

**ADDRESS BY HON. JOHN MUTORWA, THE MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY**

AT THE

**AGRO-MARKETING AND TRADE AGENCY (AMTA)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

**10 March 2016
Nampower Convention Centre,
Windhoek**



Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

- Director of Ceremonies;
- Hon. Leon Jooste, Minister of Public Enterprise;
- Honourable Governors present;
- Special Advisors to the Governor's Offices present;
- Hon. Councillors present;
- AMTA Board members;
- Board Members of State Owned Enterprises;
- Managing Director of AMTA;
- Heads of various State Owned Enterprises and Private Entities;
- Officials of Agro-Marketing and Trade Agency;
- Officials of Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry;
- Officials of Agricultural Business Development;
- Officials of Namibian Agronomic Board;
- Representatives of NAMPORT;
- Representatives of NCCI;
- Representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations;
- Representatives of Namibian National Farmers Unions;
- Representatives of Agricultural Producers, Processors and Traders;
- Representative of Farmers Unions and Farmers Associations;
- Representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations;
- Representative of the Namibian Informal Sector Organisations;
- All Farmers present;
- All other service providers;
- Members of the Media;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. It gives me great pleasure to stand here today and address the second Annual General Meeting of Agro-Marketing and Trade Agency (AMTA).
2. AMTA was established through a Cabinet Decision 7th/10.05.11/015, as a specialised Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, to coordinate and manage the marketing and trading of Agricultural Produce in Namibia. AMTA's mandate is also to manage the Fresh Produce Business Hubs and National Strategic Food Reserve infrastructure, towards the attainment of food safety and security.
3. The Cabinet's Directive to establish AMTA envisaged an agency that will have the capacity to promote marketing and trading of agricultural products, which includes agronomic and livestock products.
4. In order to drive its operations AMTA developed its Foundation Strategic Plan which was launched during the last AGM. The five strategic objective goals of the plan are establishing stakeholder partnership, building a reputable brand and agency, stimulating demand for local fresh produce, managing food reserves to support food security and being a sustainable effective SOE.
5. Thank you AMTA Board for the commitment and the desire exhibited in helping AMTA in the implementation of its Foundation Strategic in meeting its goals and to grow as a marketing and trade agency that is recognise nationally and internationally. We as

leaders in the agriculture sector should have the responsibility to translate Government policies into practice. I trust that we will all benefit from the dialogue and information to be shared during this AGM.

- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

6. The marketing and trading of agricultural produce is a very important component of the agricultural value chain and it requires a continuous dialogue between stakeholders as well as industry regulators. The success of this component needs all our collective involvement. Government has created entities such as the NAB, AMTA and AgriBusDev upon which the private sector can build a strong value chain network and system for the Agronomic Sector to the benefit of the Namibian economy and its people.
7. Agriculture is a cross-sectorial concern which requires all of us to take action, take full charge and responsibilities of our mandates which is safe food production and to play our role in ensuring that our country is secured in terms of food for our people.
8. The Namibia Food Safety Policy was launched during 2015, whose development was coordinated by MAWF, as a joint effort of five Ministries, namely Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and Ministry of Urban and Rural Development. It is one of the major achievements of the Government of the Republic

of Namibia to ensure food safety for all Namibians and provide sufficient food safety guarantees on all food products traded nationally.

9. Secondary to the food safety guarantee it is equally important to ensure smooth logistical arrangements to bring the food from land to nation. Therefore, AMTA has acquired trucks to address logistical challenges that might exist in the industry for transporting agricultural produce in a conducive environment.
10. The availability and conducive environment of transporting food is critical to food security and safety for the consumers in our towns. This is very important because most of our towns are situated far from the production areas, making it difficult to access food. The initiative of AMTA is noble in assisting producers with transport logistics to supply produce to the urban market such as Windhoek and other towns.
11. I firmly believe that our effort to successfully develop the agricultural industry should be anchored on a strong public private partnership participation. This includes cooperation amongst organized commercial producers, small scale surplus producers, traders and processors of agricultural produce within the created Marketing and Trading system provided by AMTA. The cooperation is very important to ensure a transparent value chain in the implementation of regulations concerning the marketing and trading of agricultural produce.

- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

12. When I addressed the first AMTA AGM last year I alluded to the challenges that AMTA was experiencing which was the window of the legislative transition, Change management challenges, stakeholder engagement and effective participation from industry players.
13. I can proudly say today that these challenges are not challenges anymore, however are part of the milestones achieved by AMTA. AMTA was appointed as an Agent of the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) and given the mandate to facilitate the implementation of marketing and trade of Agronomic products.
14. The transferring of the implementation of market related functions from the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) to AMTA resulted in the establishing of the division to facilitate the inspections of facilities and farms for compliance to food safety and standards of fresh produce all over in Namibia as well as manage all port of entry and exit in Namibia in relation to agronomic and horticultural products.
15. In order to stabilise production and ensure that there is consistent supply of fresh produce through the Hubs, AMTA took the first step by engaging stakeholders in the development of the cropping programme for both the Ongwediva and the Rundu hubs. At such platform it was decided that AMTA and AGRIBUSDEV will source inputs (seeds, fertilisers; pesticides, and other chemicals) to offset

the cropping programme. Such practices are aimed at bringing inputs closer to the farmers, so that they can concentrate on production of fresh produce only. This resulted in the achievement of 23% of the targeted throughput of fresh produce through the hubs.

16. AMTA signed an MoU with the Olushandja Farmer's Association towards the utilization, upgrading and maintenance of the Olushandja Horticultural collection center and the Cooler truck in order to facilitate the marketing of horticultural fresh produce that are being harvested from that area. Olushandja has more than 23 producers who are currently producing and selling their produce to AMTA through the Ongwediva Fresh Produce Hub. Most of them are producing under a cropping agreement between AMTA and individual farmers whereby the Hub provides farmers with inputs and the farmers are expected to sell to the hub.

- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

17. As one of its strategic objectives AMTA has engaged grape farmers since its inception and outlined different services that AMTA provides to the industry.
18. AMTA together with Namport engaged grape farmers in exploring the possibility of exporting grapes through the Luderitz Port which was an excellent initiative when it was realized. A trial was done on the transshipment of Namibian table grapes via the Luderitz Port for the first time to the Europe Market last December. During this

trial done it has been established that time taken for the exported grapes to reach Europe from the Luderitz Port to Rotterdam Port is only 16 days compared to the route from Cape Town to Rotterdam Port that is 27 days. The Marketing and trading of agricultural produce is a very important component of the agricultural value chain and it requires a collective involvement of all stakeholders as well as the industry regulators.

- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

19. The National Strategic Food Reserve is an initiative of the Government with the aim to maintain a national optimal level of food reserves to respond to emergency food requirements of the Namibian nation when needed. In the midst of drought experienced in Namibia surplus maize grain was purchased from Zambezi subsistent farmers, which resulted in an increase of 20% of marketed quantities of grain compared to the 2013/2014 marketing season. This was due to better rainfall received in some parts of the Zambezi Region. AMTA supplied a total tonnage of 1 266 white maize and mahangu grain for milling and to OPM for distribution purposes to the drought relief programme.

- **Distinguished guest,**

20. This is a crucial time for AMTA, as activities are put in action as well as the building of the organisational structure and capacity to facilitate agricultural marketing processes, storage and trading. Namibia is known for a resilient and turbulent economic and

weather/climate hence it is important that we capitalise on the successful foundations laid since the inception of this organisation and ensure that it is efficient and meets the country's needs.

21. We will continue our growth strategy and capitalise on the excellent foundations we have put in place since the existence of AMTA, of course together with our stakeholders which are the building blocks of AMTA. I would like to extend my gratitude towards our stakeholders for the continuous support toward the implementation of AMTAs mandates of marketing and trading facilitation of Agricultural products in Namibia.

I THANK YOU