

Check Against Delivery



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Address

By

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**On the Occasion of the High-Level Segment of
Seventeenth Session of the Commission on
Sustainable Development (CSD-17)**

**New York
13 May 2008**

Madam Chairperson

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the on set, let me congratulate you madam chairperson and your Bureau for the manner in which you have managed the activities of the Commission since your election.

Madam Chairperson,

I hope we are all of the same understanding that, the Seventeenth Session of the CSD is taking place at a very critical time in our history. The world today is facing multiple crises and major challenges. These are the financial and economic crisis, the food and energy crisis and the negative impacts of climate change and variability, that are threatening to undermine the livelihoods of millions of people, by throwing them into dehumanizing poverty. These challenges further undermine and in certain instances reverse the progress made over decades for economic development, peace and stability and social progress as well as the internationally agreed development goals including MDGs.

Against that background, this Session cannot and should not be business as usual. The people we represent have high expectation on the out come of our meeting and the actions for implementation there after. It is deplorable that valuable time is spent on debates about the meaning of concepts as opposed to ways and means of implementing them. The themes for the current thematic cycle namely agriculture, rural development, land, drought desertification, Africa, inter-linkages and crosscutting issues and

means of implementation are at the core of the struggle against poverty.

My country, Namibia has taken the current session of the CSD seriously. We have invested time and resources in preparation for CSD 17. As you may be aware Namibia is one of the vice chairpersons representing Africa. Similarly, the government of the Republic of Namibia has hosted the CSD intersessional high level meeting on African Agriculture. The participation of African Ministers at the Windhoek High-level Conference clearly underscored the importance that Africa attaches to agriculture. It is a well-known fact that the majority of people in developing countries depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and food security. At the same time agriculture contributes in no small measures to the management of natural resources including their sustainable utilization.

As host and co-Chair of that meeting, I would like to thank those Ministers who participated in the Windhoek meeting for their inputs that have greatly enriched the work of this session. A special word of thanks goes to you Madam Chair, for your participation in the Windhoek meeting and for the dynamic leadership you have provided. African Ministers underscored the urgency of a sustainable green revolution to boost agricultural production.

Madam Chair,

We believe the green economy is the way to address current and perhaps future food crises. Our efforts for poverty eradication are based on the principle of sustainable development. And in order to address the challenges posed by food insecurity and to bring about sustainable development, it is necessary to holistically consider all sectors of agriculture and food production. Those should include crop production, livestock and aquaculture, be it mono culture or

mixed farming. Different levels of agricultural production from small to medium and large scale farming must be given the attention they deserve both at the national, regional and international levels. By doing so improved productivity and sustainability as well as income security will be realized.

The Government of Namibia has initiated a process to mobilize domestic resources for implementing its green scheme policy for enhanced agricultural productivity, increased production and marketing. In other words our Green Scheme is a national framework through which sustainable agricultural production interventions will be implemented effectively.

We believe our efforts at the national level contribute to the realization of the African Sustainable Green Revolution. The Green Revolution must be based on the empowerment of farmers. It should also make farming attractive to all sections of the population including young graduates. We further believe that right policies, institution, infrastructure and investment in scientific research, technological transfer and development as well as information dissemination are essential for the success of the Green revolution.

There is a need to recognize the crucial role played by women in agriculture and rural development. Women farmers should be empowered through skills development and secure land tenure, as they make up the majority of agricultural producers. Their decisions further affect investment and productivity in the rural areas. We need to further enhance sustainable land management practices, combat desertification and land degradation so as to improve rural development while mitigating and adapting to the negative effects of climate change for present and future generations.

Madam Chair

Laudable efforts are being undermined by natural disasters such as drought, floods and field fires amongst others. Developing countries have learned to cope with recurrent natural disasters, however, due to climate change the nature and intensity of natural disasters have changed for worse. My country, Namibia is drought prone but of late we also had to deal with devastating floods that left untold destruction of infrastructure and agricultural land as well as loss of human lives. As the rainy season now draws to a close field fires will be another challenge that we have to face especially now with the presence of above average bio-mass due to the good rains.

In addition Madam Chair, species of invader bushes that results in bush-encroachment further contributes to land degradation and low productivity. Efforts aimed at combating desertification and land degradation should include programmes to restore degraded land.

Our capacity for disaster risk reduction and management is continuously being challenged and in certain instances it goes beyond our capacity. There is therefore a need for our development partners and the entire international community to support human and institutional capacity building to enhance our disaster risk reduction and management capacity.

Madam Chair,

Climate change is a serious threat to development efforts and interventions in developing countries. Our efforts are directly undermined by production and consumption patterns in other parts of the world. It is evident that our poverty reduction efforts will not produce the desired results as long as those countries with high emissions continue to do so unchecked.

I would like to pose a question through you, Madam Chair, as to how long those who are defending their standard of life will be allowed to continue on the expense of those struggling to fight poverty and to protect the environment?

It is absolutely crucial, that a development round of climate change negotiations is concluded in Copenhagen with clear commitments for a transparent and predictable financial mechanism, commitment to finance the transfer and development of clean technology and commitment for resources to capacity building in developing countries.

Madam Chair

We are all in a collective and collaborative undertaking. Both developing and developed countries have a crucial role to play in order to make sustainable development a reality for the people of the world. Indeed, all policy options that have been identified during this session will amount to nothing if we leave this session without agreeing on the means of implementation. We are cognizant of the fact that there are no policies without financial implications. Therefore if we are sincere in our deliberations we have to agree on financial means and resource mobilization to implement our stated policies.

For implementing our agreed policies, we need to be focused and target specific strategic areas. There is therefore a need to mobilize investment for the needed infrastructure for agriculture and rural development, including irrigation, roads, electricity and communication technologies.

Madam Chairperson,

International financial institutions and other funding agencies should put in place easy, simple and streamlined procedures for

timely disbursement of funds for food and agricultural input purchases if we are to win the battle against poverty and food insecurity.

Madam Chairperson, *In conclusion,*

The people we left back home in our respective countries are looking upon us to deliver desirable results that will have meaningful and real impacts on their lives. We should therefore make use of the remaining hours to finalize the negotiated text for adoption before we leave New York.

I thank you

