POLICY STATEMENT DELIVERED BY JOHN MUTORWA, MP AND
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY (MAWF),
DELIVERED AT THE DIALOGUE ORGANIZED BY THE HANNS SEIDEL
FOUNDATION, ON 4 APRIL 2017, IN WINDHOEK, UNDER THE THEME -
“STATE OF NAMIBIAN AGRICULTURE: TOWARDS BUILDING
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY.”

1.1 It is indeed a privilege and honour, for me, representing the Government
of the Republic of Namibia, broadly and the MAWF, specifically, to
address this honoured and esteemed audience, at this Dialogue on the
“State of Namibian Agriculture Towards Building Sustainable
Agriculture for Food and Energy Security.”

1.2 Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to say a few words about the
significance of and the challenges facing the Agriculture Sector. Although
only contributing about 3% to the country’s GDP, the sector sustains the
majority of the Namibian people, with about 70% of the population relying
on agricultural activities for income. The sector notably contribute to
national foreign exchange earnings and hence the country’s balance of
payments, the fighting of poverty through the improvement of rural
livelihoods, the enhancement of national food security, as well as the promotion of sustainable use of natural resources.

1.3 The agriculture sector on a global scale and so also in Namibia, is increasingly being affected by the energy, food and economic crises. This situation is further compounded by natural disasters, such as the floods, periodic droughts and like in 2017, worms being experienced in many African Countries and which are predicted to escalate due to the very real visible threats caused by climate change. The negative impacts of these phenomena are being particularly felt in Africa, where agriculture, in its broadest sense, is inextricably linked to the economy, the environment and most importantly, the people.

1.4 It is on the basis of this operating environment that the GRN and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry have formulated the following policy documents and programs amongst others:

- NDP5
- Green Scheme Policy document
- Dry land Crop Production Programme
- National Agriculture Policy
- Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme
- Small Stock Distribution in Communal Areas
1.4.1 **NDP 5**

To achieve the twin objectives of food security and enhancing agro-processing especially through value addition, NDP5 priorities include the following:

(a) **Increase agricultural production**: for both cereals and horticulture by expanding green scheme projects; Agricultural production will be increased by advancing the use of Conservation Agriculture (CA) with at least 50% of farmers practicing CA for both crop and livestock production in the whole or part of their farm land and applying appropriate technologies. Additionally, school and home backyard gardening initiatives will be introduced to enhance food security, nutrition and also promote good agricultural practices.

(b) **Land for agriculture**: An additional 5 536 ha of land for irrigation will be developed over the NDP5 period. By 2022, 88% of Namibians will have Access to Adequate Food All Year Round. By 2022 production of nutritious foods will be increased and consumption of diversified meals will be promoted to reach 60%. Furthermore, 82 200ha of land will be bush thinned annually over the NDP5 period; a bush-based industry will be developed creating a total of 17,600 jobs and 460 enterprises, at least half of which should benefit women. Efforts will be made to increase national food storage capacity from 22 900mt to 39 400mt over the NDP5 period. To increase productivity of subsistence farming use of drought resistance varieties will be promoted; crop rotation; soil enrichment; organic pesticides usage will also be encouraged.
(c) **Initiate Agro-business Development:** Efforts will be made during NDP5 period to mobilize investors to develop agro businesses to take advantage of increased local and regional production. This will include fortification of processed food especially for baby feeds. This will also address the challenge of stunting among children. It is expected that by 2022 stunting among children less than two years old will be reduced from 24.1 to 12.1.

(d) **Increase Smallholder or Communal Farmers Productivity:** During NDP5 the Government will intensify agricultural extension services to smallholder farmers and/or communal farmers by providing information on agricultural practices. This will include information on how communal farmers could organize themselves into cooperatives, access credit and acquire agricultural implements such as tractors. In line with Agenda 2063 the aim is to mechanize agriculture production. This will increase the productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth and reduce wastage of food calories throughout the production value chain from 24% to 13% by end of 2022.

(e) **Extend the Red Line/Veterinary Cordon Fence to the Northern borderlines of Namibia:** During NDP5, Government will make efforts to minimize the impact of FMD and CBPP in NCA by extending cordon fence to the northern borders of Namibia by 2022. Other major activities will include increase enrolment and teaching in veterinary courses at University of Namibia (UNAM) and Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). The development of
a pharmaceutical plant in collaboration with private sector, as also cross border initiatives with neighboring countries will be initiated.

The frequent outbreaks of animal diseases and continuous drought have impacted negatively on the growth performance of the sector during the NDP4 period, contracting it by an average 2.6 percent. Nonetheless sustained efforts have continued to move the country from an exporter of live animals towards greater value addition.

The importance of the sector in addressing food security and livelihood is acknowledged. Therefore, to address the challenges of high import dependence by enhancing productivity, especially of the small scale farmers and simultaneously building resilience to withstand climate related shocks such as persistent drought is an imperative of NDP5.

1.42. Green Scheme National Programme:

The Green Scheme Programme is a GRN National Programme, conducted by and through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry to encourage the development of irrigation based agronomic production, in Namibia, with the aim of increasing the contribution of agriculture to the country’s Gross Domestic Product and to promote food security and food self sufficiency at national and household levels. To date the Government has established about 11 (Etunda, Musese, Sikondo, Uvungu-Vungu, Mashare, Ndonga, Shitemo, Shadikongoro, Kalimebeza, Hardap, ORIP) Green Scheme projects with the total of about 6 000 hectares.
In this regard, the Ministry will continue to promote the Green Scheme Programme and its projects, through the establishment of more projects at Liselo/Katima Farm, Zone, Tandjieskoppe, Bagani, Sesfontein/Khowarib, Neckertal Dam and other places in the Country.

The successful implementation of the Green Scheme Policy represents a real opportunity for Namibia to achieve food self-sufficiency, while improving rural livelihoods, empowering marginalised stakeholders, increasing social equity and promoting investment in the agricultural sector in Namibia.

1.4.3 **Rain-Fed Crop Production Programme (RFCPP)**

The Ministry will continue to promote and implement the Rain-Fed Crop Production Programme to increase food production at the household level, through the provision of subsidized support to crop farmers. This support currently entails the provision of subsidized quality seeds, fertilizers, ploughing and weeding services and marketing outlets. The scheme is complemented by the procurement of cereals from crop farmers by Government through the National Strategic Food Reserve Facilities, commonly known as SILOS.

To date over 30 000 households per annum, have benefited from the programme.
1.4.4 **Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme**

The Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme of Namibia seeks to address and apply all of the *important principles of Conservation Agriculture* (CA) in a *holistic manner*, along with complementary integrated crop, nutrient, water, pest, labour and energy management. CA is founded on the need to improve soil conservation and reduce soil erosion and associated degradation in cropping systems while at the same time conserving resources and maintaining or enhancing crop yields.

To date the Ministry has successfully mobilized external recourses (N$45mil) from GIZ, SCORE, NAFOLA, FAO and CAN to complement MAWF’s efforts in implementing CA. In this regard the Ministry has established 10 Regional CA Forums in Kunene, Omusati, Otjozondjupa, Zambezi, Kavango East, Kavango West, Omaheke, Ohangwena, Oshana, and Oshikoto. Two hundred and twenty seven (227) Lead farmers were identified and capacitated. A total of three hundred and ninety eight (398) farmers were trained in CA practices through workshops, demonstration and field days. In addition a total of Seventy (70) farmers are practicing CA.

Furthermore the Ministry has developed CA training manual for farmers and extension staff, and developed standards and guidelines for CA Monitoring and Evaluation initiated based on international FAO guidelines. A variety of CA equipment, including
tractors, implements and tools were procured with the assistance of our stakeholders.

1.4.5 **Small Stock Distribution in Communal Areas**

The Small Stock Distribution and Development project is a new initiative, which is being undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry in the Communal Areas of Namibia, aimed at providing quality core breeding flock of suitable local and boer goats to selected vulnerable households, to gain a sustainable means of income generation and food supply. To date the project has distributed over 1260 goats to 60 beneficiaries in Kunene, Oshana and Kavango West regions. The Ministry is planning to distribute a further 1260 small stock in the following regions; Zambezi, Kavango East, and Ohangwena.

1.5 **STRATEGIC FOOD RESERVE FACILITIES**

In order to counter the threat of food shortages at national level, the Government of Namibia has constructed its own strategic food reserves with the aim of storing grain procured from local producers or sourced elsewhere, in cases when local producers are unable to supply. In this regard silos where constructed at Katima Mulilo (7400 T) in the Zambezi Region and Rundu (4000T) in the Kavango Region, Omuthiya (4000T) in Oshikoto Region, Okongo (4500T) in Ohangwena Region, and Tsandi (3000T) in Omusati Region. The total capacity of these silos are 22 900T. The Ministry is planning to construct more silos in future at Grootfontein, with a total capacity of 6000 tonnes and
expand the existing capacity of the Rundu silos from 4000 tonnes to 20 000 tonnes.

1.6 **FRESH PRODUCE BUSINESS HUBS**

In order to improve the marketing of domestically produced horticultural products, the Ministry has constructed cold storage facilities at Rundu in the Kavango East Region, Ongwediva in Oshana Region and another one is under construction in Windhoek in the Khomas Region. The Government of the Republic of Namibia has established the Fresh Produce Business Hubs to provide a marketing and trading platform, for both horticultural producers and traders. The fresh produce business hubs are meant to handle vast volumes of fresh produce and would serve as a critical link between the retail industry and the producers. In addition, the hubs are supposed to generate marketing, packaging, transportation, distribution and retailing business opportunities.

1.7 **LEGAL FRAMEWORKS**

The Ministry has launched the Namibian National Strategic Action Plan for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2016-2026 and launched the National Rangeland Management Policy and Strategy

1.8 **DEVELOPMENT OF NEW IMPROVED CROP VARIETIES**

Through the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, IAEA/FAO Joint Project, a mutation breeding programme that involved 150 cowpea, 50 pearl millet and 50 sorghum mutant lines, which has resulted in the selection of promising 21 cowpea, 18 pearl millet
and 18 sorghum drought tolerant, high yielding and early maturing mutant lines, which are currently under field screening and evaluation is being implemented. Out of these, a minimum of three (3) per crop variety will be selected by farmers, for official release as new varieties, during 2017/2018 financial year. In the past five years, the Ministry produced 757tons of certified seed respectively, for distribution to crop growing farmers. Furthermore, the Ministry is conducting research to develop pearl millet varieties resistant to bird damage.

1.9 **RANGELAND RESEARCH**

The Ministry through rangeland surveys has produced a map on southern bush encroachment in the southern parts of Namibia. This will serve as a guide to determine the potential grazing potential capacity. In addition, the Ministry has completed a Grazing Capacity map, based on prediction of plant biomass in a regression model with rainfall as the independent variable and corrected with existing bush encroachment data.

1.10 **VALUE ADDITION AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

In its effort to add value to indigenous plants and Mahangu the Ministry has developed recipes for baking Mahangu cookies that enabled commercialization thereof.
1.11 **CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PLANT AND ANIMAL GENETIC MATERIAL**

The Ministry launched the Namibian National Strategic Action Plan for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2016-2026 during the 2016 African Drought Conference, which was held in Windhoek, to ensure the conservation of plant genetic resources for current and future use. In order to mitigate the effects of climate change, the Ministry has also successfully maintained the conservation of 24 livestock breeds/types and 332 accessions were collected, 22 accessions multiplied, and 15 accessions characterized.

1.12 **CAPACITY BUILDING**

In an effort to address the critical shortage of technical skilled labour force in the agricultural sector, the Ministry commenced with the implementation of Vocational Education Training programme in agriculture in August 2016 at TAZAC with its first intake of 15 trainees (ten males and five females) in line with the Harambee Prosperity Plan and NDP5. The MAWF has also financially assisted 137 Namibians (MAWF staff and non-staff) for studies in scarce identified professions such as Veterinary Medicine, Agricultural Engineering, Entomology; Plant Pathology amongst others thereby enabling it to fill critical vacant posts in these areas.
1.13 **AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**

The Ministry has published five (5) articles in international journals on the following subjects:

- “Radio-sensitivity of Selected Cowpea (*Vigna Unguiculata*) Genotypes To Varying Gamma Irradiation Doses” in the *Scientific Research and Essays*;
- “Participatory Appraisal of Production Constraints, Preferred Traits and Farming System of Cowpea in the Northern Namibia: Implications for Breeding” in the *Legume Research International Journal*;
- “Selection of Novel Cowpea Genotypes Derived through Gamma Irradiation” in the *Frontiers in Plant Science Journal*;
- Indigenous Knowledge and Identification of Alternative Local Feed Resources as Potential Feed for Goats in the Communal Farming Areas of Namibia in *Livestock Research for Rural Development Journal*; and

1.14 **SUPPORT SCHEMES**

In an effort to promote the strategic Swakara Industry, the Ministry capacitated 31 Swakara farmers in Swakara sheep husbandry. The Ministry also provided 160 Swakara Sheep (155 ewes and 5 rams) to 20 Erongo Region communal farmers through the office of the Regional Governor. A total number of 4447 mushroom spores distributed to mushroom farmers across the country while 14 338 seven (7) day-old chicks were distributed to 561 beneficiaries.
I conclude my statement with **FOUR (4)** quotations:

(a) **2008 GREEN SCHEME POLICY DOCUMENT:**
“The revised Policy defines specific farming structures, based on Public-Private Partnership (PPP), with regard to the State developed agro-projects, and it is hoped that through such a model, Namibia will see an increased synergy between Government and the Private Sector for investment in Agro-Projects,” (page ii).

(b) **VISION 2030 MAIN DOCUMENT:**
“The major challenge of this Vision is for all of us (Government, private sector, civil society, as well as individuals) to make a determined effort, to concentrate on resolving, not just addressing, very important national problems. Successful implementation of the VISION would require the existence of a conducive enabling environment, which guarantees peace and political stability. Our emphasis will also be on good governance. We should continue to improve on issues relating to equity, in terms of access to productive resources, including land, environmental degradation, growing poverty and economic stagnation,” (page 11).

(c) **2017 FAO REPORT: “THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES.”**

“The purpose of this report is NOT to present a menu of solutions, but rather to increase understanding of the nature of the challenges that Agriculture, rural development and food systems are facing now and will
be facing into the 21st Century. Our clear message that emerges is that ‘business-as-usual’ is not an option. Major transformations of agricultural systems, rural economies and natural resources management will be needed, if we are to meet the multiple resource management will be needed, if we are to meet the multiple challenges before us and realize the full potential of food and agriculture, to ensure a secure and healthy future for all people and the entire planet,” (page 7).

(d) HARAMBEE PROSPERITY PLAN (HPP) DOCUMENT

“Climate change is a reality of our time. Although the degree of contribution to global warming varies, Namibia has committed to reducing Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, because our planet is at stake. Namibia fully supports the goals of COP21. That is why Namibia will pursue an energy mix that will predominantly comprise of renewables during the Harambee period. The International Community is called upon to support Namibia to finance renewable energy initiative.”

1.16. Thank you very much!