

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
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CONTRIBUTION TO THE BUDGET

BY

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Intervention on the 2nd reading of the budget 2013-2014 by Hon. Dr. SC Ankama

Introduction

At the onset Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members and during this time of national budget general debate, I wish to salute the departed comrade, personal friend and a distinguished cadre of the land of the brave late Dr. Mannetjie, Kakururume, Abraham Iyambo who particularly during the budget debate would consult widely and eloquently talk to the hearts of many citizens of this growing nation.

Budget speaks to us all in various ways; how we manage our finances both at home and at business level. Generally budgets allow us all an opportunity to economically manage and grow personal or public money in the manner that gives us positive output and confidence for the future.

Therefore, in the words of comrade Nandjila Saara Kuugongelwa Amadhila, Namibia's Finance Minister; "in this budget, our Government is looking ahead not only over the next few years, but also over the next generation. We are taking major steps forward to build on the strong foundation we have laid since independence. We are avoiding foreseeable problems while seizing new opportunities in the global economy. The reforms we present today are substantial, responsible and necessary. They will ensure that we are focussed on enabling and sustaining Namibia's long-term economic growth." She concluded.

The essence of her statement informs us to manage country resources responsibly both for today and tomorrow. It cautions us to be tactful when dealing with domestic and foreign economies and further invites us to unlock the potentials of both our human and material resources to our advantage while smoothening the

playing field internationally for our country to compete maximally.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members

While we may have competent cadres at some positions within the GRN and SOEs, in my view, we still have a long way to go in order for us to manage most of the growth points of our economy sustainably and at the level of acceptable performance. It our wish I know, however there are as well plethora of issues that are retarding good performance and service delivery as expected out there. Let me illuminated over few of the following;

1. MTC & TELECOM NAMIBIA

While these 2 SOEs are trying their level best to bring competition on service delivery to the clients, there is still visible lack of professionalism and more shortage of technical skills. For instance if one applies for service, these companies would take months to deliver to the client. If they so deliver, the service is either insufficient and or marred by many-many technical problems. The worst is that technical teams would not even turn up for a long time no matter how many times they are called in. It happens to individual households, private individuals and businesses alike and this has negative financial implications to especially investors. Therefore, expansions of these 2 SOEs in terms of coverage should take cognisance of the need to critically review admin, technical training and recruitment to address the said. Yes, I know they provide bursaries to students, however they should first put their houses in order to provide value for money.

2. NON PERFORMING SOEs

There are some parasite SOEs that are not worth existing at all. Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, the likes of Air Namibia, TransNamib ...anyway you know them all. Year in –year out they keep on coming to the GRN for bailout as if they are the only ones by creation of this August House. Today they want money, tomorrow they want more money...very irritating. Such SOEs usually come with business plans to GRN to get money but, later they abandon their business plans, using appropriated money left and right as they please or getting into un-authorized deals without informing the custodian. Eventually, they come and cry fool as if they are untouchables. Where does the money go and how come that such SOEs are given extra money than others without punishing the money squandering teams? I suggest that any SOE management that deviate from the business plan presented to GRN, runs out of money or under-spend s be brought to book first to account for before shown an exit door. And I strongly feel that outstanding performing SOEs should be recognized in kind.

3. WEATHER BEHAVIOUR AND ARID NAMIBIA

There is no need to go read at the library or in newspapers, this time it is rather a matter of observation and I am certain that many of us are witnesses to the weather change generally globally.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, drought, floods and nasty storms are daily occurrences around the world and sometimes here in Namibia. If these do not ring a bell into our ears, we should not be surprised to see the uncommon phenomena such as the storms that killed people and animals in Kunene,

Oshikoto, Oshana, Ohangwena and other regions or the recent Lazarus tree that was knocked down onto the ground by heavy storm and it later decided to rise again after some people started chopping it to pieces. Reference to the said, we should think out of the box and plan on long-term projects 5-10 years even beyond, on mega projects that will turn Oshanas or perennial rivers into man-made MEGA-DAMS to contain floods, reclaim land and keep water for our use especially during the dry season. Above all Namibia such a dry country runs out of water just after six months of the rainy season. We can even use stored water for food production and related other economic boosters such as camping, fishing, lodging and many more.

4. ENHANCEMENT OF SKILLS TRANSFER

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, the budget on the table appropriates money to GRN Ministries and Agencies but, for such Ministries and Agencies to deliver services to the best expectations, there is need for appropriate competencies and corresponding skills within the systems.

Not yet a lost opportunity, but Namibia had a golden chance right at independence to scoop a lot: e.g. to have sent as many Namibians abroad for training and skills acquisition. I know of many friendly countries out there who still want to help Namibia in terms of long and short-term trainings. Almost every year there are scholarships offered by some countries including India, China and others. These scholarships-bursaries are forwarded to our Ministries, especially for people in employment but, those colleagues we have in positions, are either ignorant, pathetic, greedy or jealous as they do not allow juniors to get such chances. Only few who

repeatedly get onto these on the job-training as offered. In some instances senior officers take up these opportunities that are not even in the field of their operations.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, these opportunities of on -the -job training would enhance the necessary skills transfer from other countries; placement of our trained cadres into relevant skills and corresponding positions, thus cutting incompetence and poor service delivery. At the same time we should also consider sending a sizeable group of our capable youth to friendly countries to study in various fields of educational programs. This prepares us as a country to ready ourselves in future in dealing with the socio-economic squabbles of the international house.

5. REPEALING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT

This one remains my annual priority as long as I am in Parliament.

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, I am quoting what I stated last year and some other years back: that “review of prime instruments are an urgent requirement by this August House because they stall the smooth implementation of our national budget to full use. Imagine how heads of institutions are unable to dismiss an alcoholic, a thief, a lazy or an undisciplined civil servant who deliberately and with impunity continues to neglect work one is paid for. For this I strongly feel that Public Service Act No. 13 of 1995 should be repealed and a new public service bill be brought here, even if it means to require that public servants be contracted for a limited time with a possibility of renewals depending on individual skills, commitments etc, etc.”

Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, it is morally unacceptable to have members in your team who while the team is building, few others are demolishing the work done. Some public servants are shamefully a problem. They are just not doing their work at all, but they are paid every month. There is clearly lack of moral ethics and commitments amongst some and these transmit negative influence on the good ones which further leads to non deliverance of the essential services. Eventually our clients – the electorates madly suffer. The non performance or poor delivery attitudes of the nasty ones may easily be reflected to our governance.

It is our noble duty therefore Hon. Members to device mechanisms to complete overhaul the Public Service Act No. 13 of 1995 in order to bring efficient service to the level required. Thus a request to repeal Public Service Act No. 13 of 1995 and align this with the call of the Finance Minister when referring to the outcome of the budget on page 33 Of her statement that “the intended outcomes go beyond budgetary allocations and lie in the timely execution and implementation of the funded programs”. That there is no substitute for hard and smart work

CONCLUSIVELY

My admiration to the Finance Minister and all those who whole heartedly contributed to the formation of the 2013-2014 national budget, themed ‘ Growing the economy, Optimizing development outcomes jointly doing more with less’. I support the budge and I thank you for the floor! b