

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
OF MAWF AT THE CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE
WORKSHOP AT NAMPOWER CONVENTION CENTRE, 21ST –
23 OCTOBER 2015**

Hon John Mutorwa, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry,

Hon Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

Your Excellency, Ambassador of the CPR

Your Excellency, EU Ambassador to Namibia

Your Excellency, FAO Representative to Namibia

Country Director of GIZ

Representatives of GRN O/M/As

Captains of Industry

Representatives of Farmers Organizations

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocol observed

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF), and to say how grateful we are to the European Union (EU), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), NAFOLA and SCORE who are

our partners in the implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture (CA) programme. I must underscore that without their support this workshop would not have been possible today.

This is also an opportune time to renew contacts and discuss challenges of mutual interest with participants from other institutions and the regions.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Please allow me to share the objectives of the workshop with you, which are amongst others to:

- Bring together the various identified stakeholders in order to build common understanding on CA and its national development agenda
- Serve as a platform for an open exchange of experiences and evidence-based knowledge in CA
- Develop and establish a coherent CA coordination strategy and standards for the implementation of the comprehensive CA programme in Namibia
- Develop a need based framework for domestic and external resources mobilization and allocation of identified CA interventions.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are all aware, the majority of households in Namibia rely on subsistence farming for their livelihoods. Even though this is the case, the agricultural sector has been hit by changing climate conditions, with

floods, droughts and prolonged dry spells becoming more frequent and temperatures rising steadily. This has led to the low production of major crops such as Mahangu and Maize amongst others. Low production levels throughout crop growing regions are partly as a result of erratic rainfall, increased soil and land degradation and poor farming practices. Soil erosion, loss of soil organic matter and soil structure and soil health resulting from soil tillage and exposed soil, compels Namibia to look for alternatives to reverse the process of soil degradation and decreasing productivity.

It is therefore against the aforesaid that the MAWF has developed and launched the Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme which is a framework for the coordinated implementation of CA by all stakeholders in Namibia.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Government's 4th National Development Plan and its Agricultural Sector Execution Plan as well as the MAWF strategic Plan (2014-2017) have identified CA as an important contributor towards improved national food security. The NDP4 Strategic Objectives most relevant to the CA programme are amongst others as follows:

- Desired Outcome 9 (DO9) of the NDP4 which identifies the promotion of CA as one of the strategies to achieve a real growth of 4% per annum for national agriculture
- Capacitated stakeholders who are informed, educated and supported for example emerging and resettled farmers and cooperatives

- Coping mechanism in place for addressing the adverse effects of climate change on production (including global warming, floods, and droughts)

CA is an approach to manage agro-ecosystems for improved and sustained productivity and food security while preserving and enhancing the resource base and the environment. CA is characterized by three linked principles, namely:

1. Continuous minimum mechanical soil disturbance;
2. Permanent Organic soil cover; and
3. Diversification of crop species grown in sequences and/or associations

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to urge all those involved in the implementation of the CA to make this programme a success by committing ourselves to the execution of its interventions and activities.

Finally, I would also like to thank all those who were involved in the organization of the workshop especially the MAWF, GIZ, FAO, NAFOLA and SCORE staff for making this event possible today.

I wish you all success in your deliberations during this workshop.

I thank you