the total budget). The agricultural sector not only support 75% of our people but hold great potential as a springboard for industrialization, food security and employment. Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Fellow Namibians, it is my contention that government has neglected agriculture over the 30 years of our independence.



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SWANU implores the Namibian government to commit to the Maputo Declaration by committing 10% of our total budget to agriculture. Let me remind you that the Maputo Declaration was officially ratified by African Union (AU) heads of state and government in the 2003. i.e., the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security which has two main targets: (1) achieving a six- percent annual agricultural growth rate at the national level and (2) allocating 10% of national budgets to the agriculture sector.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Fellow Namibians, I have mentioned that our budget is small. But still, besides investing in Agriculture, it is imperative that we increase the development budget to upgrade the infrastructure across all sectors. The small increase in the development budget to about 17% in this financial year is a step in the right direction. However, the 64% execution rate of the development budget is unacceptable. Government should increase the capacity of ministries and agencies so that projects are implemented efficiently and timely.

Finally, Swanu's slogan is: "**Patji Ngarikotoke**" loosely translated: "**it is a new dawn, let the land come back to the people**". Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Fellow Namibians, as much as I appreciate the N\$50 million appropriated for the purchase of land for Resettlement purposes, it however pains me deeply that the Ministry of Agriculture decided to **make it impossible through the unscrupulous Revised Resettlement Criteria**, for the indigenous African people to acquire agricultural land. Swanu reject the so-called Revised Resettlement Criteria with the disdain it deserves. Our fight for the liberation of the Motherland was about land and we should not make the acquisition of land a playground for the rich and wealthy; and foreign nationals.

The recent grey listing by the Finance Action Task Force (FATF), is a major concern as Namibia was given ample time to rectify the situation. It will therefore, be significant to assure this August House, that the situation will not repeat itself, despite the N\$299-million allocation to this vote.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Fellow Namibians, I will conclude with a cautionary note to the nation that: The high profits recorded by mining conglomerates does not reflect in our national fiscuss. What goes out deserve to be recorded with some stockpiles strategically reserved, for our future.

I so submit.