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REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY

Tel : (+264 - 61) 208 7649
Fax : (+264 - 61) 221 733

Office of the Permanent Secretary
Luther Street
Private Bag 13184, WINDHOEK
E-mail: stanleye@mawrd.gov.na

6th April 2006

Mr Jacques Diouf
The Director General
Food and Agriculture Organisation
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome
Italy

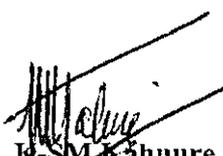
Dear Mr Diouf,

I have the honour of presenting to you the Country progress report on the World Food Summit Declaration (WFS, Rome, November 1996), which pledged "to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half its present level by no later than 2015".

The report briefly highlights the country's achievements as they relate to the seven commitments in the Plan of Action as well as the major programmes under implementation that are expected to have a major impact on the food security situation.

I sincerely apologise fro the delay in sending the report to you and I remain,

Sincerely yours,


R-S.M. Kahuure
Permanent Secretary

OFFICE OF ADG/ES

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY
The Permanent Secretary Office

Private Bag 13184, Windhoek

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT COMMITMENTS

**WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA
MARCH 2006**

**Section I:
Priority Food Security Issues and Progress Towards the World Food Summit Goal**

Background Information

Food Security Situation in Namibia

The Government's overall development objective for the agricultural sector is to contribute towards improving the levels of food security at household and national level, as well as creating employment opportunities in order to establish a secure foundation for sustainable and equitable growth throughout the economy. The principle mandates of all stakeholders in the sector in order to achieve this overall objective are to contribute towards:

- enhancing agricultural production at national and household level in a sustainable manner; and,
- raise the volume and value of agricultural exports and reduce the volume and value of agricultural imports;

In October 1992, recognising the extent of food insecurity in the country, the new Government declared the period 1992-2002 the Namibia Food and Nutrition Decade, which made Namibia the first country to have expressed the need to address issues of food insecurity and malnutrition so clearly. This all happened well ahead of the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) in December 1992, and the World Food Summit in November 1996.

In August 1995, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Namibia pledged his support to the "National Declaration on Food and Nutrition", as well as a "Food and Nutrition Policy for Namibia". These important Government statements were fully backed-up by the first "Namibia Food Security and Nutrition Assessment Report", and the first "National Food Security and Nutrition Action Plan" prepared under the auspices of the National Food Security and Nutrition Council.

In its 1995 National Declaration on Food Security and Nutrition, Government committed itself to eliminate, famine and famine related deaths, starvation and nutritional deficiency disease in communities affected by natural disasters, and iodine and vitamin A deficiencies. A look at the available data indicates that there has been a significant improvement in the number of children under 5 years old who are undernourished. For example, in 1992, 29% of all children under 5 were stunted compared to only 23.6% in 2003.

To this end, Government also established a three-tier cross-sectoral committee to oversee and guide the implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Programme. At its apex is the Food Security and Nutrition Council (FSNC), which is composed of Permanent Secretaries from relevant ministries and which has a mandate to ensure that policy issues related to food security and nutrition are well co-ordinated.

Poverty and Vulnerability to Food Insecurity

Namibia is considered to be food secure at national level, due to a well developed commercial agricultural sector, and an ability to import sufficient food to cover production deficits. However, at the sub-national level the situation is far from satisfactory. Many households are vulnerable to chronic or acute food insecurity due to highly variable, often low agricultural production, recurrent drought, low incomes and limited off-farm employment opportunities. Household food security is strongly influenced by the level, composition and stability of household incomes and, in this context, poverty and malnutrition are closely related. Furthermore, where food insecurity and malnourishment have, historically, been viewed as problems that confront rural households in Namibia, the consequence has been rapid out-migration from the rural areas to urban areas.

Opportunities for business development in rural areas are limited. In rural Namibia, 51 % of the population depends on subsistence farming, a rate, which has largely remained unchanged between 1993 and 2000. Livelihoods in rural areas seem to be heavily maintained and dependent on remittances. This trend has increased over the past years.

Namibia is blessed in having one of the most productive fishing grounds in the world, due primarily to the presence of the Benguela current off our coast. This current produces 'upwelling' whereby nutrient-rich waters come up from the depths and stimulate the growth of microscopic marine organisms. These in turn support rich populations of fish, which form the basis of our marine fisheries sector. At a time when most of the world's fisheries are characterized by over-exploitation, Namibia is at the forefront of managing marine fisheries in a sustainable manner. The fishing industry has grown to become one of the pillars of the Namibian economy, growing from 500 million Namibian dollars worth of value in 1990, to 2 500 million Namibian dollars in 2001.

Namibia has developed about 7,000 ha of land under irrigation and is at present investigating the development of further irrigation projects along the various perennial rivers and within the country where dams have been or could be developed on the ephemeral rivers. The option of constructing dams calls for high investments and the government has invested considerable amounts of resources in water supply infrastructure. These irrigation initiatives aim to create jobs, promote food security and food self-sufficiency, reduce poverty and increase foreign exchange earnings. Namibia recognises the limitations that the water shortages bring and will negotiate access to reasonable quantities of shared water resources, particularly with fellow SADC member states.

One of the foremost problems facing post-independence Namibia is HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS has become a major macro-economic variable in Namibia, impacting on labour supply, human capital and savings as well as resulting in a decline in agricultural productivity. The availability of labour force is a critical factor for household income and productivity.

HIV / AIDS has now surpassed tuberculosis and malaria as the leading cause of deaths among adults and children.

The impact on demographic indicators (for instance a decline in life expectancy at birth from 61 years in 1991 to 46 years in 2000) shows clearly that HIV/AIDS poses a big threat. The main challenge lies in responding to the pandemic in such a way that immediate needs as well as long-term effects on development are addressed. Strategies in pursuit of reducing further spread and prevention include providing information and education, supplying condoms as well as providing care and support to the affected.

The Government has invested in the establishment of agricultural extension service centres; livestock health and marketing facilities with the aim to improve farmers' access to improved advisory services and markets for their produce. Investments have also gone into improving access of farming households to water for human and livestock consumption.

The challenge is to ensure every person's readily access to water as one of the basic rights as enshrined in the Namibian Constitution. The Government policy is that no persons should walk a distance of more than 2.5 km to fetch water. This challenge has been overcome in over 80% of communities.

Despite difficult agronomic conditions prevailing in Namibia, the country produces commodities for export. Livestock is well adapted to the harsh natural conditions without supplementary feeding. This makes Namibian meat an organic product. Grapes are grown on comparative advantage in terms of harvesting time. This means that the country produces fruits earliest in the season than South Africa and this gives significant price advantage in the EU. In addition, exceptional long hours of sunshine give advantages to cash crops such as cotton. Therefore the combination of both export and import of food items that the country cannot produce made it a very important component in regional and international trade negotiations.

SECTION II:
Follow up of the WFS Plan of Action
Actions taken in response to the Commitments

COMMITMENT ONE

We will ensure an enabling political, social and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty and for durable peace, based on full and equal participation of women and men, which is most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all.

Namibia enjoys a general environment of peace, stability, democracy, social justice and tolerance with a strong emphasis on the respect of human rights as enshrined in the country's laws and the Constitution. The structures of government are designed in such a way as to afford the citizens the right to participate in their own governance through their elected representatives.

The government adopted the Policy of Decentralisation in order to ensure that basic public services are brought closer to the people and that the administration is done according to the wishes and aspirations of the people.

Issues of good governance have been at the forefront of the government's policy thrust. Namibia had always been considered as having a low rate of corruption. However, no country or system is immune to corrupt practices and the government has identified corruption as a potential danger and has taken steps to uproot this evil. In 2005, Parliament passed a law that saw the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate all reported cases of corruption in the state and semi-state institutions. The Commission commenced with its operations in January 2006

Gender equality is a major tenet of the Namibian society as outlined in the Constitution as well as other government policy statements. The Policy and Legislation Framework has been changed to reflect the reality of the times. In the political arena, women are now playing an increasing role. By 2004, 43% of local authorities' representatives were women. The country is also implementing an Affirmative Action Policy, which aims to promote women in management positions both in the government, private as well as semi-state organizations.

A significant number of Cabinet positions, Deputy Minister positions, Parliamentary seats (both ruling and opposition parties) are occupied by women, with the Deputy Prime Minister being a woman from March 2005.

Two

We will implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all at all times to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilisation.

Poverty (both rural and urban) manifests itself in different ways. Indicators of level of poverty includes life expectancy, literacy rates, household income, per capita income, access to safe drinking water, access to adequate sanitation facilities, access to lighting, heating and cooking facilities. The magnitude of the problem of poverty is difficult to measure from existing data. Circumstantial evidence suggests that high levels of poverty do exist, particularly in smaller urban areas with few employment opportunities.

Government is active in promoting rural livelihoods, services and economic development to improve the situation in rural areas. The promotion of settlements as growth points, as provided for in the Decentralisation Policy of 1996, is a case in point. Government is also keen to limit rural urban migration and therefore does not distribute food and other emergency relief items in urban areas.

Namibia is one of the driest countries in sub-saharan Africa. One out of five years can be classified as a drought year in Namibia. On the contrary, other parts of the country are susceptible to floods such as the eastern Caprivi, where excess water in the Zambezi River and its tributaries tend to flow into the flood plains leading to damage to crop fields. As such the country is susceptible to crop failures and therefore food insecurity at household level. During years of crop failure, government implements targeted drought relief programmes to distribute basic food items to the most vulnerable members of the community. This is done to ensure that no one dies of hunger.

Three

We will pursue participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development policies and practices in high and low potential areas, which are essential to adequate and reliable food supplies at the household, national, regional and global levels, and combat pests, drought and desertification, considering the multifunctional character of agriculture.

The post-independence Government has made efforts towards this policy strategy, particularly in improving production, through various interventions focusing on improving, among others, quality of variety/breeds, production techniques, input and output markets for commercially oriented production. However, a larger population (69 percent) of subsistence farmers has still not been reached with the improved technologies.

Their farming practices in use are not conducive for enhancing agricultural production and hence increasing yields.

Since the largest agricultural population is in subsistence farming, developing this sub-sector offers better opportunities for employment creation and for addressing the extreme income and investment inequalities in the sector. This will require addressing the main causes of low, unstable and declining levels of productivity, production and farm income.

These are: the hazardous farming environment, highly limited access to appropriate technologies and farm inputs, and poor access to and availability of credit, markets, rural infrastructure and effective institutions that serve smallholders.

Investment in agro-industry not only helps boost agricultural production, but also has great potential for increasing employment opportunities and enhancing the contribution of the agricultural sector to value addition within the country, which is one of the policy objectives of the sector. Agro-industry in Namibia is not well developed and contributes only approximately 2% to the GDP. At present processing is limited only to livestock and livestock products such as meat, hides and skin and ostriches as well as staple grains. The intention is to extend the processing of agricultural products to agronomic products such as dates, cotton and horticultural products.

The crop diversification exercise is continuing through the introduction of several cash crops and aims at contributing to the overall Government policy of poverty alleviation and income generation. High yielding varieties of cotton, guar, quinoa, sunflower, fruit trees, sweet potato and Bambara groundnut are tested widely and promoted to enhance the food security while at the same time generating income to the farming community.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry continues to monitor the bush encroachment problem and natural die-back of *Acacia mellifera* (Black Thorn) in Namibia and in light of the magnitude of the bush encroachment, surveys were conducted for a third consecutive year.

The Ministry is also represented on the National Bush Encroachment Technical Committee, which is looking at ways to alleviate the problem of bush encroachment. Other surveys were conducted in order to determine seedling establishment of *Acacia mellifera* in the Omaheke region.

Communities in the Caprivi Region are continuously planting pigeon peas as a supplementary feed for their animals.

The government has realized that tree-planting activities would restore the environment and promote better agricultural practices. Consequently, a pre-feasibility study was carried out to determine the possibility of planting trees in the northern grasslands in order to limit desert activities. A five-year extended feasibility study has been implemented since 2003 to conduct tree-species trials and determine which trees would survive that harsh climate and salty condition of the soil.

All sites were fenced and prepared for planting of 26,000 seedlings comprised of nineteen fruit and fast growing tree species. At least 200 households have been identified throughout the project area that will be given trees to plant at their homesteads. This would involve 5,000 seedlings to be distributed during the next planting season. These seedlings will be produced by Ondangwa-based German NGO, Trees for the World.

The project will continue with planting the trial sites in 7 pilot areas and to distribute seedlings and demonstrate tree planting to identified local households, monitor the management of trees, identify training needs for communities, project staff as well as forestry and extension workers, maintain interaction and exchange of visits between different pilot sites and increase tree planting activities in other communities and constituencies.

Four

We will strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system.

The country actively participated in several bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade negotiations in order to protect the interests of the country's agricultural sector. These included the World Trade Organization (WTO), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Southern African Customs Union (SACU), as well as free trade agreements between SACU and the United States of America and between SACU and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Five

We will endeavour to prevent and be prepared for natural disasters and man-made emergencies and to meet transitory and emergency food requirements in ways that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, development and a capacity to satisfy future needs.

As highlighted earlier, various parts of Namibia is susceptible to flooding. In the north east of the Caprivi Region a rise in the level of the Zambezi River and its tributaries leads to floods in the Region causing dislocation of communities and severe damage to crops as well as stock deaths. Government had always reacted promptly to the situation by employing an efficient Early Warning System to evacuate human and livestock as well as provide the necessary food and other humanitarian assistance to affected communities until such time that they are able again to stand on their feet again.

In the central and south of the country, heavy rainfall may cause man-made dams to overflow, causing damage to infrastructure and desperation to mankind as it happened in Mariental in 2000 and in 2006. The 2006 Mariental flood had forced the government to

seriously consider alternatives to ensure that the town of Mariental is not flooded again in case of heavy down pour in the catchment area of the Hardap Dam

Six

We will promote optimal allocation and use of public and private investments to foster human resources, sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems, and rural development, in high and low potential areas.

The government has over the years ensured that significant portions of the country's financial resources are allocated to human resources development among other in the fields of agriculture, marine resources, aquaculture and forestry. A considerable amount of money both from the public and private sectors had been invested in the fields of aquaculture, agriculture and marine fisheries protection since independence. The government, in co-operation with the private sector and the donor community has invested financial resources in the development of skills as well as physical irrigation infrastructure as well as in the adoption of efficient production systems to ensure sustainable food production.

Seven

We will implement, monitor and follow up this Plan of Action at all levels in co-operation with the international community.

The government of the Republic of Namibia has since independence engaged various development partners in order to tackle the issues of food insecurity and poverty. Through the financial assistance from its development partners and through its own resources, the government has implemented various projects and programme targeted to the poorest of the poor and other vulnerable members of society.

Currently, under the 9th European Development Fund, the government is implementing a 55 million Euro Rural Poverty Reduction Programme (RPRP). The programme, which is focusing on infrastructure, services and decentralized demand driven actions, is expected to have a major impact on poverty reduction efforts.

Summary list of the most important programmes contributing to the WFS Plan of Action

1. The Green Scheme

The Green Scheme was conceptualized by the government as a tool to promote investment, both private and public, in irrigated agriculture, promote the utilisation of the country share of the water from the perennial rivers bordering Namibia with other southern African states as well as the country's dams, promote the production of high-value agricultural crops for both the domestic as well as the export market and thereby increasing the food security situation of the country's people.

The programme was designed in response to the 1996 World Food Summit commitments to increase investment in Africa's agricultural sector. This was due to the realization that investment in agriculture had declined over the 1986-1996 decade. As a result, a regional meeting of African Ministers of Agriculture was convened in Rome. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat briefed the group, and a proposal to "Expand irrigation by investing in irrigation infrastructure" was accepted.

The objective of the programme is to develop irrigation schemes along the Zambezi, Okavango and the Orange River as well as the inland dams, where there is sufficient water for irrigation. So far 6 projects had been identified under the scheme for funding through the government's capital budget. More project feasibility studies are being carried out in order to increase and intensify the development of irrigation.

Currently, there are 196 specified irrigation areas throughout Namibia, which are either being developed or have been identified for future development under irrigation. Of the available 43,500 hectares of potentially irrigable land, 8,600 hectares are currently utilized. The anticipated development is earmarked at 27,000 hectares stretched over a period of fifteen years. This leaves 7,900 hectares for alternative developments that do not fall under the Green Scheme or that would be developed at a later stage.

2. Forestry

The purpose of the programme is:

- to improve the efficiency of protecting and managing key species and natural resources,
- to strengthen the conservancy system on communal lands and other community-based programmes, by improving the natural resource base for economic development,
- the management of natural resources through such programmes, and;
- enhance job creation and livelihood improvement through enterprise development and job creation.

The programme also aims:

- to ensure sustainable development by avoiding environmental degradation and non-sustainable use of renewable resources,

- to improve the forestry sector's contribution to State Revenue and
- enhance the understanding of the value of the resources.

In February 2001, the Founding President Dr Sam Nujoma initiated the Extended Feasibility Study of the Tree Planting Project (EFS), with the aim of promoting afforestation as a broad national policy objective. The objectives of the project are; to undertake a process involving government, NGOs and communities in an integrated approach; develop human resources; to secure permission to occupy land in all project pilot sites; to determine the potential of growth and survival rates of various planted tree species in the southern saline grasslands; to establish a Management Information System; and to determine the potential for long-term sustainable management of trees by participating communities.

The EFS project continued introducing vegetable gardens at all its tree planting trial plots as a strategy to attract community participation in tree planting activities and at the same time enhancing the food security status of those communities. Identification and demarcation of the planting sites in all pilot areas was completed by the Tree Planting Project with full participation of local communities, Regional Councilors and Traditional Authorities.

All sites were fenced and prepared for planting of 26,000 seedlings comprised of 26 fruit and fast growing tree species. At least 200 households have been identified throughout the project area that will be given trees to plant at their homesteads. This would involve 5,000 seedlings to be distributed during the next planting season. These seedlings will be produced by Ondangwa-based German NGO, Trees for the World.

The EFS project will continue with planting the trial sites in 7 pilot areas and to distribute seedlings and demonstrate tree planting to identified local households, monitor the management of trees, identify training needs for communities, project staff as well as forestry and extension workers, maintain interaction and exchange of visits between different pilots sites and raise tree planting in other communities and constituencies.

3. Agricultural Advice

The purpose of the programme is:

- to improve agricultural technology and practice options,
- support staff and farmers with relevant information,
- strengthening of agricultural institutions and organisations towards improved service delivery, and;
- the promotion of linkages with all stakeholders.

The programme also aim at:

- the development of human resources,
- provision of veterinary clinical services through government veterinary staff as well as through Community Animal Health Workers,
- ensure a bottom-up approach from community driven expectations concerning animal health and marketing,

- empower women to obtain and improve livestock thereby improving their food security and income generating capacity.

The major impacts of the programme would be;

- ✓ to achieve growth rates and stability in farm incomes,
- ✓ ensure food security and improve nutritional status,
- ✓ create and sustain viable livelihood and employment opportunities in rural areas,
- ✓ promote complementary farmer livelihood opportunities,
- ✓ expand vertical integration and domestic value addition for agricultural products,
- ✓ promote the sustainable utilisation of the nation's land and other natural resources,
- ✓ contribute to balanced regional development based on comparative advantage,
- ✓ improve animal health and production,
- ✓ enhance the marketability of animals,
- ✓ increase marketing and slaughtering of animals for national consumption,
- ✓ increase the exportation of meat and meat products and;
- ✓ reduce the incidence of animal diseases and mortality

4. Integrated Water Resources Management

The purpose of the programme is;

- to ensure equitable access and the sustainable availability and utilisation of water resources,
- uphold and improve the availability of reliable water resource data,
- perform the professional assessment of water resources information, and
- implement the legislative and policy mechanisms in the water sector.

5. Rural Water Supply

The purpose of the programme is;

- to build infrastructure in order to increase coverage and access to safe water,
- ensure efficient and effective community based operation and management of payment for water supply and decentralized water supply services at community level.

The main activities are;

- ✚ repair of existing water infrastructure,
- ✚ training of water point committees as well as
- ✚ construction of new water supply infrastructure (pipelines, water points, boreholes and dams).

A major component of the programme is the transfer of the responsibility of operation and management to Regional governments, through the establishment of Rural Water Supply offices at Constituency level. Currently, 80% of the rural population has access to clean and safe drinking water as a result of the programme implementation.