



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY

**NATIONAL CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE
STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP, 21st OCTOBER
2015, NAMPOWER CONVENTION CENTRE,
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA, OFFICIAL KEYNOTE
SPEECH BY HONOURABLE JOHN MUTORWA,
MP AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER
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- Honourable Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Water and Forestry;
- Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councilors;
- Your Excellency, Ambassador of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC);
- Your Excellency, EU Ambassador to Namibia;
- Your Excellency, FAO Representative to Namibia;
- Country Director of GIZ;
- Acting Permanent Secretary of MAWF;
- Representatives of GRN O/M/As;
- Captains of Industry;
- Representatives of Farmers' Organizations;
- Members of the Media;
- Colleagues, Friends;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. It is indeed a privileged official duty and a humbling honour, for me, to address this honoured and esteemed audience, at this timely National Conservation Agriculture Stakeholders' Workshop. It gives me great pleasure to echo our Permanent Secretary in extending to you all, a very cordial and warm welcome, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry; and also to say, how deeply grateful we are, for the technical and financial support, received thus far, from the European Union (EU), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), in co-hosting this vitally important workshop. As the Line Minister, I'm also personally indebted to all stakeholders present here today, who have accepted our invitation to convene and participate in this National Conservation Agriculture Stakeholders' workshop (NCASW).
2. Furthermore, I'm extremely delighted to note and appreciate that: with the well chosen and fitting workshop theme: **"Unlocking the Potential of Conservation Agriculture, for Inclusive and Equitable Development"**, we are gathered here today, as a united community in the Agriculture Sector, in our common determination, to transform agriculture for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods, through harnessing opportunities for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Article 98 (1) of the Namibian Constitution educates, directs and instructs as follows: "the economic order of Namibia shall be based on the principles of a MIXED ECONOMY, with the objective of securing economic growth, prosperity and a life of human dignity for all Namibians," (my own underlining for emphasis).

3. This national conservation agriculture workshop draws inspiration from the Declaration of War against Poverty by the GRN, SWAPO Party, under the leadership of our Head of State, His Excellency President Dr Hage G. Geingob. This high level Declaration gives us hope, as custodians of and workers in the agriculture sector, that: we can position agriculture as a game changer, for sustainable economic growth and development for and in Namibia, as set forth in the 4th National Development Plan (NDP4). To achieve the set targets, we need to continuously constructively and positively mobilise ourselves and all our diverse stakeholders, as we have done for this workshop. Under the prevailing adverse climate conditions, all the Namibian people, all the fauna and flora (even though they do not speak), and visitors, are expecting much, from this national forum, addressing agricultural productivity and sustainability. Our discussion and resolutions in advancing Conservation Agriculture (CA), in Namibia, must eventually culminate in defeating food insecurity and the scourge of poverty. The approaches we share for promoting CA, should be founded within the farmers' actual needs and allowing them to take the front stage, notwithstanding that adoption of new farming technologies and smart practices will take time, to be applied successfully.

4. It is also absolutely fitting, appropriate and important that I must remind this distinguished NATIONAL CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP, about the provisions of ARTICLE 95 (L) of the Namibian Constitution, under the heading: "PROMOTION OF THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE," when the following are clearly, pertinently and unambiguously stated: "the State shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting, inter alia, policies aimed at the: maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity of Namibia and utilization of living natural resources, on a

sustainable basis, for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future.”

5. It is only justifiable that during the course of this workshop, participants will share lessons, best practices, and technological advances and innovations, in order to institutionalize Conservation Agriculture at the national and regional levels, in support of our ongoing initiatives of the Dryland Crop Production Programme or Rain Fed Crop Production Programme. The workshop also provides a public platform to recognize views and inputs, directly from our farmers and their representative organizations, development partners, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the private sector; who have positively distinguished themselves, in advancing the Conservation Agriculture approach, to increase agricultural productivity whilst protecting the fragile agricultural resources and the natural environment.

6. Following the official and public launch, of the Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme of Namibia, in March 2015, our Ministry is again, as done during its formulation and development, engaging all stakeholders, on the practical implementation arrangements. It is the MAWF’s firm belief, wish and hope that: with a well coordinated implementation and financing framework, for the Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme of Namibia, we can use our collective scarce resources, to achieve shared prosperity of our farming communities, particularly in rural areas. However, all Conservation Agriculture interventions must have strong synergies and directly linked to existing and tested ongoing Government initiatives, in particular, the MAWF’s Rain Fed Programme, also referred to as: Dryland Crop Production Programme, the Green Scheme Programme, including the National

Strategic Grain Reserves, the National Fresh Produce Business Hubs, and the Agricultural Technology Centres.

7. With such synergies, no doubt, we can grow the agriculture sector and its contribution to the gross domestic product, by broadening the scope of our farm outputs, hence the MAWF's continuous call for the diversification of our agriculture base. These national programmes confirm that, together we can move Namibia forward, and contribute significantly towards food security and employment creation in the agriculture sector. I must emphasize, that this requires an institutionalized mechanism of providing support to farming communities.
8. The Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme of Namibia will enable us, as stakeholders, to transform our agricultural practices, by shifting the paradigm towards a strong community-based and government-supported approach to farming, with resource inputs and contributions, also, from the private sector and other partners. This collaborative partnership, between the farming communities, the government, and the private sector is instrumental in optimizing agricultural production and enhancing sustainable use and management of agriculture, water and forestry resources, especially in the communal areas of our Country.
9. The systematic change in paradigm also encourages local people to take local action to promote local economic development. It also ensures that causes of environmental and resource degradation are addressed. As a result, resource-poor farmers, mostly from the rural areas, are empowered through various elements and interventions of existing national programmes.
10. Considering that climate change is ranked high among top risks by impact and likelihood combined, our Ministry will

continue to engage and encourage the promotion of climate-smart Conservation Agriculture and complementary Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs), in a coordinated fashion. I'm also excited that the coordination mechanism (both at national and regional levels), as well as the financing of identified interventions will feature prominently during the next 3 days of the workshop. It is the GRN's hope, through the MAWF that: you will devise calculated approaches that would enable us as stakeholders, to collectively generate the required NAD94 million, for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme of Namibia. I call upon our stakeholders and partners to engage fully in this endeavour, to complement and augment existing public resources.

11. It remains my pleasant and onerous duty, now, to declare the 2015 National Conservation Agriculture Stakeholders Workshop officially and publicly opened. I wish you engaging, constructive, focussed, dedicated, empathetic, fruitful and successful discussions and deliberations.

I thank you.