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**Report on the Status of Food Security and Sustainable Development
in Southern Africa**

The report reviews food security and sustainable development in Southern Africa in a continued effort to stimulate the debate towards finding permanent solutions to food insecurity in subregion. The food insecurity has continued to decline, not only in the subregion but Africa as whole.

It discusses several factors that influence food production and sustainable development. These include: poverty; climatic/weather conditions; civil conflicts/wars; limited application of science and technologies; HIV/AIDS; lack of adequate investment in rural development; limited role of women; poor land tenure systems; poor land management husbandry; little use of inputs and markets; inadequate extension services to farmers; and trade and globalization.

There is need to critically address and respond to the above factors. In this context, it is important for African countries to operationize the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which has been formulated to promote interventions to respond to the crisis situation of African agriculture and food insecurity.

The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts is called upon to consider and endorse the recommendations in the report and urge member States and developing partners to implement them.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The objective of this report is to review food security and sustainable development in Southern Africa and continue to stimulate the debate towards finding permanent solutions to food insecurity in the subregion. The current food crisis affecting 6 countries in the subregion warrants stronger debate, collective commitment, policies, strategies and programmes to respond to food insecurity and overall socio-economic development.

2. Food security implies the ability to acquire enough food to satisfy adequate nutritional requirements at both national and household levels. FAO defines food security as a situation that exist when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life. This can be achieved through agricultural production and trade depending on a country's comparative advantage.

3. Sustainable development, according to the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, has been defined as "development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Thus, food security has to be viewed from many aspects related to agriculture, population, environment, macro-economic policies, etc, in the context of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) in Agenda 21. The major objective of SARD is to increase food production in a sustainable way and enhance food security.

4. The 1974 World Food Conference in Rome, Agenda 21 on Environment and Development as well as both the 1996 and 2002 World Food Summits came up with far reaching recommendations, commitments and action plans to address food and sustainable development. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) adopted a Plan of Implementation. Section VIII of that Plan on Sustainable Development for Africa stressed the need to achieve significantly improved agricultural productivity and food security towards halving, by 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. It called for support in the

development and implementation of national policies and programmes including research, fisheries, investment in infrastructure, technology and extension services. Furthermore, the WSSD underlined the need to link food security strategies to national poverty eradication programmes.

5. At the continent level, several conferences at the level of OAU, FAO, ECA and UNEP have addressed issues of food security and sustainable development and passed recommendations for implementation. A report prepared for the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1995 made the following recommendations for sustained progress in agriculture and food security.¹

- agricultural development must be environmentally sustainable;
- agricultural development should be compatible with population growth rate;
- feasible technology should be used to increase yields to raise output;
- there should be economic incentives through growth and equity;
- farmers should be provided with the delivery system – infrastructure and institutions; and
- regional economic cooperation and integration should be promoted as a means of improving food availability.

In the same year, 1995, the OAU Summit held in Cairo, Egypt, adopted an Agenda for Action which included food security as one of the priority areas.

6. Most recently, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has also accorded priority to agriculture and food security. A NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has been formulated with assistance from FAO and inputs from sub-regional organizations including COMESA and SADC. CAADP proposes interventions to respond to the crisis situation of African Agriculture. It focuses on:

¹ UNECA, "Food and Agriculture Production, Food Security and Food Self Sufficiency in Africa", doc. E/ECA/CM.21/10, 30 March 1995.

- extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems;
- improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for improved market access;
- increasing food supply and reducing hunger; and
- addressing long-term agricultural research, technological dissemination and adoption.

7. At the subregional level, both COMESA and SADC have been addressing issues on food security and sustainable development. Article 129 of the COMESA Treaty states, “The overall objectives of cooperation in the agricultural sector are the achievement of regional food security and rational agricultural production within the Common Market. To this end, member States undertake to adopt a scheme for the rationalization of agricultural complementarity and specialization in and sustainability of national agricultural programmes in order to ensure:

- common agricultural policy;
- regional food sufficiency;
- an increase in the food productivity of crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry for domestic consumption, exports within and outside the Common Market and as inputs to agro-based industry; and
- replacement of imports on regional basis.²

8. SADC adopted a Regional Policy and Strategy for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources in 1992. The Policy was subsequently revised in 1997 and replaced by a new policy called “A Food Security Strategy Framework” focusing on improving access to food, food availability and nutrition. Improving access to food underlined the need to (a) adopt policies which generate maximum employment gains from each increment of economic growth compatible with local comparative advantage; (b) introduce measures which improve income stability compatible with efficiency and equity; and (c) develop income safety nets for vulnerable

² COMESA, “Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee, 20 – 22 November 2002, Lusaka, Zambia

groups. Improving food availability was to be achieved through promotion of trade, increase in smallholder competitiveness and more efficient use of renewable natural resources.

9. The ECA, in its activities, has been involved in sensitizing member States on food security and sustainable development issues through meetings and research documents. In recent years, food security and sustainable development has continued to be on the agenda of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE). In addition, a Workshop for ECA member States in Southern Africa was organized on “Food Security – A Recipe for Development” which took place in South Africa in 1997. In 1998, the ICE for Southern Africa adopted a Policy Framework on Nexus issues of Population, Food Security and Environment in Southern Africa.

10. The food situation in Africa, notwithstanding the above, has not improved; rather it has continued to decline. Africa is the only region where average food production per capita has declined over the past 40 years. Average cereal yields in Africa are half those in the other developing regions of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Malnutrition in Africa has remained very high. Food systems have become more vulnerable than before. Food imports and food aid continued to be major issues in terms of food security. Urban employment opportunities have not kept pace with growth of the urban population and hence aggravates malnutrition among the urban poor.

11. The situation in Southern Africa is similar to that described above for Africa as a whole. Southern Africa suffered the worst food and humanitarian crisis in 1992 due to drought that adversely affected 18 million people. Currently, also due to mainly the drought but also policies and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Southern Africa is facing yet another serious food and humanitarian crisis affecting over 14 million people.

12. The report is organized as follows: General trends in food production and nutritional status are presented in Section II. Section III discusses main factors affecting food security and sustainable development, while Section IV gives some examples of efforts being made in addressing food security. Section V presents the conclusion while Section VI presents recommendations.

II. GENERAL TRENDS IN FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY

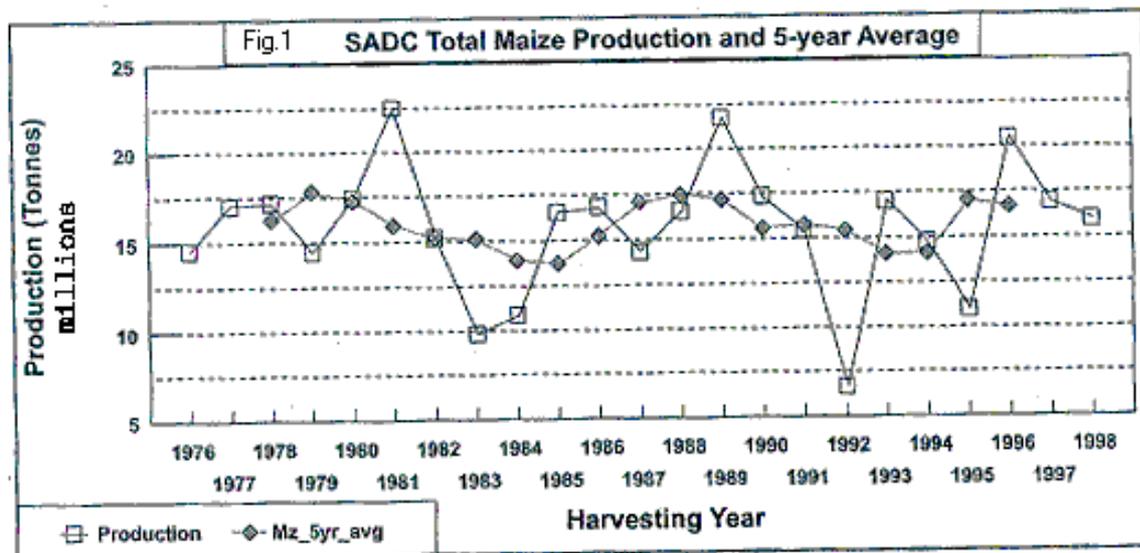
(a) Food Production and Food Security

13. FAO data for the period 1972 to 1992 showed negative growth rates in per capita food production in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, ranging from – 0.5 per cent in Swaziland and Mauritius to – 3.4 per cent in Namibia. During 1975 and 1995 per capita food production index in all Southern African countries declined. Between 1985 and 1995 there was a similar general decline in cereal per capita production except in Botswana and Mozambique. But there was an up turn in per capita cereal production in 1996 due to good weather conditions. For the period 1990 – 92 to 1997 – 99 average annual growth rates in per capita food production were as follows: Angola: 0.8 percent, Botswana: -4.0 percent, Lesotho: -0.9 percent, Malawi: 4.4 percent, Mauritius: -0.7 percent, Mozambique: 1.8 percent, Namibia: -3.9 percent, Swaziland: -4.4 percent, Zambia: -1.1 percent, and Zimbabwe: 0.3 percent.³ The implications of continued population growth on food production have been further reductions on consumption unless the situation is reversed to increase food and agricultural production, as most countries cannot afford food imports from their own resources.

14. Maize is a staple food in most of the countries of Southern Africa. Figure 1 below shows trends of SADC maize production between 1976 and 1998. The graph shows fluctuations in maize production and the impact of drought during 1983/84, 1992 and 1995. The 1992 drought was the most severe one as it threatened 18 million people with starvation. Countries experienced up to 50 per cent reduction in food production compared to normal conditions.

³ FAO: The State of the Food Insecurity in the World, 2001

Figure 1



15. According to SADC data, combined cereal production during 1999/2000 harvest was about 24.21 million metric tonnes, which was 13 per cent up from the 1998/99 cropping season.⁴ The yields could have been higher had it not been for the floods in Southern and Central Mozambique, Eastern Southern Africa, Southern Zimbabwe, Eastern Botswana and Swaziland. However, FAO indicated that Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe recorded bumper cereal harvest in the year 2000.

16. Southern Africa faces again another serious food and humanitarian crisis starting in the 2001/2002 season, the worst since that of 1992. The current crisis has affected six countries – Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Over 14 million people are affected and need food and other humanitarian assistance. The situation has been caused by a combination of factors such as drought, excessive rainfall, inappropriate policies in some countries, and the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. SADC subregion domestic cereal requirements are about 30 million metric tonnes. That of maize is estimated at 20 million metric tonnes. Yet in 2001/2002 total maize harvest in the subregion was about 16 million metric tones.

⁴ SADC, Food Security Quarterly Bulletin, June/July 2000

17. Some of the highlights of the recent food crisis in the affected countries in Southern Africa are shown in Table I below:

Table 1. Highlights of recent food crisis in affected countries.

Country	Population estimated in need of food and humanitarian aid	Some factors contributing to the current food insecurity	Domestic Cereal gap in 2001/2002 in metric tons	Food deficit expected during 2002/2003	Maximum percentage of total population in need of food aid
Lesotho	Over 600,000	Harvest in 2002 was one third down that of 2001	250,000	Yes	30
Malawi	Over 3 million	2000/2001 harvest was 30 - 40 percent lower than that of 1999/2000; 2002 harvest was the second consecutive year of low production; mismanagement of grain reserves.	600,000	Yes	29
Mozambique	About 600,000	Severe dry weather during 2001/2002 reduced crop yields in Southern and part of Central Mozambique	583,500	Yes	3
Swaziland	About 270,000	Erratic rainy season in both 2000/2001 and 2001/2002	121,000	Yes	24
Zambia	About 3 million	Prolonged dry spells during 2001/2002 growing season in five of the nine provinces reduced yields and production of cereals. As a result, 2001/2002 maize production was estimated at 24 percent below that of 2000/2001 and 42 percent lower than that of 1999/2000	684,000	Yes	26
Zimbabwe	Over 6 million	Land reform activities that affected large scale commercial farming; exceptional high rainfall during 2000/2001 undermined harvest in 2001 and this reduced carry-over stock to 2002; between January and March 2002, the country experienced the longest drought in 20 years.	1,654,000	Yes	49

Source: FAO/WFP Assessments in 2002, SADC, National data.

18. By early January 2003, according to the Early Warning System Network (Fews Net), Zambia had made the least progress towards filling the cereal gap from imports. Less than 10 percent of its total import requirements of 617,000 mt had been received. Zimbabwe had a cereal gap of 907,000 mt. It was feared that the government might not fill the gap from imports

due to foreign exchange difficulties and other constraints. In Malawi, imports had filled 54 percent of the cereal needs. Mozambique had received more than enough imports to fill the cereal gap. Lesotho had imported more than 66 percent of its requirements while Swaziland had received 59 percent of its cereal import needs.

19. A United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance to the affected Southern African countries was launched on 18 July 2002 in New York. The amount of money required was US\$611 million of which US\$507 million was for food aid, US\$ 31 million for agricultural recovery and US\$48.2 million for health and other needs.⁵ It is expected that actual needs may exceed the amount estimated at the time of the launch of the appeal, as the situation may get worse. Angola is also affected but in a different context, its food and humanitarian needs are being addressed under a separate appeal.

(b) Nutrition Status

20. Food security can also be viewed from the average daily energy supply (DES) calorie intake. According to FAO, an individual or household is food insecure if he/she consumes less than 2280 calories daily for a moderately active adult equivalent.⁶

21. Table 2 presents data on per capita dietary energy supply and proportion of the undernourished in the total population. In Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe there was an increase in the average daily calorie in take from 1990 – 1992 to 1997-1999. However, most of them were below the minimum requirements of 2,280. In Botswana, Namibia and Zambia there was a decline during that period. The current food crisis must have reversed the gain made by some of the countries over the period 1997/99.

⁵ SADC Secretariat, “Review of the Food Security Situation in the SADC Region” Doc. (SADC/CM/3/2002/7.2) A, August 2002.

⁶ FAO, Synthesis of the technical background documents for the World Food Summit, 1996.

Table 2. Per Capita Dietary Energy Supply and Prevalence of Undernourishment

Country	Per Capita dietary energy supply		Proportion of the undernourished In total population	
	1990-92	1997-99	1990-92	1997-99
	Kcal/day		Percentage	
Angola	1740	1880	61	51
Botswana	2380	2280	17	23
Lesotho	2240	2310	28	25
Malawi	1880	2120	49	35
Mauritius	2890	2950	6	6
Mozambique	1710	1920	69	54
Namibia	2130	2090	30	33
Swaziland	2610	2550	10	12
Zambia	2000	1940	43	47
Zimbabwe	2010	2080	43	39

Source : FAO, The State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2001

22. Although world leaders at the 1996 World Food Summit committed themselves to implement policies to improve nutritional status, there has not been much progress in this direction in many countries. It is important to improve food security and nutritional status as failure to do so undermines the attainment of other millennium development goals related to: achievement of universal primary education, gender equality, reduction in child mortality, improvement in maternal health, combat of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and environmental sustainability.

III. MAIN FACTORS AFFECTING FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

23. There are several factors that influence food production and sustainable development in developing countries. The main ones include: poverty; climatic/weather conditions (droughts and floods); civil conflicts/wars; limited application of science and technologies; HIV/AIDS; lack of adequate investment in rural development; limited role of women; poor land tenure system; poor land management husbandry; population factors; little use of irrigation; limited or non access to credit, inputs and markets; inadequate extension services to farmers; trade and globalization; insufficient and declining financial flows from developed countries; ineffective government policies and commitments that are not translated into action. Most of these are briefly dealt with in this section.

(a) **Poverty**

24. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 agreed that poverty was the greatest challenge to sustainable development especially in developing countries. Poverty levels are quite high in many of the countries in Southern Africa. Poor, malnourished and low income people with poor health are food insecure and tend to remain food insecure. Their children are likely to have little or no opportunities for better lives.

25. The European Union (EU) has identified poverty as one of the major causes of the food crisis in Malawi where about 65 per cent of the population live on US\$220 per year.⁷ Thus, even if food were to be available on the market, most people would not afford it at current high prices.

26. The situation is similar in other countries affected by the food crisis in Southern Africa. Though food relief and humanitarian assistance is a must in the short-term, medium and long-term measures to reduce poverty will be necessary to attain food security and sustainable development. The poverty reduction programmes member States are implementing require greater resource allocation to address food security. Member States need to show greater commitment and be supported financially and technically in their efforts by development partners. African countries cannot get out of the current situation of poverty, food insecurity and deteriorating environment without massive support from developed countries.

27. The 2002 WSSD adopted an Action Plan which includes the following actions with regard to food security and sustainable development:

- Halve, by 2015, the proportion of those whose income is less than US\$1 per day and the proportion of those who suffer from hunger, by the same date;
- Develop national programmes for sustainable development and local and community development, where appropriate within the country-owned poverty reduction strategies, to promote the empowerment of people living in poverty. The programmes should reflect

⁷ Malawi Weekend Nation of the Third Week of November 2002.

their priorities and enable them to increase access to productive resources, public services and institutions, in particular, credit, education and health;

- Build basic rural infrastructure, diversify the economy and improve transportation and access to markets and market information and credit for rural poor to support sustainable agriculture and rural development;
- Transfer basic sustainable agricultural techniques and knowledge, including natural resource management to small and medium scale farmers and the rural poor, through multi-stakeholders approaches and public-private partnership aimed at increasing agricultural production and food security;
- Increase food availability and affordability, including through harvest and food technology and management as well as equitable and efficient distribution systems, by promoting community-based partnership and linking urban and rural people and enterprises; and
- Increase decent employment, credit and income for the urban poor, through appropriate national policies, promoting equal opportunities for women and men.

(b) Climatic Conditions (Droughts and Floods)

28. Southern African countries have experienced erratic climatic conditions through droughts or excessive rain during the last two decades. Notable droughts since the 1980s are those in 1983/84, 1991/92, 1994/95 and 2001/02. That of 1991/92 was the worst while the 2001/02 ranks second. These have had adverse effects on food production. During 1991/92, Southern Africa's aggregate food crop production was reported to have been reduced by up to 50 percent of normal production. The 1994/95 drought wiped out food production in Lesotho, while it seriously affected South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The 2001/02 drought has contributed to the food crisis affecting over 14 million people in the subregion. Most of the countries in the subregion have experienced two consecutive years of poor harvest due partly to the combined effects of droughts and floods. The floods of 2000 in Southern Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, northern and eastern Southern Africa, eastern and southern Botswana and Malawi, and again in some parts of Malawi during 2001/2002 are cases in point.

29. The climatic conditions that affect food production are beyond human control. However, their impacts can be mitigated and better managed through expansion of irrigation cropping, keeping sufficient strategic grain reserves and improved early warning systems. Regarding strategic grain reserves at subregional level, SADC will undertake a comprehensive review of this and assess the viability of establishing such a facility. At national level, where possible, there should be sufficient reserves that would cover an emergency situation for the country for a reasonable period.

(c) Civil Conflicts and Wars

30. The most recent FAO report on State of Food Insecurity in the World, for 2002, indicated that war drained an estimated \$52 billion in agricultural output in sub-Saharan Africa from 1970 to 1997. The amount is nearly equal to the combined official foreign assistance over that period. Wars and civil conflicts as they affect agricultural production, lead to food insecurity.

31. In Southern Africa, Angola and Mozambique are examples of where civil conflicts and war have affected food production. In Angola, maize production increased during 1994-98 (a period of the ceasefire following the signing of the Lusaka Peace Protocol between the Government of Angola and UNITA). Following intensified hostilities between the Government and UNITA in December 1998, food production and distribution declined during 1999/2000 resulting in average actual food per capita consumption far below nutritional requirements. With the end of almost three decades of war in April 2002, the United Nations launched an appeal in November 2002, amounting to \$384 million to assist with food aid and humanitarian assistance to resettle those affected by the war.

(d) Science and Technology

32. Science and technology have greatly contributed to food production in developed countries and some developing countries that took advantage of the green revolution, but not much in Africa. Many African countries experienced the same yield per hectare as the developing country average during 1963 to 1983. Some developing countries elsewhere

improved their yields per hectare during 1991 – 1993 with regard to paddy rice, wheat and maize while Africa's yield lagged behind. For example, Africa's yield for maize was 1369kg/h while the average for developing countries was almost twice that of Africa, at 2627 kg/h. As regards paddy rice Africa's yield was 2029 kg/h compared with an average of 3488 kg/h for developing countries.⁸ Latest data for 2001 show that cereal yield in Africa averaged 1230kg/ha compared to 3090kg/ha for Asia, 3040kg/ha for Latin America and 5470kg/ha for the European Union. Africa's low yield is associated with little use of improved seeds, fertilizer, pest control and technological innovations.

33. Limited utilization of science and technology especially by small scale farmers is due to lack of investment in science and technology and most important, in human development to apply even simple technologies that already exist elsewhere. There has been a lot of discussion on technology transfer to developing countries. This can only come about first by investing in human development so that they can then easily apply the technologies and strengthening of extension services. The European Union (EU) SADC Ministerial Meeting in Maputo, 7 – 8 November 2002, in discussing food security, called for increased investment in agriculture and the transfer of technology, particularly for small-scale farmers in order to increase productivity.⁹ It is evident that use of low cost technological packages for small-scale farmers is a prerequisite to increased food production and food security. It is important to stress that the technologies for small-scale farmers should be easy to use and require little training and maintenance. Emphasis should also be on high yielding and drought resistant crops. Modest investment in labour intensive technologies can result in substantial gains in both labour and land productivity where markets and fair prices prevail and consequently contribute to poverty reduction, thereby improving food security.

34. Science and technology have a potential for improving food security. However, biotechnology, especially on genetically modified crops, is a controversial and complex issue that has raised a lot of questions, which need to be resolved. It is especially controversial from the health and environmental point of view. The United States and EU confrontation on GMOs

⁸ FAO, World Food Summit – Technical Background document 6 on “Lessons from the Green Revolution: Towards a new Green Revolution” in Vol. 2, Rome, Italy 1996.

⁹ EU-SADC Ministerial Meeting: Communique, 8 November 2002.

makes the issue more sensitive in Southern Africa which fears losing markets in Europe for some of the agricultural commodities. In Zambia, for example, the above concerns led the Government to reject GMO maize in the midst of the food crisis. The SADC Council of Ministers has established an Advisory Committee on GMO to develop guidelines to assist member States guard against potential risks in food safety, contamination of genetic resources, ethical issues, trade related issues and consumer concerns. Meanwhile, SADC member States are at liberty to accept or reject GMO grain coming as food aid. Those that accept GMO grain are to undertake awareness campaigns to ensure that the GMO maize is not planted and also ensure that GMO maize is milled into flour before any distribution to beneficiaries. What has emerged from the 2001/2002 food crisis is that there is need for SADC and its member States to develop capacity to deal with GMO issues, especially testing and monitoring.

(e) **HIV/AIDS**

35. Southern Africa, with HIV/AIDS prevalence rates of about 20 – 25 per cent among adults, is the worst affected subregion in the world. HIV/AIDS has, over the recent years, contributed to food insecurity in the subregion especially for the current food crisis. It is estimated that over 28 million people in Southern Africa are infected with HIV/AIDS, and the numbers continue to increase. In South Africa for example, Statistics South Africa released a report in November 2002 which shows that the number of HIV/AIDS deaths were rising with 95 per cent more men and 75 per cent more women dying of AIDS in 2001 than in 1997. The report also indicates that the proportion of deaths due to HIV nearly doubled in three years from 4.6 per cent to 8.7 per cent.

36. Good and improved health of the people is necessary for any nation's progress in its socio-economic development. HIV/AIDS is a great threat to the subregion's food production, food security and sustainable development. In most of the countries of the subregion, the majority of the population are employed in agriculture as a basis for their livelihood. It is projected that labour loss due to HIV/AIDS by 2005 may be as high as 17.2 per cent in Botswana, 4.8 per cent in Lesotho, 10.7 per cent in Malawi, 9 per cent in Mozambique, 12.8 per

cent in Namibia, 10.8 per cent in South Africa, and 19.7 per cent in Zimbabwe.¹⁰ In Malawi, UNAIDS indicated that Malawi registered a 5.8 per cent loss of its agriculture labour force due to HIV/AIDS in 2000.¹¹

37. The relationship between HIV/AIDS and food security and the implications can be highlighted as follows:

- Those infected by HIV/AIDS are weak and cannot actively contribute to food production, and hence increases the risks of food insecurity;
- As more people are affected by HIV/AIDS, the areas cultivated for food production becomes reduced;
- HIV/AIDS illness and deaths seriously affect agriculture and food production during peak periods of planting, weeding as well as harvesting by spending valuable time looking after the sick and attending to funerals. This results in reduction of crops grown and leads to food insecurity;
- Death from HIV/AIDS are particularly high among the young and those in the active working group, thereby reducing labour force for food production and agriculture in general; and
- Those living with HIV/AIDS need better nutrition and more calories and especially more protein in order to stay healthy. Critical food insecurity like the current situation in southern Africa with limited food aid and no access, for most of the affected, antiretroviral treatment becomes a hopeless situation - a vicious cycle as malnutrition aggravates the progression of AIDS which increases food insecurity and poverty.
- The current food crisis impacts the spread of HIV/AIDS as the most vulnerable undertake more risky behaviour to obtain money or food.

38. In view of the above relationship between HIV/AIDS and food security, it is crucial that effective strategies on the pandemic should be mainstreamed into agricultural programmes as

¹⁰ International AIDS and Economics Network, State of the Art: AIDS and Economics, July 2002

¹¹ Malawi Daily News of 28 October 2002.

well as in all socio-economic activities. Advocacy on prevention of HIV/AIDS at community, national and subregional levels should be strengthened. Commitment to deal with HIV/AIDS needs practical support beyond rhetoric. The 2002 SADC Summit in Luanda, Angola, urged member States to mobilize more resources to fight the pandemic and other communicable diseases. It is pertinent to mention here that the WSSD in 2002 stressed the need to implement, within the agreed time frames, all commitments agreed in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its twenty-sixth special session.

(f) **Women's Role**

39. More than 70 percent of economically active women in low-income food-deficit countries are employed in the agricultural sector. In Africa, women play an important role in food production and processing, especially in rural areas. They make the most contribution to household food production through small-scale farming. This is demonstrated by the proportion of time they devote to various activities as illustrated below from various studies: hoeing and weeding, 70 percent; harvesting, 60 percent; transporting crops home from fields, 80 percent; storing crops, 80 percent; food processing, 90 percent; marketing of surplus crops, 60 percent; feeding and caring for family, 95 percent; and bringing water and fuel, 90 percent.

40. Yet the crucial roles played by women are not recognized as would be evident from their lack of access to fundamental tools of food production namely, land, credit, training, decision-making power, small-scale technologies. These issues were discussed at the World Food Summit, five years later, in June 2002. Some of the points stressed at that meeting include: recognition for women farmers in their own right and mobilization of increased political will and resources to remove persistent gender inequities and that gender equality as a prerequisite for the eradication of poverty and hunger and for promoting growth and sustainable development.

41. Actions by member States to strengthen women's roles in food production and sustainable development must include:

- Agricultural extension services to reach both women and men;

- Legislation to be put in place to enable land ownership and access by both women and men;
- Facilitation of making available improved small-scale equipment for agriculture including those for food processing;
- Better education and health (including reproductive health and family planning) for girls and women;
- Women's access, in their own right, to credit facilities and farm inputs;
- Greater involvement of women in planning and implementation of food security, and management of the environment at the community level; and
- Provision of better access to clean water and energy needs.

(g) **Investment in Rural Development**

42. Agriculture and rural development are very important for Africa and especially in southern Africa in ensuring food security and sustainable development as most of the population live in rural areas. However, both international and national programmes have given little attention to this. In many countries, investment in agriculture and rural development declined by more than 50 per cent between 1986 and 1998, according to FAO. World Bank lending to agricultural support in Africa declined from almost 40 per cent in 1978 to 10 per cent in 1996 and 7 per cent in 2000. The World Bank and IMF structural programmes affected agricultural and rural development programmes. The 2002 FAO State of Food Insecurity in the World indicates that official development assistance (ODA) to agriculture in developing countries declined by an alarming 48 per cent in real terms between 1990 and 1999. These have negatively affected support to agricultural research and extension services in most African countries. Research and extension services are almost non-existent or dead. This has contributed to the decline in yields as well as continued food insecurity. Yet, development assistance is critical for very poor countries with limited ability to mobilize domestic private and public savings for investment, especially in agriculture and rural development. It was in this light that the World Food Summit, five years later, in 2002 emphasized the mobilization of resources for agriculture in support of food security and fostering political will to fight hunger in support of Commitment Six of the 1996 World Food Summit by world leaders. That

commitment reads: *We will promote optimal allocation and use of public and private investment to foster human resources, sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems, and rural development, in high and low potential areas.*

43. Before the 1996 World Food Summit, the Leaders of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at the 1985 Summit, committed themselves to allocate 20 – 25 percent to public investment to agriculture. Unfortunately, this did not materialize. With the FAO/NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) resource mobilization is even more crucial. CAADP needs investment of \$240 billion between 2002 and 2015. This works at \$17.2 billion annually, which is less than the annual cost of food imports into Africa.

44. The debate on rural development is also not new. There is consensus that rural development should address all aspects of rural society – economic as well as social. The World Bank has joined those advocating for pro-poor development approaches regarding rural development. The current World Bank Rural Development Strategy introduced at the June 2002 World Food Summit in Rome, puts emphasis on:

- A stronger voice for the rural poor – demand driven projects;
- A focus on all of rural society and all economic sectors;
- Broad-based growth in agriculture, agro-industry, non-food enterprises and services such as health;
- Greater focus on sub-sahara Africa;
- More support for technology transfer;
- More investment in research, extension services and rural infrastructure; and land reform.

45. Issues of access to credit, inputs and markets are important in relation to rural development programmes. The World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programmes especially related to agricultural market reforms over the past twenty years have had limited success in developing efficient competitive agricultural markets that benefit the rural poor. Research by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has shown that liberalization

had led to high and risky transaction costs while policies designed to improve incentives for agricultural production often have had little impact on small farmers and the rural poor, particularly in sub-saharan Africa.¹²

46. Irrigation has to be expanded in order to improve food security in Africa and it should be part of the priority areas of the agriculture and rural development programmes. Sub-Sahara Africa has about 3.7 per cent of irrigated crop land. This contrasts with 35 per cent of irrigated crop land in Asia. In the SADC subregion about 5 per cent of the agricultural land is irrigated. Yet the subregion has vast potential for irrigation. In Zambia, for example, 423,000 hectares of land are irrigatable, yet less than 100,000 hectares are under irrigation.¹³ The current food crisis has had so much impact that countries in the subregion have started considering exploiting the opportunities availed by irrigation. However, irrigation is expensive and needs financial and technical support from development partners. Both Zambia and Malawi experimented with irrigation of winter maize in 2002. The SADC Food Agricultural and Natural Resources (FANR) Ministers at their meeting in Maputo on 5 July 2002 discussed the need for establishing a regional agricultural policy and strategy that is less dependent on rainfall. The ministers advocated expansion of irrigation. Countries will need to introduce or expand low cost and small scale technologies in water harvesting for rural communities towards improvement in food production and food security. Such programmes should minimize any environmental problems associated with irrigation, especially the health of the people.

47. SADC has started addressing land reform issues and the first Regional Consultative Meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for lands and land reform was held in Windhoek, Namibia in September 2001. Some of the issues being addressed include:

- Correcting the historically determined unequal patterns of land ownership in some member States;
- Ensuring that land and agrarian reforms include an integrated approach to rural development that is sustainable, broad-based and equitable; and

¹² IFPRI, Public Policies for Rural Institutions, Markets and Infrastructure Development, website <http://www.ifpri.org/themes/mp01.htm>

¹³ The Post Newspaper of 17 October 2002

- Promoting optimal utilization of land by ensuring that farmers have access to complementary infrastructure and support services.

48. Land tenure system should be reviewed and given attention as land reform. It is sometimes argued that land tenure systems with title deeds is a precondition to increased agricultural production and hence food security as it encourages investment in land improvements. While this is generally accepted, the issuance of title deeds on its own may not be adequate and sufficient condition if not complemented with other factors, such as improved infrastructure in rural areas – roads, education, health, markets, energy, etc.

49. Trade is important for world food security. It is clear that world markets could be a source of earnings for developing countries if commodities from developing countries were given fair prices. Even where African countries have expanded their volume of commodities for international trade, this has been followed by a continuous declining terms of trade which have eroded possible gains. Furthermore, food import capacity by developing countries in Africa has been constrained by high levels of debt servicing repayments. When it comes to assisting poor farmers in Africa with subsidies to improve food production, that is opposed by developed countries and the institutions like the World Bank and IMF. Yet, the developed countries continue to pay their farmers subsidies. In 2001, it is estimated that developed countries paid subsidies to their farmers amounting to \$311 billion. As farmers are protected by subsidies in developed countries, the impact of these subsidies lower global prices by encouraging over production, some of which, in the case of food, has to be dumped on poor developing countries. These issues have to be addressed in the World Trade Organization (WTO). There is increasing concern that subsidies should be removed in developed countries.

50. Maize constitutes the major crop in most southern African countries. Consequently, maize crop failure may bring serious food insecurity problems in the subregion. There is therefore need to diversify food production from maize to other food crops such as millet, sorghum, cassava bananas and potatoes, as part of rural development programmes.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EFFORTS BEING MADE IN ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY

51. This section makes reference to the FAO Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) and conservation farming, as some of the efforts being taken to address food security.

52. In order to accelerate food security in developing countries, FAO initiated the SPFS in 1994. The programme became operational in 1995 with 15 countries worldwide and in 2002 it was operational in 71 countries. In Southern Africa, the programme is operational in Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. SPFS aims at supporting developing member countries, in particular, the low-income food deficit countries (LIDCs) in their efforts to improve national and household food security on an economically and environmentally sustainable basis. This objective is expected to be achieved mainly by:

- Promoting rapid increases in the output and productivity levels of small scale farmers in food production and other rural activities;
- Reducing year-to-year variability in agricultural production;
- Improving people's access to food.

53. The SPFS is a multi-disciplinary and nationally owned programme, with a strong emphasis on meeting people's needs directly by raising farmers' incomes, generating rural employment, increasing social equality and promoting gender sensitivity.

54. One important aspect of the SPFS is the promotion of South – South cooperation which enables countries to benefit from the experience of other more advanced developing countries. This is gaining continuous momentum according to FAO. By March 2002, 26 agreements had been signed between the following countries: Senegal-Vietnam, Ethiopia-China, Eritrea-India, Niger-Morocco, Burkina Faso-Morocco, Benin-Vietnam, Mauritania-China, Tanzania-Egypt, Gambia-Bangladesh, Djibouti-Egypt, Madagascar-Vietnam, Bangladesh-China, Mali-China, Malawi-Egypt, Equatorial Guinea-Cuba, Cape Verde-Cuba, Ghana-China, Cameroon-Egypt, Swaziland-Pakistan, Haiti-Cuba, Mozambique-India, Venezuela-Cuba, Lesotho-India, Lao PDR-Vietnam, Congo Republic-Vietnam, Guinea Bissau-Cuba.

55. The experience of Tanzania with the Special Programme for Food Security is shown in the box below:

Experiences of the SPFS in Tanzania as of October 2001¹⁴

In less than five years, the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) has been able to instill a strong sense of ownership and identity among more than 1000 farmers and others involved in realizing the pilot phase of activities under the SPFS in Tanzania. Staff at every level, from government to district to village level personnel, has shown a strong sense of purpose and motivation since the onset in implementing Programme activities. Initially, over 70 participatory farmers' groups were established in the 26 villages, and this number has since continued to grow. Others directly and indirectly involved in assisting in the realization of SPFS activities, such as extension and research staff, credit institutions and local goods' suppliers, have shown a similar sense of enterprise and solidarity.

With over 40 percent of Tanzania's population (more than 12.5 million people) estimated to be undernourished in 1996-98, the government's priority has been to undertake policies and programmes destined to improve the food security of poor groups. Enhancing the production of the main staple crops rice, maize and cassava through better water and land use techniques are among the specific objectives of the SPFS in conjunction with such policies.

By working with farmers' groups in demonstration plots and by investing in low-cost irrigation structures which are built and maintained by water users' associations, as well as through the introduction of oxen for ploughing and increasing farmers' access to the tools and technologies they need, the results have been more than encouraging.

One farmers' group was able to increase the amount of land planted with maize from 30 to as much as 70 acres. Other farmers reported yields of maize typically increasing from 6 to 10 bags per acre of land (1.4 metric tonnes (mt) to 2.3 mt per hectare). In one district, yields of rainfed rice increased from 12 to 21 bags per acre (2.7 mt to 4.7 mt per hectare) and even in low rainfall years, average yields in the demonstration plots were 25 to 30 percent higher than in the control plots. To complement these improvements in crop production, the SPFS has also been successful in introducing and improving livestock raising. Some farmers' groups have also shown an interest in starting up small agro-processing enterprises.

The successes of the pilot programme prompted the government in 2000 to extend the SPFS to all 120 districts in Tanzania and Zanzibar, starting with 30 districts in 2001. Under a South-South cooperation agreement signed with the Government of Egypt, 11 Egyptian experts and field technicians already work with agricultural extension staff and farmers in Tanzania and up to 100 will arrive to further enhance the impact of SPFS.

56. Conservation farming is currently being advocated in some of the countries. The United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) reported farmers' success with conservation farming in Zambia in October 2002.¹⁵ This was the case of farmers in the remote village of Lwimba in Chongwe district, about 80 km southeast of Zambia's capital, Lusaka. Without use of conservation farming method, the yield is about 5 bags of 50kg from a hectare.

¹⁴ Website http://www.fao.org/spfs/detail_event.asp?event_id=976

¹⁵ Website <http://www.allafrica.com/stories/printable/200210170693.html>

Using conservation farming methods, the number of bags almost triples to 14. Conservation farming maximizes crops in areas with low rainfall and difficult conditions.

57. Conservation farming is gaining momentum and popularity as farmers see the results of neighbours. The Zambia Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Zambia National Farmers Union, through its Conservation Farming Unit, are supporting strongly conservation farming methods. If widely used, it would significantly contribute to meeting the country's food requirements. In Malawi, it is reported that investment in conservation technologies has paid off well.¹⁶

V. CONCLUSION

58. What is clear from the paper is that the food insecurity crisis in Africa in general, and in Southern Africa in particular has been a recurrent phenomenon. It has happened in the past, it is here at present and will recur in the future. The causes are well known – poverty; cyclical/erratic climatic conditions that may result into droughts or floods; civil conflicts and wars; insufficient use of technological innovations; HIV/AIDS; insufficient investment in agriculture and rural development; limited attention to improving women's status and involvement in overall development efforts; population factors, economic and social policies that are not responsive to the development challenges; and resource constraint – financial and human. Any change for the better in future requires that all the identified constraints should be addressed with urgency if food security and sustainable development is to be realized.

59. It is also clear that food security and sustainable development can be achieved if the countries concerned create an enabling environment through appropriate policies and that countries commitments to sustainable development are translated into practical action. Governments in the subregion must be committed to prevent future food insecurity.

¹⁶ United Nations Press Release SC/7582 entitled "Weather Factors, Health Issues, Civil Strife, Economic Policies Worsen Africa's Food Crisis, Security Council is told" 3 December 2002.

60. It is further clear that African countries need assistance from development partners to improve food security towards sustainable development. NEPAD provides the framework for this partnership. In this case, resource mobilization for agricultural development is very important.

61. Continued neglect of agriculture and rural development will perpetuate poverty and worsen food insecurity. This and the heavy subsidies that developed countries provide to their farmers as well as barriers to markets in developed countries of commodities from developing countries, make it difficult for African countries to compete on the global agricultural markets.

62. Low productivity in agriculture as well as in other economic sectors hampers improvements in food security. Science and technology can significantly contribute to improved food security. This can only be realized if there is sufficient human development to master and apply science and technology with special attention to the needs of small scale farmers.

63. Overall, it should be stressed that effective implementation of all the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would enhance food security and sustainable development as the MDGs are interdependent and mutually reinforce the attainment of food security.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

63. In view of the discussion in the paper, the following general recommendations are proposed for member States in Southern Africa, subregional, regional, international organizations and development partners:

- Member States should follow up on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Food Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed commitments that have a bearing on and agriculture and food security;

- The ECA, FAO, Subregional organizations such as SADC and COMESA, should strengthen their support to countries to develop capacity in the formulation and implementation of appropriate food and agriculture policies and programmes at national, community and household levels;
- Member States should incorporate in their countries programmes and policies, general guidelines and strategies developed through SADC, COMESA and other subregional, regional and international organizations;
- Member States should ensure that they implement the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme;
- Member States need to review their agricultural policies to give greater attention to investment in integrated rural development and address all rural development socio-economic needs including: rural infrastructure such as roads, irrigation, support for small scale farmers to credit facilities, access to agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.) and markets, provision of extension services, expansion of irrigation programmes, rural electrification, improvements in health and education, etc. Implementation of rural development will need to be decentralized to make governments more responsive to local needs;
- There should be renewed commitment in all countries and at all levels of leadership down to the community level to address the HIV/AIDS. Advocacy on prevention of further spread of the pandemic is of paramount importance while care for those infected equally deserves better attention. In this regard, the African Consensus and Plan of Action: Leadership to Overcome HIV/AIDS (2000), The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS by the UN General Assembly, and the SADC Programme on HIV/AIDS offer frameworks and guides and specific actions to be undertaken;
- Member States need to produce high quality variety of seeds locally than depend on imports;
- Member States should ensure the adoption of existing and new sustainable technologies that should assist small scale farmers achieve sustainable food security;
- Member States need to formulate harmonized common policies on genetically modified crops and ensure capacity development to test and monitor GM crops;

- Member States and SADC need to build adequate food strategic reserves that could mitigate future impacts of unfavourable climatic conditions;
- There is need for institutions like the World Trade Organisation, as indicated in NEPAD, to change the international trade terms which put developing poor countries at a disadvantage as their commodities do not get fair prices. With this goes the issue of subsidies that developed countries need to stop providing to their farmers while rejecting developing countries to do the same to their farmers. Currently developed countries spend \$1 billion a day on subsidies;
- As member States in Southern Africa cannot improve the food security without financial and technical support from developed countries, developed countries need to increase their development assistance and fulfill the agreed ODA support.

64. There are several other specific issues and policies that would contribute to food security and sustainable development in Southern Africa. The list below includes some of these and reinforce the general recommendations presented above:

- Policies should promote and encourage agricultural growth, especially among small scale farmers, safeguard the environment for sustainability and ensure development of effective markets.
- Encourage and implement long term conservation technologies that counter soil degradation and increase food security and sustainable development.
- Food security should go beyond satisfying the food requirement, but also satisfy employment as a source of income and wealth generation in both rural and urban areas. Hence there is need to ensure that agricultural growth and productivity, especially in rural areas is given much attention and not biased toward urban development.