



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

AT THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUTRITION (ICN2)

Your Royal Highness, Your Majesty The King of Lesotho

Your Excellency Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania

Honourable Ministers

Your Excellency the Director General of FAO

Your Excellency the Director General of WHO

Your Excellency's, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is well known that good nutrition is a basic building block of human capital and, as such, contributes to economic development.

As we enter the post 2015 agenda, Namibia has shown slight improvements in nutrition: the number of children under 5 years who are stunted has decreased from one in three to one in four children over the past 8 years. The number of children being exclusively breastfed has increased from 24 to 48 per cent between 2006 and 2013 due to the scaling up of infant and young child feeding counselling to all health facilities and community health workers and volunteers.

One of our key achievements this year has been an infant and young child feeding and caring practices study undertaken in all 14 regions, to support evidence based planning for scaling up nutrition. This study will provide information about what caregivers are feeding their children, why those foods are chosen and what else is available locally in the community that could potentially enrich complementary foods. The preliminary study results already point to potential opportunities for maximising the messages about ideal infant feeding practices. The influence of health workers has been shown to be very strong and therefore improving the inter-personal communication skills of health workers and equipping them with educational and counselling tools might see future increases in breastfeeding rates and an increase in the number of children receiving the recommended minimum adequate diet.

However, this is not enough, as we move beyond 2015, we have to adopt a multi-sectorial and integrated approach. Partnerships and strategic alliances are important vehicles to tackle the challenges associated with improving the nation's nutritional status and therefore we have embraced the multi-sectoral approach in recognition of the multiple causes and determinants of malnutrition.

Namibia plans to strengthen the enabling environment for scaling up nutrition by updating and developing the legislative and policy framework, institutional capacity and appropriate resource mobilisation and utilisation for nutrition.

In recognition of the multiple causes and determinants of malnutrition, the focus will be directed to the code of marketing of breastmilk substitutes, the fortification of staple food, provision of safe water and improved sanitation, while not neglecting the ongoing nutrition specific interventions. This by extension includes the empowerment of small-holder and family farmers as important stakeholders in the fight for eradication of hunger and poverty, providing food security and Nutrition.

Being mindful of the impact of infectious diseases and its effects on nutrition, Namibia is cognizant of the devastating social economic impact of Ebola on not only the affected countries, but also on the continent. We accept this as our collective responsibility to respond to it; hence Namibia fully supports all initiatives under the umbrella of the African Union and the World Health Organization.

Mr Chair, Namibia supports the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action, we are convinced that these Conference Outcome Documents will further support our policy, institutional and legislative framework on Nutrition.

I thank you.