

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**KEY NOTE ADDRESS
BY HON. ALPHEUS G. !NARUSEB
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY
AT THE OCCATION OF THE MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY,
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

**7TH JUNE 2019, WINDHOEK COUNTRY CLUB, WINDHOEK,
NAMIBIA**

- **Director of Ceremony**
- **Honorable Ministers**
- **Honorable Deputy Ministers**
- **Deputy Executive Secretary of SADC**
- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Senior Government Officials FROM SADC Member States**
- **Director of FANR**
- **Senior SADC Officials**
- **Officials from the SADC Secretariat**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Distinguished invited Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased and honoured to address you on this very important Joint Meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Water, Fisheries and Aquaculture, which is being held under the theme: **“Promoting Infrastructure Development and Empowerment of Youth for Sustainable Development”**. We are meeting at a time when the region has just experienced two serious climate related calamities. The 2018/2019-rainfall season, which ended recently has concomitantly presented climate related disasters in the form of drought, on the one hand, and floods

caused by Tropical cyclones, namely, Idai, Enawo and Kenneth on the other hand.

These events left the region in a humanitarian situation with many people having lost their lives in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe due to cyclones Idai and Kenneth. In addition, the El Niño induced drought, which is being experienced in many Member States, including Namibia, has resulted in crop failures, water shortages and poor grazing. As a consequence, many Member States declared disaster emergency.

In the case of Namibia, His Excellency Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia did not only declare drought but he also declared a State of Emergency. These declarations by member states show the severity of the drought situation in the Region, which prompted our governments to take immediate emergency disaster response measures in order to save human lives and livestock.

Furthermore, it has been confirmed that the cyclones that struck the region killed over 1000 people, injured an estimated 3000 people, destroyed houses and production infrastructure, and also damaged an estimated 800 000 hectares of agriculture land. At this

juncture I would therefore like to convey our sincere condolences and reiterate our moral support to the governments and people of the affected Member States.

May I now invite you all to rise to observe a minute of silence in honor of those who have lost their lives as a result of the natural calamities that I referred to earlier.

Hon. Ministers

Your Excellencies

As you are well aware, about 70 % of the population in the SADC Region depends on agriculture, for their livelihood, which in turn hinges on adequate, timely and well-distributed rainfall. The fact that the bulk of crop production in the region depend on rainfed agriculture, makes our region vulnerable to adverse climatic conditions, a situation that call upon us to put policies and strategies in place in order to reduce and mitigate the impact of drought and floods, and to make the agriculture and fisheries sectors in the region more resilient to adverse climatic conditions.

In this regard, it is important for us as Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture in the

SADC region to ensure that the decisions that we have taken are effectively and practically implemented on the ground. In addition, it is also imperative that our officials devise and implement strategies that will enhance our preparedness to respond timely and effectively to the effects of the increasingly volatile climatic conditions. To this effect, we should continue to formulate and implement policies that support and promote climate smart agriculture, such as Conservation agriculture, and the use of improved seeds. Such policies and strategies will not only enable us to achieve regional Food Security Objectives and targets, but will also put us in a position to contribute towards the attainment of the Continental Goals that are stipulated in Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and those of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programmes, as well as, to the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations.

Therefore, in our deliberation, we should ensure that solutions are found to address food security challenges that are currently facing the region. We should particularly focus on rural investment, infrastructure development and appropriate technologies to reduce the long-term effects of climate variability and climate change on food security, through the provision of incentives that will motivate farmers to adopt better agricultural technics and practices

and encourage aquaculture development. In addition, we need to strengthen our national and strategic grain reserve facility

Honourable Ministers

I am informed that this meeting will discuss a number of items, among others the regional food security situation, trans-boundary animal diseases, harmonized seed regulatory system, implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy, fisheries and aquaculture as well as the blue economy strategy.

While deliberating on these items, it is therefore; important to highlight that it will not be sufficient for us to take good decisions and to formulate good policies if these decisions and policies are not practically implemented for the benefit of our people. In addition, the implementation of this decisions and policies is only possible if all Member States commit themselves to honor their obligations towards the implementation of the regional programmes and initiatives. It is only through our timely contribution and the effective implementation programmes and initiatives that the Region will be able to feed the estimated 30 million people who currently food insecure in our region, and to take the SADC agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture Development programme forward.

I am mindful of the fact that the region has been experiencing economic head winds. However, I would still like to humbly request all Member States to make effort where possible to avail resources for the implementations of our regional programmes in order for us to address food insecurity, poverty and unemployment, particularly among the youth.

With these words, I look forward to productive and successful deliberations

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I thank you!