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short-term measure, but is an important one. "We're sitting on a time bomb, one which the private sector is too small to defuse alone," Van Zyl said.

The Namibian Sun trumpeted: WHILE the Minister of Finance is commended for making job creation the centrepiece of her budget and the idea of using fiscal policy as a tool to promote employment is wholeheartedly supported, the budget fails to make clear how deficit spending in cer-

tain Ministries generate large numbers of sustainable private sector jobs – this being the ultimate aim.

Well-known economist Robin Sherbourne critically analysed the national budget ... Sherbourne questioned why Government is spending such massive amounts in a way that exceed the capacity of the economy to absorb this level of spending.

He argued that a more appropriate and realistic approach would have been a more gradual increase in development spending hand-in-hand with an overall strategy for growth and employment as well as the required policy and admin-

istrative changes which would have maximised the benefit to the local economy. Sherbourne said that now was not the time to massively max out the country's limit especially at a time, when the Minister herself suggested that trade agreements and a new Revenue Sharing Formula "could result in considerable decreases in revenue".

In another article they said:

The N\$35,8 billion budget is an aggressive deviation from the N\$29,05 billion that the Finance Minister announced was to be tabled during the 2011/12 budget last year. The additional allocations in the current budget are targeted at,

amongst others, the promotion of economic growth, job creation, infrastructural development and the development of youth and women, Kuugongelwa-Amadhila said. But the expanded budget will mean excessive budget deficits and ballooning public debt to reach N\$40 billion by 2014.

NamRights (formerly the NSHR) also has something to say:

The „first ever-bold“ national budget for fiscal year (FY) 2011-2012, which Namibia's Finance Minister Mme. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila has tabled in the National Assembly

last Wednesday, March 9 2011, should, rather, be described as an old wine in an old bottle. Prior to tabling the said budget, Mme Kuugongelwa-Amadhila had repeatedly been quoted in local electronic and print media as saying that such budget will be „pro-poor and pro-growth“.

In parliament, too, the budget received a very cool reception, with the opposition virtually parroting what had been said before. Even those that were reticent with their comments had little good to say about the budgetary framework.

Nangof, saying it was speaking on behalf of civil society, also criti-

cized the main points that have already been mentioned over and over again.

A discussion after the budget had been tabled, the president of the NCCI, Martha Namundjebotilahun welcome the budget and urged government to continue to focus on its mission to promote faster economic growth and create further job opportunities. According to her the private sector was ready to support government's efforts to reduce the unemployment rate in the country and to provide further economic growth.

While it is true that the budget is more one for tomorrow than for today, that it has some inherent risks and that it is bigger than before, it shows that the government is not satisfied with the status quo – especially the high unemployment rate and the stuttering economy resulting from the recent world-wide economic crisis, it is a budget that has been carefully prepared. The minister and her advisers have weighed the positive and the negative aspects well to ensure that the country does not get into a position which will leave it vulnerable to outside factors.

The fact that education has received such a boost also augurs well for the future. Uneducated people do not easily get jobs and with the increasing activity in the mining sector, Namibia needs more and more trained and qualified people. The minister has considered the situation of importing labour well and has decided that Namibians deserve bigger slice of the economic cake. That will not happen unless our work force is trained and able to compete with the rest of the region.

While the budget deficit seems high, it is still within manageable parameters and, again, the rationale seems to have been rather to spend a dollar today in order to ensure that in future these dollars will not have to be spent again and again.

One point everyone seems to have forgotten about is that 2014 is an election and nobody, especially not our government and the ruling party, would as unwise as to cause financial and economic upheaval in an election year.

Nobody in their right mind would go and spend billions if they were not sure that this expenditure is warranted and that a positive return could be expected.

All in all a budget which seems as controversial by others, but then they can criticise; they do not have to prove that they can do it better.

That burden will still remain with our Swapo Party government who, in spite of all the adverse comment, will ensure that Namibia will pass this test and come out with its head held high.

Maybe the Hon Kuugongelwa-Amadhila still says it best of all:

"The global economy has emerged from the worst of the downturn and emerging markets offer new opportunities for trade and growth. The Government's continued expansionary budget will help to lay the foundation for economic growth and address the persisting socio-economic challenges that face Namibia. As a country, we need to grasp these opportunities to make structural improvements and achieve lasting, sustainable development.

A bold step; a bold statement, but sometimes a little boldness is just what is needed. A G Bohn says: Boldness in business is the first, second, and third thing.

# Independence Anniversary

# 21<sup>st</sup>

The Board of Directors, management and the entire staff of Agribank congratulates the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the entire Namibian Nation on this milestone celebration of Namibia's 21st Independence anniversary.

On this auspicious occasion, Agribank invites all Namibians to join the bank on the journey to promote food security and to march towards the attainment of Vision 2030.



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