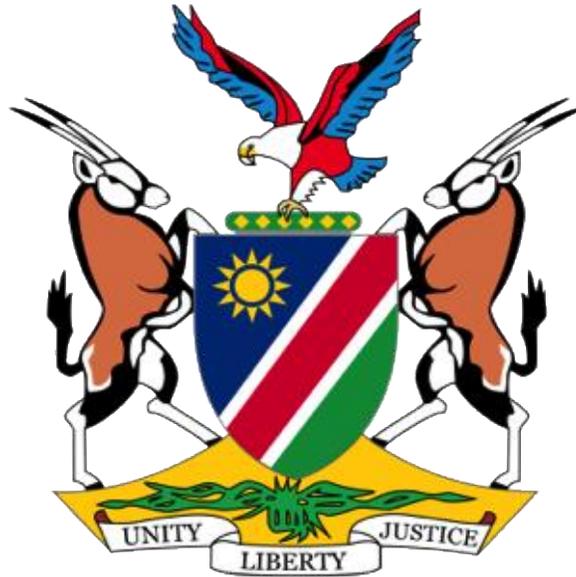


Republic of Namibia



**STATEMENT BY MS. DAISRY MATHIAS  
PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR: YOUTH MATTERS & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT  
AT THE YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE NETWORKING DINNER**

**Safari Court & Conference Centre**

**18 November 2020**

To locate tonight's discussion, every programme of Government is located in a policy document. Through the 2016 Harambee Prosperity Plan, H.E. the President amongst others, elevated and placed policy priority on Youth Enterprise Development and Zero Deaths in Namibia from Hunger Poverty. There is however always a gestation period between inception of policy and impact. What we have seen, presented this evening, are the direct results of the policy foundation that was set in the HPP1.

From the Keynote Address delivered by the Hon. Deputy Minister, it is clear that the Ministry of Youth and Government at large has prioritized agriculture as a sector for self-employment and food security. The Minister has been on the road, across the country, installing horticultural projects that will be managed by young people, across our regions and constituencies. This is really commendable, because it buttresses our President's Commitment – that No Namibian Should Die from Hunger Poverty.

Government's intent to intensify investments into Agricultural sector, to add value & grow the agro-industry for the purposes job creation & export earnings, and to appreciate the NB of agriculture & preserve the culture of food self-sufficiency.

Namibia and the world are managing a Triple Crisis:

1. Climate Change, and the effects of a protracted drought have exposed thousands of Namibian households to food insecurity and hunger poverty.
2. The Public Health Emergency spurred by the outbreak of COVID-19 - has extended beyond the immediate public health implications, as food systems have been disrupted by import / trade restrictions.
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Crisis is Economic, with sector contractions spurred by business closures; mass retrenchments & job losses; diminishing purchasing power and household financial insecurity. This has only exacerbated the triple challenge of, unemployment, income inequalities and poverty.

So fellow NamYouth my message to you tonight is short and clear, we need to invest in this sector, as it is one that is key to economic recovery and growth. There are also manifold benefits for ourselves and economy - land ownership and economic empowerment; reduce household and national food security challenges; balanced nutrition and health to reduce malnourishment and child stunting and wasting; mass employment creating engine of the economy that can reduce the triple challenge of youth unemployment, poverty, and income and wealth inequalities. Agriculture employs the most young people - 48,613 young Namibians were employed in 2016 and remains the backbone of the economy and prosperity for many Namibians, despite challenges and plagues experienced.

Here Are 5 Creative things Young Namibians Can do to induce Structural Transformation in the Agriculture Sector:

1. Firstly we need to change image of agriculture and perception that agriculture. Agriculture is LUCRATIVE commercial sector.
2. ICT has the potential to spearhead agricultural transformation by unlocking efficiencies – connecting farming suppliers to buyers through agribusiness software and applications, amongst others. ICTs can deliver extension services to rural youth. Let our agribusinesses build on a central ICT model.
3. Strengthen your Capacity – *invest in* new farming technologies, marketing and digital farm management solutions. Climate adaptive technologies; adapt mobility of goods and transport pooling. Drought-resistant seeds.
4. Let us embrace Intellectual Property Rights, Trade promotion, standards and Competitiveness.
5. research your industry and focus on research in agriculture and innovation, that deals with local problems. Study MARKET ACCESS VALUE CHAINS & LINKAGES: Along agricultural value chains - from input supplies and service provision - to primary production; processing

– the opportunities for creativity are plentiful. For example: let us also not be shy to exploit untapped opportunities in the sector, that may not seem so attractive but I assure you can be lucrative, if properly executed. Eg: Manure from livestock and chicken poultry farms to fertilise our bleached northern communal farmlands.

In closing; A nation that depends on other nations for food security can become vulnerable, as we have learned during the C19 induced lockdowns. Independence and self-sufficiency on food security are therefore matters that cannot be compromised.

Let us reframe the conversation from the burden of youth unemployment and rather focus on the solution, that of enterprise development for job creation. Let us rather focus energy and investments into establishing businesses for young people in this sector, to achieve the desired end result, of employment creation.

Thank you.

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