

**NEW ERA**

NEWSPAPER FOR A NEW NAMIBIA

## Find amicable solution to BIG

GOVERNMENT ought to reach out to its social partners on the other side of the BIG divide and seek consensus on this cardinal issue.

By reaching out to these partners, Government would not only demonstrate goodwill, but also the ability and willingness to listen even if that would mean agreeing to disagree.

The issue of BIG is paramount and touches at the very heart of poverty alleviation. It is central to all efforts that aim at improving the welfare of Namibians. Hence, this is one issue that should naturally unite all stakeholders and partners.

By most accounts, the organisations that form BIG are a credible lot and ones whose leaders have integrity and good credentials. The following are the BIG partners – the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), National Network of HIV Service Organisations (NANASO), Church Alliance for Orphans (CATO), Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), National Youth Council (NYC), Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), and the Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI).

At least some, if not most, of these organisations have a history of standing for the downtrodden and fighting for justice. They cared for Namibians' spiritual and material needs during the dark days of apartheid and colonialism.

The Council of Churches of Namibia, Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Namibia National Student Organisation are all long-time liberation struggle partners of the ruling party. They played a pivotal role inside the country and stayed on the side of the oppressed.

Ideally, therefore, the ruling class and these partners have to remain engaged in the fulfilment of the social contract with the Namibian people. The relationship between these organisations and the ruling party that is cemented by a common mission and vision dating back to the days of the liberation struggle should never be compromised on the altar of expediency.

Put simply, the BIG partners are natural and historical allies of the ruling party and they, together, should remain seized with the current challenges that Namibians face. What is more, the BIG partners represent the same constituency as today's rulers.

All these factors put together necessitate that both Government and the BIG partners come together and consult on BIG. It is unhealthy for them to communicate through the media and other forums on a crucial subject such as this. Working at cross-purposes is not an option either.

As partners, they owe it to the general population to find workable solutions to their plight. The public is not interested in knowing who is right or wrong. All they require is a solution to their plight by their respective leaders.

Leaders should be able to rise above their differences during difficult times and indeed, these are difficult times for most Namibians.

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