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## **Maiden Speech & Contribution to the 2025/2026 Appropriation Bill**

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**By: Hon. Milunga Elvis Lizazi, Shadow minister of Justice and Labour Relation**

**Windhoek  
April 2025**

**Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members,** I rise as a son of Zambezi, with the currents of this great river and the voices of my people guiding me. In a small hut in Ikoma village, elders would recount how justice, like the mighty Zambezi itself, must flow to every corner from the deepest rural gap to the highest courts of our land.

Having served across multiple regions of Namibia as an educator, I carry with me a diverse understanding of our people's challenges and aspirations. I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, keeping the Bible Sabbath as outlined in the scriptures. I respect all faith and traditions that uplift the human spirit. I thank my party, the IPC, for entrusting me with this responsibility, and all those who supported my journey to this chamber.

Today, carrying that narrative spirit, I stand in this August House to ensure those ancestral lessons inform our nation's laws and national treasury. It reminds us that **justice and labour** are not abstract concepts, but living stories of our people's daily struggles and triumphs.

**Hon. Speaker  
Hon. Members**

### **Embracing Labour Relations in the Justice Ministry**

With the new government structure, the Ministry of *Justice and Labour Relations* combines two critical portfolios under one roof. This merger underscores that social justice in Namibia isn't limited to courtrooms it extends to the fields, shops, and offices where our people labour. Labour Relations is now firmly on our agenda, and we must confront the challenges head on.

**Legacy of APS-Style Labour Hire:** Namibia's history with labour hire is painful. The infamous *Africa Personnel Services (APS)* case still echoes in 2009 judgement of the Supreme Court that struck down a law banning labour hire, deeming the entire practice as unconstitutional. Even with our Labour Act and recent introduction of a national minimum wage, enforcement is alarmingly weak. In 2024, the Ministry's Executive Director revealed that only 51 labour inspectors are available nationwide<sup>1</sup>. With such a thin inspectorate, abusive employers slip through the cracks. Indeed, labour experts warn that many employers ignore basic conditions and minimum wage rules, knowing the chance of inspection is slim<sup>2</sup>. The message is clear: "*Our people continue to be exploited through labour hire companies*" this should become a lament of the past, not a reality on our watch.

**Hon. Speaker**

**Hon. Members**

### **Access to Justice Legal Aid, Community Courts, and Protecting Whistleblowers**

True justice must be accessible to all, not only to those in towns and cities or those who can afford a lawyer. As Shadow Minister of Justice and Labour Relations, let me take a glance on our *access to justice* challenges and opportunities for reform. Legal Aid for the Poor; we commend the recent efforts by the Ministry of Justice to expand legal aid. The eligibility threshold was substantially raised so that Namibians earning up to N\$7,000 per month can now qualify for state-funded legal aid<sup>3</sup>. This is a positive step, up from a previously inadequate income cap. The Ministry is appointing additional legal aid counsels to handle the expected surge in cases<sup>4</sup>.

**Community and Traditional Courts:** In remote villages, the first (and sometimes only) forum for justice is the community or traditional court. These courts, recognized under the Community Courts Act<sup>5</sup>, handle local disputes through customary laws which are recognized in Article 66(1)<sup>6</sup>. Yet, they often operate with negligible support, many traditional authorities lack proper training in legal procedures, and their decisions may not be effectively enforced or recorded. I call for a modest but meaningful budget allocation to strengthen community courts. Train community court clerks, provide remunerations to traditional justices instead of a N\$ 1000.00 allowance they receive, and integrate their record-keeping with the formal system.

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<sup>1</sup> [namibian.com.na](http://namibian.com.na) accessed on 13 April 2025

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) accessed 13 April 2025 [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com).

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> 10 of 2003

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

By so doing, we validate the role of customary justice while ensuring it aligns with constitutional values. Additionally, mobile legal clinics should be funded to visit rural areas offering legal advice, helping villagers file cases or appeals, and educating communities about their rights. This kind of outreach, possibly in partnership with the Law Society and law faculties at our local universities, to bridge the urban-rural justice divide. I will be asking pointed questions in votes debate about the timelines for enforcing these Acts<sup>7</sup>. Justice delayed is justice denied and protective laws delayed are justice *derailed*.

**Hon. Speaker**

**Hon. Members**

**Ensuring Judicial Accountability (Case Backlogs and Delays):** Independence goes hand-in-hand with accountability. Unfortunately, our courts face crippling backlogs and delays in delivering justice. Magistrates' courts dockets are overflowing as I speak, thousands of cases remain unheard or unfinished, some stretching several years. The *Chief Justice's Annual Report* (if tabled) would likely to show a stubbornly high number of pending cases, especially criminal trials where accused persons wait in custody beyond reasonable time. This backlog, as the Justice Ministry itself admits, is partly due to a shortage of judicial officers and court resources<sup>8</sup>. We have magistrates circuits that serve vast areas infrequently, for example, periodical courts in remote areas might sit only once a month, causing legal matters to drag on.

Our task as the legislative arm is to ensure the Executive delivers on these priorities. I will not be silent if budgets meant to uplift the vulnerable are misdirected. This maiden contribution, is my pledge that, as Shadow Minister of Justice and Labour Relations, I will champion the cause of the voiceless seeking justice and the workers seeking dignity.

In conclusion, **Honourable Speaker, Hon. Members**, the true measure of our nation is how we treat our most vulnerable—the rural villager seeking justice, the workers demanding dignity. We must choose today whether to perpetuate privilege or fulfill our constitutional promises of equality, justice, and dignity. I stand unequivocally on the side of the worker, on the side of justice, and on the side of genuine reform.

I yield the floor with the confidence that together we can turn these proposals into reality, so that the story our children inherit is one of justice served and labour respected in the Land of the Brave. Thank You Honorable Speaker

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> facebook.com. (not for academic purpose)