



Maiden Speech & Contribution to the 2025/2026 Appropriation Bill

By: Hon. Lilian Muchenya Lutuhezi

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Hon. Lilian Lutuhezi – Maiden Speech

Shadow Minister for Gender Equality and Child Welfare

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,

I come from Makanga village in the Zambezi Region. Before politics, I stood before chalkboards, not microphones. I taught children in forgotten corners of this country classrooms without floors, learners without shoes, families without income.

It is a great honour to rise today and address this house for the first time as a newly elected Member of Parliament, representing the mighty Independent Patriots for Change. Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to my family and friends for their unwavering support throughout this journey.

To our party president, Dr Panduleni Itula thank you for introducing me to politics and allowing me to be part of the movement for change that began five years ago, you have been a beacon in my political journey.

Today, I stand here, not as a politician, but as a mother, a teacher, and a daughter of the soil sent here by the people to say enough. Enough of the hunger. Enough of the violence. Enough of the broken promises.

Honorable Speaker,

Namibia is called an upper-middle-income country. But if you've walked through Namiyundu deep in the flood plains of the Zambezi river or Kikiya at 6 a.m. and seen schoolchildren sharing one bowl of porridge before walking 10 kilometres to school then you know that income is not the full picture.

According to the 2021 Multidimensional Poverty Index, over 43.3% of Namibians live in poverty not just money-poor, they lack dignity, opportunities, and hope.

Even more disturbing: the 2024 Global Hunger Index ranked Namibia 86th out of 121 countries, placing us among nations with serious hunger. In regions like Omaheke and Kavango, malnutrition among children under five continues to rise. Yet some leaders see the suffering and still sleep peacefully.

Honourable Speaker, poverty is not just about empty pockets. It's about empty

futures. A grandmother raising five grandchildren on N\$1,600. A child who eats only at school if they get to go.

Let me be clear Namibia is at war. Not a foreign war but one within our homes and communities. Women are dying. Children are being raped and discarded. The case of the five-year-old girl in Okahandja is not a rare horror it is part of a national nightmare.

We must act:

- No bail for child rapists and murderers.
- Life sentences for violent crimes against children.
- Dedicated family violence units with full staffing and swift case handling.

This is not politics it is about protection.

I've watched boys lose themselves in bottles because dreams were stolen by hunger.

Substance abuse isn't always about rebellion. Sometimes, it's about numbing the pain. But the cost is generational.

We need:

- Tighter regulation on alcohol access, especially near schools.
- Tougher laws on drug traffickers.
- Real rehabilitation programmes that don't end at awareness campaigns.

Yes, alcohol sales keep some households afloat but our policies must balance survival with safety. Let's not criminalize desperation. Let's treat the wound, not just the symptom.

Honorable Speaker across this country, streetlights have become begging hotspots. Bridges have become homes. Every town has children begging, mothers sleeping with babies in tents, and in abandoned buildings, these are the forgotten Namibians.

Where are the social workers? Where is the rescue plan? Where is the state that promised to care?

Our Constitution promises welfare but promises mean nothing without action. The

Ministry of Gender must move from paperwork to pavement. From slogans to shelter. From annual reports to real results.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members

Namibia cannot pride itself on freedom if its elders are still in chains of poverty, neglect, and abuse.

Our elderly:

- Raised us.
- Protected our traditions.
- Carried this country to independence.

Yet today, many survive on pensions that disappear by mid-month. Others are murdered for land or robbed by their own relatives.

We need:

- An immediate increase in old-age pensions.
- Legal protection against elder abuse emotional, physical, and financial.
- A proper audit on how many elders are raising orphaned children with no support.

If a nation abandons its elders, it has abandoned its soul.

Honorable Speaker in Closing

To every mother who cried herself to sleep last night...

To every child who went to school hungry...

To every elder raising a second generation...

To every girl scared to walk home...

You are not forgotten. And now, your voice has entered this House.

I will not just speak for you I will fight with you.

Let this Parliament be remembered not for the noise we made but for the lives we lifted.

I thank you.

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