STATEMENT

BY

MR. PENDAPALA A. NAANDA
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

SECOND COMMITTEE
OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM 25: "AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION"

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Mr Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to express the appreciation of my delegation for the highly efficient way in which you and the Bureau have been steering the work of this Session of the Second Committee. Namibia welcomes the report of the Secretary General on this agenda item and fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China, and welcomes the opportunity to make a few national comments.

Mr Chairman,

With less than three years before a 2015 deadline, the developing world is largely expected to miss one of the UN’s key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger. Despite limited progress, there are still more than 1.4 billion people—out of a total global population of over seven billion, who live below the poverty line of 1.25 dollars and on the razor edge of starvation. Therefore, Mr Chairman, we the Member States of the United Nations will have to make serious and concerted efforts to address these challenges.

Namibia’s National Development Plan (NDP4) commits the Government to devise programmes and projects to ensure food security. In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry’s Strategic Plan identifies key strategic issues for national and household food security which is guided by the following key policies: the National Agricultural policy, the National Food and Nutrition Policy, the National Drought Policy and the Green Scheme Policy.

Namibia is a country that could be described as vulnerable to food shortages. A large part of the Namibian population depends on agriculture directly and indirectly for their livelihoods. Subsistence agriculture sustains approximately 48% of rural households. Our country and the region as a whole face challenges like the severe effects of climate change, water scarcity and land degradation and chronic droughts. Namibia also struggles to correct the historically skewed land distribution where a small minority had, and continue to have access to most of the farmland in the country.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry is mandated to promote, develop, manage and utilize agricultural, water and forestry resources. This involves diversification of agricultural practices and products, job creation, improved competitiveness, developing the market locally, regionally and internationally,
ensuring potable water and basic sanitation services, promoting integrated 
environmental management, improving the regulatory framework, promoting food 
safety standards and most of all, to ensure food security.

Namibia is one of the most arid countries in the world, and this hugely impacts 
agriculture and specifically crop production. About 56% of water used in Namibia is 
drawn from dams, rivers and so-called unconventional sources such as water 
purification, while the remaining 44% is abstracted from groundwater sources.

Mr Chairman,

Namibia welcomes international efforts to address the challenges regarding food 
security, and fully supports the Zero Hunger Challenge launched at the UN 
Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. We trust 
that the enhancement of food and nutrition security will figure prominently in the 
post-2015 development agenda.

Honourable Nahas Angula our Minister of Defence is one of the world leaders 
involved in the Scale Up Nutrition (SUN) Lead Group. At the national level, the Office 
of the Prime Minister (OPM) is the convener of the National Alliance for Improved 
Nutrition (NAFIN) that was established in November 2010 with the aim of reducing 
malnutrition and promoting good nutrition for all Namibians, while focusing on 
women and children by ensuring the economic and social benefits of nutrition 
security that are reflected in sectoral plans and policies, as well as the National 
Development Plans.

Mr Chairman,

Namibia wishes to express its appreciation to the Food and Agriculture Organization 
(FAO) for their continued support and ongoing national and regional projects aimed 
at improved production and the transfer of technologies.

In conclusion, let us not forget the important role that women play in Agriculture and 
food production around the world. In Namibia a large percentage of women are 
involved in subsistence farming, and thus contribute enormously to food security 
and economic development. We believe the gender aspect of agriculture and food 
security is important and should be mainstreamed in national as well as international 
development agendas.

Nutrition and food security should be the top development goal as the international 
community sets its priorities beyond 2015, the target date for a achieving the globally 
agreed anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 
line with the UN Secretary-General’s Zero Hunger Challenge, and in close
collaboration with our development partners, we agree that we should be striving for the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

I thank you.