

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. NANGOLO
MBUMBA PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICA FERTILIZER AND
SOIL HEALTH SUMMIT**

9 MAY 2024

NAIROBI, KENYA

- **Your Excellency Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Chairperson of the African Union;**
- **Your Excellency Dr. William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya and our gracious host,**
- **Your Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,**
- **Honourable Ministers;**
- **Distinguished invited guests;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

1. I am pleased to address this African Union Summit for the first time as President of the Republic of Namibia, following the untimely passing on February 4, 2024, of our beloved Third President, His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob. May his memory and legacy continue to live on.

Your Excellency Mr. Chairperson,

2. Given that the global population has risen four-fold over the past century, significantly more food is

needed worldwide, which correlates with the need for more agricultural inputs, including fertilizers.

- 3. In the African context in particular, addressing food demand is a pressing issue given the continent's rapidly growing population and the challenges posed by natural disasters, soil degradation, as well as limited access to modern agricultural inputs and technologies. In this regard, fertilizers can help address nutrient deficiencies in African soils, thereby increasing crop yields and improving food security.**

- 4. However, it is important to note that while fertilizers have played a crucial role in increasing agricultural productivity, their indiscriminate use can also have negative environmental consequences, such as soil degradation, water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, a balanced approach to soil fertility management is essential, integrating mineral fertilizers with organic inputs, conservation agriculture practices, and agro-ecological principles to promote sustainable agricultural systems that meet both**

current and future food needs without compromising the health of the environment. This holistic approach will be critical for addressing the food demands of Africa and ensuring the long-term sustainability of global food production systems.

Your Excellencies,

- 5. Approximately 70% of Namibians are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. Even though agriculture's contribution to our country's Gross Domestic Product is currently only 8%, crop and livestock farming support the majority of Namibians, many of whom reside in rural areas. A large percentage of our farmers still practice subsistence, rain-fed agriculture and livestock herding. Furthermore, given Namibia's arid to semi-arid environment, large-scale commercial agriculture is constrained by the scarcity of water. The main crops under irrigation include maize, wheat, vegetables, and fodder.**

- 6. At the regional level, Namibia, together with other SADC Member States and key stakeholders,**

developed the Harmonized Fertilizer Regulatory Framework (HFRF), to promote uptake and improved utilization of quality fertilizers. This Framework is in line with the 2006 Abuja Declaration on Fertilizers for an African Green Revolution, to stimulate and improve access and availability of quality fertilizers. We also support the full operationalization of the AU Fertilizer Centre in Zimbabwe, which should be reflected in our outcome documents.

Your Excellencies,

- 7. Namibia is ready to play its part to contribute to food security on the continent. While imports of fertilisers into the continent are welcome, local production should be promoted and supported. Our country is endowed with natural wind and sun resources, and it is well on its way to become a competitive producer and exporter of green hydrogen, reckoned to catalyse the decarbonisation of the planet.**

- 8. Green ammonia is a derivative of green hydrogen, and at full scale, Namibia will be producing about three (3) million tonnes of green ammonia, annually, for regional and global markets. With increased local production of green ammonia, which is one of the ingredients necessary to produce fertilizers, our continent can augment food production, through fertilizer usage. Agricultural produce can be further traded through the African Continental Free-Trade Area, at an affordable price. We therefore invite potential investors to explore opportunities in ammonia and fertilizer production in Namibia, and elsewhere across the continent.**

- 9. Additionally, we encourage fellow AU Member States to endeavor to acquire fertilizers from Africa as a means of supporting efforts to produce more fertilizers locally. We hope this sentiment will also be reflected in our outcome documents.**

Your Excellencies,

- 10. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and investment in agricultural development, we can**

overcome the challenges facing African agriculture and unlock the sector's full potential to nourish growing populations, alleviate poverty, and drive economic growth. Let us as Africans, work together in unison by holding hands and remaining steadfast in our commitment to advancing the goals of food security, poverty reduction, and sustainable development across the continent. By doing so, we will ensure that we are on the way to becoming "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena."

I thank you.