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Namibian fish creates '6 000 jobs for Spain'

April 10, 2015

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WINDHOEK – DTA of Namibia president McHenry Venaani has slammed government for exporting “over 6 000 jobs” in the fishing sector to Spain, while it fails to create jobs for its own people who are struggling to find work.

Venaani attributed the jobs export to a lack of efficient value-addition infrastructure in the country, and urged government to come up with ways to ensure that Namibian fish is processed locally and exported to European markets as a finished product.

“While you are struggling to create jobs locally, you create over 6 000 direct jobs in the fishing sector to Spain, all because of a lack of value-addition plants,” charged Venaani when speaking in the National Assembly on Wednesday in the first reading debate on the budget.

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The Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Bernhard Esau, momentarily interjected to respond to Venaani: “We now have the ‘growth at home policy’ which will deal with such things,” before he took his seat again. Over the years Spain has been the biggest beneficiary of Namibia’s fishing, creating thousands of jobs for its people and making millions through the sale of Namibian fish to other countries.

A 2002 document titled Information on Fisheries Management in the Republic of Namibia states: “The bulk of Namibian hake is



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exported to Spain, where it is then distributed to other markets on the European continent after the value addition process. Supply of whole wet fish on ice to Spain, mostly from the long-line fishery, is a valuable niche market that may expand if transport links improve and prices increase.”

As for the housing crisis prevailing across the country, Venaani said the blame for Namibia’s housing crisis points to none other than the ruling government because of an absence of housing regulations.

He said land delivery mechanisms in local municipalities remain a major concern because conventional land and housing delivery systems have perpetually failed to serve millions of the urban poor in cities of the developing world, with Namibia being no exception. The housing crisis in the country is further exacerbated by the ever-widening income inequality gap, which has seen the wealthy acquiring properties – as if on a clothing shopping spree – just to later rent out those properties to the poor.

Even though he commended the mass housing programme, Venaani said the programme would not achieve the desired results if land delivery mechanisms in local municipalities are not addressed.

Venaani gave an example of last year’s auction in Academia, Windhoek where plots sold for more than triple the service cost.

Former Windhoek mayor and now Swapo backbencher in parliament Agnes Kafula could be seen shaking her head in disagreement while Venaani slammed the City of Windhoek.

Venaani proposed that government seriously consider adopting the urban resettlement programme to ensure that land is availed to the poor.

“The way government takes millions to buy farms on which people are resettled, government can also do the same and put money aside to do mass land servicing to ensure that plots are available at a cheaper rate,” he suggested.

Although government in 2013 implemented the mass housing development programme, the programme continues to be crippled by a lack of funding.

This somehow prompted DTA MP Elna Dienda to give notice that she plans to ask the Minister of Urban and Rural Development a few questions relating to the mass housing programme, such as the cost of contracts dished out and whom they were awarded to.

Swapo MPs did not take kindly to Dienda referring to the programme as “mess housing” instead of “mass housing” and called for a retraction. She responded: “Yes, of course it is mess housing, because the programme is a mess.”

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