



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND LAND REFORM

PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT BY HON. CARL HG SCHLETTWEIN,
MP, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND LAND REFORM ON
THE STATUS OF CONTINUOUS EXPORT OF BEEF AND OTHER
COMMODITIES TO THE EUROPEAN UNION MARKETS FOLLOWING
THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION DEFORESTATION
REGULATION AS FROM 01 JANUARY 2025

13 August 2024

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members of the House,

I rise to present to this August House the Ministerial position and way forward regarding the status of continuous export of beef and other commodities to the European Union markets following the introduction of the European Union deforestation regulation on January 1, 2025.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members of the House,

It is a known fact that Namibia's livestock industry serves as the backbone of many families in Namibia. This is not only made possible through the sale of livestock to local abattoirs but also through export to other lucrative markets. Namibia is one of the very few African countries with beef that enjoys the international lucrative markets, including the European Union. This is made possible by various interventions and disease control measures that we have in place. However, our export destinations like the European Union, have introduced what they term EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

The EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), which entered into force in June 2023, marks a step change in demand-side efforts to reduce deforestation by requiring that commodities placed on or exported from the EU market be deforestation-free.

The EUDR requires that commodities placed on or exported from the EU market that are covered under the regulation—cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soy, timber, and rubber, as well as derived products such as beef, furniture, and chocolate—do not come from land deforested or degraded after December 31, 2020.

This regulation affects beef, fuel wood, and charcoal in Namibia. As of 1 **January 2025, these products will not be authorised to enter the EU market if they come from a parcel of land deforested after December 2020 and if they are not produced in accordance with the national laws in the country of origin.**

The **'forest'** is defined as land spanning more than 0.5 hectares (1.24 acres) with trees higher than 5 meters (16.4 feet) and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach those thresholds in situ, excluding land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use;

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Forest degradation' means structural changes to forest cover, taking the form of the conversion of primary forests or naturally regenerating forests into plantation forests or into other wooded land and the conversion of primary forests into planted forests;

1. **Deforestation'** means the conversion of forest to agricultural use, whether human-induced or not;
2. **Deforestation-free'** means (a) that the relevant products contain, have been fed with or have been made using commodities that were produced on land that has not been subject to deforestation after December 31, 2020, and (b) in case of relevant products that contain or have been made using wood, that the wood has been harvested from the forest without inducing forest degradation after December 31, 2020;
3. Operators are defined as“any natural or legal person who, in the course of a commercial activity places relevant products on the Union market or exports them from the Union market.”
4. Operators will need to submit a due diligence statement that must be available to competent authorities electronically. It should confirm that due diligence was carried out and no or only negligible risk was found.
5. While the producer country regulates the specific harvesting and production requirements of these commodities, the EUDR requires adherence to relevant laws in producing countries, including:
 - 5.1. land (land tenure, land registration),
 - 5.2. environment (water, soil, use of pesticides, waste, etc.),

- 5.3. human rights (child/ forced labour, indigenous rights/ Free Prior and Informed Consent, etc),
 - 5.4. labour (health and safety, wages, gender, etc.),
 - 5.5. trade (SPS)/ customs /
 - 5.6. taxes/anticorruption regulations.
6. Capturing relevant source-level data on the social (such as farm wages and the environmental impact of raw material sourcing, such as farmer wages, and maintaining that data throughout the product's chain of custody will be necessary to secure EU market access).
7. EUDR compliance will require data integrity and interoperability with the numerous systems incorporated throughout the supply chains.
8. The traceability system should leverage suppliers' data to avoid double data entry and build on any missing information. For example, traceability software should smoothly integrate with systems used by associations and certifiers (Rainforest Alliance, RSPO, FSC, GPSNR, Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, etc.). Doing so will reduce inconsistencies, streamline data analysis, and maintain certifications with the batch's chain of custody.
9. Traceability partners must seamlessly integrate with any Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), inventory management, and other legacy systems used to manage supply chains, procurement, compliance, and sustainability data. System compatibility will help operators streamline their operations and reduce the risk of errors and inconsistencies.

10. Operators (or traders) are legally responsible for ensuring that the geolocation and legality information is correct, regardless of the means or intermediaries they use to collect that information.
11. Operators will need data-backed evidence on the plots of land the commodities originated from.
12. For farms larger than 4 hectares, digital polygons (i.e., a series of GPS coordinates that shown where commodities are grown. However, a single GPS coordinate is sufficient for.
13. The plots of land must be linked to the asset's transaction history at the source, and their final product is compliant.
14. Tracking and tracing a product's journey from the origin creates a digitized audit trail of environmental impact accurately.
15. Non-compliance will result in the following:
 - 15.1. Fines: Can reach up to 4% of the operator's or trader's annual EU turnover.
 - 15.2. Confiscation: Revenues from relevant transactions may be confiscated.
 - 15.3. Exclusion: Temporary exclusion from public procurement and access to public funding for a maximum of 12 months.
 - 15.4. Suspension: Temporary suspension from placing or making available on the EU market or exporting relevant

commodities/products, along with a prohibition from exercising simplified due diligence.

16. Not long ago, the European Union delegation facilitated a technical assistance mission to assess the private sector's adaptation to the requirements of the European Deforestation Regulation.
17. This requirement has significant implications for companies, producers, and governments in producer countries that sell relevant products to the EU market.
18. On the other hand, the requirement creates opportunities for our government as a producing country to improve our own forest governance and achieve other environmental policy objectives while working to support our trade with the EU market.
19. As Namibia is a net exporter of beef and other commodities to the European Union market, we must ensure compliance with these requirements and design national measures that align with them, as stipulated in the EUDR.

Preparatory Steps may include and not limited to:

1. Understand and analyze the requirement.
2. Identify relevant state actors (ministries/agencies) concerned by the requirement.

3. Review of the legal framework and existing relevant national and international approaches initiatives to guarantee compliance.
4. Develop strategies to consolidate and harmonize legal frameworks especially through participatory approaches.
5. Define indicators for legal compliance.
6. Sensitize local farmers about the content of the legislation and how to comply with it.
7. Develop legality assurance systems through auditing, certification and chain of custody requirements.
8. Strengthen compliance with the legal frameworks' standard operating procedure/strategy of law enforcement.
9. Support independent forest monitoring to verify compliance.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members of the House,

I am therefore calling upon all role players to come on board so that we can develop a road forward to avoid uninterrupted market access of our products to the lucrative European Union market.