



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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**Motivation by Hon. Hidipo Hamata (PDM) regarding the Motion to discuss the plight of farmers residing north of the redline *vis-à-vis* creation of a local market that prioritises these farmers**

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**April 16, 2024**

**Honorable Speaker,**

**Honorable Members,**

1. I rise today to present a proposal aimed at bolstering Namibia's livestock industry and empowering farmers in the Northern Communal Areas (NCAs). Our nation's agricultural sector is the backbone of our economy, providing livelihoods for thousands of Namibians and ensuring food security for our people.
2. Yet, certain regions such as Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Omusati, Kunene, Kavango East and West and Zambezi, which have a combined population of over one-million inhabitants, face unique challenges due to the presence of redline, hindering farmers' ability to access markets and maximize the value of their estimated 1.16 million cattle and approximately 860,000 sheep and goats. It is imperative that we address

these challenges and unlock the potential of these regions to contribute fully to our nation's agricultural prosperity.

3. **Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members**, it is for this reason that I deemed it necessary to table this important Motion – to discuss the plight of farmers residing in the NCAs and find durable solutions thereto. These farmers lack access to a suitable market, have difficulty accessing funding, and have no proper infrastructure, such as abattoirs and mobile slaughter units. Economic opportunities are shrinking for many of these farmers, with high poverty levels, leading to intergenerational transfer of poverty. As a result, farmers in the NCAs are discouraged, disempowered, and often vulnerable.
4. I, thus, propose the establishment of a Livestock Expo specifically tailored to showcase and promote livestock from NCAs. This Expo will serve as a beacon of hope for farmers, providing them with a platform to connect with buyers, investors, and stakeholders from across Namibia and beyond.
5. **The objectives of this Expo are clear:**
  - Firstly, to promote market access and economic opportunities for farmers in the NCAs. By providing a dedicated marketplace and auction area, we will empower farmers to sell their livestock at fair prices and negotiate directly with buyers.
  - Secondly, to facilitate knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and capacity building in livestock management and disease control. Workshops, seminars, and demonstrations will equip farmers with the skills and resources needed to improve their farming practices and enhance productivity.

- Thirdly, to foster regional integration and cooperation in the livestock sector. By bringing together farmers, government officials, industry stakeholders, and international partners, we will create opportunities for collaboration, investment, and market development.
6. **Honorable Members**, the Expo will not only stimulate economic growth but also empower farmers to build strong and thriving livelihoods for themselves and their families. The establishment of a Livestock Expo in Namibia's NCAs is a crucial step towards realizing the full potential of our agricultural sector.
  7. I am not only proposing the establishment of a Livestock Expo but also to advocate for meaningful policy changes, specifically the creation of a livestock marketing and trading agency, to coordinate and manage the marketing and trading of livestock and livestock products in the NCAs. The agency I am advocating for will be mandated to manage the meat processing and marketing efforts.
  8. **Honorable Speaker**, the creation of this agency will empower farmers from the NCAs and ensure their economic prosperity, thereafter ensuring the attainment of meat safety and security. Meatco's purchase requirements are not favorable to the NCAs farmers (in my view, this is a deliberate attempt to exclude farmers from the NCAs). Most of these NCA-based producers have good-quality slaughter-ready cattle available, but Meatco is not a viable marketing option or partner for their cattle.
  9. **Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members**, I am aware and equally appreciative of the Honorable Minister of Finance and Public Enterprises' Notice of issuance of *Code of good Practise* which, under *paragraph 3*

(1)(a), compels that raw meat of cloven hoofed animals inclusive of beef, sheep, goat, pork or game to be supplied north of the veterinary cordon fence must be sourced from suppliers north of the veterinary cordon fence. **Honorable Speaker**, little is known about this *Code of good Practice*, and it is unfortunately ineffective.

10. While we pride ourselves on the principles of a free market economy, we must recognize that some of our fellow Namibians face disproportionate barriers to participating fully in this market. Farmers from the NCAs often struggle to compete on a level playing field, hampered by restrictions on livestock movement and limited market access.

11. Therefore, I call upon the government to make amendments to existing laws and policies that will level the playing field and provide opportunities for farmers from NCAs to thrive.

12. Furthermore, I urge the government to mandate that powerful businesses and government entities operating in these areas, including those selling meat, strictly source their products from local farmers through the proposed agency. By compelling them to support local farmers, we can empower these farmers financially and provide economic benefits to their families and communities.

13. This approach is not about handouts or special treatment; it is about creating a fair and equitable environment where all Namibians have the opportunity to succeed. By harnessing the purchasing power of government institutions and holding businesses accountable for sourcing locally (in the NCAs), we can stimulate economic growth, promote rural development, and build stronger, more resilient communities.

14. In closing, I implore each of you to consider the profound impact that these policy changes could have on the lives of our fellow Namibians. Let

us stand together in solidarity with our farmers from NCAs, recognizing their contributions to our nation's prosperity and ensuring that they have the support they need to thrive.

Thank you.