Message from FAO Representative in Namibia

2018 has been a very packed and eventful year for FAO-Namibia: it marked (more or less) the start of my assignment as FAO Representative to the country – with all that comes with that, at a professional and personal level: presenting letters of credence; a seemingly endless round of courtesy calls on partners; completing assignment briefings in HQ and the Sub-regional Office; finding and moving into a new place and just getting used to the office, the country, the new environment and work in general! It has definitely been a hectic, but deeply rewarding experience for me personally and for the FAO Namibia Team.

We have managed to achieve a number of notable landmarks – we prepared our new CPF for 2019-2023; remained engaged with our key stakeholders and ensured FAO relevance on the national stage through participating in and (sometimes leading) key events on the national calendar. In addition, as we navigate the choppy waters of supporting a middle-income country going through economic challenges, we are working on developing a strong programme – more on that in ensuing issues...

In-house in November we welcomed a key new staff member, the Assistant FAO Representative (Programme); while maintaining the capacity of the office. In all this, we have had unstinting support from all levels of the Organization, the UN Namibia family and, of course, our partners in Government and beyond.

I am truly excited to be launching this first issue of our newsletter, which will become quarterly in 2019.

As we navigate the choppy waters of supporting a middle-income country going through economic challenges, we are working on developing a strong programme”

- Ms. Farayi Zimudzi, FAO Representative
Interview with the incoming Assistant FAO Representative (Programme)

FAONA: Tell us a little about yourself? I am an Environmental and Fisheries professional with a combined nine (9) years of experience in the private and public sectors in Namibia. My educational background includes a Masters of Philosophy in Environmental Management from the University of Stellenbosch, a Bachelor of Science Honours in Biodiversity and Conservation Biology from the University of the Western Cape and a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources (Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences) from the University of Namibia.

FAONA: How do you feel about joining FAO and how do you find the new assignment? The new position is exciting, and I am grateful for this great opportunity to be working at FAO, a specialized Agency of the United Nations. The feeling about the position thus far is overwhelming and exhilarating, I am learning about how FAO operates, aiming to settle in as fast as possible while at the same time, fulfilling my work requirements. This position has already provided me with opportunity to interact with professionals in other FAO departments globally, who provide technical support so that we deliver the FAO mandate effectively and efficiently. Working as a team with international experts in fisheries, agriculture and forestry, and interacting with them almost on a daily basis is exceptional and makes me feel that at FAO, no one is working alone, and it does not matter where you are working from.

During my fourth week at FAO, I had the opportunity to participate in the FAO Namibia staff retreat held at Sun Karros Resort, Dan Viljoen. Although I am new to the team, no challenges were posed in terms of participating in team activities, but rather it was an opportunity to interact with professionals in other FAO departments globally, who provide technical support so that we deliver the FAO mandate effectively and efficiently. Working as a team with international experts in fisheries, agriculture and forestry, and interacting with them almost on a daily basis is exceptional and makes me feel that at FAO, no one is working alone, and it does not matter where you are working from.

The CPF was informed and recognized that Namibia’s mid-term developmental aspirations, which are espoused in the fifth National Development Plan (NDPS) document. It is also aligned to the Harambee Prosperity Plan, which is Government’s acceleration plan that sets out national level priorities of the current political leadership. The new CPF also took into consideration the aspirations of the:

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF),
2. Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET),
3. Ministry of Finance (MoF),
4. Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR),
5. Ministry of Land Reform (MoLR),
6. Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MPESW)

The total resources required to implement this CPF amount to USD 10 728 500 of which USD 1 528 500 (15%) is available; while USD 9 200 000 (85%) will need to be mobilized. It is envisaged that USD 1 250 000 of the required resources will be from FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme. About USD 1 400 000 of the amount to be mobilized will be derived from South-South Cooperation. A total of USD 6 150 000 will need to be mobilized through voluntary contributions.

The new position is exciting, and I am grateful for this great opportunity to be working at FAO, a specialized Agency of the United Nations. The feeling about the position thus far is overwhelming and exhilarating, I am learning about how FAO operates, aiming to settle in as fast as possible while at the same time, fulfilling my work requirements. This position has already provided me with opportunity to interact with professionals in other FAO departments globally, who provide technical support so that we deliver the FAO mandate effectively and efficiently. Working as a team with international experts in fisheries, agriculture and forestry, and interacting with them almost on a daily basis is exceptional and makes me feel that at FAO, no one is working alone, and it does not matter where you are working from.

Despite the challenges of being an upper middle income country, FAO Namibia is on a resource mobilization drive to fund the CPF, through exploring partnerships with the Government of Namibia itself; as well as other funding opportunities such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF); the Green Climate Fund (GCF); the Adaptation Fund; regional projects; as well as partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs).
Developing sustainable food systems and value chains in Africa

As food systems thinking becomes central to FAO’s work, there is a need to develop a clear framework to guide projects and policy recommendations, and to provide greater internal consistency of FAO’s work. The sustainable food systems (SFS) approach allows us to assess the big picture. Rather than focusing on isolated components of a system, it facilitates a holistic understanding of their interactions, feedback loops and how they, together, affect systems dynamics. Adopting a systems thinking can bring about significant improvements to our work in terms of project design and cooperation.

A five (5) day course primarily targeting FAO technical staff in regional, sub-regional and country offices actively engaged in value chain related projects was held in Windhoek on 22-26 October 2018. The training was attended by FAO personnel from 13 country offices, HQ, RAF, SFE and SFS. The training comprised presentation of concepts, group exercises and visits to two enterprises involved in the beef value chain in Namibia. Similar trainings have been undertaken in other regions (HQ Bangkok (RAP), Bridgetown (RLC) and Budapest (REU)).

The training was designed as a Trainer of Trainer (ToT), and trainees were encouraged to train other FAO staff and project stakeholders using an abridged form of the training course. The main objectives of the training were to:

- Promote food systems thinking within FAO
- Operationalize food systems thinking through the sustainable food value chains development approach
- Advocate for integrated solutions and better-aligned programs across technical disciplines

Following the training, participants were invited to join the Technical Network and Knowledge Platform on Sustainable Food Value Chain Development. These online communities of practice will enable participants to continue the food systems- and value chains-related discussion beyond the training. Through multiple structures such as webinars, newsletters, online discussions, and networking platforms, members will benefit from a unique space to exchange knowledge, information and experience, as well as stay updated on the latest value chain topics.

Did you know?

Food value chains play a crucial role in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 2 and 12.

Commemoration of World Food Day

In keeping with global practice, the Representation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Namibia supported the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) to host the 2018 World Food Day (WFD) commemoration on 30 October 2018. As the current SADC chair, Namibia implemented the new regional approach to WFD observances that were piloted by South Africa (the immediate past chair) and adopted by the SADC Ministers of Agriculture in 2017. It is therefore against this background that Namibia hosted their first ever Regional WFD commemoration on 30 October 2018 in Bunya Village, Kapako Constituency in Kavango West Region. This global annual observance, celebrates the founding of the FAO and its commitment to end hunger.

The theme for 2018 was “Our actions are our future: a Zero Hunger world by 2030 is possible”. The theme highlighted the crucial role each and every individual across the continent and the globe can play in the fight against hunger, noting that all climate action decisions made today can impact the future.

The event was attended by:
- Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb, the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, who spoke on behalf of the guest of honour, the Vice President of Namibia, H.E. Nangolo Mbumba;
- The South African Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Hon. Senzeni Zokwana;
- The FAO Representative in Namibia, Ms. Farayi Zimudzi, who delivered the Director-General’s remarks;
- The WFP Country Director in Namibia, Mr Bai Mankay Sankoh;
- The Head of SADC Food and Natural Resources (FANR) Sector, Dr Gove
- The Ambassadors of Zambia and Zimbabwe to Namibia – H.E. Ms Stella Libongani and H.E. Ms Rofina Chikava, respectively.
- Senior government officials, traditional leaders, community members and a number of private sector companies.

Key activities included:
- Planting of fruit trees to promote dietary diversity;
- Remarks highlighting the importance food security issues from a global, sub-regional and national perspective;
- Provision of agricultural inputs to 200 vulnerable beneficiary households;
- Provision of foodstuffs from the “food mountain” to vulnerable households;
- Displays showcasing some of the agricultural produce from smallholder farmers from the host region; from SADC RVAA; from MAWF (tractors and agricultural implements) and from private companies involved in food processing and marketing.

In the run-up period to the event, the Permanent Secretary of MAWF, Mr Percy Misika and the FAO Representative, had appeared on national television to raise awareness of WFD and the issues of food security in the country.

The community in Bunya Village, Kapako Constituency in Kavango West Region learned about how everyone’s actions play a role in achieving Zero Hunger.
FAO-Namibia sponsored a floating trophy for the Best Overall Student in the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, (FANR) held on 11 November 2018 at the University of Namibia (UNAM)’s Neudamm Campus, 30 km east of Windhoek.

The FAO Representative, Ms. Farayi Zimudzi presented the trophy during the event, and in her remarks she indicated that: “by endowing this trophy, we are signaling FAO’s commitment to developing the capacities of Namibian youth to participate meaningfully in the country’s development. It is my Organization’s desire that the graduates of this esteemed institution of higher learning earn sustainable and profitable livelihoods in agriculture.”

The award ceremony was to motivate students to perform better, and to encourage them to succeed in their studies, and upon completion, contribute meaningfully to successful development of the agricultural sector and the nation at large.

The Dean at the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Simon Nangombe in his welcoming remarks, stated that the FANR believes that good education plays a crucial role in ensuring a bright-future for students. Therefore, the FANR commit itself to providing a conducive and an enabling atmosphere to students to ensure that they all can imbibe good values and learn new things every day.

At the event, the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Prof Frednard Gideon reiterated on the vision and mission of the University by saying, “Our core values of Professionalism, Mutual Respect, Integrity, Transparency, Equity and Accountability are the foundation for our commitment to help [the students] grow personally, intellectually, professionally, and culturally.”

FAO participated in the second Food Namibia Expo and Conference hosted in Rundu, Kavango East Region from 4-8 September 2018 under the auspices of Operation Werengendje and Food Namibia. Operation Werengendje is a flagship programme of the Governor of the Region, Hon. Samuel Mbambo, to promote agricultural production in the Region through stakeholder engagement and investment. The Expo was celebrated under the theme “Food Security for a Healthy Nation”.

The Expo brought together various stakeholders including government actors as well as representatives from the food and agricultural production industries to discuss issues related to agriculture and sustainable food production in Namibia. Among the issues discussed, were: agriculture and food production sustainability, promotion of cooperatives, community and school gardening as well as market and financial sustainability and accessibility, post-harvest production and value addition.

FAO had a stall to display publications and was able to engage with visitors to the stall; and in the process, communicated key messages on food security.
In view of the importance of livestock production to Namibia, animal diseases control is a major preoccupation of the country’s State Veterinary Services. This entails substantial socio-economic costs, especially in the context of poverty alleviation and development objectives. In particular, the occurrence of trade-sensitive diseases such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) have had extensive socio-economic impacts, which have resulted in significant and costly control efforts with varying results.

Despite routine vaccination, there have been seven outbreaks in the infected zones between 2002 and 2015. On that basis, and given the high costs of vaccines and the dependency on the sole manufacturer of FMD vaccines in SADC, FAO provided technical assistance to the MAWF to enable them to conduct a feasibility study FMD on vaccine production in Namibia. This culminated in a two-day stakeholder consultative workshop, held on 17 and 18 May 2018 to discuss key findings and deliberate on the road map to vaccine production. In keeping with the aspirations of SDG 12 “Responsible Consumption and Production”, through this intervention FAO continued to promote best practices aimed at making animal production efficient and sustainable while protecting public health and ensuring safe trade.

In the recent years, Namibia recorded notable human deaths due to Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF), mainly emanating from people contracting the disease through coming in contact with animals that were carriers of the disease or from a tick bite.

Congo fever is a highly contagious disease transmitted through tick bites to people. The disease can be life-threatening and if it is not diagnosed on time, a person may die. The disease is transmitted by a tick belonging to the Hyaloma species. It can also be transmitted through handling of infected blood or tissue of livestock and wildlife or by coming in contact with a person who already has the disease.

Following the series of CCHF outbreaks in Namibia, and upon request from MAWF, FAO partnered with MAWF to support the Ministry’s efforts to control and minimize future outbreaks through developing and distributing awareness raising pamphlets as well as translated radio-based messages.

Quick Facts: Food-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)
Source: Foot-and-Mouth Disease Frequently Asked Questions (FAO)

What is it? Foot-and-mouth disease is a devastating animal disease affecting all cloven-hoofed animals, both domestic and wild species. The viruses that cause FMD are among the most infectious agents known to veterinary or human medicine.

What animals are affected? FMD affects cattle, buffalo, pigs, sheep, goats and various wildlife species. Foot-and-mouth disease does not affect humans.

What happens to the animals? Animals affected by FMD develop liquid-filled blisters on their feet, tongue, in and around the mouth, nose or snout, and on the teats. The blisters may rupture, leaving raw, tender skin exposed. Pain and discomfort from the lesions lead to depression, loss of appetite, weight loss, and lameness, with animals unwilling to move or even to rise to their feet.

What can be done to control FMD? Vaccination is an important tool used in controlling FMD in many parts of the world. Additional measures are essential to prevent virus transmission
Despite recurrent droughts that have plagued Namibia in recent years, Cecilia Amutenya and her six children still have surplus food, mainly sourced from their 5-hectare dwelling in Northern Namibia’s Omusati Region. “I got plenty of food from my field this year, and I still have enough to take me through the dry season,” she says with a smile.

Namibia is regarded as the country with the driest climate in Sub-Saharan Africa: only eight percent of the country receives more than 500 mm mean annual rainfall (MAR). In fact, MAR ranges from less than 20 mm on the Atlantic coast to over 600 mm in the northeast. All inland rivers are ephemeral – thus limiting irrigation prospects. Drought is a common occurrence in Namibia and inherently poor soils limit crop yields and production. The north-central regions, where the majority of the population lives, receives a mean annual rainfall of approximately 270 mm.

Cecilia first heard of Conservation Agriculture (CA) when she attended a Farmers’ Field Day at Omahenene Research Station organized by MAWF in partnership with FAO through the European Union funded project that is working to “Strengthen the capacity of 45 000 small-scale farmers to manage climate-related risks in Northern Namibia”. After the field day, she continued to receive training on CA through MAWF extension officers with technical backstopping from the Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU) and FAO.

CA is a way of managing agro-ecosystems aiming to improve productivity while preserving the environment. It is based on three interlinked principles: minimal soil disturbance, permanent soil cover and crop rotation. Tillage is reduced to an absolute minimum. Agrochemicals and plant nutrients are applied in quantities that do not interfere with biological processes, leading to better soil quality and ultimately resulting in healthier crops. Cecilia applied a combination of manure and chemical fertilizer in her field which she obtained from the project and MAWF, respectively.

Emily Shipateko, is an Agricultural Extension Technician who has been working with Cecilia and other farmers in the Onkani village. On a regular basis during the peak cropping season, Emily visits the farmers, giving them hands-on training and advice on their fields. Emily testifies to Cecilia’s hard work and how the practice of CA has changed her fortunes. “I have been working with her for two years, she is a hard working person, and has extended her field this year from 4 to 5 hectares. Since starting practicing CA the farm yield has increased and she is getting more from the same area”.

Contrary to the popular belief that CA is labor intensive, Emily tries to encourage the farmers to view it positively. “I don’t think CA is labor intensive because all you have to do when you cultivate is follow the lines. The grass that is in between the lines is left as it is, and the soil is not disturbed,” she says.

The practice of CA in the area of Omusati Region has shown evident improvement in the livelihoods of farmers like Cecilia, who maintains that she is not poor – thanks to CA. “Agriculture is not for poor people. In fact, if you are into agriculture you will be well-off because when you sell something you get money for your pocket and that’s what I do,” she says.

Cecilia says most of her peers have often discouraged her, asking her why she cultivates the whole field when she is alone. “I just try my best; I know what I am going to get when I harvest.” Cecilia maintains that even for a woman, land preparation and cultivating are easy. “There is no difference between man and women when it comes to CA implements,” she says, “everything is straightforward. As long as you believe in yourself, you can do it”.

Complemented by other Good Agriculture Practices, including the use of quality seeds, and integrated pest, nutrient, weed and water management; as well as the use of sustainable mechanization approaches, CA can serve as a basis for market-driven and sustainable intensification of agricultural production.
The Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) that entered into force in June 2016 is the first binding international agreement that specifically targets illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Given the importance of PSMA in protecting fishery resources – which are a major contributor to the national economy – Namibia became a Party to the PSMA on 17 August 2017. The PSMA lays down a minimum set of standard measures for Port States to apply when foreign registered vessels seek entry into the ports or while they are in the ports for services such as landing or trans-shipping fishery catches.

After ratification of the PSMA, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) was supported by FAO to conduct a needs assessment of Namibia’s capacity to implement the PSMA, complementary instruments and regional mechanisms. The needs assessment provided the basis for a draft National Strategy and Action Plan that FAO developed to support Namibia’s gradual transition to implementing the PSMA. This was done through a consultative national workshop which was held in Swakopmund, Namibia from 28 May to 1 June 2018 and attended by representatives from several Namibian government agencies.

A review of policy, legal and operational frameworks was conducted, and discussions during the workshop identified several strengths within Namibia including strong political will to detect, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and a history of successful monitoring control and surveillance (MCS) actions against IUU fishing operators. As a Party to the PSMA, Namibia has demonstrated political will to ensure strong Port State measures are implemented and build on the Port State Measures already in operation including those required by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to which Namibia is party.

On Tuesday, 27 March 2018, the MAWF, in collaboration with FAO and other stakeholders commemorated three important days on Namibia’s natural resources management calendar:

- International Day of Forests, celebrated on 21 March every year was celebrated under the theme, “Forest and Sustainable Cities – Let’s make our city greener, healthier, happier place to live”.
- World Water Day, an UN Observe was celebrated on 22 March under the theme, “Nature for Water – exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges we face in the 21st century”.
- World Wetlands Day which is celebrated on 2 February each year – marking the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands, – was celebrated under the theme “Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future”.

In her speech, FAO Representative to Namibia Ms. Farayi Zimudzi highlighted the importance of forests to livelihoods, “Forests cover about one third of the earth’s land surface, performing vital functions that sustains life and livelihoods around the world. It is estimated that around 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests for their livelihoods, medicine, fuel, food and shelter. Forests also have the most biologically diverse ecosystems on land, as they are home to more than 80% of the terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects”.

Agriculture Minister, Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb in a speech read on his behalf by Deputy Permanent Secretary Mr. Abraham Nehemia talked about the importance of the three special days to make the public more aware about the importance of forests, water and wetlands in their everyday lives. “The statements, ‘No Water No Future’ and ‘Water is Life’, allude to the fact that a lack of water means no future and no life anywhere in the world, including Namibia. As we look at the theme of ‘Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future’ there is a need to recognize the vital role of wetlands for the future of humanity and specifically their relevance towards achieving the new Sustainable Development Goals. The International Day of Forests is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of all types of forests and trees to our economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. Forests and trees store carbon, which helps regulate the climate thus mitigating the impacts of climate change in and around urban areas.”

The event provided a platform for stakeholders in the forestry sector to present the importance of water, plants and challenges faced in the country while highlighting the activities that are being carried out by various partners to address the issues. During the commemoration, Water Marshalls from different public institutions were awarded certificates after they had been trained on water management measures including leak identification, water meter reading, and water consumption determination that contributes to reducing water wastage and saving government billions of dollars in water bills.

The celebration of the International Day of Forests, Water and Wetlands was concluded with a symbolic tree planting exercise in the UN Plaza Park where the event took place.
Snapshots of the Year

Project funded by FAO in Opuwo.

FAOR delivering a statement during the World Water Day celebration.

FAOR visiting a project in Tsumeb.

Mr. Gift Kamupingene, National Project Coordinator during a field visit.

FAOR visiting Mannheim Agricultural Research Station.

Mr. Eugene Kanguatjivi, National Project Coordinator, participating in a meeting.

Farmers implementing Conservation Agriculture techniques.

FAO Namibia is committed to achieving the SDGs.
Mr. Patrick Kormawa the FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator for Southern Africa (SFS) and FAO Representative in Zimbabwe, visited Namibia and he had a chance to meet with FAO Namibia staff for the very first time.

Group photo of the participants at the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) Validation meeting. Mr. Herve Ouedraogo of @FAOGhana participated in the validation meeting as well.

"@FAO is active in mobilizing resources and providing technical support to address issues related to climate change (including droughts) and the challenges it poses on agricultural production &livelihoods. " Said FAOR @FarayiZimudzi during the Food Conf. & Expo Post Event Report.

The FAO Representative, @FarayiZimudzi with the Speaker of National Assembly, Professor Peter Katjavivi.

We also visited the Katutura Old Age Home as part of our #UNDay celebrations. The @UNNamibia team shared information about the UN, planted mango trees and socialised with residents & listened to their inspiring stories. #ClimateAction #LeaveNoOneBehind

The @WFP is a key participant in the World Food Day celebration. Mr. Bai Mankay Sankoh, World Food Programme Representative in Namibia planting a fruit tree during celebration of #WFD2018

Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence

Contact us:
FAO Representation in Namibia
38-44 Stein Street, UN House, 2nd Floor, Klein Windhoek
Tel: +264 61 224094 Email: FAO-NA@fao.org www.fao.org/namibia @FAONamibia