



Maiden Speech & Contribution to the 2025/2026 Appropriation Bill

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Hon. Armas Nangolo Amukoto – Maiden Speech

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of this August House, and to the people of Namibia following these proceedings, good afternoon.

Allow me to begin with the powerful words of one of Africa's greatest sons, Thomas Sankara, who once said: "You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. Besides, it took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen."

These powerful words remind us that leadership demands courage the courage to challenge old systems, abandon empty promises, and act boldly in the interest of our people.

I stand before you today with great honour, carrying the legacy of those who came before me. I am the great grandson of Nehale lyaMpingana's senior fighters at Amutuni lyaManenge, Kuumbwandjembo kwaShikutha, and the son of Second World War soldier Bokoma yaAmukoto GwaKuumbwandjebo. I was born in Onyaanya Constituency in the Oshikoto Region. I began my political career as a political office bearer and had the privilege to serve as the Regional Councillor of Omuthiya from 2010 to 2015, gaining firsthand experience in advocating for community development.

I want to thank all Namibians who made it possible for me to stand before you in this August House especially the Ground Mobilisation Commandos (GMC). I am here as your servant.

I also want to thank those who keep me grounded my wife and children for their constant love and support; my mother, whose strength guides me every day; and my late father, whose values continue to shape the man I strive to be.

I take my stand in this August House as a Member of Parliament and Shadow Minister of Urban and Rural Development, representing the Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) under the able and distinguished leadership of our President, Dr. Panduleni Itula.

Honourable Speaker,

Thirty-five years after independence, and five years before our Vision 2030 milestone, over 40% of Namibians and nearly 80% of our urban population still live in informal settlements and backyard shacks. Our housing backlog stands at an estimated 300,000 units.

The Mass Housing Development Programme, launched in 2013 with a bold promise of 148,000 homes, was meant to be the solution. But fewer than 5,000 homes were built before the programme collapsed under the weight of mismanagement, irregularities, and empty political rhetoric. Informal settlements in Windhoek alone have been expanding by 10% per year, and yet, on the eve of every election, new promises are made. An N\$18.5 billion plan now speaks of 50,000 homes by 2029.

But Honourable Speaker, our people are not forgetful. They remember the Mass Housing promise. They remember the broken pledges. When I hear these new commitments, I ask on behalf of the public: what will be different this time?

The National Housing Enterprise, which was mandated to build homes, has only managed to construct 18,304 houses in 31 years. At this rate, even if we gave them another 60 years, they would still only manage to build about 35,000 houses a figure far too low to meet growing demand. This is not progress; it is a crisis. It must be declared a national crisis without delay. It is clear that we must remove NHE from its current role.

First, we must prioritise the development of low-cost housing initiatives by adopting affordable construction technologies to reduce costs and shorten construction time.

Honourable Speaker,

While we are here debating budgets and figures, our people on the ground are crying for one simple thing land. The provision of plots by local authorities has become a serious problem. People apply and wait for years without feedback, while the well-connected jump the queue and receive plots with ease. This is not what we fought for. We need a fair, transparent, and faster way to allocate plots so that people can build proper homes for their families.

Every town council must publish a clear list of available plots and allocations, so the community can hold them accountable.

We must also work with our informal settlement communities. It is wrong to criminalise poverty. People do not choose to live in shacks they go there because they have nowhere else to go. Instead of chasing them away, we must formalise these settlements: install basic services like water standpipes, communal toilets, sewer lines, and electricity. We must grant residents tenure security through title deeds or recognition certificates, so they can improve their homes without fear of demolition.

It is neither humane nor practical to evict people without providing a dignified alternative. Formalising informal settlements is not a favour it is a responsibility of this government. We must work with communities where they are, whether in Havana, DRC, or Ndama, to survey, map, and gradually upgrade settlements with essential services and secure tenure. Priority should go to areas in the worst conditions.

It is unacceptable that, to this day, deadly Hepatitis E outbreaks still occur due to poor sanitation.

Another issue, Honourable Speaker, is that while we are failing to maintain the towns we already have, the government continues to proclaim new towns left, right, and centre. How do you declare a town when you cannot even provide basic services in the ones that already exist? This is political point scoring.

A town without running water, proper roads, or a working sewage system is not a town it is a village pretending to be a town. Before we proclaim more towns, let's fix what we have.

Honourable Speaker, When it comes to land, we must also differentiate between urban land for housing and agricultural land for livelihoods. Land reform cannot be measured in hectares alone. It must be measured by how many productive farmers we establish, and how food security improves.

Communal farmers must have their rights legally strengthened, and opportunities should be created for them to lease or acquire underutilised commercial land adjacent to their communities.

IPC also believes in bringing government closer to the people. The days of local authorities begging for approval from Windhoek for every borehole, sanitation project, or road repair must end. We must decentralise both power and resources. Let towns and regions have a greater, formula-based share of the national budget, and let communities themselves have a say through participatory budgeting processes.

Stronger local government must also mean stronger oversight. Every local authority should undergo an annual audit, and those outcomes must carry consequences.

Honourable Members,

Budgets are moral documents. They reflect not just what we spend, but what we value. If we value luxury travel over hungry children, this budget will reflect that. If we value red carpets over rural roads, this budget will reflect that.

But if we choose to value people over privilege, then we must act now by reshaping this budget to ensure every Namibian has a fair shot at life.

Let this be the budget of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Before I close, I want to thank all Namibians who made it possible for me to stand before you in this August House especially the Ground Mobilisation Commandos (GMC). I am here as your servant.

I also want to thank those who keep me grounded my wife and children for their constant love and support; my mother, whose strength guides me every day; and my late father, whose values continue to shape the man I strive to be.

Tangi uunene, Baie Dankie, Ritumenzi, Okuhepa tjinene and I thank you.