



Remarks By:

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World Food Day Celebrations

Stampriet

19th October 2017

Mr. Percy Msika, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture,
Water and Forestry

Hon. Esmé Sophia Isaack, Governor of the Hardap Region

Senior Government Officials,

Regional Councillors

Traditional Leaders,

Representatives of civil society and private sector,

Colleagues from the United Nations Country Team,

Distinguished guests,

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning,

I am so pleased to be with you here in Stampriet, to celebrate World Food Day (Also 72nd birthday of the Food and Agriculture Organization). This year's theme is: 'Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development'.

I would like to express gratitude to the Governor for hosting us in the beautiful Hardap region; the region that stretches the entire width of Namibia and is home to the Hardap Dam.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to make a few remarks before I read the statement of the Director General of the FAO.

In 2015, the Global Development Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals was launched. The SDGs are directly relevant to Namibia's national aspirations elaborated in Vision 2030; the NDP5; the Harambee Prosperity Plan and the Poverty Eradication Blue Print.

The common thread in all these plans is an agenda to end poverty; save our planet; and ensure prosperity for all.

Globally and nationally there is a recognition of the link between food security and migration^[1]. And addressing hunger features prominently in all Namibia's strategic plans.

- Between 2010 and 2011, approximately 41,000 residents migrated to different regions in Namibia^[2]. Currently 43% of Namibians live in urban areas^[3].
- In addition, approximately 37% percent of Namibians are undernourished while 24% of children under the age of 5 are stunted^[4].

Although migration brings benefits such as remittances to family members left behind, or transfer of skills to areas of settlement, if not understood and managed, migration can sometimes impact negatively on development.

Director of Ceremonies,

The good news is that Namibia is active in both areas.

With the support of the UN's International Organization on Migration (IOM) Namibia launched a migration profile in 2016; an

^[1] World Food Programme Report: 'Food Insecurity Accelerates Global Migration', Published on 05 May 2017

^[2] Footnote: Namibia 2011 Census, MIGRATION REPORT, Namibia Statistics Agency 2015

^[3] Government of Namibia website <http://www.gov.na/population>

^[4] Namibia Zero Hunger Strategic Review Report 2016

attempt to consolidate information into one concise report and the first step towards a Migration Policy.

Namibia has and is implementing its National Policies on Agriculture, Climate Change and Disaster all with a clear focus on food security.

The UN through its Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) supports: the Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry to assist communities to build their resilience in areas such as Conservation Agriculture; the development of water infrastructure along human and livestock migration routes and the strengthening of food production, and livestock vaccinations against disease.

Ladies and Gentlemen, every year we commemorate World Food Day to raise awareness on the issues around food security. Today is therefore a good day to recommit to the War on Poverty and to ask what more you can do for the 18% of Namibians who still live in poverty.

Ladies and Gentlemen without further ado allow me to read the statement of the Director General of FAO Mr. José Graziano da Silva:

Throughout history, one of the most effective strategies for people to look for a better future has been to move. In most cases leaving impoverished rural areas in search of more productive opportunities elsewhere.

Indeed, migration has since our earliest days been essential to the human story — the source of multiple economic and cultural benefits. But when migration is out of extreme need, distress and despair, it becomes another story. Forced migration is rooted in

conflicts, political instability, extreme poverty, hunger, environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change.

In these situations, people have no choice other than to move.

This year's slogan for World Food Day (16 October), "Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development", addresses the structural drivers of large movements of people in order to make migration safe, orderly and regular.

This is all the more pertinent today because the numbers of hungry people are on the rise again after decades of progress.

According to the 2017 State of Food Security and Nutrition report (SOFI), 815 million people suffered from hunger in 2016, an increase of 38 million people compared to 2015 (777 million). This was largely due to conflicts, droughts and floods around the world.

In fact, conflicts have driven northeast Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen to the brink of famine and triggered acute food insecurity also in Burundi, Iraq and elsewhere. Globally there are now around 64 million people forcibly displaced by conflict and persecution, the highest number since the Second World War. Furthermore, drought, due to an unusually powerful El Niño, has sharply reduced access to food in much of Africa.

Rural households often bear the brunt of these drivers. Most of the world's poor live in rural areas, and many rural youth, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, migrate in the absence of productive opportunities.

But let's set the story straight: Despite widely held perceptions, most of those who migrate remain in their countries of origin. There are around 763 million internal migrants worldwide, one in every eight people on the planet with the majority moving from the countryside to cities. Of the 244 million international migrants recorded in 2015, one-third came from G20 countries and consisted of people who moved to pursue more productive opportunities. South-South migratory flows are now larger than those from developing to the developed nations.

Make migration a choice

Conflict, rural poverty, and climate change, all demand increasing attention as they drive up distress migration as a last resort, which generates a tangle of moral, political and economic problems for migrants, their eventual hosts and the transit points in between. We all have roots and few of us wish to sever them. In fact, even in the most extreme situations, people would rather remain at home.

Inclusive rural development can help on all fronts, curbing conflict, boosting sustainability and making migration a matter of choice rather than desperation.

Decent employment opportunities – which can be generated by productive agriculture and supporting activities ranging from seed research and credit provision to storage infrastructure and food processing businesses – are urgently needed to convince a fast-growing number of young people in rural areas that there are better fates than hazardous journeys to unknown destinations.

Migration itself is part of rural development, seasonal migration is closely linked to the agricultural calendars, and remittances are a huge force for improving both rural welfare and farm productivity.

Migrants' contribution to development needs to be recognized and cherished, as they are the bridges between countries of origin, transit and destination.

FAO is working to address the root causes of migration. This means promoting policy options that favour vulnerable people. It includes youth job training and inclusive access to credit, crafting social protection programmes that offer cash or in-kind transfers, specific measures to support those returning to rural areas of origin, and offering assistance for the provision of seeds, fertilizers and animal-health services, fine-tuning early warning systems for weather risks and by working for sustainable natural resource and land use.

As co-chair in 2018 of the Global Migration Group, comprising 22 UN agencies and the World Bank, FAO will advocate for solutions that make migration an act of choice and not a desperate last resort. Agriculture and rural development have a key role to play in this.

That is why FAO dedicates World Food Day 2017 to the relationship between migration, agriculture and rural development.

It is our intention to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty, food insecurity, inequality, unemployment and lack of social protection. To save lives, we must rebuild the environment in which people live, reinforcing their resilience and guaranteeing their livelihoods. And offer them the possibility of a dignified way of life.

Strengthening the resilience of rural communities is also vital in conflict situations, through a combination of humanitarian and developmental actions. This is a fundamental point of cooperation between the three Rome agencies: FAO, IFAD and WFP. In addition, it is necessary to support migrants so that they

are better received in their countries of destination. We must thus accept, protect, promote and, above all, integrate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

FAO has been working at several levels to make migration an important tool for sustainable development.

In 2018, FAO will co-chair the Global Migration Group together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This Group will lead the consultations for the adoption of a "Global Pact for Migration", a document that will serve as a basis for the promotion of safe, regular and orderly migration.

That global commitment is important, but not sufficient. It is also necessary to act with more determination and solidarity. The theme of World Food Day 2017, "Changing the future of migration. Investing in food security and rural development" is a call to life, work, peace, land, water and our daily bread.

As the motto of our organization FIAT PANIS says - Let there be bread, for all.

I thank you.