

**OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE NAMIBIA AGRICULTURE POLICY BY
HON. JOHN MUTORWA, MP, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER
AND FORESTRY, DECEMBER 2015.**

Director of the Programme

Deputy Ministers

Permanent Secretaries

Deputy Permanent Secretaries

Representatives of the Private Sector,

Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers of State Owned Enterprises

Representatives of Farmers Unions

Representatives of Agricultural Producers, Processors and Traders

Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations

Management and Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and
Forestry

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

I wish, at the outset to welcome the invited guests and representatives of the agriculture and related sectors to this prestigious occasion. We are assembled here today to launch an important policy instrument that is designed to appropriately direct the future work, within the agriculture sector in particular, namely the 2015 National Agriculture Policy.

Mandate

In order to put my address into context, it is necessary that I outline the origin and mandate of the new, 2015 Namibia Agriculture Policy. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry is mandated to promote, develop, manage and utilize agricultural, water and forestry resources. The current functions, which are set in the Ministry's Strategic Plan, include among others policy and legal framework, which involve formulating and reviewing sectoral policy documents. The National Agricultural Policy has been and still exists since 1995. A national policy is a living document that must be reviewed to keep it up to date with the changing environment in the agriculture sector. It is for this reason that the document has been revised to provide a broad guideline to the Government, its agencies and all stakeholder in the agriculture sector to work uniform, in individual and collective efforts to develop and grow the agricultural sector in particular and the national economy in general.

Rationale

The Namibia Agriculture Policy is a review of the 1995 National Agricultural Policy. There have been new developments within the agricultural sector that prompted this revision. These include the role that agriculture is expected to play in the attainment of the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4) strategic objectives, as well as Vision 2030 goals of economic growth, sustainability, equity and poverty alleviation and the desire for Government to diversify agricultural

products and export markets. Furthermore, another dimension that prompted the revision of this policy is the number of bilateral, regional and multi-lateral agreements as well as the current and expected impacts of climate change and agricultural land reform that are affecting the performance of the agricultural sector

In reviewing this policy, the Government takes cognisance of the fact that African Union (AU) and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have taken the initiative to have common agriculture development agenda under Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Furthermore, countries belonging to the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) have initiated a process for the harmonisation of agricultural and related policies. In 2013, SADC Minister of Agriculture have adopted the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP). Hence this policy has taken into account those developments.

This policy document presents a new direction in the process of agricultural development. Efforts are made to provide a coherent framework, inter-linkages through the value chain as well as the sectors that are relevant to agriculture. The Namibia Agriculture Policy is the overarching policy and will serve as a base for drafting new as well as aligning existing policies, law and regulations. The policy presents a framework for the design of programmes and projects that will steer the performance of the sector. The legal Framework for the policy and strategies is defined on the basis of the Namibian Constitution and major Acts in the agriculture sector.

Objectives

This Policy is formulated within the context of high level national policy documents in order to advance Namibia's overall economic development. The policy objectives are to:

- Accelerate the agricultural sector's contribution to the National Gross Domestic product (GDP)
- Create a conducive environment for increased and sustained agricultural production and productivity which is regionally and internationally competitive
- Create a common understanding among national and international stakeholders as well as investors, about the vision of the Government of the Republic of Namibia for the development of Namibia's agriculture sector and its downstream industries
- Create a framework that will enable streamlined efforts by all stakeholders in Namibia's agriculture sector and its downstream industries, towards common developmental goals
- Promote the development of the national agriculture sector across the value chain
- Serve as a basis for drafting new as well as aligning existing legislation

Implementation

The implementation of this policy will take into account the laws and regulations affecting the utilization of natural resources and agricultural production. The Namibia Agriculture Policy objectives are geared towards the realization of the targets of Fourth National Development Plans and Vision 2030 as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

The implementation of the strategies under this policy is expected to be a concerted effort by a host of role players within the Government, private sector and civil society as well as with the support of the international cooperating partners, all under the coordination and supervision of the Ministry of Agricultural, Water and Forestry. The stakeholders are expected to supplement Government/policy strategies with the aim to attain the objectives of this Policy.

I am therefore inviting all of you here today to support the agriculture sector in the implementation of the Policy and Strategies contained in this document. The success we seek can only be achieved by working together, in a responsible manner, to optimise the contribution of our agricultural resources to National Development. I would also like to state that the Policy and Strategy are not cast in stone, meaning it must keep track with Government's overall objectives and the dynamic agricultural environment. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry will remain flexible in making appropriate amendments if and when necessary.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will also be subjected to monitoring and evaluation, which would then ensure that the progress of its implementation is tracked and documented. I am also delighted to present that this Policy has a complementary Strategy to guide its implementation.

Acknowledgement

The 2015 Namibia Agriculture Policy was formulated through a consultative process between ministry officials, farmers unions and associations, National Planning Commission, other government ministries, offices and agencies, academic institution and private sector. I therefore wish to acknowledge the stakeholders in the agriculture sector, who provided constructive contributions to the Policy.

With these words, I now launch this document titled “2015 Namibia Agriculture Policy” and in doing so, reaffirm the commitment of this Ministry to its successful implementation.

I thank you.