



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**  
**BY**  
**HONOURABLE AGNES TJONGARERO**  
**MINISTER OF SPORT, YOUTH AND NATIONAL**  
**SERVICE**

**12 AUGUST 2021**

**INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY**  
**DORDABIS COMMUNITY HALL**  
**DORDABIS**

Hon Calle Schlettwein, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform;

Hon Laura McLeod - Katjirua, Governor: Khomas Region;

Hon Piet Adams, Councillor: Windhoek Rural Constituency;

Esteemed Sheila Roseau, United Nations Populations Fund;

Esteemed Sen Pang, United Nations Resident Coordinator;

Esteemed Sharonice Busch, Executive Chairperson: NYC;

Esteemed Dr. Audrin Mathe, Executive Director: MSYNS;

Esteemed Dr. Felix Musukubili, Commissioner: NYS;

Media Practitioners;

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my distinct honour to be part of this event today and deliver the keynote remarks, in celebration of the International Youth Day, in Dordabis, Khomas Region. The theme, “Transforming food systems: Youth innovation for human and planetary health” is quite befitting, as current estimates show that nearly nine percent (9%) of the world population, which is about six hundred and ninety million (690 million) people, are going hungry. Also, how appropriate that we gather here today in Dordabis, a place in which farming is the main business activity.

The highlighted statistics clearly indicates, that many people globally, are potentially on the brink of starvation, thus the theme today is befitting, as prompt action needs to be taken to provide the necessary food relief. Sustainable Development

Goal number two (2) on zero hunger targets, envisage to “ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices, that increase productivity and production; that help maintain ecosystems; that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters; and that progressively improve land and soil quality, by the year 2030.

### **Ladies and gentlemen;**

It is no secret that the youth represent a rapidly growing segment of our population, thus the importance of strengthening enabling instruments cannot be overemphasize enough, so as to position the youth to play a meaningful role in various areas, with agribusiness industry being one of such areas. Therefore, Youth Day, is an important platform to bring youth issues to the attention of not only the international community, but also nationally, to celebrate the potential of the youth, as partners in today’s global society. Youth Day thus accord us the opportunity, to celebrate young peoples’ voices, actions and initiatives, and recognized their engagement and contributions.

As the Minister responsible for youth affairs, when perusing this program, I am indeed delighted to notice the amount of young experts being engaged, in their various fields of expertise. Our commitment remains steadfast towards youth empowerment and development. In pursuit of the fulfillment of the national priorities of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service,

in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, developed a National Youth in Agricultural Value Chains and Agribusiness Program, also known as the YIA Program.

The YIA Program is a five (5) year program, aimed at encouraging youth driven investments in agribusiness development; promoting capacity development across viable value chains, and empowering the youth to contribute to food security. The uniqueness of the program, is that it drives youth employment opportunities in agriculture, in an effort to promote self-employment, with a view of tackling challenges related to youth unemployment in Namibia.

Unfortunately, we are in an era distressed by unprecedented uncertainties, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, that has devastating economic impacts on Namibia and the world at large. It is for this reason, that now more than ever, we need to drive transformational change in food systems, as an emerging strategy. When there seems to be a fragmentation of services, dialogues are opportunities for widespread engagement, as they can act as encouragement of collaborative measures.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

To this end, the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service, has established youth agriculture projects in all the 14 regions of the country, as a means to create opportunities for income generation for the youth, while also contributing to

food security. Last year, in corroboration with the National Youth Service and the National Youth Council of Namibia, we initiated youth self-employment opportunities in three (3) agricultural projects namely: horticulture, charcoal and mushroom cultivation projects.

As I approach the end of my address, I wish to recognize Ministerial partners who have been unwavering in their commitment to assisting government, in combating the challenges of youth empowerment. Our developmental partners at the United Nations, Mr. Pang and Ms. Roseau, your contribution to the empowerment of young people is commendable, and I look forward to our continued productive relationship.

In conclusion, let me leave you with these final words quoted from Ban Ki-moon: “Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all”

**I THANK YOU.**