



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

**REMARKS DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE
OFFICIAL SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE FAO NAMIBIA
COUNTRY PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK 2025-2029.**

By

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VENUE: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform

DATE: Monday, March 16, 2026

- *Director of Ceremony*
- *Honourable Minister, Inge Zaamwani, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries Water Land and Reform.*
- *Esteemed colleagues from Government and line Ministries,*
- *Development partners,*
- *Members of the media,*
- *Ladies and gentlemen,*

Good morning.

It is a Profound Honour to stand before you today at this ceremony marking the signing of the FAO Namibia Country Programming Framework 2025–2029. This document is not merely a strategic plan. It is a declaration of shared intent, a covenant between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Government of the Republic of Namibia to work together, deliberately and urgently, to transform the agrifood systems that Namibians depend upon for their survival and their dignity.

I say deliberately and urgently because the data compel us to act. Today, 57.2 percent of Namibia’s population experiences moderate or severe food insecurity. Nearly one in five Namibians is undernourished. More than one in five children under the age of five is stunted. And Namibia’s Agriculture Orientation Index stands at just 0.26, a figure that tells us that public investment in the sector most critical to rural livelihoods and national food security has been declining for decades, from 0.54 in 2001 to where we stand today. These are not statistics. They are human realities.

Yet today is also a day of confidence. Because in this CPF, and in the partnership it enshrines, we have a credible, country-owned roadmap to change the trajectory.

A PARTNERSHIP FORGED WITH GOVERNMENT

Honourable Minister, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform, and to all line ministries, agencies and institutions that contributed to this framework. Built through sustained consultation and inclusive participatory process with government, the private sector, civil society and the communities it will serve, this CPF reflects a truly country-owned process.

The CPF is fully aligned with Namibia's Sixth National Development Plan, anchoring our three strategic priorities to NDP6 Pillars 1, 3 and 4, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2025 -2029) as well as Vision 2030 and the Harambee Prosperity Plan II. Together, we have agreed on three interdependent priorities: strengthening the policies, institutions and data systems that govern our agrifood sectors; driving economic recovery and value chain development; and advancing sustainable development and green growth. FAO's role is to provide technical support to the government-led processes, not to substitute for them, and this CPF reflects that commitment entirely.

That is the theory of change that guides this framework, and one FAO is fully committed to realising alongside the Government.

THE FOUR BETTERS: OUR GLOBAL COMPASS

The CPF 2025–2029 is firmly anchored in FAO's global strategic vision: the “Four Betters” – Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment and a Better Life for all. Each speaks directly to Namibia's most pressing needs.

Better Production means tackling Namibia's structural dependence on food imports — currently 50 to 80 percent of requirements — by improving production and productivity, supporting climate-smart practices and unlocking the potential of smallholder farmers, who make up over 70 percent of the sector.

Better Nutrition means confronting Namibia's triple burden of malnutrition: stunting in children, micronutrient deficiencies in women, and rising diet-related disease in our cities. In 2024, only

62.3 percent of women aged 15 to 49 met minimum dietary diversity standards. We need to do better.

A Better Environment means protecting and restoring Namibia's rangelands, forests, which have declined from 10.3 to 8.4 percent of land area since 1990, fisheries and scarce water resources, while mainstreaming climate resilience and green innovation into everything we do.

And a Better Life means ensuring gains reach those who need them most: women farmers, young people, communal smallholders and fishing communities. The CPF carries an explicit commitment to gender equality and youth inclusion across all its outputs.

PARTNERSHIPS: EXISTING AND EMERGING

Ladies and Gentlemen, Namibia is not alone in this work, and FAO is not the only partner at the table. The strength of this CPF lies in its foundation of real, operational partnerships that are already delivering on the ground.

Through our South–South Cooperation initiative with China, agricultural experts are working with Namibian farmers on crop production, poultry and aquaculture. Through the EU-funded STOSAR II programme, we are strengthening regional surveillance for transboundary pests and diseases with SADC and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform. Through our Japan-funded drought resilience project, we are going to reach 6,000 youth- and women-led households across Erongo, Kunene, Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Hardap with agro-inputs, livestock support and climate-smart training. And through the STAS TCP project, we are building the institutional architecture, working groups, coordination mechanisms, monitoring frameworks to turn Namibia's agrifood transformation strategy from paper into practice. Looking ahead, FAO will mobilise new partnerships through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the One Country One Priority Product initiative, and joint UN programming under the UNSDCF to amplify impact, attract investment and avoid duplication.

SECURING IMPACT IN A PERIOD OF DECLINING GLOBAL FUNDING

I must be frank. The total resource requirement for this CPF is USD 15.7 million, of which USD 6.8 million is currently available, leaving a gap of USD 8.9 million. We should strategically close that gap with impact-driven evidence when global Official Development Assistance is contracting and competition for funds is intensifying. Good intentions and comprehensive frameworks are not enough; we must make the case for investment with rigour and demonstrated results. FAO Namibia will pursue this gap through bilateral and multilateral channels, climate finance instruments, South-South modalities and UN Joint Programmes under the UNSDCF “Delivering as One” agenda. Our results framework with clear baselines, disaggregated indicators and annual reviews is our accountability contract with the people of Namibia.

A COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA

Honourable Minister, ladies and gentlemen, as we sign this framework today, I would like us to remember who it is for. It is for the smallholder farmer in Ohangwena who needs better seeds and access to markets. It is for the mother in Kavango whose child is stunted not because food is unavailable, but because it is unaffordable. It is for the young man in //Karas whose productivity and potential are constrained by drought and limited economic opportunity. It is for the fisherwoman on the Namibian coast whose livelihood depends on well-governed, sustainable marine resources. It is for every Namibian who deserves a food-secure, well-nourished and prosperous future.

Namibia has the policy frameworks, the institutions, the natural resources and above all the human capital to achieve this future. What this CPF provides is a structured, funded, results-oriented partnership to help make it a reality.

FAO stands committed, unreservedly, to the full and effective implementation of this Country Programming Framework. We will bring to this partnership our global technical standards, our analytical capacity, our convening power and our accountability to results. We will stand alongside the Government of Namibia every step of the way, until the nation realizes food security for every citizen.

I Thank You...