

Statement delivered by
The Honourable Ignesia Inge Zaamwani, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform
on the occasion of the 44th session of the FAO Conference (28 June – 4 July 2025)
1 July 2025

Dr. QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),

His Excellency Mabouba Diagne, Chairperson of the 44th Session of the Conference and Minister for Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Livestock of the Republic of Senegal, Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my distinct honor to address this esteemed gathering for the first time as Minister responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform of the Republic of Namibia. I bring you warm greetings from Her Excellency, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the President of the Republic of Namibia.

Namibia welcomes the 2025 edition of The State of Food and Agriculture Report and commends FAO for its continued leadership in providing evidence-based insights, that inform global policy decisions on food and agriculture. The Report's emphasis on true cost accounting and the transformation of agrifood systems is timely and essential, particularly as we confront the complex threats of climate change, economic volatility, and food insecurity.

Namibia's agricultural landscape is characterized by a dual structure comprising of commercial and subsistence farming, with a predominant focus on crop and livestock production. Notably, livestock farming remains the backbone of our agricultural sector.

Namibia is globally recognized as the driest country in Sub-Saharan Africa, a reality that places our agricultural systems at high risk due to climate change. This has resulted in the growing frequency and severity of natural disasters such as droughts and floods, which continue to undermine our national efforts to increase food production, achieve self-sufficiency and ensure food security.

The ongoing global conflicts and geopolitical tensions have significantly disrupted international supply chains and contributed to the rising cost of agricultural inputs. These external shocks are placing additional pressure on already vulnerable food systems, particularly in developing countries like ours. The volatility in the global markets underscores the urgent need for localized inputs production, regional trade facilitation, and establishment of strategic food reserves to safeguard food production and affordability.

In Namibia, the state of food and agriculture reflects these persistent challenges. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for the period July 2024 to June 2025, one million, two hundred and forty-nine thousand (1,249,000) people equating to 41.6 percent of the population were classified as food insecure.

Despite these challenges, the current cropping season brought hope to our farmers. The normal to above-normal rainfall received in most parts of the country, replenished both surface and underground water sources, revitalizing our grazing areas, and we expect better crop yields which will offer much-needed relief.

We have prioritized agriculture as a fundamental pillar for socio-economic development. We are committed to transforming the sector through diversification, transitioning from rain-fed agriculture to

irrigation-based systems, and investing in agro- processing with a strong emphasis on sustainable innovation.

To this end, Namibia developed a comprehensive *Strategy for the Transformation of the Agri-Food Sector*, which is aligned to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, the Kampala Declaration on Strengthening Agri-Food Systems from 2025 to 2035, which calls for a paradigm shift towards integrated and sustainable agricultural practices.

Given the alarming findings presented in the 2024 Report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, we urge all Member States to implement the recommendations of that Report,. We also implore all Member states to nationalize the Pact of the Future in order to accelerate the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with emphasis on SDG 2 and a strong focus on improving food security and building more sustainable agrifood systems.

As I conclude, Namibia, extends its appreciation to the Food and Agriculture Organization for the continued support received through your Country Office. We reaffirm our commitment to FAO's founding vision conceived 80 years ago, of a world free of hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, and especially the poorest of the poor amongst us. We look forward to deepening our collaboration and successful implementation of our collective priorities, leaving no one behind.

Thank you very much.