



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

REMARKS

BY

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INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE**

**STATEMENT
ON THE OCCASION OF MARKET-LED AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE, 02-03 SEPTEMBER 2020**

03 September 2020

1. **DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAMME,**
2. **HON. CARL-HERMAN GUSTAV SCHLETTWEIN, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND LAND REFORM;**
3. **VALUED PRODUCERS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR,**
4. **CAPTAINS OF THE AGRO-INDUSTRY,**
5. **VALUED LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATING PARTNERS,**
6. **REPRESENTATIVES OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND GOVERNMENT**
7. **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

A very Good Morning to you as Namibian audience.

And for those who are in other time zones who have logged-in using the zoom webinar platform, I say good morning, good afternoon, good-evening and good night.

I felicitate eminent speakers and presenters who eloquently and richly spoke before me about *agriculture fit for the future*, your perspectives have been very enriching, I thus say salutations and appreciations to you all.

In particular, I want to say merry to Honourable Carl-Hermann Gustav Schlettwein for initiating this important discussions intended to inform the synergies from various agricultural sectors, both the private as well as government sectors.

I commence my conversation by stating that I am conscious of the magnitude of this subject which I am entrusted to deliver before this conference, in which the interest

are not only pertinent to Namibia, but applicable and relevant to the whole sub-Saharan Africa and the globe, and by default applicable to the realities of our citizens where the common denominator is the need to provide and put food on the table to feed not only ourselves but our beloved families and humanity at large.

According to yours truly, and I submit to you that, “*Agriculture is food and food is survival*”, end of claim and no doubt about this.

My topic is titled ‘*what is needed to realize a market led agricultural sector.*’

In response and by clarification, a market led economy has six defining characteristics.

1. The law protects ownership of private property.
2. Everyone is free to live, work, produce, buy and sell whatever they choose (as long as it's legal.)
3. Self-interest drives the buying and selling of goods and services, including employment. Sellers want the highest price and buyers want the best value for their money.
4. The law protects competition.
5. Prices are allowed to float along with supply and demand.
6. The primary role of government is to make sure that everyone has free access to a free market.

In respect of the cited factors, Namibia pretty much fulfills much of what is *needed to realize a desired market led agricultural sector, particularly in terms of policy space.*’

Besides a conducive policy space, the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade, have augmented the following projects namely;

1. A new beef cold storage export facility in Walvis Bay, Erongo Region which is a new-European Union certified red meat cold storage export facility suitable for fresh chilled and frozen beef, lamb and venison;
2. Kavango Cattle Ranch (KCR), in the Kavango West Region, a relatively large scale beef value adding process for cattle production project to create jobs, wealth and export opportunities;
3. A Factory for animal feed and bio-char to be constructed in Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, whereby the animal feed will be processed from different types of natural trees harvested from different farms in and around Otjozondjupa Region and greater Namibia;
4. Naute Irrigation Project for grapes and dates at !Karas Region which has served as a vital exporter of high value products, to cite few examples.

Namibia's agri-food industry has the capacity to create equity directly to agripreneurs. To this end the Ministry also recently tabled at Cabinet the National Competition Policy which aims to ensure fair trading and a balanced approach to Public Interest. The provisions of the National Competition Policy also aims to safeguards smaller entities such as farmer's cooperatives and traders from the variations of larger market players and dynamics.

The question that should then be posed is, have we as a country collectively realized a market led agricultural sector? Unanimously, the answer is no.

Views of Communal farmers who are the majority stakeholders in the agricultural sector in Namibia are:

There is a great need for farm mechanization and automation. Communal farmers lack a great deal of farming technologies and machineries. They need public investment in infrastructure such as proper rural roads, electricity and food processing technologies to realize food value chain transformation.

The World Bank and the United Nations, are sounding alarm bells warning that there may not be enough food to feed the global population by year 2050. This is an opportunity for countries such as Namibia where arable land is sufficient to provide our part to the world market if all systems in gear.

Equally, food self-reliance is critical now than ever before. Testimony to this is, the world is witnessing countries imposing export and Import restrictions, there is rising trade protectionism and ongoing tariff wars. Instead of globalization, major economies are acting **pro de-globalization**, with more inward looking policies being introduced.

Clearly, as a country, our nationals are spending much of their resources on foreign imported food that our farmers have potential to produce and process into final products. Should Namibia's production reach the desired levels, food will be more affordable.

Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey Report of 2015 and 2016, revealed that; most consumption or spending in Namibia is on food and on beverages (36.3 percent). The main problem is, we are spending on food sourced from outside Namibia amounting to millions. Should our farmers produce more for our own consumption and acquire small food processing machineries which are readily

obtainable from Asia, not only will food become cheaper but we will create more employment, improve our savings and reduce poverty.

I wish to conclude with the following thoughts and questions:

- What if our productive subsistence and communal farmers have access to financing or deliberately are incentivized with basic **machineries, meaningful infrastructures such as low cost irrigation systems covering between five to ten hectares, aquaculture facilities, poultry facilities etcetera and various food processing equipment for value addition?**
- What if in future, through our Extension Services, we provide thousands of fruit trees and seed to households to plant in their backyards, at school premises, championed by Regional Leaders inclusive the Traditional Leaders, after ten years most parts of Namibia would have turned in pockets of small but many orchards?
- What if we champion aggressively backyard gardening in urban localities, it is trending in developed countries. In fact some people whom we know don't buy some vegetables daily because their backyards have pot-plants with vegetables disguised as flowers.
- What is Agronomic Board set correct prices for pearl millet to instead of the current prices that communal farmers including myself do not agree with as fair and just.

The quote of Caryn Sullivan, demand to be referenced in which she said “***In the face of adversity, we have a choice. We can be bitter, or we can be better.***”

In conclusion, the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade is committed to a modernized and a transformed ***market led agricultural sector and the support of agri-preneurs*** to realise agri-economic development in Namibia.

I thank you!