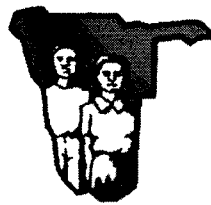


NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF NAMIBIA
(NYC)



NANGOF Trust
Advocating Networking Supporting



Basic Income Grant Coalition

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Basic Income Grant Coalition

12 May 2010

Media Statement:

The coalition of the Basic Income Grant (BIG) welcomes that the President of the Republic of Namibia has finally broken his silence on the BIG. We however, are equally shocked and disappointed by the remarks of the President. The poor and the unemployed, who make out half of the Namibian population, still cannot believe that President Pohamba said, "We can't dish out money for free to people who do nothing." It implies that the poor and unemployed are to be blamed for the situation as if they are the cause of poverty and unemployment

Namibia from 1990 to 2010

Unemployment drastically increased to over 50%, the highest income inequality in the world. 24% of children under the age of 5 are underweight and 9% are 'wasted', increasing dropouts and failure rates, especially of grades 10 and 12, growing influx of desperate rural poor to already highly indebted villages and towns

Otjivero 2008 to 2009

Unemployment rate dropped from 60% to 40%, food poverty dropped from 72% to 16%, self-employment increased by 300%, school dropout rates reduced from almost 40% to 0%, child malnutrition dropped from 42% to 10%, development of a local economy and very important the people regained their human dignity. Is that not reason enough for the speedy implementation of the BIG?

Are the resources of this country only to be used by the rich elite at the expense of the poor and the unemployed? Is asking for little seed money exploitation? Is it expected that the poor can break away from poverty without any economic empowerment? Can you expect that the poor can build something from nothing? Can you expect people to make a living in the absence of any viable local economy, especially in rural areas?

Is it a priority to buy luxurious cars costing millions of dollars, while hunger and destitution is increasing at such a high rate? This is really an insult to the poor and unemployed of this country. It is an insult to the young men and women who go without

food and come every morning until the evening to the traffic lights looking for jobs. They are not lazy, they are hunting for jobs but don't find them because there are no job opportunities. It is an insult to every student who on an empty stomach is trying to study. It is an insult to every woman, getting up early in the morning trying to feed her family.

The pilot project has proven that local economic development, creating job and business opportunities, is possible through a basic income. The BIG in Otjivero has broken the vicious cycle of poverty and empowered people to partake in the economy. It is very much important that the President engages with the people directly, especially with the Namibian citizens in Otjivero.

As in the past the BIG Coalition remains committed to the just cause of the poor and unemployed, especially the youth. We will continue to engage government constructively and advocate for the national implementation of the Basic Income Grant as a matter of urgency.