



Revised National Food & Nutrition Security Policy



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PREAMBLE



Adequate nutrition is a basic human right and a prerequisite for both national growth and sustainable development. Improving nutrition status of the Namibian population is not only an ethical responsibility but also a step towards the attainment of objectives of Namibia's Vision 2030. The Government of the Republic of Namibia has made great efforts to improve the health and nutritional status of everyone in Namibia. Despite these efforts, many households still face challenges in accessing nutritious and safe food. Maternal and child undernutrition remains a major public health and development issue. Further, Namibia is now facing the double burden of malnutrition and growing levels of obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases especially in urban and peri-urban settings.

One of the primary responsibilities of the Government is to improve the health and nutrition of its people through well-designed, coordinated and implemented policies and strategies. To sustainably address the underlying and immediate causes of malnutrition, the Government will support a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to the implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy through a well-coordinated and managed institutional framework. The revived and strengthened Food and Nutrition Security Council will perform this function supported by structures at the regional, district and constituency level.

The Government acknowledges that significant improvements in the food and nutrition status of the people of Namibia will only be realised through innovative and transformative investments at every stage of the food value-chain, guided by a clear understanding of the food system. This food systems approach must address binding constraints in input supply, food production, aggregation, processing, marketing, and consumption to improve food quality, availability, affordability, consumption, and dietary diversity across all age-groups of the country's population. It can only address malnutrition in all its facets through the implementation of quality food and nutrition programmes, sustainable investment in food security and proper accountability. It will seek to support increased domestic funding for food and nutrition security, strengthen information management systems and build the capacity of human resources to develop and implement quality food and nutrition security programmes.

The formulation process of the policy was inclusive, and yielded consensus and integration of multiple ideas from all sectors that will enhance ownership, commitment, and collaboration towards attainment of the Policy objectives. The policy is not intended to replace or duplicate other sectoral policies or strategies; rather it provides an overarching framework that speaks to all strategic documents related to food and nutrition while informing those that will be developed by line ministries to foster policy alignment.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia calls upon all stakeholders to commit to and invest in food and nutrition security to ensure effective implementation of this policy, with the common goal to end hunger and eliminate all forms of malnutrition and its related

consequences on the Namibian population, and ultimately contribute to attainment of Namibia's Vision 2030.


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DR. SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA, MP
PRIME MINISTER

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome
AMTA	Agro Marketing and Trade Agency
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
BMI	Body Mass Index
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDRM	Directorate of Disaster Risk Management
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FNSC	Food and Nutrition Security Council
FNSIASC	Food and Nutrition Security Inter-Agency Steering Committee
FNSMIS	Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System
FNSP	Food and Nutrition Security Policy
FNSSC	Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICN	International Conference on Nutrition
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAWLR	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
MDVA	Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs
MEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
MEFT	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MGEPESW	Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
MHETI	Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation
MICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
MIT	Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade
MLIREC	Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment Creation
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MSYNS	Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service
MT	Metric tonnes
MURD	Ministry of Urban and Rural Development
NAD	Namibia dollar
NAFIN	National Alliance for Improved Nutrition
NAFSAN	Nutrition and Food Security Alliance of Namibia
NAMVAC	Namibia Vulnerability Assessment Committee
NCA	Northern Communal Area
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NDHS	Namibian Demographic and Health Survey
NDP5	Fifth National Development Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPCC	National Policy on Climate Change
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
NSFP	Namibian School Feeding Programme
NSI	Namibia Standards Institute
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OMA	Offices, Ministries and Agencies
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PITC	Provider-initiated testing and counselling
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
SUNCIP	Scaling Up Nutrition Country Implementation Plan
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States of America dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS

1,000 days: The 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's 2nd birthday. This period is known as the window of opportunity as this is the most critical time for positive impact on a child's cognitive and physical development.

Acute Malnutrition (also known as wasting): A low weight for height (below -2z scores of the median WHO growth standards), usually associated with starvation and/or disease.

BMI: Body mass index defined as weight (in kg) divided by height (in M) squared.

Breast Milk Substitute: Any food marketed or otherwise represented as a partial or total replacement for breast milk, whether or not suitable for that purpose.

Common Results Framework: A comprehensive framework that contains nutrition-related shared goals and aligned actions (both specific nutrition interventions and nutrition-sensitive approaches) from government ministries and other stakeholders to achieve stated goals.

Coordination: process in which, under the leadership of a legitimate authoritative individual or organisation, stakeholders exchange information, align activities and resources around on agreed results framework, and enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose.

Complementary Feeding: Gradual introduction of nutritionally age-appropriate and safe foods during the transition from exclusive breastfeeding to two years or more while the mother continues to breastfeed.

Emergency: Situation of hardship and human suffering that overwhelms people's capacity to manage and cope alone for a period and requires intervention with support from outsiders.

Exclusive Breastfeeding: To achieve optimal growth, development and health, infants should receive only breast milk, no other liquids or solids– not even water – for the first six months of life.

Food diversification: maximisation of the number of different foods or food groups consumed by an individual, especially beyond starchy grains and cereals.

Food Fortification: process of adding micronutrients, or restoring those lost during processing, to food products.

Food Security: a situation when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life.

Food system: the ecosystem, people, resources, and all activities involved in the production, processing, preservation, trade, distribution, preparation, and consumption of foods.

Hunger: uncomfortable or painful sensation caused by the need to eat. In global, hunger often refers to insufficient food consumption or prolonged lack of food that can lead to malnutrition.

Infant and Young Child Feeding: the feeding of infants (less than 12 months old) and young children (12–23 months old) including the protection, promotion and support of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months; timely introduction of complementary feeding and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond.

Institutional Feeding: The provision of food services to residents by established organisations such as hospitals, learning institutions, elderly residential houses, army barracks among others.

International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes: a set of recommendations to regulate the marketing of breast-milk substitutes, feeding bottles and teats adopted at the 34th session of the World Health Assembly in 1981 as a minimum requirement to protect and promote appropriate infant and young child feeding.

Low Birth Weight (also referred as intra-uterine growth retardation): weight at birth less than 2,500 grams due to poor pregnancy conditions.

Malnutrition: abnormal physiological condition resulting from deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in energy, proteins and/or other nutrients.

Micronutrients: Essential vitamins, minerals and other substances that are required in miniscule amounts (milligrams or micrograms) by the body throughout the lifecycle.

Micronutrient deficiency (also referred as Hidden Hunger): lack of essential micronutrients in diets negatively affecting the health, cognitive development and economic development of over two billion people worldwide.

Moderate acute malnutrition: low weight for height (between – 3 and -2 z scores of the median WHO international growth standards) or by a mid-upper arm circumference between 11.5 cm and 12.5 cm.

Multi-stakeholder Platform: A shared space for dialogue among various nutrition stakeholders – government, civil society, UN agencies, donors, business and the research community – to align activities and take joint responsibility for policy implementation, including setting shared targets and coordinated plans of action.

Nutrition Security: nutritional wellbeing attained due to secure access to an appropriately nutritious diet coupled with a sanitary environment, access to safe water, adequate health services and care.

Nutrition-Sensitive Interventions: interventions designed to address the underlying and basic causes of malnutrition and take into consideration the cross-sector impact of nutrition.

Nutrition-Specific Interventions: Interventions that are designed to address direct causes of malnutrition with direct impact on nutritional outcomes, such as exclusive breastfeeding; appropriate complementary feeding; micronutrient fortification and supplementation; and therapeutic feeding.

Obesity: abnormal physiological condition (malnutrition defined by a BMI ≥ 30) caused by excesses or unbalances in energy to the extent that health may be impaired and that can lead to chronic diseases.

Over nutrition: Excessive food intake relative to dietary nutrient requirements.

Overweight: nutritional disorder resulting from an excessive intake and/or inadequate absorption of energy, fats or sugar.

Ready-to-use Therapeutic Foods: Specialized ready-to-eat, portable, shelf-stable products, available as pastes, spreads or biscuits that are used in a prescribed manner to treat children with severe acute malnutrition.

Severe acute malnutrition: very low weight for height (below -3 z scores of the median WHO growth standards), by visible severe wasting, or by the presence of bilateral pitting oedema or mid-upper arm circumference of less than 115 mm in children six – 59 months old.

Strategy: a well-conceived, practical approach to achieving an objective – usually involving a group of interrelated activities.

Strategic Objective: a broad operational objective that supports the policy mission and goals and whose achievement requires a set of strategies.

Stunting: Low height-for-age measurement used as an indicator of chronic malnutrition, calculated by comparing the height-for-age of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children.

Supplementary Feeding: Provision of extra food along with whatever is being consumed to selected group of children, pregnant and lactating women and other nutritionally vulnerable groups to satisfy the nutritional requirements of the individual.

Undernutrition: insufficient intake and/or inadequate absorption of energy, protein or micronutrients leading to nutritional deficiencies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

In 1995, Namibia developed its first Food and Nutrition Policy with the objective to improve the nutritional status of the population through improving the quantity and quality of food eaten to provide adequate nutrition to all, empowering households to use the available resources to improve childcare, feeding practices, and their hygiene and sanitation environment and provision of adequate levels of social and supporting services. In 2010, the Cabinet established the Namibia Alliance for Improved Nutrition (NAFIN), to coordinate and promote accountability on nutrition programming and actions in the country. In 2011, Namibia was accepted as a member of the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. This was followed by the development of the Namibia Scaling-Up Nutrition Country Implementation Plan (SUNCIP) 2012-2016. In 2015, the Ministry of Health and Social Services, in collaboration with Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), initiated the process of revising the Food and Nutrition Policy (1995) into the current policy. The Revised National Food and Nutrition Policy (2021) forms the basis for food and nutrition security actions that consider national progress and challenges raised in the NDP5 and the Zero Hunger Strategy Review Report (2016). Its ultimate objective is to ensure that everyone in Namibia has access to adequate, affordable, safe, sustainable, and quality diets capable of meeting their nutrient requirements for healthy and productive lives.

B. Background information

B1. Namibia Socio-Economic Situation

Namibia is categorised as an upper middle-income country with a population of 2.5 million estimated for 2020 and a per capita income of USD3,217.64 in 2020. This middle-income status masks extreme poverty and inequalities amongst the population and regions. Although Namibia registered a general reduction in poverty incidence between 2003/04 and 2015/16, 17.4% of the population remains poor. Namibia's imports exceed its exports resulting in a trade deficit. The country mainly relies on South Africa for imports. The country imports 50-80% of its food requirements. Malnutrition contributes to more than 45% of all deaths in children under five years of age. More than half of Namibia's poor households are in rural areas and engaged in subsistence farming.

B2. Climate Change Situation

Namibia is classified as semi-arid to arid receiving rainfall of up to 700 mm per year. Climate variability greatly affects agricultural production exacerbating household food insecurity and malnutrition.

B3. Food Security Situation

In 2016, a food and nutrition security assessment indicated that 34% of the Namibian population were food insecure. In 2017, Namibia's Global Hunger Index Score declined to 25.7 from 30.9 recorded in 2008 depicting a serious hunger situation in Namibia. In Namibia, the major staple crops are white maize, wheat, pearl millet and sorghum. Livestock products are mainly from cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, and poultry. Whereas Namibia is a surplus producer

for beef, the country remains food insufficient because of fluctuation of cereal production over the years. Cereal production meets only 60% of domestic requirements and the remaining 40% is imported from the SADC region. Factors impeding availability, access and utilisation of nutritious foods in subsistence-based households include high levels of poverty, inequality in income distribution, chronic drought and recurrent water shortages resulting in death of animals and crop failures, widespread soil erosion and land degradation, limited income-generating opportunities and restrictions on women's access to, and control over land and resources.

Among indigenous communities, the gathering of wild foods is still an important livelihood strategy. However, it is highly seasonal and limited in most areas by lack of access to land. Formal employment is a major determinant of food security, mostly because it offers regular cash income, but employment opportunities for individuals from indigenous people remain limited.

B4. Nutrition Situation in Namibia

Since independence, the proportion of undernourished children under five years old has steadily declined. The demographic health survey of 2013 indicated that, of the under five-year old children; 24% are stunted, 6% wasted and 13% underweight. While there is a commendable 5 percentage points decline in stunting when compared to previous data presented in NDHS 2006/7, the current level of stunting is a clear reflection of persistent low food intake and recurrent or chronic infections. According to the not yet published Cost of Hunger in Namibia Report, stunting increased to 30.4% by 2016¹. In addition to poor nutrient intake, intestinal parasites such as helminths and Schistosomiasis aggravate micronutrient inadequacy, but only 43% of children under the age of five years receive deworming medication as a complementary measure to improve micronutrient status.

The 2013 NDHS showed that 14% of women of childbearing age (15-49 years) were thin (BMI below 18.5) due to insufficient energy intake, with the prevalence being higher in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. At the same time, 32% of women were overweight (BMI between 24.9 and 29.9) or obese (BMI above 30). This co-existence of undernutrition and overweight, suggests that Namibia is undergoing a nutrition transition with overweight or obesity being more of a public health concern than underweight in women because of its association to non-communicable diseases. The status of the most common micronutrient deficiencies like vitamin A, iodine, and zinc is not well documented in Namibia. According to the NDHS 2013, anaemia, which is an indication of iron deficiency, affects 48% of children aged 6-59 months and 21% of women of childbearing age.

B5. Health status for vulnerable population in Namibia

The 2013 NDHS report shows that diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection and fever are the most common infections among children under five years of age in Namibia. Additionally, Malaria, HIV/AIDS and TB, and other infectious diseases are risk factors for undernutrition. Long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and indoor residual spraying are part of the integrated strategy for malaria prevention, but only 24% of households have at least one

¹ Cost of Hunger in Namibia – Namibia Country Report, Draft 5, September 2021, p.33. In the following we continue to reference the DHS 2013.

insecticide-treated mosquito net (ITN), and a minimal 6% of children under five years of age sleep under the ITN. In 2014, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS was estimated at 16.9% of the population.

B6. Namibia Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene situation

According to 2013 NDHS, only 49% and 17% of households in urban and rural areas respectively have access to improved water and sanitation conditions and about 48% of the population practice open defecation and 34% of households use improved and individual household-based toilet facilities. Furthermore, about 20% of schools do not have access to toilets. Moreover, the regions with highest rates of open defecation reported highest rates of stunting.

B7. Status of food and nutrition interventions, gaps and opportunities

The sections below outline the various efforts made by the government to mitigate the food and nutrition security in the country.

B8. Food and nutrition security governance

In 2017, the Cabinet through its decision number 1st/14.02.17/004 re-established the Food Security and Nutrition Council (FSNC). This was designed to promote partnerships between government and developing partners and enhance efficiency in implementing food and nutrition security interventions.

B9. Food production, preservation, and marketing interventions

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR) is mandated to promote, develop, manage, and utilise agriculture and water resources sustainably. Over the years, Government has embarked on various programmes and projects aiming at increasing food production in the country including the Green Scheme Programme, the Dryland Crop Production Programme, Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture, National Horticulture Development Initiative, Animal Health and Marketing in the Northern Communal Areas (NCAs) initiative, Fresh Produce Business Hubs, Namibia Fish Consumption Promotion Trust. Furthermore, it has increased the coverage and monthly payments of the social safety net, such as old-age pension grants and food aid.

B10. Management of chronic and acute malnutrition

The management of malnutrition is done within the primary health care system at the clinic, health centre and hospital levels. There is, however, a need to increase and sustain the quality and delivery uptake of the community-based management of acute malnutrition approach.

B11. Maternal and child health care programs

In 2003, MoHSS developed a National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF). The IYCF guidelines were revised in 2010 to include the new WHO recommendations on exclusive breastfeeding and the management of malnutrition in a high HIV environment. The Baby and Mother Friendly Hospital Initiative launched in 1992 should be revamped and all health facilities reassessed and supported to improve implementation and ensure quality service delivery is sustained. To support and promote breastfeeding, in March 2015 Namibia passed a

Public and Environmental Health Act to regulate marketing of breast milk substitutes in line with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

B12. Management of diet related non- communicable diseases

Further investigation is required to establish overweight prevalence among school-age children and adolescents.

B13. Prevention and control of micronutrient interventions

Micronutrient deficiencies are addressed through a combination of interventions including salt iodisation, iron/folic acid supplementation for pregnant women in health facilities, vitamin A supplementation for children and food-based fortification approaches for all age groups. A comprehensive and integrated approach for managing micronutrient deficiencies should be developed. Moreover, a micronutrient surveillance system should be established to track progress and efficiency of implementing the related programmes.

B14. Industrial food fortification programmes

Major cereal industries in Namibia are already undertaking voluntary fortification of maize meal and wheat flour with government-recommended micronutrients. At present, these fortified industrial products are not easily accessible to rural populations who are the most vulnerable to micronutrient-related malnutrition.

B15. Agri-business and bio-fortification interventions

The revised Namibia Agriculture Policy of 2015 identifies the need to increase and diversify food production in all areas of the country with special emphasis on increasing drought tolerant varieties, crop diversification and conservation agriculture including organic agriculture.

B16. Water and sanitation and hygiene interventions

While water supply in Namibia has improved significantly since independence, hygiene, and sanitation indicators in rural areas and in school settings are still a major concern for public health. A national Water Supply and Sanitation Policy was developed in 2008 to safeguard availability of safe water supply and guarantee safe sanitation services to everyone in Namibia at affordable costs. Improvements in equitable access to safe water supply and effective hygiene and sanitation promotion are needed to prevent faecal – oral transmission of infectious bacteria.

B17. Institutional nutrition programmes

In 2000, the Namibian Home Economics Advisory Board initiated the development of Namibian Food and Nutrition Dietary Guidelines to provide guidance on healthy food choices. The Namibian School Feeding Programme (NSFP) has been in existence for 29 years. Started by the World Food Programme (WFP) in 1991, it was fully taken over by the Namibian Government in 1996/1997.

B18. Social protection for vulnerable people

Despite relatively good economic growth, and recent stable employment growth, Namibia's population continues to be susceptible to poverty. About 44% of the population live in multi-dimensional poverty. It is higher in rural (359%) than in urban areas (25%). The Government has enacted various legislations that provide social protection in the country. The National Planning Commission report of 2015 outlines root causes of poverty and interventions, most of which are non-contributory social protection instruments.

B19. Safety, standards, and quality control of food

The Government has put in place the Namibia Food Safety Policy that is currently being implemented through several ministries. However, several challenges have been experienced since the start of the food safety policy implementation. This policy through the coordination structure will provide a basis for the food safety key players to address issues that have, hitherto, impeded for the full implementation of the food safety policy of Namibia.

B20. Integrated Food and Nutrition Security Information System

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) with technical support from WFP and UNICEF developed Namibia Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System (FNSMIS), which incorporates nutrition indicators following a Cabinet decision to provide accurate and timely information and analysis about the prevailing food and nutrition situation in the country. A parallel system, Namibia Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NAMVAC), is tasked with the functions of collecting vulnerability information including confirmation on the prevailing food security status and tracking indicators to inform early warning on impending disasters, guiding rural development strategies, and informing poverty reduction and social safety net programming. However, NAMVAC is dependent on donor funding and its sustainability is questionable. Within the MAWLR, the Crop and Household Food Security Monitoring Assessments (CHFMS) and Agricultural Inputs and Household Food Security Monitoring (AIHFSM) assessments are conducted through the Agro-Business Information Services. However, data collected on food availability both at household and national levels only focus on cereals i.e., maize, sorghum, pearl millet and wheat.

B21. Food and nutrition technical capacity

The Nutrition Subdivision of the MoHSS Directorate of Primary Health Care is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership on nutrition in the country and overseeing implementation of nutrition-specific interventions including the supply of supplementary and therapeutic feeds to manage acute malnutrition. However, it is grossly under-capacitated. The ongoing reform of the health sector is proposing three nutrition officers in each region. Now the Namibian University of Science and Technology is offering a four-year degree programme on Human Nutrition. However, it will take a while before the first batch of nutrition graduates are placed into the health system.

B22. Advocacy, communication, and social mobilisation

Communication, social mobilisation and advocacy for food and nutrition have been shown to be effective tools for changing food and nutrition-related behaviours, increased acceptance of interventions and subsequently reduction of malnutrition rates. In Namibia, the Namibia

Alliance for Improved Nutrition (NAFIN) has been on the forefront in advocating for the enhancement of nutrition status of everyone in Namibia especially for children below the age of five years. In the effort to scale up nutrition interventions, Namibia was one of the “Early Risers” within the global SUN Movement and was accepted as a member in 2011.

B23. Operations research in Food and Nutrition

Currently, Namibia lacks a dedicated National Research Strategy that incorporates operations research for food and nutrition security. Through this policy, the Government is committed to ensuring that operations research is prioritized in program implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This may call for additional resource allocation and capacity development in all sectors to increase the use of operations research results in food and nutrition security programming.

C. RATIONALE AND LEGAL ALIGNMENT

C1. Introduction

To capture the broad scope of the current Policy, its name was expanded beyond the 1995 *Food and Nutrition Policy for Namibia* to National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. The rationale was to show the strong link between food security and nutrition. It was also intended to illustrate food security and nutrition as cornerstones for the realisation of the objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia.

C2. Rationale

Over the past two decades and since the promulgation of Food and Nutrition Policy, emerging evidence globally has provided impetus for coming up with new designs and implementation strategies for food and nutrition security programmes in Namibia. The trend indicates that malnutrition is a multi-causal national challenge that must be addressed by many sectors using a food systems approach. This will ensure balanced investment of resources throughout the value-chain from input supply, farm production, aggregation, processing, marketing to consumption.

Food systems are complex adaptive systems composed of many diverse parts/actors whose interaction with each other drives the functioning of the system. A dysfunction in one sector or by one actor has significant effects to the rest of the actors. The new FNSP therefore looks at coherent game-changing actions and investments that must be prioritised and undertaken from seed and planting stages to harvesting, storing, processing, marketing and consumption, for both crop and livestock, so as to transform Namibia's food system in a manner that improves food quality, availability, affordability and diversity, on the one hand, and food consumption and dietary diversity on the other, in order to address all forms of malnutrition at every stage of the life-cycle.

Namibia's experience has also shown several challenges related to implementation of food and nutrition security programmes but mostly related to global climatic changes, variations in food prices, poor marketing structures, income disparities and population dynamics. Furthermore, the country is faced with epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases that have largely affected national and household income, reduced productivity, and increased morbidity. The current policy is designed to put all these aspects into perspective and provide strategies that will effectively respond to the current national, regional, and global food and nutrition challenges.

C3. Legal Alignment

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP) is well aligned to national sectoral policies, strategies, and the constitution, and contributes to aspirations of Harambee Prosperity Plan and the Zero Hunger Road Map. It resonates well with international conventions and declarations on food and nutrition, which the Government has ratified for the promotion of food and nutrition security.

D. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The implementation and governance of this Policy is founded on the following guiding principles:

- Namibia's commitment to the Universal Human Rights.
- Commitment to implement the recommendations of regional and global initiatives.
- Equity in access to and implementation of nutrition interventions more specifically, eliminating gender and other inequalities to help address some of the underlying causes of vulnerability to malnutrition.
- Effective coordination within and across sectors.
- Community empowerment and effective involvement with incentives.
- Decentralization of adequate tools, resources and governance systems.
- Scaling-up of evidence-based interventions.
- Food systems transformation approach that provides better food to more people.
- Life course approach.
- Accountability and participation.

E. POLICY DIRECTION

E1. Vision

Optimal food and nutrition security for a healthy and productive nation.

E2. Mission

To provide integrated, affordable, accessible, and equitable, quality food and nutrition security services that are responsive to the needs of the population.

E3. Goal

To ensure that the population has access to adequate, affordable, safe, quality food and water throughout their life cycle that always meets their nutrient requirements for optimal healthy and productive lives.

E4. Policy Objectives

- Objective 1** By 2030, reduce the prevalence of undernourishment from 30.9% to 15% and maintain overweight and obesity among children under five years of age below 5%, by facilitating the provision of adequate food and nutrition for mothers and children and ensuring optimal health and productivity of the people of Namibia throughout their lifecycle.
- Objective 2** By 2030, increase domestic food production of local consumption from 30% to 60% and enhance processing, marketing, and consumption of food to improve access to nutritious and safe food for the populace of Namibia at all times.
- Objective 3** By 2030, reduce prevalence of stunting from 24% to 12% through nutrition-sensitive interventions and by ensuring access to health care services, sanitation, hygiene, education, and social protection programmes for all people in Namibia.

Objective 4 By 2025, increase investment in food and nutrition security by at least 10% of national budget annually and ensure an enabling environment of effective coordination and implementation.

E5. Government Policy Objectives, Rationale and Strategies

Policy Objective 1: By 2030, reduce the prevalence of undernourishment from 30.9% to 15% and maintain overweight and obesity among children under five years of age below 5%, by facilitating the provision of adequate food and nutrition for mothers and children and ensuring optimal health and productivity of the people of Namibia throughout their lifecycle.

The Government of Namibia commits itself to the following strategic measures that are designed to address the underlying and immediate causes of malnutrition:

- Strategy 1.1 Increase coverage of evidence-based high impact nutrition-specific interventions aimed at preventing all forms of malnutrition.
- Strategy 1.2 Increase coverage of interventions for the management and treatment of acute malnutrition by documenting and sharing best practices at national, regional and global levels.
- Strategy 1.3 Implement Growth Monitoring and Promotion programmes.
- Strategy 1.4 Prevention and control of micronutrient disorders.
- Strategy 1.5 Promotion of optimal maternal nutrition.
- Strategy 1.6 Prevention and management of over-nutrition and related non-communicable diseases.
- Strategy 1.7 Promotion of optimal nutritional care for people living with HIV, TB, and other infectious diseases.
- Strategy 1.8 Promotion of universal access and utilisation of quality primary health care services to all people.
- Strategy 1.9 Develop nutrition preparedness and response plans for emergency situations Interventions.

Policy Objective 2: By 2030, increase domestic food production of local consumption from 30% to 60% and enhance processing, marketing, and consumption of food to improve access to nutritious and safe food for the populace of Namibia at all times.

The revised Namibia Agricultural Policy provides direction for increasing crop and livestock production, increasing household income through agro-business development, and promoting marketing and trade of Namibian safe, raw and processed agricultural products. The objective will be achieved through the following strategies:

- Strategy 2.1 Strengthening local production of safe and nutritious foods especially by smallholders' farmers.
- Strategy 2.2 Improve both physical and economic access to safe and nutritious foods at household levels.
- Strategy 2.3 Improve processing, storage and preservation of nutritious foods and reduce food waste and loss.
- Strategy 2.4 Strengthening capacity for implementation of nutrition-sensitive intervention within the agriculture sector.
- Strategy 2.5 Strengthening the resilience capacity of households to various shocks.
- Strategy 2.6 Promotion of agricultural approaches that mitigate the negative impact on nutrition.
- Strategy 2.7 Create a conducive, healthy, and safe food industry.
- Strategy 2.8 Promote irrigation development and integrated water resources management.
- Strategy 2.9 Promote environmental systems and land management for sustainable agriculture development.

Policy Objective 3: By 2030, reduce prevalence of stunting from 24% to 12% through nutrition-sensitive interventions and by ensuring access to health care services, sanitation, hygiene, education, and social protection programmes for all people in Namibia

To address the underlying determinants of malnutrition, the following strategic actions will be undertaken:

- Strategy 3.1 Enhance and sustain equitable access to safe water, hygiene, and sanitation interventions.
- Strategy 3.2 Improve school nutrition and nutrition awareness.
- Strategy 3.3 Promote social protection interventions for improved nutrition.
- Strategy 3.4 Enhance women empowerment for improved nutrition status of household members and communities.

Policy Objective 4: By 2030, increase investment in food and nutrition security by at least 10% of the national budget annually and ensure an enabling environment for effective coordination and implementation.

In this Policy, the enabling environment for food and nutrition will be reinforced through four major strategies as follows:

- Strategy 4.1 Enhanced capacity for food and nutrition security policy implementation.
- Strategy 4.2 Strengthening Integrated Food and Nutrition Information management system for improved decision-making and programming at all levels.
- Strategy 4.3 Enhance a national interest in and commitment to improving nutrition programmes through functional communication plan.
- Strategy 4.4 Enhance sustained commitment, governance, and resources.
- Strategy 4.5 Mainstream food and nutrition security into national, sectoral, regional, and local plans and promote common result-based frameworks.
- Strategy 4.6 Develop appropriate food and nutrition security legislations, regulatory instruments, and guidelines.
- Strategy 4.7 Strengthen policy and legal framework for coordination, planning, monitoring and evaluation for food and nutrition security activities.

F. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND COORDINATION

The responsibility for implementation of the policy framework lies with all stakeholders across different government ministries and agencies, development partners, private sector, academia and civil society organisations. A multi-sectoral governance system will be strengthened to ensure effective coordination and accountability.

F1. Governance and Coordination

The Government will provide overall leadership of the policy implementation with assistance from development partners, civil society organisations, and research and academic institutions. It will establish a four level Food and Nutrition Security Coordination mechanism for Namibia from the (i) national, (ii) regional, (iii) constituency, and (iv) community levels.

F2. Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Given the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder nature of this policy, the proposed actions will be implemented through a coherent and coordinated approach, which will foster collaboration between line ministries, regional and local authorities, development partners, CSOs, training and research institutions and private sector. Therefore, responsibility for implementation will be shared among stakeholders and there will be both individual and collective accountability for results.

F3. Legal and Regulatory Arrangements

The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy derives from the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, Article 95, paragraph (j) which stipulates that: “consistent planning to raise and maintain an acceptable level of nutrition and standard of living of the Namibian people and to improve public health”. This policy aligns with the country's national development priorities. Namibia's Vision 2030 provides the foundation for principles of nutrition security; and the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP-5) and Harambe Prosperity Plans which are the main instrument for implementing policies and programmes aimed at achieving Vision 2030. The revised policy

also aligns with objectives of several sector policies, strategies and programmes as well as regulatory frameworks that impact food and nutrition security.

G. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Government will create a budget line for food and nutrition security resources for each cycle of the implementation plan. All stakeholders shall budget for and secure own financial, human and material resources to ensure effective implementation of activities they are responsible for.

H. MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Through the monitoring process, lead implementers and co-partners will be charged with the responsibility of identifying potential gaps in implementation, outline areas of improvement and account for their activities and resource utilisation. The monitoring reports will gauge the level and quality of stakeholder engagement and track progress of achieving the intended policy outcomes. Lead implementers will submit at least annually their monitoring reports to the Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee (FNSSC) and the FNSC Secretariat or as often as mandated by the FNSC- steering committee. The information obtained should contribute towards the mid-term policy review.

I. ADVOCACY AND DISSEMINATION

The launch of the endorsed Policy will be publicised through television, radio, and print media in all Namibia's languages in order to raise awareness of the existence of the document. Following the adoption of the Policy, all relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation will be availed with copies (print and soft). Copies will be provided to academic institutions and libraries and made available for online access on the website of relevant institutions. Plain language summary of the Policy will be developed and other formats of the documents for advocacy purposes will be developed for the high-level decision makers and traditional leaders. Finally, a communication and social mobilisation plan for food and nutrition security will be developed to support and enhance implementation of the action plan.

J. POLICY REVISION

The current Policy shall be revised as national priorities change and new evidence becomes available, upon an in-depth evaluation of the implementation of the Policy and related action plans.

K. IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

A detailed Implementation Action Plan of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy has been developed through a multi-sectoral approach (supplementary document). The costed multi-sectoral Implementation Action Plan incorporates specific activities required to achieve the policy objectives, indicates the lead implementer and co-partners, strategic outcomes, activities, outputs, output indicators, baseline indicators, annual targets, and related costs.

L. CONCLUSION

The Revised National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2021) has built on the achievements of the Namibia Food and Nutrition Policy (1995). Implementation of the Policy will be done through a well-coordinated multisectoral institutional framework. The Food and Nutrition Security Council will be revived and strengthened to fulfil this function. The Government will support the implementation of this Policy by creating an enabling environment to integrate and implement food and nutrition security interventions in all sectors and into regional, district and constituency development plans and to establish platforms for lesson sharing.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP) is a revision of the 1995 Food and Nutrition Policy for Namibia. The revised policy forms the basis for food and nutrition security actions that consider national progress and challenges raised in the NDP5 and the Zero Hunger strategy review report (2016). It recognises food and nutrition as universal rights essential for the physical, mental, and emotional development of children and the quality of life for adults. Overall, the ultimate objective of the Namibia Food and Nutrition Security Policy is to ensure that everyone in Namibia has access to adequate, affordable, safe, sustainable, and quality diets capable of always meeting their nutrient requirements for healthy and productive lives.

The process of revising the Food and Nutrition Policy (1995) into this current Policy was initiated in 2015 by the Ministry of Health and Social Services in collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations. An extensive review of relevant documents was conducted to provide background information and update the policy document. The key documents reviewed included; The Fifth National Development Plan, Zero Hunger Road Map, Harambee Prosperity Plan, Namibia's Vision 2030, National Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, the Sustainable Development Goals, The Scaling Up of Nutrition Country Implementation Plan, the Food and Nutrition Policy (1995), periodic and annual Food and Nutrition Security Assessment Reports, Demographic & Health Survey reports, MEAL SUN movement framework, National Nutrition Monitoring & Evaluation framework, National Food and Nutrition security implementation plan. In addition, extensive stakeholder consultation meetings were held with technical persons from line Ministries, United Nations agencies, NGOs, Academic Institutions, and the Private Sector. Further, in August 2018 fact-finding field trips were conducted to selected regions (Khomas, Zambezi and Erongo).

The revised Policy contains five major sections, an implementation plan and a monitoring and evaluation tools to support its implementation.

The sections are:

Section one: Introduction and Background information. This section mainly provides the methodology for revising the policy and detailed situation analysis for various segments that contribute towards food and nutrition security in Namibia.

Section 2: Rationale, Legal alignment, and Guiding Principles for the policy. The section explains the rationale for revising the policy document and explains how it addresses policy gaps on food and nutrition security in the country. It shows the strong link between food security and nutrition and brings forth the multi-disciplinary nature of nutrition. The revised policy was also intended to illustrate food security and nutrition as cornerstones for the realisation of the objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia and how it is anchored in Namibia's Vision 2030.

Section 3: Policy Goals, Objectives, and Strategies. The section provides policy direction, including vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the policy and highlights several strategies and related activities under each objective that are intended to address the multi-sectoral

nature of food and nutrition security. The key interventions are food security, nutrition-specific, nutrition-sensitive oriented, and the related enabling environmental sectors.

Section 4: Institutional Arrangements and Coordination Mechanism. This section contains the Policy institutional arrangements and coordination framework for government ministries and agencies. The Government will provide overall leadership of the policy implementation with assistance from development partners, civil society organisations, and research and academic institutions. Further, the section stipulates how the Policy will be implemented and co-ordinated at the national and sub national levels to achieve its goal and objectives. It highlights the role and responsibilities of the various line ministries and other stakeholders involved in promoting food and nutrition security in the country.

Section 5: Implementation Action Plan for the Policy. The section focuses on describing the costed multi-sectoral implementation action framework for this Policy. It takes into account existing government implementation plans and strategies aligned to food and nutrition security issues in the nation. The plan incorporates specific activities required to achieve the policy objectives, indicates the lead implementer and co-partners, strategic outcomes, activities, outputs, output indicators, baseline indicators, annual targets, and related costs. The implementation action is a supplementary document to this Policy (Supplementary document 1).

The Policy ends with a conclusion and bibliography.

1.1 Background information

1.1.1 Past efforts to address Food and Nutrition concerns in Namibia (1995-2017)

Namibia's first Food and Nutrition Policy of 1995 placed emphasis on improving the nutrition status of the population through increasing the quantity and quality of food eaten to provide adequate and nutritious food for all, empowering households to use the resources to improve childcare, feeding practices, and their hygiene and sanitation environment and provision of adequate levels of social and supporting services. Subsequently, the Food Security and Nutrition Action Plan 1995 was developed and provided an elaborate strategic framework for the implementation of the 1995 Food and Nutrition Policy. The objectives of the policy were to be achieved through community empowerment and participation in health and nutrition programmes.

In 2010, Namibia Cabinet Decision (No. 17th/23.11.10/001) established the Namibia Alliance for Improved Nutrition (NAFIN), a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform aimed at enhancing nutrition status of Namibians especially children below the age of five years. The goal was to coordinate activities of Government, private sector, NGOs, UN agencies and academia in the field of nutrition and promote accountability on nutrition programmes in the country.

To scale up nutrition interventions, Namibia was one of the "Early Risers" within the global SUN Movement and was accepted as a member in 2011. The Namibia Scaling-Up of Nutrition Country Implementation Plan (SUNCIP) 2012-2016 was developed and it emphasized a multi-

sectoral approach in tackling malnutrition through implementation of both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions across the country.

1.1.2 Achievements for implementing the 1995 Food and Nutrition Policy

Since its implementation, significant progress has been made with regards to coordination at national, regional and constituency level; accountability, reporting on activities, collaboration among government line ministries, management of malnutrition in emergency situations, integration of nutrition assessment, counselling and support for government health system and capacitation of community health programmes.

1.1.3 Lessons learned from implementation of the Food and Nutrition Policy 1995

The key lessons generated during the implementation of the Food and Nutrition Policy 1995, have informed the revision of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy. These lessons are:

- The Food and Nutrition Policy, 1995 had a limited scope in that it did not consider the multi-sectoral and holistic approaches required to tackle and overcome the underlying and immediate causes of malnutrition,
- Objectives of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy can be realized through consistent and adequate funding,
- Adequate and capacitated human resource are required to drive food and nutrition programmes in the country and deliberate efforts must be made to ensure that the Government puts in place nutrition focused educational programmes at institutions of higher learning in Namibia,
- There is need to develop and strengthen an integrated health information management system that can capture and provide real time data on key food and nutrition security indicators,
- To ensure effective policy implementation, the development of a detailed food and nutrition security implementation plan outlining an effective monitoring and evaluation system should be put in place,
- Effective and efficient response to emergency averts human suffering and death especially for the most vulnerable members of the community,
- Sustainable nutrition well-being of a population can be realised through the implementation of both nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions,
- Namibia is experiencing a nutrition transition due to a growing number of urban and peri-urban dwellers. The nutrition transition involves changes in diet and lifestyle that has resulted into an increase in obesity and over-weight people and consequently increased prevalence of lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases,
- There is a need for a strong linkage between agriculture, nutrition, and health to promote production and consumption of adequate and diversified diets. To mitigate nutrient deficiencies especially micronutrients, food processing of staple foods should be accompanied by clear standards on fortification with micronutrients, and
- Strengthening inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms is essential for effective and efficient policy implementation.

1.2 Namibia Socio-Economic Situation

Namibia is categorised as an upper middle-income country with a population of 2.5 million estimated for 2020 and a per capita income of USD3,217.64 in 2020. [1] [2]. This middle-income status masks extreme poverty and inequalities amongst the population and regions. Although Namibia registered a general reduction in poverty incidence between 2003/04 and 2015/16, 17.4% of the population remains poor [3].

Namibia's imports exceed its exports resulting in a trade deficit. The country mainly relies on South Africa for imports. The country imports 50 to 80 percent of its food requirements [8]. Malnutrition contributes to more than 45% of all deaths in children under five years of age, therefore becoming the single biggest contributor to child mortality globally. The economic cost of malnutrition is estimated to contribute up to 11% losses in GDP every year in Asia and Africa [4]. Other indirect losses for a country's economy are, malnourished children have poor cognitive function that results to poor school performance, reduced school attainment, [5] and eventually deprived skills.

In Namibia, more than half of poor households are in rural areas and engaged in subsistence farming. These rural areas are a home to the most vulnerable, entangled in vicious cycle of poverty and malnutrition.

1.3 Climate Change situation

Namibia is agro-climatologically classified as semi-arid to arid receiving rainfall of up to 700 mm per year [6]. More adversely, the country has experienced extreme variability in weather conditions within the last four years due to climatic changes, which has greatly affected agricultural production exacerbating household food insecurity and malnutrition.

During the NDP4 period, the agriculture sector experienced a significant contraction of 1.7% in real terms against the real growth sector performance target of 4% [7]. This poor performance was attributed to the effects of climate change associated with frequent droughts, floods, crop pests, and livestock disease outbreaks. Thus, the prevalence and intensity of natural disasters are predicted to continue to increase because of climate change.

Overall, climate change is a critical threat to sustainable development, because of that, the Government of Namibia has developed a national climate change policy document (2011) and a multi-sectoral strategic and action plan (2013-2020) implemented through the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) to effectively respond to the complex challenges of climate change related shocks.

1.4 Food Security situation

Vision 2030 of the global agenda on Food and Nutrition Security seeks to significantly reduce the relative number of undernourished people and that food security will be guaranteed on a sustainable basis through:

- a) Significant transformation of agriculture production systems through investments, research, and training

- b) Maintenance of an adequate enabling environment in rural areas through rural development strategies
- c) Establish a food system where production and consumption are balanced at local, regional, and global levels
- d) A large demand-driven food system where responsible consumer behaviour shapes sustainable objectives

In 2016, a food and nutrition security assessment indicated that 34% of the Namibian population was food insecure. Later, in 2017, the Global Hunger Index Score declined to 25.7 from 30.9 recorded in 2008 [10] depicting a serious hunger situation in Namibia. Further findings of the food and nutrition security assessment indicated 28.8% of Namibians were undernourished [11]. Hence, Namibia's aspiration and long-term vision is to achieve food self-sufficiency by the year 2030 through farm mechanisation and industrialisation, among others.

1.4.1 Food availability, access, utilisation, and stability

In Namibia, the major staple crops are white maize, wheat, pearl millet and sorghum. Livestock products are mainly from cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, and poultry. Whereas Namibia is a surplus producer for beef, the country remains food insufficient because of fluctuation of crop production over the years. Cereal production attains only 60% of its domestic requirements and the remaining 40% is imported from the SADC region [12].

Factors impeding availability, access and utilisation of nutritious foods in subsistence-based households include high levels of poverty, inequality in income distribution, chronic drought and recurrent water shortages resulting in death of animals and crop failures, widespread soil erosion and land degradation, limited income-generating opportunities and restrictions on women's access to, and control over land and resources.

1.4.2 Food security for indigenous communities

Among these communities, the gathering of bush food is still an important livelihood strategy. However, it is highly seasonal and limited in most areas by lack of access to land. Formal employment is a major determinant of food security, mostly because it offers regular cash income, but employment opportunities for individuals from indigenous people remain limited.

1.5 Nutrition situation in Namibia

In the last two decades, there has been significant government investment in health and nutrition programs. However, malnutrition remains a major development concern in Namibia, affecting all regions of the country and hitting hard on the most vulnerable segments of the population. The current levels of malnutrition hinder Namibia's human, social, and economic development. This high burden of malnutrition in Namibia is not only a threat to achieving Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2030, but also a clear indication of inadequate realisation of human rights.

1.5.1 Nutrition status of the maternal, new-borns, infants, and early childhood

Since independence, the proportion of undernourished children under five years old has steadily declined. The demographic health survey of 2013 indicated that, of the under five-year old children; 24% are stunted, 6% wasted and 13% underweight [15]. While there is a commendable 5 percentage points decline in stunting when compared to previous data presented in NDHS 2006/7, the current level of stunting is a clear reflection of persistent low food intake and recurrent or chronic infections [16]. According to the not yet published Cost of Hunger in Namibia Report, stunting increased to 30.4% by 2016². Further, poor nutrition status of mothers has resulted in 13% of Namibian babies being born with a low birth weight (birth weight below 2.5 kg). Although exclusive breastfeeding rate during the first six months of life has improved from 24% to 49% between 2006 and 2013 respectively, only 13% of 6-23 months children are fed in accordance with the three-core infant and young child feeding practices (minimum dietary diversity, minimum meal frequency, and appropriate complementary feedings).

1.5.2 Nutrition status of adolescents, adult women, and the elderly

The 2013 NDHS assessment of adolescents between 15-19 years showed that 50% and 26.7% of males and females respectively had a Body Mass Index (BMI) of below 18.5% indicating that they were thinner than their counterparts of 20 years and above. In general, 14% of women of childbearing age (15-49 years) were thin (BMI below 18.5) due to insufficient energy intake, with the prevalence being higher in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. At the same time, 32% of women were overweight (BMI between 24.9 and 29.9) or obese (BMI above 30). This co-existence of undernutrition and overweight, suggests that Namibia is undergoing a nutrition transition with overweight or obesity being more of a public health concern than underweight in women because of its association to non-communicable diseases.

1.5.3 Micronutrient Deficiencies

The status of the most common micronutrients deficiencies like vitamin A, iodine, and zinc is not well documented in Namibia. According to the NDHS 2013, anaemia, which is an indication of iron deficiency, affects 48% of children aged 6-59 months and 21% of women of childbearing age.

Nearly 76% of households use iodised salt in the country. Error! Bookmark not defined.WHO recommends availability and use of adequately iodised salt of >15 ppm. Moreover, WHO defines adequate coverage of iodine utilisation when more than 90% of households are using iodised salt [19]. The Namibian rural community has not attained this threshold. Antenatal maternal night blindness has been reported in Namibia, an indication of severe vitamin A deficiency in pregnancy [16]. In addition to poor nutrient intake, intestinal parasites such as helminths and Schistosomiasis aggravate micronutrient inadequacy, but only 43% of children under the age of five years of age receive deworming medication as a complementary measure to improve micronutrient status.

² Cost of Hunger in Namibia – Namibia Country Report, Draft 5, September 2021, p.33. In the following we continue to reference the DHS 2013.

1.5.4 Over nutrition/Obesity and Diet related non-communicable diseases

NDHS 2013 data show an increasing trend in overweight from 28% to 31.4% and obesity from 11.7% to 13.2% in 2007 and 2013, respectively. Over-nutrition is associated with diet-related Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) such as high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, some cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic respiratory illnesses. In Namibia, cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic respiratory illnesses are among the top 15 causes of death [16].

In the recent past, Namibia has experienced change in people's lifestyle and eating habits due to effects of urbanisation and globalisation. Consistent consumption of commercially processed food products that contain high levels of saturated fats and simple carbohydrates and sugars, coupled with sedentary lifestyle are prime causes of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, and diabetes. Another contributing factor to NCDs is alcohol abuse, which is highly prevalent in Namibia. Effective prevention and control of NCDs face many challenges such as lack of adequate data for effective planning of interventions, the shortage of specialist health professionals, equipment, and transport to health care services.

1.6 Health status for vulnerable population in Namibia

The 2013 NDHS report shows that diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection and fever are the most common infections among children under five years in Namibia. Additionally, Malaria, HIV/AIDS and TB, and other infectious diseases are risk factors for undernutrition.

Long lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and indoor residual spraying are part of the integrated strategy for malaria prevention but only 24% of households have at least one insecticide-treated mosquito net (ITN), and a minimal 6% of children under 5 years sleep under the ITN.

In 2014, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS was estimated at 16.9% of the population. The HIV AIDS prevalence among pregnant women was estimated at 17.2% in 2016 [20], positioning Namibia at the sixth position of the most affected countries worldwide. HIV is a significant cause of severe and moderate acute malnutrition, with an estimated increase of 30% mortality for children living with HIV admitted in nutrition programs [21]. Global evidence [21] shows that HIV-positive rates in nutrition programs can be as high as 24% in patient nutrition recuperation units. Additionally, people living with HIV, especially children, have an altered intake, absorption and metabolism of macronutrients and lack of essential micronutrients in the body weaken the immune system and increase the risk of mortality.

1.7 Namibia Water, Sanitation and Hygiene situation

Access to safe water is essential for good health and nutrition. Adequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions can contribute to 59% reduction in diarrhoea [22]. Access to improved sanitation and hygiene is low in rural and informal urban settlements. According to 2013 NDHS, only 49% and 17% of households in urban and rural areas respectively have access to improved water and sanitation conditions and about 48% of the population practice open defecation and 34% of households use improved and individual household-based toilet facilities. Further, about 20% of schools do not have access to toilets, majority of these are located in flood prone areas, thus increasing the risk of faecal contamination. Moreover,

results from the NDHS 2013, showed a correlation between stunting and lack of access to sanitation in young children. For example, regions with highest rates of open defecation reported highest rates of stunting.

1.8 Status of food and nutrition interventions, gaps and opportunities

Since independence, many programmes have been developed and implemented by the Government with support from various Organisations to address food and nutrition insecurity in Namibia. The sections below outline the various efforts made by the government to mitigate the food and nutrition security in the country.

1.8.1 Food and nutrition security governance

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy is hinged on the notion that overcoming malnutrition requires multi-sectoral collaboration, a strong coordination mechanism and political will because causes of malnutrition are complex and interconnected. A more sustainable solution relies on different sectors of the government working in a coordinated manner with related stakeholders. It is essential that these stakeholders have representations working at the national level and at the lowest level of operation, in this case the constituency level. In 2017, the Cabinet through its decision number 1st/14.02.17/004 re-established the Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNSC). This necessitated the development of the Food and Nutrition Security Coordination system from the national to the community level) to ensure that food and nutrition interventions are integrated in development plans and budgets up to the subnational levels. At the same time this was designed to promote partnerships between government and developing partners and enhance efficiency in implementing food and nutrition security interventions.

1.8.2 Food production, preservation, and marketing interventions

Over the years, the Nation has experienced fluctuation of cereal production causing unmet demands. Similarly, and within the same timeframes, livestock production showed fluctuating statistics, which were attributed to general poor rainfall conditions. Nonetheless, during the NDP4 period, the total area under irrigation increased by 800ha while the National Strategic Food Reserve storage capacity increased from 14 000MT to 22 900MT which is only enough for about one month. However, plans are underway to increase the storage capacity to 67 000 metric tons by the year 2030, which is sufficient to sustain the country for a period of four months. A total of NAD178 million is required to meet this target in the next 10 years. Namibia is endowed with about 50 000 hectares of irrigable land. To date a total of 11,500 ha is under irrigation and is targeting to put about 27 000 hectares of land under irrigation by the year 2030. Government has embarked on various programmes and projects aiming at increasing food production in the country including the Green Scheme Programme, the Dryland Crop Production Programme, Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture, National Horticulture Development Initiative, Animal Health and Marketing in the Northern Communal Areas (NCAs) initiative, Fresh Produce Business Hubs, Namibia Fish Consumption Promotion Trust and Pension grants and food aid.

1.8.3 Management of chronic and acute malnutrition

The management of malnutrition is done within the primary health care system at the clinic, health centre and hospital levels. The introduction of the health extension workers has the potential to increase the coverage and expands screening and management capacities. There is however, a need to increase and sustain the quality and delivery uptake of the community-based management of acute malnutrition approach. More assistance is needed to change poor nutrition practices at both the health facility and community settings.

1.8.4 Maternal and child health care programs

In 2003, MoHSS developed a National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) [25] The IYCF guidelines were revised in 2010 to include the new WHO recommendations on exclusive breastfeeding and the management of malnutrition in a high HIV environment [26].

Launched in 1992, the Baby and Mother Friendly Hospital Initiative, which originally certified more than 35 health facilities [27, 28] should be revamped and all health facilities reassessed and supported to improve implementation and ensure quality service delivery is sustained. According to the Namibia Labour Act (1992 amended in 2007) [29, 30], employed pregnant women are entitled to three months maternity leave which possess several challenges for child and mother. First, the duration is not adequate to provide exclusive breastfeeding and protect the child. Second, breastfeeding women experience financial constraints because majority are on half pay. Third, the workplace environment does not provide suitable space for breastfeeding. Thus, this current policy aims to change this and state the Government's commitment to explore further opportunities to promote exclusive breast feeding in these environs. The aggressive promotion of breast milk substitutes is a major hindrance to exclusive breastfeeding. However, in March 2015 Namibia passed a Public and Environmental Health Act [31] to regulate marketing of breast milk substitutes in line with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. This code is a set of regulations that if implemented can protect, support and promote breastfeeding.

1.8.5 Management of diet related non- communicable diseases

Prevention of overweight and management of diet related non- communicable diseases is complex because factors that promote weight gain and obesity associated with non-communicable diseases depend on lifestyle. Although these diets related non-communicable diseases are currently being managed at the health facilities, they still require high level attention in Namibia. Further investigation is required to establish overweight prevalence among school age children and adolescents.

1.8.6 Prevention and control of micronutrient interventions

Micronutrient deficiencies are addressed through a combination of interventions including salt iodization, iron/folic acid supplementation for pregnant women in health facilities, vitamin A supplementation for children and food-based fortification approaches for all age groups. Specifically, anaemia in children is currently being addressed through the expanded distribution of multi-micronutrient powders; deworming every six months for children ages 1 to 5 years, along with vitamin A distribution; and promotion of the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets for children under 5 years of age in malaria-endemic areas. A comprehensive

and integrated approach for managing micronutrient deficiencies should be developed. The approaches should include micronutrient supplementation, dietary approach, and food fortification and this can only happen if the current strategic framework for micronutrients supplementation is reviewed. Moreover, a micronutrient surveillance system should be established to track progress and efficiency of implementing the related programmes.

1.8.7 Industrial food fortification programmes

Major cereal industries in Namibia are already undertaking voluntary fortification of maize meal and wheat flour with government recommended micronutrients. Other industrially processed products on the market such as oil and sugar are also fortified. Currently, there is no mandatory regulation or national guidelines on commercial food fortification for the general population. Such legislation is required to ensure imported oil and sugar are adequately fortified and quality and consistency of the local fortification process is guaranteed.

At present, these fortified industrial products are not easily accessible to rural populations who are the most vulnerable to micronutrient related malnutrition. The most commonly consumed staple food product (*Mahangu*) is locally milled but not yet extensively fortified. Point-of-use home fortification using small sachets of micronutrient powders can be an efficient measure to include in community level nutrition programmes to ensure adequate micronutrient intake by the most at-risk group of the population.

1.8.8 Agri-business and bio-fortification interventions

Agriculture is one of the key areas of focus that have been identified to reach the NDP-5 overarching goals to achieve inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economic growth, through increased agricultural production for cereals, horticulture, and livestock [34]. Soon after independence, the MAWLR launched a national crop improvement program with two major crops pearl millet (*mahangu*) and sorghum taking pre-eminence. Progress has been made in research in the development of drought resistant varieties for cowpeas, millet, and sorghum and on cassava and orange sweet potatoes production as a measure to ensure adequate supply of food crops [35] to meet the populations' demand.

Currently, a total area of 11 500 hectares is under irrigation countrywide and expected to be increased to 27 000 hectares by the year 2030 through the implementation of the Green Scheme program as outlined in the NDP-5. However, limited budget allocation, staff shortages, poor irrigation mechanisms and slow adoption of new varieties of horticultural products are some of the major challenges facing crop production in the country [34]. Thus, the development of agro-processing industries is geared towards utilizing local produce and regional value chains, increasing the productivity of smallholder farmers, enhancing animal health and production, supporting preparedness for effective response, recovery and reconstruction and the planting of drought resistant varieties.

The revised Namibia Agriculture Policy of 2015 identifies the need to increase and diversify food production in all areas of the country with special emphasis on increasing drought tolerant varieties, crop diversification and conservation agriculture including organic agriculture. It provides an opportunity to support the most food insecure farmers to grow

more nutritious cereal, vegetable and fruit crops for own consumption and sale at the local markets for income generation.

1.8.9 Water and Sanitation and hygiene interventions

While water supply in Namibia has improved significantly since independence, hygiene, and sanitation indicators in rural areas and in school settings are still a major concern for public health. A national Water Supply and Sanitation Policy was developed in 2008 to safeguard availability of safe water supply and guarantee safe sanitation services to everyone in Namibia at affordable costs. Given the high prevalence and related consequences of open defecation in rural Namibia, a communication strategy to address the issue was developed to provide guidance to stakeholders and improve behaviour change and knowledge of the most vulnerable population [23].

Improvements in equitable access to safe water supply and effective hygiene and sanitation promotion are needed to prevent faecal – oral transmission of infectious bacteria. One of the greatest challenges to achieving this lies within the institutions responsible for water and sanitation. The mandate for implementation of water and sanitation intervention falls under several line ministries, which requires but currently do not have, a strong coordination mechanism. In this current policy, this coordination may be attained through the water, environment, and sanitation coordination mechanism under the FNESC.

1.8.10 Institutional nutrition programmes

In 2000, the Namibian Home Economics Advisory Board initiated the development of Namibian Food and Nutrition Dietary Guidelines to provide guidance on healthy food choices. The guidelines were endorsed by the Ministry of Health and Social Services. They were developed to promote a healthy lifestyle and diet for the population of Namibia. To make the dietary recommendations visual, the food guide was developed as a practical guide for menu planning in various institutions including school feeding programmes

1.8.10.1 School feeding programmes

The Namibian School Feeding Programme (NSFP) has been in existence for 29 years. Started by the World Food Programme (WFP) in 1991, it was fully taken over by the Namibian Government in 1996/1997. Currently, the programme supports approximately 1423 schools across the country. The meal consists of a maize blend, which is cooked as porridge at schools and given to all children regardless of vulnerability status. The maize blend is fortified and by weight consists of 63% maize meal, 25% protein (soya) blend, 10.8% sugar and 1.2% salt. The Goal of the NSFP is to “promote equitable participation in quality learning and education for all children in Namibia during all seasons by providing nutritious and healthy food through schools that are a part of the social and economic life and development of communities”.

Potentially, it increases dietary intake of children and provides an opportunity for food diversification, valorisation of locally produced crops, and capacity building for the private sector and women that provide services to schools. It also offers a platform for delivering cost effective nutrition-specific interventions such as nutrition education, micronutrient supplementation, deworming, HIV and AIDS, psychosocial support and school gardening.

The programme is fully implemented, managed and funded by the government with technical assistance from WFP.

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in collaboration with WFP have finalized the development of a national school feeding policy, and a home grown school feeding programme, both of which will address issues of stakeholder collaboration, diversification of the current food basket and improved management structures amongst others.

1.8.10.2 Nutrition in other institutions

Although the Government has developed the Namibia Food Safety Policy, which is currently being implemented through several ministries to ensure food, safety in the country [38], there is need to set food standards and legislation for food fortification initiatives in the country, including labelling regulations. This will ensure that the different sectors and institutions that offer meals like correctional facilities, hospitals, school hostels, universities, old age homes, early childhood development centres, and army bases provide nutrient adequate meals to their enrollees.

1.8.11 Social protection for vulnerable people

Namibia has been rated as an upper middle-income economy [39]. Despite relatively good economic growth, and recent stable employment growth, the population continues to be susceptible to poverty. About 44% of the population are poor. Poverty is highest in rural (37%) than in urban areas (15%).

To offer solution to the extreme poverty situation in the country, the Government has enacted various legislations that provide social protection in the country. The National Planning Commission report of 2015 outlines root causes of poverty most of which are non-contributory social protection instruments.

The Government is keen in offering protection for the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Namibia. There are four principal child grants and allowances namely a) the child maintenance grant, b) the foster parent grant, c) the places of safety allowance, and d) the special maintenance grant. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, (MGEPESW) mainly administer Child and family benefits.

However, given the rapid growth of the elderly in the vulnerable households and increased number of OVC the Government is committed to continuing and scaling up support towards the vulnerable population.

1.8.12 Safety, standards, and quality control of food

Namibian government is committed to ensuring that food that is available within the country either through local production or imports and food that is exported from the country is safe for consumptions. Therefore, the Government has put in place the Namibia Food Safety Policy that is currently being implemented through several ministries [38]. In addition, persons or organisations involved in; a) food production including plant and animal farmers, aquaculture farms, and fishers, b) food handling, transporting and storage, c) food transformation such as primary handling, slaughter, processing or packaging, d) food trade such as retailing,

wholesale, import or export of food, e) food service including catering services, restaurants, hotels, street foods, ceremonial or social food service; are obliged to abide by the standards and provisions of the Namibian Food Safety Policy and related regulations. All the regulatory functions relating to production and primary handling of safe food of either animal or plant origin, including standards on fresh produce, grain, insects, eggs, dairy, poultry, and meat are handled by the MAWLR. Fundamentally, all regulatory functions on consumer health related to food safety, regulations and standards on food offered or intended to be offered to consumers anywhere in the Republic of Namibia, including food service or food business premises such as retail, restaurants, street foods or food at social or ceremonial gatherings are handled by the Division of Public and Environmental Health in the MoHSS. There are currently two accredited food laboratories in Namibia for analysis and testing of food samples.

Nevertheless, several challenges have been experienced since the start of the food safety policy implementation. These include the irrational allocation of environmental health practitioners in areas of jurisdiction, workforce requirements for rendering inspection services not in place and related risk factors, no regulations for the enforcement of the Public and Environmental Health Act, 2015, Act No 1 of 2015, inadequate resources and tools for conducting inspections especially at the ports of entry, insufficient funds, high staff turnover, poor coordination among the stakeholders and no standard inspection procedures in place. Hence, this policy through the coordination structure will provide a basis for the food safety key players to address issues that have, hitherto, impeded for the full implementation of the food safety policy of Namibia.

1.8.13 Integrated Food and Nutrition Security Information System

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) with technical support from WFP and UNICEF developed Namibia Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System (FNSMIS), which incorporates nutrition indicators [40] following a Cabinet decision to provide accurate and timely information and analysis about the prevailing food and nutrition situation in the country. The information is collected through regular monitoring, data collection, analysis and reporting by Early Warning, Monitoring and Risk Assessment subdivision within the OPM. A few shortfalls of the system include 1) disaggregation of data is by region only and not by district, and 2) the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework focuses on prevalence of malnutrition and do not report on determinants, equity aspects and best practices to scale up for effective nutrition programming.

A parallel system, Namibia Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NAMVAC), is tasked with the functions of collecting vulnerability information including confirmation on the prevailing food security status and tracking indicators to inform early warning on impending disasters, guiding rural development strategies, and informing poverty reduction and social safety net programming. It also assesses disaster risk indicators to examine factors that influence vulnerability such as livelihoods and means of survival for communities in Namibia, outcomes of impacts of disaster on livelihoods and the way the affected people will cope in the event of hazard shocks. However, NAMVAC is dependent on donor funding and its sustainability is questionable.

Within the MAWLR, the Crop and Household Food Security Monitoring Assessments (CHFSM) and Agricultural Inputs and Household Food Security Monitoring (AIHFSM)

assessments are conducted through the Agro-Business Information Services. The AIHFMSM mainly focuses on the availability of agricultural inputs, farmers' preparedness for the season and tracks changes in household food security in terms of food (mainly cereals) availability from the previous harvest). Bi-annual crop assessments are also carried out through CHFMSM which collects data on area planted, production and yield estimates and also track changes in household food security in terms of food (mainly cereals) availability from the previous harvest. However, data collected on food availability both at household and national levels only focus on cereals i.e., maize, sorghum, pearl millet and wheat.

1.8.14 Food and Nutrition technical capacity

The Nutrition Subdivision of the MoHSS Directorate of Primary Health Care which is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership on nutrition in the country has capacity gaps. The central level sub-division has one trained nutritionist (MSc. in Nutrition and Registered Dietician). There is no nutrition officer in any of the 14 regions and related districts. UNICEF, FAO and WFP have made strides in bridging the technical gap by providing nutrition technical support to the national nutritionists, while a few other partners are offering technical support through short-term consultancies. However, this support is not adequate. To fill this gap, the ongoing reform of the health sector is proposing three nutrition officers in each region. Now the Namibian University of Science and Technology is offering a four-year degree programme on Human Nutrition. However, it will take a while before the first batch of nutrition graduates are placed into the health system.

1.8.15 Advocacy, communication, and social mobilisation

Communication, Social mobilisation and advocacy for food and nutrition have been shown to be effective tools for changing food and nutrition related behaviours, increased acceptance of interventions and subsequently reduction of malnutrition rates. By 2014, about 42 countries in the SUN movement had designed different mechanisms [41] to support social mobilisation, advocacy, and communication for scaling up nutrition. These mechanisms involved: organisation of nutrition events involving high level government officials; establishment of comprehensive government or joint social mobilisation, advocacy and communication strategies; engagement of parliamentarians in actively advocating for nutrition; development of country-specific advocacy tools to raise awareness about nutrition at a high level and establishment of SUN civil society alliances to provide support for social mobilisation, advocacy and communication activities. In Namibia, the Namibia Alliance for Improved Nutrition (NAFIN) has been on the forefront in advocating for the enhancement of nutrition status of everyone in Namibia especially for children below the age of five years. In the effort to scale up nutrition interventions, Namibia was one of the "Early Risers" within the global SUN Movement and was accepted as a member in 2011. Despite this achievement on scaling up nutrition, more is needs to be done to promote the Food and Nutrition Security agenda. Hence, in 2019, NAFIN restructured, redefined, and renamed itself to become the **Nutrition and Food Security Alliance of Namibia (NAFSAN)**. NAFSAN's vision states "All persons in Namibia have the resources, knowledge and motivation to assure food security and optimal nutritional status for everyone in Namibia".

1.8.16 Operations research in Food and Nutrition

Operations Research is an essential tool for providing information to address some of the main challenges faced in the implementation of food and nutrition security programs in Namibia. Currently, Namibia lacks a dedicated National Research Strategy that incorporates operations research for food and nutrition security. Again, the existing assessment mechanisms for food and nutrition security are not well uncoordinated, and implementers or decision makers may not have timely access to food and nutrition information, partly due to poor information sharing, advocacy and communication systems. Hence, through this policy, the Government is committed to ensuring that operations research is prioritized in program implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This may call for additional resource allocation and capacity development in all sectors to increase the use operations research results in food and nutrition security programming.

2. RATIONALE AND LEGAL ALIGNMENT

2.1 Introduction

To capture the broad scope of the current Policy, its name was expanded beyond the 1995 *Food and Nutrition Policy for Namibia* to National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. The rationale was to show the strong link between food and nutrition security . It was also intended to illustrate food security and nutrition as cornerstones for the realisation of the objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. This National Food and Nutrition Security Policy is aligned to the Namibia Vision 2030, Harambee Prosperity Plan, Swapo Party Election Manifesto and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also well aligned with other sector policies and national development plans and strategies such as the Namibia Zero Hunger Strategy. The broad scope further expands the policy's ownership to all relevant institutions in government and outside government and recognises the critical roles these relevant stakeholders have to play at both national, regional and constituency levels for the successful implementation and realisation of the objectives of the Food and Nutrition Security policy.

The ultimate objective of the Namibia Food and Nutrition Security Policy is to ensure that the people of Namibia have access to adequate, affordable, safe, sustainable, and quality diets capable of always meeting the nutrient requirements of her population for healthy and productive lives.

There is the recognition that food security is complex and dependent on factors such fluctuating weather conditions, sectoral public policies within the different government ministries, rural versus the growing urban population, food imports, technology adoption and current percentage of land under cultivation and grazing, among others.

2.2 Rationale

Over the past two decades and since the promulgation of Food and Nutrition Policy, emerging evidence about providing better food to more people, in response to the growing food gap, have provided impetus for coming up with new designs and implementation strategies for food and nutrition security programmes in Namibia. The global trend recognise that malnutrition is a multi-causal national challenge that must be addressed by an innovative multi-sectoral, food systems

approach. This ensures balanced investment of resources throughout the value-chain from input supply, farm production, aggregation, storage, processing, marketing to consumption in order to sustainably improve food and nutrition security.

It is also accepted globally that food systems are complex adaptive systems composed of many diverse parts/actors whose interactions with each other drive the functioning of the system. A dysfunction in one sector or by one actor, has significant knock impacts to the rest of the actors. Namibia’s FNSP therefore looks at innovative, coherent game-changing actions and investments that must be prioritised and undertaken from seed and planting stages to harvesting, processing, marketing and consumption, for both crop and livestock, so as to transform Namibia’s food system in a manner that improves food quality, availability, affordability and diversity, on the one hand, and food consumption and dietary diversity on the other, in order to address all forms of malnutrition at every stage of the life-cycle.

The revised policy therefore bridges the policy gap on food and nutrition security in the country and provides an overarching and coordinated framework for the Government and its development partners to tackle and overcome all the causes of malnutrition. It articulates the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders and has clear coordination mechanisms. The policy acknowledges that other development sectors, such as agriculture, education, gender, social protection, urban and rural development as well as, international cooperation partners, NGOs, private sector, and civil society have critical roles to play in implementing nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions that address the immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition.

2.3 Legal Alignment

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP) is well aligned to national sectoral policies, strategies, and the constitution, and contributes to aspirations of the Harambee Prosperity Plan and the Zero Hunger Road Map. It resonates well with international conventions and declarations on food and nutrition, which the Government has ratified for the promotion of food and nutrition security. Table 1 presents the legislative framework and policy alignment of food and nutrition strategies.

Table 1 Policy alignment for Food and Nutrition Security Policy

Legislative framework	Policy Alignment/FNSP strategies
The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia	Article 95, paragraph (j) which stipulates “consistent planning to raise and maintain an acceptable level of nutrition and standard of living for the Namibian people and to improve public health”.
Namibia Vision 2030 [43]	Attainment of objective 5 of the Namibia Vision 2030. Which aims at ensuring a healthy, food secured and breastfeeding nation, in which all preventable, infectious, and parasitic diseases are under secure control, and in which people enjoy a high standard of living, with access to quality education, health and other vital services, in an atmosphere of sustainable population growth and development.

Legislative framework	Policy Alignment/FNSP strategies
	Addresses sectoral strategies of food and nutrition challenges at national, regional and constituency plans through the integration of food and nutrition interventions.
National Development Plan 5 [34]	<p>The NDP5 health pillar aims at achieving a healthy population as core for economic growth and development. It recognises the inter-linkages between nutrition, health, and poverty. It also acknowledges that poor nutrition is a barrier to achieving the health and poverty outcomes in Namibia.</p> <p>The FNSP contains strategies aimed at ensuring healthy and productive Namibian population and consequently is aligned to achieving the outcomes of the health and poverty pillars.</p>
Namibia Zero Hunger Road Map (2016 – 2020):[35]	FNSP will provide the framework for the implementation of the Zero Hunger Road Map that outlines strategic actions for ensuring a Namibia without hunger. In addition, FNSP will define the coordination mechanisms to ensure actions and the relevant Government institutions and partners implement targets set within the Road Map.
Namibia Agriculture Policy of 2015 [44]	FNSP supports the Namibia Agriculture Policy to increase and diversify food production in all areas of the country, specifically drought tolerance varieties and crop diversification. It also provides the framework to support farmers to increase the production of nutritious cereal, vegetable and fruit crops for household consumption and as a source of income.
National Gender Policy 2010[45]	The FNSP contributes to the National Gender Policy to create an enabling environment for the empowerment of women ensuring their full participation in socio-economic and decision-making processes in all sectors and at all levels. The FNSP contains nutrition strategies to reduce gender inequalities and improve access to productive resources enabling poor women and girls to overcome poverty.
Namibia Food Safety Policy 2014 [38]	The Objective of the Namibia Food safety policy is to protect consumer health while facilitating trade in food. This is done by ensuring control standards are established and adhered to in regard of food production safety, food product hygiene, animal health and welfare, plant health and preventing the risk of contamination from external substances. It also lays down conditions for regulations on appropriate labelling for foodstuffs and food products.

Legislative framework	Policy Alignment/FNSP strategies
National Health Policy Framework 2010 – 2020 [46]	The National Health Policy Framework confirms that health and social well-being are fundamental human rights and addresses nutrition as one of the general public health and social services priorities.
National Policy on Sexual, Reproductive and Child Health 2013 [47]	The FNSP is in line with the overall goal of the National Policy on Sexual, Reproductive and Child health that is to enhance the attainment of the highest possible standard of sexual, reproductive health, child health and nutrition for the Namibian population through the provision of equitable, accessible and affordable health and nutrition information and services.
National Rural Development Policy 2012 [48]	The FNSP supports the overall objective of the National Rural Development Policy to achieve a sustainable economic and social advancement in rural areas. Optimal nutritional status of the Namibian population will contribute to the improvement of rural people’s standards of living and empowerment to take charge of their own development.
National Policy for School Health 2008 [49]	The FNSP complements the school health policy that aims to promote health education in schools to influence learner’s understanding, attitudes and behaviour concerning health and nutrition practices. The FNSP strategies aim at ensuring improvement and maintenance of nutrition status and prevention of diseases.
Namibia School Feeding Policy [50]	The FNSP is in line with the four pillars of the school feeding policy that form the school feeding policy framework. The pillars are aimed at provision of safe, quality, adequate and balanced meals to learners. It also emphasizes the importance of strengthening coordination and sectoral linkages in achieving its objectives. The FNSP considers well-nourished learners as key contributor to the future socio-economic development of Namibia.
Namibia Climate Change Policy 2011	The FNSP support the vision of the National Policy on Climate Change (NPCC), which outlines a coherent, transparent, and inclusive framework on climate risk management in accordance with Namibia’s national development agenda, legal framework, and in recognition of environmental constraints and vulnerability. The goal of the NPCC is to contribute to the attainment of sustainable development in line with Namibia’s Vision 2030 through strengthening of national capacities to reduce climate change risk and build resilience for any climate change shocks

Legislative framework	Policy Alignment/FNSP strategies
Global and Regional Conventions	<p>The FNSP resonates well with major elements of the global and regional conventions and guidelines that deal with direct and underlying principles related to food and nutrition security. These include the 1990 World Summit for Children, the World Health Assembly (1991), International Conference for Nutrition (1992 and 2014) and the World Nutrition Summit (1996), which influenced nutrition to become an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015). The FNSP draws from the global movement on Scaling Up of Nutrition (SUN) movement initiated in 2010 to promote and guide national efforts to improve nutrition and mobilize national and international resources.</p> <p>The FNSP also recognizes Namibia ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention for the Eradication of all forms of Discrimination against Women that include important principles on food production, household food and nutrition security. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (2014), the Zero Hunger Challenge and Malabo Declaration, World Health Assembly (2012), the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (2010) and more recently the established 1000 days movement with a focus to reducing malnutrition from conception through to the second birthday of a child.</p> <p>At regional level, the FNSP accepts key resolutions related to nutrition and household food security from of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the African Union New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for the East African Community.</p>

2.4 Guiding Principles

Namibia as member of the regional and international community is signatory to several instruments such as ICN 2 recommendations, the SUN movement, the SDGs, the 1,000 days' movement, and the African Regional Nutrition Strategy. These instruments are formulated based on updated research and Namibia has the obligation of contributing to their objectives. Further, Namibia has developed several national road maps such as the Vision 2030, Harambee Prosperity Plan, the Zero Hunger road maps and National Development Plan 5. This Food and Nutrition Security Policy is well aligned to the principles of all these instruments. Therefore, implementation and governance of this Policy is founded on the following guiding principles:

- Namibia's **commitment to the Universal Human Rights** as evidenced by the Namibian Constitution that guarantees the rights of all Namibian to adequate, safe and nutritious foods,

- **Commitment to implement the recommendations of regional and global initiatives** including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Maputo Declaration, the Scaling-Up Nutrition Movement, the Zero Hunger Challenge, the second International Conference on Nutrition,
- **Equity in access to and implementation** of nutrition interventions more specifically, eliminating **gender and other inequalities** to help address some of the underlying causes of vulnerability to malnutrition,
- **Effective coordination** within and across sectors including alignment, partnership, and integration for inclusive and effective multi-sectoral collaboration,
- **Community empowerment** and **effective involvement with incentives** to engender community acceptance and ownership for implementation including the delivery of evidenced-based actions, good practices, nutritional knowledge, skills, and resources,
- **Decentralisation** of adequate tools and resources and governance system for better implementation at operational level in accordance with Namibia's commitment to decentralisation,
- **Scaling-up of evidence-based interventions** that include proven strategies and best practices,
- **Life course approach**, with a particular focus on the key 'window of opportunity', which is the first 1,000 days. This is a period from pregnancy and the first two years of life to address infant, maternal and adolescent girl nutrition, and
- **Accountability and participation** at all levels including within and across sectors and at national, regional, district and community levels.

3. POLICY DIRECTION

3.1 Vision

Optimal food and nutrition security for a healthy and productive nation.

3.2 Mission

To provide integrated, affordable, accessible, and equitable, quality food and nutrition security services that are responsive to the needs of the population.

3.2 Goal

To ensure that the population has access to adequate, safe, quality food and water throughout their life cycle that always meets their nutrient requirements for optimal healthy and productive lives.

3.4 Policy Objectives

Objective 1 By 2030, reduce the prevalence of undernourishment from 30.9% to 15% and maintain overweight and obesity among children under five years below 5%, by facilitating the provision of adequate food and nutrition for mothers and children and ensuring optimal health and productivity of the people of Namibia throughout their lifecycle ;

Objective 2 By 2030, increase domestic food production of local consumption from 30% to 60% and enhance processing, marketing, and consumption of food to improve access to nutritious and safe food for the populace of Namibia at all times.

Objective 3 By 2030, reduce prevalence of stunting from 24% to 12% through nutrition-sensitive interventions and by ensuring access to health care services, sanitation, hygiene, education, and social protection programmes for all people in Namibia.

Objective 4 By 2030, increase investment in food and nutrition security by at least 10% of the national budget annually and ensure an enabling environment for effective coordination and implementation.

3.5 Government Policy Objectives, Rationale and Strategies

Policy Objective 1: By 2030, reduce the prevalence of undernourishment from 30.9% to 15% and maintain overweight and obesity among children under five years below 5%, by facilitating the provision of adequate food and nutrition for mothers and children and ensuring optimal health and productivity of the people of Namibia throughout their lifecycle.

Rationale

Inadequate nutrition is a contributor to malnutrition, reduced immunity, and increased susceptibility to disease, impaired physical and mental development, and reduced productivity. Malnutrition can present itself as acute (wasting and underweight), chronic (stunting) or micronutrient deficiencies. Both severe and moderate acute malnutrition are perilous for child survival and major determinants of stunting, which has long-lasting consequences and linkages with slowing development. Namibia has made minimal progress in reducing stunting as compared to wasting and underweight yet if reducing stunting is prioritised, more lives will be saved and all related consequences of child undernutrition will be eliminated. Conversely, Namibia has made progress in lowering acute malnutrition. However, assistance in changing nutrition practices need to be strengthened in both health facility and community settings.

Addressing deficiencies of micronutrients is considered a major component of the stunting reduction strategy. In Namibia, micronutrients of greatest concern include vitamin A, iron, iodine, folic acid and zinc whose deficiencies have devastating consequences ranging from reduction of mental and physical development to impaired growth and related pregnancy complications. Specific strategies for reducing micronutrient deficiencies include promotion of micronutrient-rich diets, fortification of staple foods, point-of-use fortification of complementary foods, and micronutrient supplementations.

Diet-related non-communicable diseases require high-level attention in Namibia because of the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity in the urban population. Underlying factors contributing to overweight and obesity need to be determined and related strategies for effective prevention developed accordingly.

Adequate nutritional care and support are recognised as an essential component of the Namibian guidelines for Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) because it contributes to enhancing quality of life, prolong the survival rates of those infected and improve productivity. Therefore, integration of nutrition and HIV interventions should be strengthened.

Namibia is prone to natural disasters including droughts and floods that lead to farming failure, food losses and high livestock mortality. Together with internal population displacements, disasters increase food insecurity and malnutrition. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen food and nutrition security activities in the disaster preparedness and response plan.

Hence, the Government of Namibia commits itself to strengthening actions aimed at preventing and managing all forms of malnutrition through the following strategic measures that are designed to address the underlying and immediate causes of malnutrition that have direct impact on nutritional outcomes.

Strategy 1.1 Increase coverage of evidence-based high impact nutrition-specific interventions aimed at preventing all forms of malnutrition

- 1.1.1 Promote, protect, and support exclusive breastfeeding by enforcing the legislation and monitoring of the implementation of the Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes
- 1.1.2 Facilitate a supportive family, workplace, and social environment that enable caregivers to provide optimal feeding of their infants and young children
- 1.1.3 Ensure equitable access to optimal feeding and hygiene practices for infants and young children
- 1.1.4 Promote increased intake of micronutrients by infants and young children through consumption of diversified diets, food fortification, home fortification, and micronutrient supplementation
- 1.1.5 Promote and create access to available, affordable, and nutritionally adequate complementary foods for children aged 6–24 months
- 1.1.6 Foster partnerships to expand the scope of actors and implement Multi-Sectoral Nutrition approach towards improving child feeding practices
- 1.1.7 Create a national campaign on “1,000 Days” that promotes awareness messages on the multiple causes of stunting, its negative consequences, services, and practices for its prevention

Strategy 1.2 Increase coverage of interventions for the management and treatment of acute malnutrition by documenting and sharing best practices at national, regional and global levels.

- 1.2.1 Scale up high quality health and nutrition services to detect, treat and prevent the occurrence of acute malnutrition among children under the age of five years.
- 1.2.2 Promote and support community-based approaches for active identification and effective management of acute malnutrition
- 1.2.3 Enhance the institutional and operational capacity to manage moderate and severe acute malnutrition within health facilities and communities

- 1.2.4 Strengthen and scale up the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition and the nutritional management of men, women, and children in hospital setting
- 1.2.5 Ensure that operational tools for the policy implementation include guidelines and key messages, norms, and standards for essential strategies such as Management of Acute Malnutrition

Strategy 1.3 Implement Growth Monitoring and Promotion programmes

- 1.3.1 Strengthen capacity of health workers at health facilities and outreach services to monitor infant and child growth of children under the age of five years.
- 1.3.2 Sensitise mothers and women of reproduction age on pre-conditions and enablers for optimal growth
- 1.3.3 Scale up growth monitoring and promotion services via Community Health Workers at community and household level
- 1.3.4 Reinforce information on the use and interpretation of anthropometric indices, cut-off points, and summary statistics used to establish progress on optimal growth
- 1.3.5 Undertake periodic comparisons in levels, trends, and geographical distributions of under- and over-nutrition in pre-school and primary school children in Namibia

Strategy 1.4 Prevention and control of micronutrient disorders

- 1.4.1 Strengthen monitoring of the universal salt iodisation programme to ensure that all salt is adequately iodised
- 1.4.2 Strengthen the quality and coverage of vitamin A supplementation for children under the age of five years and post-partum women
- 1.4.3 Develop national guidelines for the prevention and treatment of micronutrient deficiency disorders (this includes all manner of micronutrient deficiency management)
- 1.4.4 Increase production and use of fortified and bio-fortified foods including point-of-use fortification

Strategy 1.5 Promotion of optimal maternal nutrition

- 1.5.1 Strengthen pre-conceptual nutrition services and counselling for women of reproductive age and encourage pregnancy spacing
- 1.5.2 Strengthen iron and folic acid supplementation during pregnancy
- 1.5.3 Strengthen community mobilisation to increase access to and use of antenatal care services by women
- 1.5.4 Promote healthy weight gain and adequate nutrition during pregnancy through Antenatal services
- 1.5.5 Introduce measures to prevent adolescent pregnancy and nutrition services and counselling for pregnant adolescents
- 1.5.6 Strengthen interventions to ensure that pregnant and lactating adolescent mothers are adequately nourished
- 1.5.7 Promote nutrition-sensitive services (including family planning, safe motherhood, and prevention or management of infections) in collaboration with relevant sectors

- 1.5.8 Improve the system of social safety nets to ensure all vulnerable women of reproductive age and their family members have adequate nutrition

Strategy 1.6 Prevention and management of over-nutrition and related non-communicable diseases

- 1.6.1 Promote practices that encourage diversified diets, food safety, healthy food choices, and healthy lifestyles, and weight management through communication, counselling, and dietary guidelines
- 1.6.2 Strengthen the capacity to screen, manage and provide adequate care for people affected with NCDs
- 1.6.3 Develop tailored dietary guidelines for over nutrition prevention and related NCDs
- 1.6.4 Regularly monitor the prevalence and diet related risk factors for NCDs
- 1.6.5 Further explore lifestyle changes contributing to obesity and overweight and strategies to encourage physical activity
- 1.6.6 Regulate the marketing of processed food and beverages to children and other vulnerable groups
- 1.6.7 Promote and support inclusion and sustainability of physical education in schools
- 1.6.8 Advocate for formulation of guidelines and strategies that will regulate intake of sugar and salt in processed foods

Strategy 1.7 Promotion of optimal nutritional care for people living with HIV, TB, and other infectious diseases

- 1.7.1 Increase access to appropriate nutritional assessment, care and support for people living with HIV & AIDS and TB
- 1.7.2 Provide counselling on diet and exercise to prevent and control diet-related chronic diseases among people living with HIV
- 1.7.3 Strengthen the community HIV programmes nutrition support capacity
- 1.7.4 Promote and strengthen provider-initiated testing and counselling (PITC) at nutritional recuperation units
- 1.7.5 Coordinate and implement services in health facilities and activities in workplaces, communities, and homes to protect, promote and support breastfeeding among women living with HIV with full ART cover

Strategy 1.8 Promotion of universal access and utilisation of quality primary health care services to all people

- 1.8.1 Promote and support health and nutrition education to increase the level of awareness of good nutrition
- 1.8.2 Promote integration of nutrition services in all routine and outreach health services and programmes targeting children and mothers
- 1.8.3 Promote and support breastfeeding policies, programmes, and initiatives
- 1.8.4 Promote and support appropriate complementary feeding practices

- 1.8.5 Promote utilisation of antenatal and postnatal care services among all pregnant and lactating women to monitor child growth, and the health and nutrition status of both the mother and the child
- 1.8.6 Advocate for, and support scale-up of new or existing programmes with low coverage
- 1.8.7 Prevent, control, and manage communicable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and HIV.

Strategy 1.9 Develop nutrition preparedness and response plans for emergency situations interventions

- 1.9.1 Ensure that policies, strategies and practices in emergencies and humanitarian crises promote, protect, and support breast-feeding and cater for non-breastfeeding mothers
- 1.9.2 Ensure implementation as per national guidelines for infant feeding in emergencies
- 1.9.3 Strengthen workforce capacity for managing nutrition in emergency situations
- 1.9.4 Improve supplementary feeding programmes for infants and young children in emergency situations
- 1.9.5 Ensure screening mechanisms are in place for targeting of nutrition and its related services to underserved communities and vulnerable groups in humanitarian situations
- 1.9.6 Improve supply chain management and logistics in emergency situations to treat and refer cases of severe acute malnutrition
- 1.9.7 Carry out sensitisation programmes for communities to raise their awareness of prevention, mitigation and response to risks of malnutrition during emergencies
- 1.9.8 Strengthen early warning systems on food and nutrition information from community to national levels

Policy Objective 2: By 2030, increase domestic food production of local consumption from 30% to 60% and enhance processing, marketing, and consumption of food to improve access to nutritious and safe food for the populace of Namibia at all times.

Rationale

The UNICEF conceptual framework (1990) which has been in use for programming for the past 28 years by the nutrition community identifies inadequate dietary intake and disease as the two immediate causes of malnutrition, disability and death. Dietary intake is underpinned by household food security. Therefore, improving household food security has a high potential to prevent and control undernutrition, particularly wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies through food-based approaches. Intervention packages and practices that combine improved food security with nutrition education have been shown to be more successful in improving nutritional status than stand-alone agricultural interventions.

The revised Namibia Agricultural Policy provides direction for increasing crop and livestock production, increasing household income through agro-business development, and promoting marketing and trade of Namibian safe, raw and processed agricultural products.

Strategy 2.1 Strengthening local production of safe and nutritious foods especially by smallholders' farmers and facilitate markets.

- 2.1.1 Enhance the use of sustainable agricultural technologies to increase production, processing, storage and handling of bio-fortified staple and nutrient-rich foods
- 2.1.2 Promote the production and consumption of locally grown indigenous nutrient-rich foods through increased awareness of their benefits and facilitate market access through formal marketing channels such as the Agro Marketing and Trade Agency and others.
- 2.1.3 Promote climate-smart agriculture and conservation
- 2.1.4 Strengthen agricultural inputs to enhance growth and food diversification for smallholder farmers that can still not afford agriculture inputs
- 2.1.5 Promote irrigation development and integrated water resources management
- 2.1.6 Promote sustainable and resilient agriculture through supporting livelihood approaches and new technologies that are climate resilience.
- 2.1.7 Strengthen research on new technologies and methodologies to enhance climate-smart agriculture
- 2.1.8 Promote fisheries, especially aquaculture, through access to finance, training, equipment, and market linkages

Strategy 2.2 Improve both physical and economic access to safe and nutritious foods at household levels

- 2.2.1 Facilitate marketing of local surplus produce, and access to adequate, diverse, safe, and affordable food at household level
- 2.2.2 Promote and support income generating activities of food insecure households through agro-processing and small-scale agricultural technologies
- 2.2.3 Promote production, marketing, and consumption of diversified nutritious foods at household and community levels
- 2.2.4 Advocate for and support integration of nutrition in agricultural programmes at national and local government levels
- 2.2.5 Promote and support local food processing and value addition at household and community level
- 2.2.6 Promote production and consumption of indigenous foods across seasons to enhance diet diversification
- 2.2.7 Scale-up urban and peri-urban horticulture program, incorporating backyard gardening projects

Strategy 2.3 Improve processing, storage and preservation of nutritious foods and reduce food waste and loss

- 2.3.1 Promote preparation at and dissemination of nutritious local recipes to household and community level
- 2.3.2 Promote national and local systems for food processing, preservation and small-scale storage technologies that preserve nutrients and increase the supply of nutritious foods
- 2.3.3 Promote food practices that reduces food waste and losses at household level
- 2.3.4 Develop a national framework to enhance postharvest handling of food and reduce food loss and waste
- 2.3.5 Support the standardisation of food handling and management during processing, storage, and transportation
- 2.3.6 Support the establishment of food banks to minimise food losses
- 2.3.7 Support the establishment of a coordination body to direct a comprehensive food management system
- 2.3.8 Promote fish canning, marketing, and distribution

Strategy 2.4 Strengthening capacity for implementation of nutrition-sensitive intervention within the agriculture sector

- 2.4.1 Strengthen nutrition promotion and education in agricultural extension training
- 2.4.2 Promote extension service system as a platform to deliver food and nutrition-information to farming households
- 2.4.3 Strengthen the capacity of farmers' unions in service delivery to farmers, especially with focus on digital extension, facilitation of farmer organisation for input acquisition, knowledge sharing and market linkage promotion

Strategy 2.5 Strengthening the resilience capacity of households to various shocks

- 2.5.1 Scale up the implementation of nutrition-sensitive safety nets and social protection programmes to address chronic vulnerability linked to strengthening livelihoods to build resilience among vulnerable groups
- 2.5.2 Provide technical and financial assistance to small-scale farmers in the Green Scheme farming, rural communities, and horticulture programmes
- 2.5.3 Establish an integrated risk management and reporting system for monitoring and assessing livelihood and vulnerability

Strategy 2.6 Promotion of agricultural approaches that mitigate the negative impact on nutrition

- 2.6.1 Ensure that nutrition is enhanced across all stages of the food system, from production through consumption
- 2.6.2 Identify agricultural interventions and practices that are harmful to human nutrition and enhance mitigation strategies

Strategy 2.7 Create a conducive, healthy, and safe food industry

- 2.7.1 Encourage consumer demand for healthy foods and meals through sensitisation of communities on their benefits

- 2.7.2 Strengthen partnership with the food industry to foster implementation of nutrition related legislation such as food fortification, labelling, food safety, public and environmental health
- 2.7.3 Facilitate the establishment and accreditation of a national network of food testing laboratories to international / regional food safety institutions.
- 2.7.4 Strengthen policies and regulations that encourage gradual reduction of saturated fat, sugars, salt/sodium, and trans-fat in foods
- 2.7.5 Promote healthy diet-friendly public facilities such as hospitals, childcare facilities, workplaces, schools, food and catering services

Strategy 2.8 Promote irrigation development and integrated water resources management

- 2.8.1. Facilitate investment in rainwater harvesting and water management
- 2.8.2. Encourage use of rivers and underground water resources for irrigation to diversify crop farming

Strategy 2.9 Promote environmental systems and land management for sustainable agriculture development

- 2.9.1. Support the development of strategies for climate change adaptation
- 2.9.2. Encourage productive utilisation of arable land in communal areas

Policy Objective 3: By 2030, reduce prevalence of stunting from 24% to 12% through nutrition-sensitive interventions and by ensuring access to health care services, sanitation, hygiene, education, and social protection programmes for all people in Namibia

Rationale

Malnutrition is not just due to diseases or lack of food, but also because of poor access to health care services, sanitation and hygiene, and education. In addition, lack of access to resources and lack of women empowerment indirectly contribute towards malnutrition. Scientific evidence suggests that implementation of the ten proven high-impact nutrition-specific interventions to scale, with a 90% coverage, can reduce prevalence of stunting and severe wasting by 20% and 60% respectively (Lancet 2013). Nevertheless, implementation of nutrition-sensitive interventions designed to address the underlying causes of malnutrition yield more benefits in reducing malnutrition.

Empowerment of women through increased income, access and control over resources and reduction in female work overload are linked to improved child nutrition. Evidence has shown that an increase in USD10 in woman’s income achieves the same improvements in children’s nutrition and health to an increase of a man’s income by USD110 (Farming First and FAO 2015: the female face of farming). This is because women are more likely to spend additional income on food and healthcare when compared to men. In addition, reduction of time constraints on women positively affects caring capacity and practices for children, self-care, and care for the family. To address these underlying determinants of malnutrition, the following strategic actions will be undertaken.

Strategy 3.1 Enhance and sustain equitable access to safe water, hygiene, and sanitation interventions

- 3.1.1 Promote measures that ensure equitable access to safe water
- 3.1.2 Promote scaling up of community approaches to total sanitation
- 3.1.3 Promote interventions on awareness of infectious disease prevention and management strategies at community and household levels
- 3.1.4 Encourage treatment of recycled water in agriculture
- 3.1.5 Promote and support interventions on hand washing with soap (and where possible with liquid soap)
- 3.1.6 Enhance communication and advocacy for improved sanitation and hygiene practices.

Strategy 3.2 Improve school nutrition and nutrition awareness

- 3.2.1 Integrate and strengthen nutrition education on infant feeding, maternal nutrition, and healthy eating into curricula for Early Childhood Development, formal and informal education, and parenting communities
- 3.2.2 Enhance nutritional sensitivity of the national school feeding programme through appropriate emphasis on hygiene and sanitation practices, deworming, gardening, and small animal husbandry in all participating schools
- 3.2.3 Promote physical education and exercise in schools at all levels
- 3.2.4 Ensure that the foods offered in institutional settings provide meals that meet optimal dietary requirements for targeted age groups and disease conditions
- 3.2.5 Promote water, sanitation and hygiene promotion education and practices in institutional settings
- 3.2.6 Build capacity of institutional staff on food handling, safety, and hygiene practices
- 3.2.7 Promote school gardens especially in schools in areas with rivers and springs to aid learning on agriculture and to supplement school feeding programme

Strategy 3.3 Promote social protection interventions for improved nutrition

- 3.3.1 Provide social transfers to the most vulnerable households and communities
- 3.3.2 Strengthen the quality-of-service provision and expand coverage of social protection measures, including conditional and non-conditional cash transfers to target nutritionally vulnerable groups
- 3.3.3 Promote nutrition education activities in social protection interventions to increase household awareness of optimal nutrition practices
- 3.3.4 Promote nutrition-sensitive interventions such as school feeding programs as vehicles for nutrition education, micronutrient supplementation, deworming, school gardening for vulnerable groups
- 3.3.5 Promote off-farm employment opportunities through economic empowerment programmes and other income generating activities

Strategy 3.4 Enhance women and youth's (including persons with disability) empowerment for improved nutrition status of household members and communities.

- 3.4.1 Promote gender-sensitive approaches in agriculture, primary health care, water and sanitation, social protection, and education.
- 3.4.2 Ensure meaningful participation of designated groups in all decision-making processes related to the food and nutrition security issues
- 3.4.3 Promote labour and time-saving technologies to reduce women's workload
- 3.4.4 Support women's access to productive resources and income-generating opportunities
- 3.4.5 Encourage the retention of learners, especially girls, at school
- 3.4.6 Ensure that women and youth empowerment programmes have nutrition goals and outcomes.

Strategy 3.5 Improve the livelihood and nutritional status of Marginalized Communities

- 3.1.1 Strengthen coordination among stakeholders to ensure full implementation of targeted initiatives towards marginalised communities
- 3.1.2 Advocate and promote the related human rights for marginalised communities
- 3.1.3 Ensure that learners and students from marginalised communities have equitable access to primary, secondary and tertiary education
- 3.1.4 Strengthen existing collaboration with key stakeholders to expedite the provision of water, land, housing and sanitation
- 3.1.5 Increase, improve and mobilize Marginalised Communities towards socio-economic empowerment programmes
- 3.1.6 Strengthen the registration and coverage of marginalised communities to benefit from social protection interventions
- 3.1.7 Intensify the registration of undocumented marginalised community members within Namibia
- 3.1.8 Ensure that food items under the Marginalised Community Feeding Programme have sufficient nutritional value for all beneficiaries

Policy Objective 4: By 2030, increase investment in food and nutrition security by at least 10% of the national budget annually and ensure an enabling environment for effective coordination and implementation

Rationale

The achievement of the nutrition goal relies not only on capacities of individuals and organisations to design and implement cost effective interventions, but also on a set of supportive programmes and activities required to ensure that the core set of nutrition interventions are competently delivered to the target population. This requires financial resources and well-educated and adequately skilled staff. To monitor the implementation of

nutritional interventions and assess progress in outcomes as well as to inform decision-making, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system at all levels will be implemented.

Key to enhancing implementation outcomes, is the ability to learn and share information on gaps and corrective measures and adjust programme implementation accordingly in real-time by navigating between the original log frame and the realities on the ground that arise during implementation (referred as adaptive management).

Accurate data and information are important not only for evidence-based planning and implementation but tracking the changes in welfare and living conditions of the Namibian population. The food and nutrition information management system needs to be strengthened and implemented through national surveys, monitoring and evaluation and other assessments and reviews as well as a problem-based operations research. Food and nutrition information from various sources need to be strategically disseminated to promote effective use among stakeholders.

Achieving the objectives of the policy to reduce the burden of malnutrition will also require stakeholders to accurately track progress and performance, evaluate impact, and ensure accountability at all operational levels. Therefore, a comprehensive M&E and accountability system for food and nutrition aligned with NDP-5 will be developed based on existing mechanisms for collecting routine data.

To increase investment and raise the profile of food and nutrition, policy makers and other key players will need to be sensitised on social and economic consequences of poor nutrition for Namibia's development through advocacy activities. A communication strategy is required to support advocacy, resource mobilisation, alliance building and to effectively promote social mobilisation and behavioural change.

In addition to good governance and accountability, the policy recommends the following strategies to strengthening the supportive programmes, activities and services.

There is a global consensus that sustainable improvement in nutrition requires nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, underpinned by an enabling environment for securing and sustaining political momentum and resources, and converting momentum into actions on the ground.

In Namibia, nutrition is currently given high priority in development objectives as evidenced by its positioning in Vision 2030 and NDP 5. However, persistent, and causal complexity of remaining and emerging food and nutrition security challenges requires strategic advocacy to sustain and increase political leadership and further build political commitment to sustain momentum and resources.

A major challenge in reducing food and nutrition insecurity in Namibia and other Sub-Saharan African countries is the tendency to focus on individual interventions often undertaken by single sectors rather than on collaborative, coordinated and mutually reinforcing strategies. Therefore, it is essential to create a conducive environment for a multi-sectoral approach through mainstreaming food and nutrition security into development policies and programmes, comprehensive scope and coverage of interventions, effective coordination and

accountability across sectors and among development partners at all levels. In this Policy, the enabling environment for food and nutrition will be reinforced through four major strategies as follows:

Strategy 4.1 Enhanced capacity for food and nutrition security policy implementation

- 4.1.1 Implement a comprehensive human resource plan for nutrition in Namibia in collaboration with the national human resource plan
- 4.1.2 Increase the capacity of relevant sectors and stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels to implement nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions relevant to their mandate
- 4.1.3 Strengthen the institutional, technical, and infrastructure capacity of relevant institutions to develop and carry out problem-based nutrition operational research
- 4.1.4 Analyse the social and economic impacts of child undernutrition through the Cost of Hunger in Africa Study and provide evidence supporting investments in human capital for sustainable development in Namibia

Strategy 4.2 Strengthening Integrated Food and Nutrition Information management system for improved decision-making and programming at all levels

- 4.2.1 Maintain and continuously improve the existing comprehensive and integrated health information system for the country
- 4.2.2 Strengthen the existing nutrition surveillance system at all levels of operation
- 4.2.3 Strengthen the quality of food and nutrition data systems, specifically in collection, collation, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination
- 4.2.4 Analyse the nutrition situation in Namibia through the Fill the Nutrient Gap Study to identify barriers in accessing and consuming healthy and nutritious food for improved decision-making and programming
- 4.2.5 Harmonise the food and nutrition security implementation plan with other strategic frameworks such as Sustainable Development Goals, the SUN movement, Zero Hunger Road Map, ICN 2 framework for actions and the National Climate Change Strategic and Action Plan

Strategy 4.3 Enhance a national interest in and commitment to improving nutrition programmes through functional communication plan

- 4.3.1 Ensure full dissemination of the policy in forms ranging from the full document to summaries and electronic versions
- 4.3.2 Develop and implement tailored communication and advocacy strategy to inform and influence decisions that affect food and nutrition security outcomes on all levels in Namibia
- 4.3.3 Strengthen and sustain capacity for advocacy, resource mobilisation and social mobilisation
- 4.3.4 Create effective platforms for information sharing on Food and Nutrition Security and networking for decision and policy formulation
- 4.3.5 Establish Champions to advocate for Food and Nutrition messages at all levels

Strategy 4.4 Enhance sustained commitment, governance, and resources

- 4.4.1 Advocate for and stimulate domestic investments in food and nutrition interventions
- 4.4.2 Encourage ethically public-private partnerships in addressing hunger and malnutrition issues
- 4.4.3 Strengthen budget tracking for food and nutrition interventions

Strategy 4.5 Mainstream food and nutrition security into national, sectoral, regional, and local plans and promote common result-based frameworks

- 4.5.1 Foster alignment of policies, projects, programmes, objectives, and indicators that impact food and nutrition security across different ministries and agencies
- 4.5.2 Strengthen alignment of development partner programmes and funding mechanisms within their respective mandates
- 4.5.3 Encourage identification and mitigation of potential harmful actions for Food and Nutrition Security
- 4.5.4 Ensure that all NDPs have budget lines for food and nutrition security
- 4.5.5 Strengthen coordination institutions to enhance the implementation of the Namibian Zero Hunger road map

Strategy 4.6 Develop appropriate food and nutrition security legislations, regulatory instruments, and guidelines

- 4.6.1 Review, analyse and modify existing sectorial policies and programmes on food and nutrition to ensure their suitability to emerging changes

Strategy 4.7 Strengthen policy and legal frameworks for coordination, planning, monitoring and evaluation for food and nutrition security activities

- 4.7.1 Establish and implement a functional governance structure that ensures effective implementation of food and nutrition security interventions
- 4.7.2 Establish and operationalise a strong and authoritative government-owned and -led coordination body on all levels
- 4.7.3 Advocate for the establishment of Food and Nutrition Security academic programmes at various levels of academic institutions to enhance human resource capacity
- 4.7.4 Facilitate the development of a monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of food and nutrition security policy

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND COORDINATION

The current policy intends to achieve optimal nutrition for everyone in Namibia, by means of specific and targeted strategies, focusing on strengthening the enabling environment for effective actions in ending hunger, preventing, and managing all forms of malnutrition, ensuring equitable food security for all households in Namibia. It also aims at promoting and

ensuring wide coverage of nutrition-sensitive interventions to address underlying causes of malnutrition, strengthening supporting programmes and services needed for effective policy implementation, and establishing and enforcing a strong governance system. Each strategy needs to be implemented through a set of measures which are under the responsibility of several sectors, notably Health and Social Services, Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Education Arts and Culture, Higher Education, Technology and Innovation, Fisheries and Marine Resources, Urban and Rural Development, Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Industrialisation and Trade, etc. In addition to these government ministries and agencies, effective implementation of the policy requires engagement and contribution from development partners, civil society organisations, academia, and the private sector.

Therefore, the responsibility for the implementation of the policy framework lies with all stakeholders, and a multi-sectoral governance system will be strengthened to ensure effective coordination and accountability.

4.1 Governance and Coordination

Food and nutrition security concerns are multi-sectoral and best addressed through a well-coordinated multi-sectoral approach. Hence, an institutional framework will be initiated with the aim of supporting stakeholders at all levels to successfully operationalise the FNSP. The FNSP will galvanise the achievements realised so far and strengthen the existing coordination, planning and management mechanisms to guide policy and harmonise programming.

The Government will provide overall leadership of the policy implementation with assistance from development partners, civil society organisations, and research and academic institutions.

Effective coordination, planning and management for food and nutrition interventions has always been a priority for the Government of the Republic of Namibia. In support of the multi-sectoral approach, the Government will establish a four level Food and Nutrition Security Coordination mechanism for Namibia from the national to the subnational level.

National level: refers to the first and top tier ranking for decision-making for all Food and Nutrition Security Policy implementation directives and emerging concerns. The national structure comprises of two bodies. 1) The Food and Nutrition Security Council, which is the over-arching body for all stakeholders, involved in food and nutrition security activities in the country. The Right Honourable Prime Minister will chair the Council. 2) The Food and Nutrition Security Inter-Agency Steering Committee (FNSIASC) is the body that provides coordination, management and implementation of Food and Nutrition Security Policy, chaired by Secretary to Cabinet as outlined in the Coordination Structure document. The FNSIASC addresses all technical issues regarding food and nutrition security in the country. The technical experts will work in specialised units or working groups to address specific components of food and nutrition security issues in line with government departments, development partners, and civil society's alliances. Still at the national level, the National Secretariat will offer all the administrative support to the two institutions, link and coordinate the stakeholders. The National secretariat will be hosted in the MAWLR and work closely with other stakeholders.

Regional level: refers to the second tier ranking of operation level for decision making for Food and Nutrition Security programming. The regional development committee is the overarching supervisory body for the food and nutrition security stakeholders in the region. It comprises of a food and nutrition security technical team with similar composition of that of the national level that advice the regional development team on Food and Nutrition Security matters. The Sub-National Secretariat will be hosted under the Directorate of Planning at the Regional Council supervised by the Chief Regional Officer. The role of sub-national secretariat is the same as that of the national level secretariat.

Constituency level: refers to the third tier ranking of operational level for decision-making navigated by Regional Council through the constituency development. Due to lack of adequate technical capacity at the constituency levels, matters regarding food and nutrition security will be relayed through the different Development Committees like the Local Authority Development Committee, Village Development Committee, Settlement Development Committee, and Locality Development Committee. The community resource persons and agriculture extension workers will sit in the various development committees to discuss Food and Nutrition Security Matters.

Community level: refers to the fourth tier ranking of operational levels for decision making at the community level steered through community-based organisations, community leaders, community health workers, the community members, faith-based organisations and other existing and relevant structures in the community. The community leaders and representatives of the community organisations will report to the constituency development committee.

4.2 Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

The policy also recognizes the critical needs for creating a supportive environment that seeks to promote complementary and harmonized efforts and to maximize synergies for existing resources, capacity, and programs across all relevant government sectors, development partners, private sector and civil society organisations.

Given the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder nature of this policy, the proposed actions will be implemented through a coherent and coordinated approach, which will foster collaboration between line ministries, regional and local authorities, development partners, CSOs, training and research institutions and private sector. Therefore, responsibility for implementation will be shared among stakeholders and there will be both individual and collective accountability for results.

4.2.1. Office of the President: National Planning Commission (NPC)

National Planning Commission will:

- Support resource mobilisation for the implementation of food and nutrition security activities in all relevant sectors,
- Ensure that priority research topics and data needs for computation of indicators on food and nutrition security are included in national surveys, and
- Support the development, revision and reviewing of related regulated framework on Food and Nutrition Security

4.2.2. Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

The Office of the Prime Minister will oversee the Food and Nutrition Security Coordination structure and its implementation up to the subnational level through the various government sectors. Further, the Directorate of Disaster Risk Management (DDRM) in the Office of the Prime Minister will ensure that Food and Nutrition Security issues in emergency preparedness and responses are integrated into the sectoral preparedness and response plans. The OPM as a public service coordinating body will:

- Strengthen nutrition and agricultural linkages.
- Ensure that policies are implemented and oversee human resource development and management for the various ministries,
- Provide timely and reliable data on emergency for programming purposes (planning, provision of nutrition services and monitoring),
- Coordinate resource mobilisation in cases of emergency, and
- Chair the Food and Nutrition Security Council.

4.2.3. Ministry of Health and Social Services

MoHSS will play a key role in the achievements of the FNSP especially under nutrition-specific interventions. In addition, the Ministry will:

- Strengthen public health care system and human capacity to respond to nutrition needs at all levels of the system,
- Take responsibility to provide technical support and guidance to all sectors as well as to disseminate the nutrition policy and associated action plans to other stakeholders and the community at large,
- Enhance accountability on FNSP implementation,
- Take necessary steps to strengthen the integrated health information systems with a wide spectrum of key nutrition indicators,
- Promote healthy lifestyles in families,
- Seek to build the capacity of its personnel at all levels in nutrition information management to enhance data collection, reporting and utilisation, and
- Ensure that all elderly and disabled are entitled to quality health and nutrition care information and services.

4.2.4. Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR)

The MAWLR is responsible for promotion of food production security for all Namibians and specifically mandated to promote sustainable production, productivity, and diversification of the agricultural sector towards food security and the sustainable management and utilisation of land and water resources. To achieve this MAWLR will:

- Under the Department of Land Reform, ensure that Namibia's land resource is equitably allocated, efficiently managed, administered, and sustainably used for the benefit of all Namibians,
- Strengthen land and property rights to realise Namibia's development objectives related to poverty alleviation, food security, environmental sustainability and advancing women's empowerment,

- Collaborate with Ministry of Industrialisation & Trade and research institutions on the production of micronutrient rich-foods, and production of drought resistant food crops,
- Ensure adequate sanitation and equitable access to adequate safe water for all Namibian households, particularly in underserved areas, and
- Ensure national, community and household food security, and
- Host the National Secretariat for the implementation and coordination of National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, Implementation Action Plan as well as the Coordination Structure.

4.2.5. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MEAC)

The MEAC will:

- Strengthen school-based nutrition programmes including nutrition education through classroom curricula, nutrition-sensitive school feeding programme, school gardening and school health activities including deworming, micronutrient supplementation, sexual and reproductive health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion,
- Ensure that Physical Education will be an examinable subject to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyle throughout the life cycle, and

4.2.6. Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation (MHETI)

The MHETI will:

- Ensure an environment conducive for human resource development, including pre-service and in-service opportunities to meet the requirements for a well-trained and skilled workforce for food and nutrition security,
- Support skills development through the Technical and Vocational Education and Training system, inclusive of skills development needed in the attainment of food security and nutrition,
- Support efforts to start food and nutrition security degree programmes, including certificate and diploma courses in food and nutrition security,
- Support efforts in the undertaking of food and nutrition security research in institutions of higher learning aimed at enabling technologies and product development,
- Support the development and implementation of appropriate innovative strategies/interventions towards food and nutrition security,
- Collaborate with the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) to promote the establishment of research and analytical laboratories and facilities that can address food and nutrition security problems.

4.2.7. Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (MIT)

Part of the Ministry's mandate is to develop and maintain economic regulatory framework, create conducive environment for business and promote value addition. In line with this, MIT will:

- Collaborate with the relevant OMAs and the private sector to regulate imported and locally processed food products,

- Strengthen its existing policies and strategies to promote value addition to locally produced goods, especially agro-processed food and ensure that it is done in a manner that does not compromise nutritional content of the product, and
- Promote fair pricing and trade and ensure that food and beverages on the Namibian market meet the country's nutritional standards and protect consumer health.

4.2.8. Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MGEPESW)

The MGEPESW will:

- Provide leadership in advocacy for equitable and gender sensitive nutrition programming including food supply to needy families and the implementation of growth monitoring and promotion,
- Take leadership in advocacy for adequate maternity leave as it relates to breastfeeding promotion and protection, and national campaign for 1,000 days' movement,
- Promote male involvement in maternal, infant, and young child nutrition care; train and educate women, girls, men, and boys on how gender impacts on nutritional status and food and nutrition security and educate the public on and reinforce existing policies, guidelines, acts and regulations related to maternity protection, maternal health, infant feeding, and child welfare grants,
- Provide support to poor rural, urban, and peri-urban populations to enhance food production and income-generating activities through the Implementation Plan for the Blueprint on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication and the Zero Hunger Road Map,
- Ensure quality of service provision and make sure that the safety net programme targets nutritionally vulnerable groups.

4.2.9. Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs (MDVA)

The MDVA will:

- Ensure that all maternal and child health and nutrition services are provided to the Namibia Defence Force members and their families,
- Create awareness among the Defence Forces and their families by developing information, education and communication materials on food and nutrition security,
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Health and Social Services to ensure that the MDVA health care providers are oriented towards the provision of quality nutrition care services, and
- Provide logistical support in emergency nutrition preparedness and response, and when possible be responsible for exceptional, large-scale programmes.

4.2.10. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment Creation (MLIREC)

The MLIREC together with all relevant stakeholders will:

- Ensure children are protected from child labour and traditional practices harmful to optimal nutrition,
- Support the ratification and implementation of the ILO Maternity Protection Convention No. 183 of 2000 and its recommendations, and

- Work towards ensuring fully paid maternity leave for all employees including those in the private sector.

4.2.11. Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service (MSYNS)

The MSYNS will:

- Support Behaviour Change Communications and healthy lifestyles including nutrition and physical activity, and
- Incorporate nutrition, food security, food safety and health issues into existing youth development programmes

4.2.12. Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR)

The MFMR will:

- Promote freshwater aquaculture to enhance food security, generate income and improve rural livelihoods through a pro-poor policy with production targeted primarily to ensure food security in local communities,
- Promote marine aquaculture (known as mariculture) targeting farming of high value export species,
- Promote fish canning and related value-addition,
- Strengthen conservation, sustainable use and mainstreaming of biodiversity in coastal and marine ecosystems in Namibia, and
- Ensure the production and availability of fish products in the local market to contribute to enhancing micronutrient intakes while providing income to the people.

4.2.13. Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (MICT)

The MICT will collaborate with the relevant sectors to:

- Inform and educate the population on nutrition issues,
- Assist with the social mobilisation for nutrition including advocacy, community involvement and behaviour change communication,
- Through a variety of appropriate channels such as broadcasts (TV and radio), and print and electronic media, it will ensure that Namibians receive accurate and timely information related to nutrition policies, regulations, and laws as well as best practices and norms.

4.2.14. Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT)

The MEFT will:

- Mainstream food and nutrition security into mitigation and adaptation strategies for managing the threat of desertification, drought, climate change and other disasters,
- Specific to climate change, will take up the designated role as the government agency responsible for the coordination and implementation of climate change policies and measures including sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation to protect the present and future development gains for the country.

4.2.15. Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

The MOJ will

- ensure that laws and regulations related to food and nutrition security such as food safety, food standards and the Environmental and Public Health Act related to International Code for marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes are enforced,
- Play a critical role in revision of the Labour Act to put into effect changes to maternity protection provisions,
- Assist with the review and updating of food and nutrition related legislation, and
- Ensure justice for citizens on health, nutrition, and food security issues.

4.2.16. Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD)

The MURD will:

- Mainstream WASH, food and nutrition security into regional and district development programmes and projects and enforce by-laws,
- Establish and strengthen sub-national coordination platforms for multi-sectoral planning,
- Assist with food distribution and WASH in emergency situations requiring food distribution,
- Accelerate a broad-based rural industrialisation and economic growth through enhanced rural infrastructure development, research and appropriate technology development, income generation and employment creation,
- Use constituency development funds to support community, family and child health and food and nutrition initiatives in their various constituencies,
- Local government shall ensure nutrition is included in local development plans. They shall mobilize resources for the implementation of interventions and the operationalization of sub-national multi-sectoral platforms.

4.2.17. Ministry of Finance (MoF)

The MoF will:

- Coordinate resource mobilisation for food and nutrition security and make concomitant provisions for food and nutrition security in the national budget, and
- Ensure adequate budget allocation and track expenditures for food and nutrition security in all sectors.

4.2.18. Ministry of Works and Transport (MWT)

The MWT will:

- Facilitate and support the construction and maintenance of food and nutrition building and transportation infrastructure,
- Facilitate the movement of goods (food and nutrition products), and
- Provide early warning services in terms of natural disasters which may impact food production and security such as floods, droughts etc.

4.2.19. Namibia Statistic Agency (NSA)

NSA in collaboration with the stakeholders will:

- Develop a nutrition information management system to strengthen the evidence base for food and nutrition security programming, and
- Ensure findings are disseminated in a timely manner to enable effective planning and M&E.

4.2.20. Namibia Standards Institution (NSI)

The NSI will:

- Develop and disseminate quality national standards of food products including imported and locally produced foods and micronutrient fortified products, and
- Reinforce the food quality control system and assist sectors in enforcing the Public Health Act relevant to their activities.

4.3 Legal and Regulatory Arrangements

The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy derives from the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, Article 95, paragraph (j) which stipulates that: *“consistent planning to raise and maintain an acceptable level of nutrition and standard of living of the Namibian people and to improve public health”*. It conforms to the international conventions and declarations on food and nutrition, which the Government has adopted or ratified for the promotion of nutrition.

This policy aligns with the country's national development priorities. The Namibian Vision 2030 provides the foundation for principles of nutrition security. The fifth Objective of the Vision is to *“ensure a healthy, food secured and breastfeeding nation, in which all preventable, infectious and parasitic diseases are under secure control, and in which people enjoy a high standard of living, with access to quality education, health and other vital services, in an atmosphere of sustainable population growth and development”*.

The Fifth National Development Plan (NDP-5) which is the main instrument for implementing policies and programmes aimed at achieving Vision 2030 acknowledges the nexus between nutrition, health and poverty. For example, NDP-5 considers nutrition as barrier to achieving health outcomes but also as a determinant and an outcome of poverty in Namibia.

The revised policy also aligns with objectives of several sector policies, strategies and programmes as well as regulatory frameworks that impact food and nutrition security. These strategic documents listed in Annex 1 are from health and social services, agriculture and forestry, gender and child welfare, fisheries and marine resource, poverty eradication, education, industry, and trade just to name a few.

4.4 Resource Mobilisation

Government will create a budget line for food and nutrition and secure resources for each cycle of the implementation plan. The Implementation Action Plan will include both nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions carried out by several line ministries and development partners. All stakeholders will be expected to budget for and secure own financial, human and

material resources to ensure effective implementation of activities they are responsible for. In case of insufficient funding, stakeholders will mobilise resources and technical assistance. Government will explore ways in which the private sector can participate in reaching the policy goals, in line with Government policies and priorities. At Regional and District levels, food and nutrition security interventions will be included in development plans and budgeted accordingly.

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation framework

Monitoring of this Policy will entail a range of activities that will describe and analyse the development and implementation of policy objectives. Through the monitoring process, lead implementers and co-partners will be charged with the responsibility of identifying potential gaps in implementation, outline areas of improvement and account for their activities and resource utilisation. The monitoring reports will gauge the level and quality of stakeholder engagement and track progress of achieving the intended policy outcomes.

The Policy Implementation Action Plan (Section 5) contains key components essential for monitoring progress of policy implementation. The monitoring and reporting tool (Supplementary document 2) enables each lead implementer to report on the objectives, strategic outcomes, activities, outputs, output indicators, status of actual interventions and related results. Lead implementers will at least annually submit their monitoring reports to the Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee (FNSSC) and the FNSC Secretariat or as often as mandated by the FNSC- steering committee.

Monitoring and evaluation of these sectorial related activities will be completed concurrently with mandatory assessments of the progress made in the implementation of the sector plans. The information obtained should contribute towards continuous policy review (section 4.7). Thus, the continuous review should report on physical and financial implementation rates, progress and achievements, effectiveness of strategies and activities, gaps and challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for revising the policy.

4.6 Advocacy and Dissemination

Proper communication and dissemination are important elements in raising awareness on the policy, creating ownership, and enhancing commitment. The launch of the endorsed policy will be publicised through television, radio, and print media in all of Namibia's most spoken languages in order to raise awareness of the existence of the document. Following the adoption of the policy, all relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation will be availed with copies. Copies will be provided to academic institutions and libraries and made available for online access on the website of relevant institutions.

Plain language summary of the policy will be developed and other formats of the documents for advocacy purposes will be developed for the high-level decision makers and traditional leaders. Finally, a communication and social mobilisation plan for food and nutrition security will be developed to support and enhance implementation of the action plan.

4.7 Policy Revision

Food and Nutrition Security agenda is dynamic, and priorities may change quickly. Therefore, the current policy shall not be considered as a static document. Rather, it should be revised as national priorities change and new evidence becomes available. Each revision should be undertaken only after an in-depth evaluation of the implementation of the policy and related action plans. The following eight steps may be followed during the revision of the policy; 1) Policy review 2) research and analysis, 3) stakeholder consultations, 4) draft policy, 5) review and revision, 6) implementation, 7) evaluation and 8) revised policy. Prior to each revision of the policy, FNSC in collaboration with the National Planning Commission will conduct a thorough evaluation of the policy implementation.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

In general, policy implementation is the administration stage of the policy process after the Cabinet has passed the policy and officially adopted it. Implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy concerns several efforts that encompass financial, administrative, and political matters that require technical, professional, and administrative support, advocacy, and motivation to attain the intended purpose.

To implement this policy, a detailed Implementation Action Plan of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy has been developed through a multi-sectoral approach (supplementary document).

The costed multi-sectoral Implementation Action Plan considers existing implementation plans and strategies under the guidance and supervision of the Office of the Prime Minister. The plan incorporates specific activities required to achieve the policy objectives, indicates the lead implementer and co-partners, strategic outcomes, activities, outputs, output indicators, baseline indicators, annual targets, and related costs.

Section 4.5 and 4.7 clearly outline how the Implementation Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed.

6. CONCLUSION

This Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP) is a revision of the 1995 Food and Nutrition Policy for Namibia. The policy was updated to provide a policy base for nutrition and household food security actions that takes into consideration national progress and challenges. It recognises food and nutrition as universal rights essential for the physical, mental, and emotional development of children and the quality of life for adults. One of the Government priorities is to achieve Vision 2030 for long-term development. Food and Nutrition Security has the potential to enhance macroeconomic and societal growth through a set of positive outcomes including, for example, increasing maternal and child survival, enhancing good health, better productivity and higher earnings, breaking the nexus between nutrition, health and poverty and eliminating the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Despite several remaining challenges that need to be addressed, the Policy is developed in an environment of considerable past achievements of the 1995 Food and Nutrition Policy. The revised policy and its operational plan seek to consolidate these achievements and reinforce Namibia's efforts to addressing the national challenge of malnutrition in children as stated in NDP5. Further, it is a step towards achieving the Vision 2030 goal of ensuring a healthy and food-secure nation. As such, a proper implementation of the policy will accelerate Namibia's progress in reducing poverty and sustaining its economic development while contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Nutrition is a developmental issue, which is rooted in underlying and basic determinants that cannot be addressed by one sector alone. Given the inter-connectedness and inter-dependency of these causes, successful results-oriented implementation will depend on full participation, commitment, and accountability of all stakeholders. Because of the involvement of multi-

stakeholders and several line ministries, Government will, through this policy establish a strong coordination mechanism capable of fostering synergies across sectorial policies and programmes. This is key to achieving the policy specific objectives.

The food and nutrition security policy framework reinforces the commitment by Namibia's government to positioning food and nutrition as central to long-term development efforts as well as its compliance to global and regional initiatives related to addressing malnutrition. It provides an overarching framework that speaks to each sector and partner working towards the achievement of national goals and objectives through food and nutrition.

Government of Namibia understands that many external factors such as climate change, global economy instability, global nutrition agenda and international protocols and conventions might affect the implementation of some interventions in the current policy. Therefore, the policy might require adaptation to the changing environment.

It is expected that by embracing a multi-sectoral perspective and bringing the overall supervision at higher level of the Office of the Prime Minister and custodianship of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, the policy extends ownership and implementation responsibilities to all sectors, which will result in increased sectorial commitments and opportunities for joint programming.

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APPENDICES

Annex 1: Main policies that impact FSN in Namibia

Policy (year of adoption)	Custodian
Vision 2030 – Policy Framework for Long-term national development. (1994)	Office of the President
Food and Nutrition Policy for Namibia (1995)	Office of the Prime Minister
National Health Policy Framework 2010 – 2020 (2010)	Ministry of Health Social Services (MoHSS)
National Policy on Sexual, Reproductive and Child Health (2012)	MoHSS
National Policy on Health Promotion (2011)	MoHSS
National Policy on HIV/AIDS (2007)	MoHSS
National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding (2003)	MoHSS
National Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (2003)	MoHSS
National Policy for School Health (2008)	MoHSS
Namibia Agriculture Policy (2015)	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF)
Namibia Food Safety Policy (2015)	MAWF
Water supply and Sanitation Policy (2008)	MAWF
National Horticulture Programme (2015)	MAWF
Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act No.6 of 1995	MAWF
Green Scheme Policy (2008)	MAWF
Draft Revised Namibia Drought Policy (2017)	MAWF
Namibia's Aquaculture Policy (2001)	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine (MFMR)
Marine Resources Policy (2004)	MFMR

National Policy on Climate Change for Namibia (2011)	Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET)
National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (2004)	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW)
National Gender Policy (2010-20)	MGECW
National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2007)	MGECW
Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Policy (2009)	Office of Prime Minister (OPM)
Namibia Labour Law (1992, amended in 2004)	Ministry of Labour
Social Security Act, 1994 (Amended 2004)	Ministry of Labour
National Rural Development Policy (2014)	Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD)

Annex 2: Main Sector Strategies that impact FSN in Namibia

Strategy (Year of Adoption)	Custodian
Namibia Child Survival Strategy 2014-2018 (2014)	Ministry of Health and Social Services
Master Plan for Marine Aquaculture in Namibia 2013-2023 (2013)	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (NCCSAP)	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
Country Climate-Smart Agriculture programme 2015 – 2030 (2015)	Ministry of Environment and Tourism and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry.
National Agenda for Children 2012 – 2016 (2012)	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW)
Multi-sectoral nutrition implementation plan, results framework and dashboard of indicators (2014)	Namibia Alliance for Improved Nutrition (NAFIN)/OPM
Implementation Plan for the Blueprint on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication (2017/18 – 2019/20)	Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MPESW)
Namibia Zero Hunger Road Map (2016-2020)	National Planning Commission
National Multi-sectoral Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in Namibia 2017/18 – 2021/22	Ministry of Health and Social Services
Harambee Prosperity Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20: Namibian Government's Action Plan towards Prosperity for All.	Office of the President
Namibia Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring Plan 2016 – 2020 (2016)	Office of the Prime Minister

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