



Maiden Speech & Contribution to the 2025/2026 Appropriation Bill

By: Hon. Uazapi Ferdinand Hengombe

**WINDHOEK
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Maiden Speech

Hon. Uazapi Ferdinand Hengombe
Mines, Energy & Industry in Namibia
Date: 16 April 2025
Time: 14h30

Honorable Speaker, members of the 8th Parliament,

I am Honourable Uazapi Ferdinand Hengombe, Shadow Minister for Mines, Energy and Industry, and this is my maiden contribution to this House. I am not here as a miner of minerals, but as a miner of missed opportunities. Before joining politics I spent two decades and a half in the jewellery manufacturing and gem specimens trade. That journey taught me the value of adding worth through creativity and hard work.

Firstly, I would like to thank God and all His people who tirelessly trained me and prayed for me in this journey of life. I as well want to extend my perpetual gratitude to:

An exceptional leader; A visionary; A person with unwavering support; A person who inspire many day to day; A person who walk in integrity, Dr. Panduleni Itula. The president of the Official Opposition Party, the Independent Patriots For Change (IPC).

Honorable Speaker, Honorable members,

Today, I stand before you with a deep sense of responsibility and pride as I deliver my maiden speech on a topic that is vital to the future of our beloved Namibia: The mines and energy sector.

Namibia is a nation rich in natural resources, endowed with vast mineral wealth and significant energy potential. Our mines have long been the backbone of our economy, contributing not only to national revenue but also to job creation and community development. As of August 2024, Namibia has issued 162 mining licenses, with 68 of these mines actively operational. From diamonds to uranium, copper to gold, and a variety of gem specimens, are a testament to the abundance that the land of the brave offers. In the same vein, we have approximately 1,078 small scale mining claims registered as groups, which suggest that between 5,000 and 8,000 individuals are engaging in small scale mining activities across the country.

However, as we celebrate our rich mining heritage, we must also acknowledge the challenges that come with it. The mining sector must operate sustainably, ensuring that we protect our environment and the rights of our communities. It is imperative that we adopt practices that minimize ecological impact and promote the well-being of our people. We must strive for a balance between economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

Here are some thoughtful and relevant questions small-scale miners have been asking:

- What financial or technical support does the government offer to small-scale miners?

- Are there training programs available for small-scale miners to improve their operations?
- What initiatives exist to help small-scale miners access modern mining equipment or processing technologies?
- How does the ministry ensure compliance with environmental and safety standards among small-scale miners?
- How does the ministry address land conflicts between small-scale miners and large mining companies?
- Are there specific areas designated for small-scale mining activities and where are these areas?
- How does the ministry balance the growth of small-scale mining with environmental conservation?
- Are there incentives for small-scale miners to engage in value addition or local beneficiation?

Honorable Speaker, Honorable members,

With the above mentioned... "What is the total value of Namibia's mineral portfolio?"
[pause]

We cannot manage what we have not measured. It is time to establish a sovereign valuation authority to assess the full worth of our mineral resources. If we know the estimated value and quantities of all our key minerals from proven diamond reserves to lithium deposits we can plan our economy with foresight.

International investors take us more seriously when we ourselves understand our assets. By quantifying Namibia's mineral wealth, we send a message that we know our worth. This can attract responsible investment on our terms, and discourage exploitative contracts. We must be price-setters of our resources, not price-takers.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

Now, in the realm of energy. Namibia stands at a crossroad. As the world's second-largest producer of uranium, Namibia possesses vast reserves that could significantly contribute to its energy needs. However, despite this potential, the country currently imports about 70% of its electricity. While the country has engaged with international entities, such as the Russian nuclear giant **Rosatom** to explore the feasibility of establishing a nuclear power plant. While these discussions indicate interest in developing nuclear energy infrastructure, the question still remains, do we have a comprehensive nuclear energy policy and a defined nuclear policy framework to regulate these practices?

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

As of November 2022, Namibia's overall electrification rate was estimated at approximately 50%, meaning about 300,000 households remained without electricity. In rural areas, the electrification rate was notably lower, with estimates indicating that between 70% and 80% of rural households lack access to electricity.

What steps is the ministry taking to promote renewable energy sources in Namibia, and how do you see this impacting the country's energy security?

What plans are in place to improve energy access in rural areas of Namibia?

How is the minister responding to global trends such as the shift towards green technologies and the demand for critical minerals to support electrification?
What specific initiatives are being implemented to create jobs in the industry?
What is your vision for the future of Namibia's energy sectors over the next five years?
These questions remain a priority.

In conclusion,

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

The mines and energy sector holds immense potential for Namibia's economic growth and development. Let us work together to harness this potential responsibly and sustainably. Let us commit to building a future where our natural resources benefit all Namibians, where our energy is accessible, and where our mining practices respect both our environment and our communities.

I thank you.