

Not a waste

PLEASE allow me space in your esteemed newspaper to air my views on what seems to be a controversial issue - the purchase of a Presidential jet estimated to cost R80 million.

I would at the outset like to state that acquiring a plane for the country is in no way a waste of resources considering the fact that this plane is going to be used for transporting the President and his entourage to various parts of the globe to canvass for much-needed assistance that our young and fledgling nation will require from time to time.

On top of that the jet will not be used for the President's private purposes but rather for purposes beneficial to the development of Namibia and its people. Obviously when the President is not travelling the aircraft will be used commercially, thus bringing in additional revenue for the state. As opposed to the chartered plane which is costing the government and the taxpayer, if you like, thousands, if not millions per day? Therefore the purchase of an executive jet is a cost-saving exercise rather than an unwanted and unwarranted expenditure as some of our countrymen tend to believe.

Painstakingly, those opposing the idea are mostly those responsible for the misery and poverty of Namibians and suddenly and ironically are today 'championing' the 'cause' of the disenfranchised community hence the unofficial spokespersons of these people. This is sheer hypocrisy. There are those who maintain that the acquisition is untimely because of the drought situation in our country. Well and good. That the country is drought-stricken is a reality too obvious to be missed even by the Government. To be realistic the Government is in no way ignoring this problem and instead it has announced emergency measures in a bid to address and thus arrest the situation!

Concomitantly, to my own understanding and belief, the President had to charter a plane to go to Iran - to name but one country - where he won a deal to supply the Iranians with beef in exchange for oil which (the beef) otherwise could have flooded the local market, thus forcing the drought affected farmer to sell it below market prices.

In a nutshell, I am just trying to appeal to my countrymen and women not to criticise everything left, right and centre just to let themselves be heard, but should rather be objective and constructive.

I realise that there are those who have their own political agenda (perhaps a hidden one) and who will try to frustrate the efforts of the new dispensation in order to win some political votes, but acquiring a plane which is obviously going to serve the national interest in for example taking 'us' to the top of the world in search of assistance when in dire straits, is something worth justifying.

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On bad timing