

**Statement delivered by  
The Honourable Alpheus !Naruseb  
Minister for Agriculture, Water and Forestry of the Republic of Namibia  
on the occasion of the  
41<sup>st</sup> Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy (22-29 June 2019)  
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I beg to indulge to stick to the protocol that is established.

Firstly, allow me to join the previous speakers in congratulating you Mr Chairman, for your election to preside over the proceedings of this Conference.

Secondly, allow me to congratulate the incoming Director-General for being elected to lead this organization. We are looking forward as Namibia to working with him and we pledge our cooperation and support.

Let me equally thank the outgoing Director-General for his excellent work and for the visionary leadership that he provided to the organization during his tenure.

This Conference is being held along the theme 'Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development'. A theme that is indeed defeating given the current high levels of migration and its impact on agriculture and rural development. According to existing statistics, in 2017, there were 258 million international migrants, of which 68.5 million people were forcefully displaced by conflict, while 23.5 million were displaced by climate related disasters.

The power to reduce forced migration, end climate induced migration, related disasters is in our hands. All that is needed is political will, resources and proper planning. Experts are cautioning us that migration is a complex and dynamic phenomenon which can present challenges and opportunities. This means that in our search for solutions to migration, we should focus on the implementation of policies and strategies which maximize the benefits of migration and simultaneously concentrate on the implementation of those policies that minimize the drivers of migration. It has been proven that migration has the potential to play a critical role in agriculture and rural development. Our Government should therefore tap into and exploit this potential for the benefit of sustainable agriculture, and rural development. This will in turn contribute to the reduction of involuntary migration of people from rural areas.

Implementing a combination of policies and strategies at different points along the dynamic spectrum of migration will not only fast track the realization of the aspirations of New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants and the achievement of the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration, but will also compliment the implementation, enhance the impact of our policies and programs on the promotion of sustainable agriculture and rural development. We should therefore embrace the web of FAO on migration to achieve this objective.

Mr Chairman,  
Excellencies,

We are meeting at a time when global statistics show that the number of hungry people in the world continues to be high with 821 million people under-nourished and 130 million people experiencing acute hunger and require urgent emergency assistance. It is also documented that conflict and climate change related disasters are the main contributors to food insecurity and hunger. This harsh reality is evident in our sub region where countries including Namibia, just experience El Niño induced droughts while others experience devastating floods and extreme weather conditions caused by cyclones, like Idai and Kenneth. The effects of the two cyclones resulted in the death of over 1,000 people and the overwhelming

destruction of agricultural and other economic infrastructures. Furthermore, the combined impact of the cyclones, floods and drought left 30 million people food insecure.

The frequent occurrence of these climate change related disasters is an indication that our journey towards the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the attainment of which goals will be protracted and full hurdles. That is critically slowing down our pace towards the achievement of SDG2 and related goals. You will agree with me that the solutions that are required to end conflict and reduce the impact of climate change and conflict on agriculture and food security are within our reach.

We should therefore triple our efforts to end conflict and accelerate the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Climate Change. Namibia continues to implement climate friendly policies and programs in this regard. We have been implementing climate smart agriculture initiatives with the assistance of FAO. In addition we have jointly with the FAO, developed a new country programming framework which has recently been launched. Under this new project, Namibia is seeking FAO assistance in developing a disaster risk management strategy for agriculture. Once implemented this strategy is expected to build resilience in agriculture, particularly in rural areas, where the majority of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Allow me therefore to, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia to express our gratitude to FAO for the support provided to Namibia in general, but in particular, the recent financial in kind contribution that FAO made towards our current drought relief program.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that Namibia remains committed to timely honor its obligation towards the FAO budget.

Thank you.