

Statement
The End of current EU Preferential Market Access for Namibia:
What would be the Economic and Social Impact?
Nampower Convention Centre, Windhoek

By Sylvia Mundjindi, Project Officer, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Members of the Agricultural Trade Forum

Members of the Diplomatic Community

All Protocol Observed

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel honored to deliver a brief statement on behalf of the FES. First of all, we would like to congratulate the agricultural sector for taking up this initiative to discuss the implications of the ***“End of the EU Preferential Market Access”*** for Namibia Agricultural Sector as well as the effects on the Namibia economy and the Namibia nation.

Since agriculture is the backbone of Namibia’s economy and more than 70% of the Namibian population derives its livelihood from agricultural activities it is essential that negotiations are concluded in time. I know its going to be a challenge to conclude negotiations in time since SADC member states have diverse interest. Nevertheless it is important that SADC Member States should be aware of the advantages and disadvantages that can be accrued from the EPA negotiation agreement.

Should negotiations not be concluded in time, Namibia agricultural sector would not only loose preferential market access to the EU, but its capacity to export agricultural products to the EU due to the increase of tariffs on agricultural products will be minimized.

The absence of preferential market access to this important sector in the Namibia economy will not only mean economic costs (for e.g. loss of foreign

revenue to the Namibia government) but also social costs (for e.g. loss of human dignity due to job losses within the Namibia economy).

Due to such losses the Namibia government will be more challenged to address developmental challenges such as poverty and unemployment and meet its national objectives which are enshrined into policy documents such as vision 2030 and NDP3.

I am sure that most SADC nations, including Namibia would fear losing market access to the EU and will be pressured to sign agreements that might bring minimal benefits to their countries and therefore my appeal to the EU is to seriously consider the December time frame and wait until most countries are ready to commit themselves to the EPA negotiation agreement.

With these few remarks ladies and gentlemen I thank you for your kind attention.