

# REPUBLICAN PARTY OF NAMIBIA

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## CONTRIBUTION BY HONOURABLE CLARA GOWASES TOWARDS THE SECOND READING OF THE BUDGET DEBATE

31 MARCH 2011

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members of this August House

It is a tremendous honour and privilege for me to stand here today as a member of this august House and I thank the Almighty Farther for the opportunity to represent, not only the thousands of our Republican Party supporters, but the Namibian people as a whole.

I am truly humbled by the confidence and trust of my President Mr Henk Mudge for having nominated me to take his place in Parliament and I would like to use this opportunity to sincerely thank him. I am ready and I know that I am able to represent my Party with pride and dignity.

Honourable Speaker, the RP has a proud history and we are continually encouraged by our RP President to act with integrity so that we can be trusted by our fellow countrymen and woman. Our contribution therefore will always be for the benefit of the entire Namibian nation.

In this House Honourable Speaker, I will rely on you for protection and guidance. I am not interested in anything that could undermine the dignity of this august House. I am fully aware of my responsibility as an RP representative and in line with our vision, I will always strive to make my humble but constructive contribution in order to bring about the much needed change in the lives of the poor and unemployed people of our country.

Honourable Speaker, all of us here were elected through different voices, but by people with common needs and dreams. My experience is that our election campaigns were merely different approaches to a common objective .

I am therefore confident that all the Honourable members in this House will agree that a solution need to be found quickly for the suffering of our fellow Namibian brothers and sisters due unemployment and poverty.

Honourable Speaker, I want to caution that we should be careful, because for many years the Namibian people have been patient, but the day will come that their patience will run out.

We have seen what happened in the north of Africa lately and we will fool ourselves if we think that it could never happen here and I think we agree that the last thing that we want in our country is instability.

But Honourable Speaker, we should not be driven by the fear for retaliation, but rather by an honest desire to improve the living conditions of especially the grass-roots level on the one hand and to be able to fulfill in the dreams and expectations of our young people who are encouraged to obtain better qualifications under very difficult circumstances due to financial constrains.

My worry is that despite their efforts they still struggle to find jobs and they are becoming restless.

Honourable Speaker this brings me to something that has become very controversial, namely the Chinese issue. Reactions by <sup>His Excellency</sup> President Pohamba and other government officials lately have created more questions than answers and I am of the opinion that the Government must come clean on this issue without any further delay. What was said in defense of the Chinese just does not make sense.

I am of the opinion that the President's attack on South African companies operating in Namibia when he accused them of exploiting the Namibian workers and taking money out of the country, obviously in an attempt to defend the government's position on the Chinese, was very unfortunate.

South Africa is our direct neighbour and we are both members of SADC. We have been importing almost everything we need in this country, from food to motor vehicles, from South Africa. South Africa has been accommodating many of our students who attended its universities and colleges.

In the mean time we show our gratitude by turning down applications for work permits of well qualified South Africans, with the excuse that we have to reserve those employment opportunities for the unemployed Namibians.

At the same time our government is quite happy to allow Chinese nationals, with very little if any qualifications, to enter our country seemingly without any restrictions and to be employed as brick layers, carpenters, plumbers and even as ordinary labourers, and to open shops in direct competition with our own entrepreneurs and SME's.

But Honourable Speaker, the Chinese nationals are not only taking the food from the mouth of our own brothers and sisters, but their construction companies are also allowed by this government to compete unfairly with Namibian companies when it comes to tenders, because it is common knowledge that the Chinese government is subsidizing the local Chinese companies.

The Government, the unions are also very quick to act when local commercial farmers businesses are mostly unfairly accused of transgressing our labour laws, but deperate outcries by workers employed by the Chinese have been falling on death ears for many years now?

Honourable Speaker, this cannot be tolerated any longer and I honestly hope that the Government will explain its position clearly. We as the Republican Party will not hesitate to join all those who have been complaining about this for years, but who have been ignored for whatever reason.

We firmly believe that charity begins at home first and that we should look at our Constitution and find a way to stop this.

Honourable Speaker, the President's defense that the Chinese are welcome because of their contribution to the struggle for independence does also not make sense. The struggle was primarily to improve the living conditions of the Namibians first.

Now it seems that our Government is more worried about the wellbeing of foreign nationals like the Chinese than the dire situation in which most of our Namibian brothers and sisters find themselves in due to unemployment?

We are however grateful for the huge amounts that have been provided for capital projects in this budget in order to reduce unemployment and we sincerely that Namibian companies, big and small will be the beneficiaries of the bulk, if not all the projects.

We are however not convinced that the huge amounts that will be spent, will contribute to create employment that will be sustainable and we are worried that if that will be the case then the unemployment crisis will only be postponed for another 3 years.

Honourable Speaker, allow me, as a former teacher for many years, to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Education for the measures he announced in order to solve the many problems surrounding Education in general.

We in the Republican Party trust that he will be able to institute measures whereby Principles and teachers will be held accountable for what they are supposed to do.

We are worried about the lack of classrooms, learning material and discipline in our schools and we trust that a way can be found to whereby teachers can be assisted to be well trained and become even better qualified.

A source of great concern is the salaries of teachers and we would like to encourage the honourable Minister to look into this as a matter of urgency.

Honourable Speaker I will not deal with so many other issues like Health and Local Authorities today, but will make my contribution during the Committee Stage.

I would however want to say something about the land issue.

Honourable Speaker , Honourable members I want to share with you an experience I had while I was campaigning in the southern part of the country.

I am not a farmer but I hail from that part of the country and I met with some of the resettled farmers and I only want to relate what they complained about.

A number of stockowners have been given grazing rights on these resettlement farms - they mentioned five. According to them some of these persons settled on farms bought by the Government are not bona fide farmers but part –time farmers.

Apparently there are even farmers who have their own farms, who sometimes keep cattle or goats there on the farms allocated for resettlement.

These resettled farmers complained that they are merely allowed to put up shacks and keep animals on these farms while the farms belong to the Government. The farmers does not have ownership or security of tenure. In other words, those who have been resettled do in fact do not own a square inch of land.

They wanted to know from me whether that is the end result of what was promised, namely land for the landless? I did not have the answer, maybe the minister can help during the committee stage.

The RP is very much confident that sustainable solutions will be found under the able guidance of the Minister of Lands and Resettlement, because we are aware that he is adamant to find lasting solutions for a very difficult issue.

I therefore want to pledge our full support whenever he feels that we can make any contribution.

Honourable Speaker, following remarks made by senior members of the ruling party where things were we were compared to snakes and called the enemy etc. I would like to say something about ethnicity.

The Republican Party is a non-racial and non-ethnic political organization. A Party of which the majority of the members are black while the leader happens to be white.

Should any member of the house should wish to accuse me of sleeping with the enemy they should stop talking about reconciliation.

The existence of different ethnic and language groups can not be denied, but it must never be allowed to become an obstacle in our efforts to build a united nation.

All that is needed is tolerance and understanding. Just keep in mind that a majority group or groups have nothing to fear and can easily disregard ethnicity, but smaller groups are concerned about the possibility of ethnic discrimination.

We are however satisfied with the provision that has been made in our Constitution whereby minorities are being protected. Let us not just leave it there, but let us act accordingly and make every Namibian feel at home and eager to make his/her contribution for the benefit of all of us.

Let us refrain from calling fellow Namibians names and let us rather spend our energy to ensure that the process of National Reconciliation not remain lip service.

We in the Republican Party are fully committed to our Constitution. We never created false expectations. We did not promise that after Independence every Namibian will be rich that that they will share equally in the wealth of the country and that every Namibian will be a landowner.

Nowhere in the world is this possible but we stood by the provision of the Constitution that we will support every effort to promote the welfare of the population as well as policies and programs to advance them.

Much has been done by the government in order to achieve this supreme goal and I would like to congratulate them.

Honourable Speaker, be assured that we are committed to make our continuous contribution in order to protect our wonderful Constitution that was written by the founding fathers of our Independent Namibia, many of whom are still senior members of this House.

I want to salute all of you, including those who are no longer here, for a job well done. The fact that, after twenty1 years of Independence, our Constitution has not been tampered with, deserves praise and I give it to you.

I fully support the Appropriation Bill 2011-2012

Thank you for listening to me.