



by Hileni Nembwaya

OMUSATI regional governor Erginus Endjala has called on young people in the region to treat agriculture as a lucrative business and not just a hobby.

He added that northern Namibia has the potential to be a food basket to many communities.

The governor said this to encourage his region's detachment from communal farming and migration to a level of commercial agriculture.

“By treating agriculture as a business, we shall improve in food self-sustenance. So we must defeat the notion of being artificial consumers but not producers, because we rely on imported food for our consumption. Thus, it is our wish as a region to formalise the informal market to enable it to enter into the national procurement system,” he said.

To finance such bold move, he also encouraged banks and lending institutions to bet on this shift.

“I urge our local financial institutions to be innovative through unlocking agricultural potential in our region, especially in the manufacturing and agricultural processing areas that have the potential to create employment opportunities for our youth,” said the governor.

It is often said that Omusati is a dry region, but Endjala said despite this being a concern in many rural areas, the Omusati Regional Council, in conjunction with the agriculture ministry, spent N\$13 million on cleaning, pump testing, the installation of solar panel systems and the purchasing of materials for hand pumps in different constituencies.

Another, N\$6 million was spent on drilling 17 boreholes, solar installations, cleaning, the rehabilitation of 15 boreholes and the provision of short pipes.

The region has also spent N\$1,5 million on the construction of 12 earth dams, while N\$3 million had been spent on the construction of 178 pit latrines for households.

The governor said this presents an opportunity, despite the economic and social disruption caused by Covid-19, which has led to food shortages as people continue to lose their livelihoods. It has also come with hiked food prices.

Despite the governor's concerns about food prices, Omusati region houses one of the biggest green schemes (Etunda) and one of the biggest lakes (Etaka lake) in Namibia.

Moreover, one of the longest canals in the country stretching from Angola, runs through Omusati to supply Oshana with water all year.

This could mean the Omusati region has a constant supply of water all year to make the region an agricultural hub.