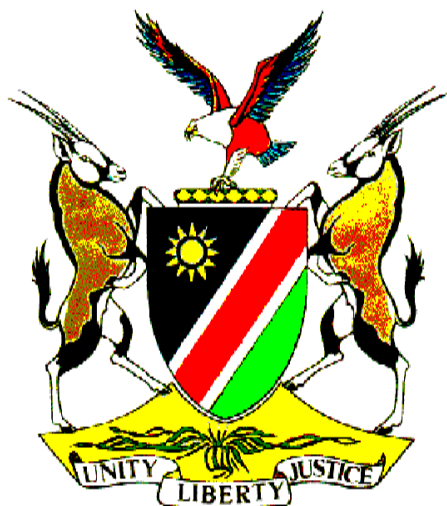


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR FRIEDA NANGULA ITHETE

AT

FAO CONFERENCE

39TH SESSION

ROME, 6-13 JUNE 2015

Mr Chairperson,

Excellences,

Minister, Ambassadors, Colleagues,

Let me from the onset join others before me in congratulating Dr José Graziano da Silva on his re-election as the Director-General of this Organisation. I wish to assure him of Namibia's full support during his second term and re-iterate our commitment to work with him in his quest to achieve the Zero Hunger goal for all.

Mr Chairperson,

As you may be aware, Namibia is a semi-arid country which is featured that puts a lot of strain on the efforts by Government in our quest to become food self-sufficient. Factors such as deforestation, land degradation and desertification also pose a serious threat to sustainable agricultural development in Namibia. In addition to these challenges, the arid climate makes it difficult to produce sufficient food under rain fed conditions. This has led to a situation of subjecting the country to import significant quantities of our food needs.

To address this food deficit the Government introduced the Green Scheme Policy that aims to increase agricultural production under irrigation. The Green Scheme policy is also designed to empower smallholder farmers in irrigation agriculture.

Through our national agricultural policy, the government provides livestock marketing incentives, animal health kits and feed subsidies for breeding stock.

For resilience building, the government also avails fertiliser and certified seeds at subsidised prices, providing training in conservation agriculture and climate change adaptation measures.

These interventions by Government are aimed at achieving food self-sufficiency and reversing the status of Namibia as a net-importer of food.

Mr Chairperson,

Let me also take this opportunity to thank FAO and our development partners for the important role they play in the implementation of the South-South Cooperation programme in Namibia in the areas of veterinary diagnostics, horticulture, aquaculture, and rice and cereal production.

Namibia further wishes to express our appreciation to the role played by FAO and other member states in advocating for the importance of soils for agriculture and livelihoods. Soils as we know play an important role in our agricultural systems. With poor soils our desired agricultural productivity levels cannot be reached. It is for this reason that Namibia urges that pragmatic programmes aimed at improving soil fertility and the reduction of land degradation be coupled with the international year of soils. This is particularly important in developing countries especially those with fragile ecosystems.

Mr Chairperson,

This Session of the Conference takes place at an opportune time just before very critical events of 2015. These include the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, The Heads of State Summit in New York and the COP 21 to be held in Paris. We call upon FAO and its partners to advocate for the principles that we have on so many occasions agreed upon in this house, these include among others, curbing global warming as it has devastating effects on the livelihoods of so many small holder farmers who solely depend on agriculture to survive.

I would like to conclude my statement in saying that it is time now for us to galvanise support and reinvigorate our commitment to the implementation and achievement of the proposed Goal 2 of the SDGs.

THANK YOU