



REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

**FOOD AND NUTRITION
SECURITY STRATEGY**

Mozambique



**National Executive Secretariat of Food Security and Nutrition
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FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY STRATEGY

CONTENTS

I.	PRESENT SITUATION.....	8
1.1	Food and Nutrition Situation.....	8
1.2	Ongoing Policies and Programmes.....	9
II.	OBJECTIVES AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STRATEGY.....	11
2.1	Objectives of the Strategy.....	11
2.2	Assumptions of the Strategy.....	11
2.3	Dimensions of the Strategy.....	13
III	STRATEGY AND PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS.....	14
3.1	Strategies to improve food and nutrition security.....	14
3.2	Strategies to improve food and nutrition security at short term, focussing on priority interventions to cope with situations of transitory nature.....	17
IV.	INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS.....	18
	GLOSSARY OF BASIC TERMINOLOGY.....	20

INTRODUCTION

The Government's overall objective with regard to food and nutrition security is to guarantee for all citizens, at all times, sufficient availability of food of adequate quality and variety, physical and economic access to the required foodstuffs through individual production, purchase, trade, donations, etc., and to ensure that people shall be able to use the foodstuffs in such a way that each household member receives and absorbs the adequate nutrients according to his/her needs so that they may lead an active and healthy life.

In accordance with this objective, in March 1997 an inter-sectorial group of food and nutrition security was created, consisting of technicians from the various sectors playing a more active role in achieving food and nutrition security (MPF; MAP; MICTUR; DPCCN; UEM), and also integrating representatives of non-governmental organizations developing activities in this area (Visão Mundial; AMODER; AMRU) and of the society with an interest in the field of food and nutrition security, including other ministries (MICAS; MICOA, MOPH).

Several seminars were held in an attempt to achieve responsiveness of the different actors (Government, donors and NGOs) about the approach to specific aspects with reference to the Food and Nutrition Security Strategy.

The activities were coordinated by the Ministry of Planning and Finance. The Food and Nutrition Security Strategy was finalized in November 1998.

The group was widely supported by the Government of the Netherlands, the European Commission, USAID, PMA and FAO.

In December 1998, the Council of Ministers approved the present Strategy and indicated that the group should be transformed into a Technical Secretariat, under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery, and play a role in the elaboration, coordination and implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan, assuming the collective responsibility to ensure that all recommendations and initiatives in this field be elaborated and implemented within an inter-sectorial framework.

Republic of Mozambique

Council of Ministers

Internal Resolution No. 16/98
of 23 December

The Government's Five-Year Programme for the period 1995 to 1999 establishes the priority to assign to food self-sufficiency in basic products as part of a set of governance objectives oriented towards poverty reduction.

With regard to food security, it is necessary to ensure that all Mozambicans have access to the foodstuffs necessary for a healthy and active life.

As it becomes necessary to establish the framework for the participation of the various sectors of society in the accomplishment of this objective, within the framework of line e) of No. 1 of Article 153 of the Constitution, the Council of Ministers determines:

One and only: The Food and Nutrition Security Strategy, attached as annex and integral part of this Internal Resolution, is approved.

Approved by the Council of Ministers.

The Prime Minister

PASCOAL MANUEL MOCUMBI

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY STRATEGY

I. FUNDAMENTALS

The Government's Programme defines as the central objective of economic and social development the growing satisfaction of the fundamental requirements of the entire Mozambican population, especially the more vulnerable groups.

The Government's overall objective with regard to food and nutrition security is to *guarantee for all citizens, at all times, physical and economic access to the foodstuffs required to lead an active and healthy life*. In order to achieve this objective it is necessary to ensure: (i) sufficient **availability** of foodstuffs in adequate quality and variety; (ii) **access** to foodstuffs through individual production, purchase, trade, donations etc.; and (iii) the ability of the people to **use** the foodstuffs in a such way to guarantee that each household member receives and absorbs the adequate nutrients according to his/her requirements.

The questions relating to the guarantee of food and nutrition security form one of the principal dimensions of the economic development process. The significance is based on the fact that: (i) Adequate nutrition represents a basic human requirement. Therefore, access to sufficient food of adequate quality is an obvious and vital necessity. (ii) The production, processing, distribution and consumption of food, i.e. the nutritional system, play a fundamental role in the economic activity in general. Therefore, (iii) the guarantee of food and nutrition security and the set of related aspects are located among the central objectives that shall orient the public economic and social policies.

The connections between the question of food and nutrition and the economic and social development need to be correctly established and monitored with a view to include food security objectives within the strategic components of development policies and programmes.

The changes in management of the economy introduced in our country over the past ten years and the normalization in the political and social environment resulted in profound changes in the food economy. In fact, the macro-economic structure adopted by the Government for the management of economy constitutes at present the decisive instrument in the allocation of resources. The State no longer intervenes directly in the economy but plays the role of facilitator and guarantor of legality. On the other hand, Mozambique has risen from a nation deeply dependent on external aid to ensure nutrition of its population to a position of almost self-sufficiency since 1996/97.

These changes determine the need for an adequate intervention strategy of the Government in trying to achieve its objectives in the food and nutrition security area, considering the role of the State in a market economy. The strategy to be

adopted shall constitute a reference frame for the actions of the private sector and the interventions of civil society in general to contribute to the achievement of a common objective, to be shared by all.

The elimination of hunger and its causes is a concern of worldwide dimensions that has been translated in the efforts to coordinate policies and programmes in this field. The strategy to be adopted attempts to be conceptually compatible with the approach to the problem of food and nutrition security at international and regional level.

At the World Food Conference in 1996, Mozambique undertook to reduce the number of malnourished people by 50% by the year 2015. Although the magnitude of this undertaking cannot be quantified with accuracy, it is obviously an enormous challenge. The substantial changes over ten years, from 1987 to 1997 within the framework of the economy-ruling policies, have been a fundamental factor contributing to a fast increase in production and to a growing efficiency and efficacy of the food economy – particularly in the post-war and post-drought period from 1991/92 onwards.

Women are a key element in the struggle against hunger. They bear the largest responsibility to ensure food security for the household. Thus, the increase of resources controlled by women means more available resources for food security. In our country, about 90% of the women work in agriculture, representing more than 60% of the work force in this sector. However, it is stated that about 41% of the households headed by women have small fields with areas of less than 1 ha, of whom 1% do not own any area at all. Comparatively, in the households headed by men the percentage of those who own areas of less than 1 ha is 26%. This difference is reflected in the level of food security. It is estimated that the average number of months of food insecurity in the households headed by women is 4.3 months, against 3.5 months in households headed by men.

The reduction of these imbalances through an increase of human capital and of the resources controlled by women is one of the main challenges for the improvement of agricultural productivity, increase of the household income and higher food and nutrition security for all.

The population of Mozambique will grow by about 35% between 1997 and 2010, i.e. from 15.7 million to about 21 million. Therefore, having reached the position of nominal self-sufficiency (1996/76), the food economy will have to continue to develop fast in order to ensure an adequate diet for the growing population. Thus, the challenge for Mozambique in terms of ensuring adequate food availability is to maintain the growth of production and availability at levels compatible with the growth of its population.

With regard to the adequate access to foodstuffs, the challenge for Mozambique is double: first, the continuity of the current growth and fast improvement in the efficiency of the food economy must be guaranteed, particularly the system of commercialization and distribution. Secondly, there is the continuation of improvements in the management of public assistance systems for those members of society who suffer from transitory and structural (chronic) food insecurity. Improvements in the access to foodstuffs through these actions will contribute directly to the continuation of the decrease of malnutrition levels suffered by the majority of the population vulnerable to food insecurity. This means a better preparation and response capacity to disasters associated to an improved assistance for the families that suffer from structural (chronic) food insecurity.

The improvement of the utilization of foodstuffs and nutrients is one of the important dimensions of the challenge for Mozambique in the field of food and nutrition security. Specific areas that merit attention include changes of habits and attitudes concerning the preservation of foodstuffs, food processing and their distribution within the family, occupation of the women's time, among others. At individual level they include primary health care to improve the treatment of diarrheic infections, malaria and other diseases that reduce the capacity of the people to consume available foodstuffs and the treatment of micronutrient deficiencies, such as vitamin A, iron, iodine etc. At community level factors such as the quality of the environment, availability, cost and quality of sources of drinking water, electricity services and basic sanitation must be considered.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY STRATEGY

I. PRESENT SITUATION

1.1 Food and Nutrition Situation

With an area of 799 km² and an estimated population of 15.7 million inhabitants, Mozambique is rich in natural resources and a country in which agriculture constitutes the most important economic activity, being the main and often the only source of food and income for more than 70% of the population and contributing with about 40% to the gross national product.

Despite having a rich potential for food production, the country suffers from persistent food insecurity. Main factors for this are the low profit levels, associated and explained by the weak physical, social and economic infrastructure that results in a scarceness of alternative sources of income. Therefore, the large majority of the population is vulnerable to natural disasters such as droughts and floods as well as to economic shocks such as disruptions in the system of commercialization.

The Household Survey of 1996/97 estimates that 69.4% of the Mozambican population live below the poverty line. That means that in 1996-97 more than two thirds of the population lived in a state of absolute poverty. The incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas (71.2%) than in urban areas (60.2%) which, associated to the fact that about 80% of the population live in rural areas, turns poverty into a predominantly rural phenomenon.

The figures of the survey reveal that among the farmers near urban areas only about 7% used agricultural equipment of some kind, 38% bought improved seeds and 3% use fertilizers. Among the rural farmers 3% used agricultural equipment, 19% bought improved seeds and practically no farmer uses fertilizers. These data together with the fact that in the rural areas about 56% of men and 80% of women still cannot read or write explain the low level of productivity in family farming and consequently of income needed for access to foodstuffs.

Energy-protein malnutrition, anaemia, goitre and other anomalies resulting from iodine deficiency, avitaminosis A, pellagra and manioc poisoning are the most common public health problems associated to the food and nutrition situation in the communities. These problems are aggravated by the high incidence of malaria and other parasitic infestation diseases. It is estimated that 27% of the children in Mozambique suffer from malnutrition, and 55% of these suffer from chronic malnutrition.

The poor access to health services, including maternal and childcare services, is one of the factors contributing to this situation. The household survey data

indicate that on average only 4% of the investigated rural communities have health posts. The average distance to the nearest post is 19 km. About 20% of the communities have a mid-wife and child growth control, and about 55% benefit from vaccination campaigns.

1.2 Ongoing Policies and Programmes

The determining factors affecting the food and nutrition security situation involve different sectors of social and economic activity. The Government has been dealing with the causes of food and nutrition insecurity through the implementation of the strategy for economic and social development and the reduction of absolute poverty based on the following aspects:

- development of human capital
- rehabilitation of key infrastructures
- restoration of agricultural production
- creation of an environment that is favourable to the development of private initiative.

In line with this strategy, various policy and programme measures have been implemented which contribute to minimize the causes that determine food and nutrition insecurity. The following are to be highlighted.

Agricultural policy: The main objective of the agricultural policy is to recuperate agricultural production, thus improving food security and increasing the levels of commercialization of export products. Within the implementation of this policy the National Programme for Agricultural Development (PROAGRI) was developed. This is a programme of public investment in the agricultural sector which, in coordination with other activities such as road and trade development, shall create institutional and infrastructure conditions that facilitate the process of agricultural production and commercialization, thereby permitting to gradually achieve the objective of poverty reduction and food security improvement.

Revision of Land Legislation: This serves to establish mechanisms that permit security in the ownership and use of land, particularly by the family sector.

Transport and communications infrastructures: Recognizing the importance of the connection between the centres of production and consumption for rural development, the Government has been implementing a programme of the rehabilitation of secondary and tertiary roads using methods based on intensive labour.

Commercial policy: Various activities are ongoing in order to promote rehabilitation, construction and modernization of the commercial network to guarantee, among other aspects, operating systems of agricultural

commercialization. Procedures are being simplified, and licensing competencies for external and internal commerce operators are being decentralized.

Promotion of the spread of knowledge and the improvement of food attitudes and habits: Various activities are ongoing with a view to expand the knowledge of the population and to adopt more appropriate practices with regard to the different factors that influence the nutritional situation of the household.

Primary health care: The Government's policy for the health sector concentrates on providing primary health care services. In this context, the rehabilitation of health units destroyed during the war has been initiated to improve the coverage by primary health care services. Simultaneously, vaccination programmes covering up to about 70% children from 0 to 5 years of age and programmes to reduce infectious and diarrhoeal diseases are in progress.

Improved access to drinking water: The National Programme of Rural Water (PRONAR) has been in charge of the rehabilitation and installation of rural water supply sources, including wells, boreholes and small pumping systems. At present, the number of inhabitants with access to drinking water within 500 metres from their residences is about 35%. This indicator varies from 20% to 60%, being lowest in Nampula and Zambêzia and highest in Cabo Delgado. The national target is coverage of 40% by the year 2000. The structure of the programme will undergo significant changes whereby the responsibility for the installation and maintenance of rural water supply systems will pass to the rural communities and the private sector while the State maintains the function of regulating and planning.

II. OBJECTIVES AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STRATEGY

2.1 Objectives of the Strategy

The objective of the Government with regard to food security is **to guarantee that all Mozambicans have, at all times, physical and economic access to the foodstuffs required to lead a healthy and active life.**

To achieve this objective, the strategy considers the following aspects necessary and important:

- (i) Sufficient **availability** of foodstuffs in adequate quantity and quality, which means a growing increase of the indicator referring to the supply of nutritional energy per capita, expressed in kilocalories.
- (ii) All Mozambican citizens shall have **access** to foodstuffs through production, purchase, exchange, donations and other forms.
- (iii) The people shall be capable of **utilizing** the foodstuff so as to ensure that each family member receives and absorbs the adequate nutrients for his/her requirements.

Thus, the objective of the present strategy is to establish the principal strategic vectors to coordinate the Government's policies so that they contribute in a harmonious way to the accomplishment of the Government's objectives in this area. The strategy shall constitute a reference mark for the orientation of the interventions of the private sector and the civil society in general towards the accomplishment of the common objective, which is the elimination of hunger and poverty.

2.2 Assumptions of the Strategy

In a market economy, the objective of State intervention in the economy is seen as the creation of an environment favourable to the activity of the private sector. The State is considered to maintain a key role in rendering some services in the economy, in particular those essential for economic growth that cannot be provided adequately by the private sector. In the social sectors the State is considered the guarantor of a set of minimum services – not only primary health care and basic education but, where adequate and possible, services that ensure the minimum of well-being for those members of the society that are unable to provide their own sustenance or cannot count on assistance by their families.

Economic growth, considering that it is widely shared by all members of society, is the most important means for the improvement of food security. It does not only increase family income but also permits higher levels of collected fiscal receipts which in turn can be used to provide more public goods and services required to guarantee food security for all members of society.

In this context, the approach of the Food and Nutrition Security Strategy adopts the following key assumptions:

- Although recognizing that growing income and thus improvement in food security are the result of the economic growth in all sectors of the economy, the strategy concentrates its actions on the food economy, i.e. the segment of the economy related to the transformation of agricultural, husbandry and fishery products (of national production or imported) into food products, which includes the processes of food production, storage of foodstuffs, their distribution, food preparation and consumption. It is in the food economy where the majority of the population obtain their foodstuffs and income. Therefore, the realization of activities promoting the improvement of efficiency and efficacy in this area, including the reduction or elimination of the economic isolation to which vast regions of this country are subject, will increase the possibilities of production and income growth of rural producers which form the large majority of the population. The improvement of the food economy's efficacy will in turn influence the growth of activities in other sectors, thereby contributing to the increase of income and improvement of food security.
- The strategy recognizes that the various regions of the country have different geo-climatic and economic characteristics, which determine substantial differences in the way in which the households have access to the food they consume. These differences must be taken into consideration when operationalizing the strategy, advancing agricultural production of foodstuffs and non-foodstuffs, husbandry and fishery production and non-agricultural economic activities in accordance with the natural and economic potentials of each region, diversifying and maximizing the sources to improve income and diet as well as food and nutrition security.
- The strategy assumes that in the pursuit of food security, the Government follows a policy of self-sustenance, i.e. maximum economic efficiency and productivity within the food economy is considered to be the centre of the Government's policy. Thus, the underlying assumption is that in the long-term growth of income through economic growth leads to a better guarantee of food security. Commerce is the motor driving economic growth, and the income of small producers and consumers will increase faster if the products they produce and consume are totally integrated in the national, regional and international markets.

2.3 Dimensions of the Strategy

Taking into account the scarce resources of the Government, it becomes necessary to consider alternative ways to improve food security and to define priorities. The first aspect is the aspect of time – the choice between using the resources to minimize immediate distress and using them to invest in services that will improve food security in the future. The second aspect is the selection of alternatives in each one of these two general categories.

Thus, the strategy has three dimensions:

- *Maximization of economic growth and food security in the long term*, especially in the sector where 80% of the population obtain their sustenance and where 100% of the population obtain their food, i.e. the agricultural and food economy. The strategy therefore emphasizes the need for higher Government investment in the public goods of the market, not only to encourage the increase of production and reduce the margins of commercial operations, but also as a means to reduce the seasonal instability of prices.
- *The allocation of resources to ensure the solution of immediate problems*; the strategy emphasizes that the Governments do not leave all aspects of the lives of their citizens to the market criterion and that the Government undertook to guarantee the security of land ownership for all citizens and to provide necessary assistance to those who are unable to ensure the means for their subsistence (handicapped, old people living alone etc.) through social services which redistribute the resources in favour of those in need.
- *The utilization of scarce resources*: The Government does not have sufficient financial and human resources, be it for the immediate creation of the appropriate environment necessary to maximize economic growth in the food economy or be it to ensure the necessary food assistance for all those in need. Therefore options will have to be taken between the different alternatives to improve food security, all the time ensuring sustainability of the actions.

III STRATEGY AND PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS

Three conditions are necessary for families to achieve food and nutrition security: (i) *availability* of sufficient foodstuffs of adequate quality; (ii) physical and economic *access* for the households to foodstuffs through family production, purchase, offers and other forms, and (iii) the adequate *utilization* of the foodstuffs so that each member of the household receives and absorbs the adequate nutrients according to his/her requirements.

The Government of the Republic of Mozambique defined as a medium-term objective for the social and economic development the promotion of accelerated economic growth, based on the widely shared growth of individual income, in the reduction of social inequalities and regional and gender disparities.

The food and nutrition security strategy is incorporated in the Government's general development objectives and includes the principal aspects to coordinate the formulation of policies at macro, sectorial and local level to ensure that the development policies and programmes at the various levels be compatible with the objective to guarantee availability, access and adequate utilization of food, at all times, for all Mozambicans.

These policies shall incorporate the need to guarantee economic and environmental sustainability of the proclaimed activities, favouring environmental conservation and the promotion of communities' self-management of their resources.

3.1 Strategies to improve food and nutrition security

Improvement of the food and nutrition security at long term can only be achieved through the maximization of economic growth, especially in the agricultural and food economy where the majority of the population obtain their sustenance and the largest part of their income.

The proposed strategy proclaims the implementation of policy measures that ensure the growth and stabilization of family resources through the combination of production increase and subsistence production diversification, increase and diversification of income-generating opportunities through agricultural and non-agricultural activities, improvement of technological knowledge of production and food conservation associated to measures to render the markets more efficient.

Strategies promoting the increasing *availability* of foodstuffs

To promote increasing availability and diversity of crops, actions are needed to incentivate growth of production and income in the family sector and allow private sector intervention, as well as an adequate policy for foreign trade, namely:

- (i) Guarantee security in land ownership so that the peasants and private farmers feel confident to make the necessary investments to improve and diversify production in a sustainable way.
- (ii) A commercial network that is able to provide the necessary productive input and purchase the excess of the resulting production.
- (iii) Promote the transfer of technologies to favour growth of production and productivity and reduce post-harvest losses, which entails:
 - a governmental system of agricultural research oriented towards the problems of the family sector and small private producers that has specific programmes directed at the improvement of food security, giving priority to the introduction of drought and pest resistant crops well as of new sustainable technologies incorporating the improvement of soil fertility, in particular in areas with lack of ground. In the same way, technologies of low cost production shall be investigated to diminish the effort of women and reduce the time spent in agricultural work;
 - a governmental system of agricultural extension oriented towards the family sector and small private producers that transmits specific technologies directed at the improvement of food security. Particular attention shall be paid to the growing number of female extensionists and to the re-orientation of the training of extensionists towards the differences based on gender so that the requirements of women can be met more effectively since they are responsible for the production of the majority of foodstuffs;
 - rehabilitation of husbandry infrastructures to improve maintenance conditions with a view to increase husbandry production in the country through the recuperation of the animals and the increase of their productivity;
 - development of fishery including systems of commercialization and management with the communities with a view to improve the supply of fish in the country and the food security of the fishing communities;

- increase the level of education in the rural areas to permit the adoption of new technologies and opportunities that may arise. Particular attention shall be given to the promotion of wider female participation in the various types and levels of schooling and to the introduction of basic schooling curricula, basic notions useful for production, conservation and adequate preparation of food.
- (iv) A rural financial system able to support production and commercialization activities of small and medium level producers and traders, taking into consideration the requirements of the rural woman.
- (v) Permit the import of essential products that the country cannot produce in sufficient quantities to guarantee coverage of the internal requirements at acceptable costs.
- (vi) Favour the export of food products in which the country has comparative advantages and where the positioning on the national market is not efficient.

Strategies to improve *access* to foodstuffs for the families

The interventions to improve access of the families to food are:

- (i) The expansion of the programme for rehabilitation and construction of access roads to the rural areas. Trade is the basis for economic growth and without an extensive and well maintained road system it cannot develop. Due to the high costs of transport, the isolated communities cannot participate in the trade of agricultural products and goods and have no access to the purchase of essential products of industrial origin which is necessary to promote economic growth.
- (ii) The establishment of an operational information system of the market so that the markets function efficiently and to encourage the producers and traders to engage in inter-seasonal storage which is not being done by the traders due to the structure of the capital market.
- (iii) A system of regulations that encourages the entrance of new traders into the system of commercialization to stimulate competition.
- (iv) The promotion of an improved capital market permitting easier access for small and medium scale traders to capital so that the number of traders may increase favouring competition and the reduction of the margins in which commerce operates.

- (v) Capacity-building and coverage extension of the judicial system to solve disputes and oblige the fulfilment of contracts.

Strategies to improve *utilization* of foodstuffs by the families

Priorities of intervention in this area are:

- (i) Evaluation, analysis and follow-up of the nutritional situation;
- (ii) Prevention and control of infectious diseases;
- (iii) Protection of the consumer through improved hygienic quality of foodstuffs and water including the update of pertinent legislation;
- (iv) Prevention and control of malnutrition and specific nutritional deficits with regard to micronutrients;
- (v) Continuation of the improvement and coverage extension of the sanitary network that guarantees primary health care services;
- (vi) Development of activities of nutritional education and improvement of childcare with a view to promote healthy food habits and lifestyles within the families;
- (vii) Improve the access to drinking water and energy resources in the rural areas.

3.2 Strategies to improve food and nutrition security at short term, focussing on priority interventions to cope with situations of transitory nature

The Government recognizes that there will always be people without conditions to ensure their sustenance by their own means or with the help of the informal mechanisms of social protection. This situation may be of a transitory nature as a consequence of diseases, disasters or temporary unemployment, or of chronic/structural nature deriving from structural problems of the economy or the family, such as general unemployment, prolonged illness etc.

The interventions directed towards the solution of problems of short-term food insecurity include:

- (i) Capacity-building of the services of social assistance, including a continuing evaluation of the efficacy in reaching their target groups;

- (ii) A functional system of disaster management, including a comprehensive system of forewarning;
- (iii) Availability of funds to finance the importation of maize and other essential products by the private sector during an emergency or when the domestic prices for basic food products experience sudden increases beyond the parity prices of importation.
- (iv) An adequate food reserve for distribution in case of sudden or unforeseen natural disasters – cyclones, floods, earthquakes etc. – when rapid distribution of food aid is necessary and local or imported supplies may not immediately be mobilized.
- (v) Development and adoption of a set of rules for all importers and distributors of food aid: the Government, donors, NGOs with the objective of maximizing the efficacy of food aid as an instrument to reduce food insecurity, minimizing their impact on the efficiency of the domestic food markets. These rules shall favour non-gratuitous distribution forms of food aid.
- (vi) Investigation and promotion of community mechanisms for the self-management of disasters and social protection.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

To guarantee the success of formulating and implementing the policies and programmes of food and nutrition security it is necessary to guarantee the coordination not only of the interventions of the Government but of all actors present in the food economy, as well as the connection between short and long term interventions.

In this context the following coordination structure is adopted:

- (i) The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will be the Government's organ responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan that shall be elaborated to operationalize the strategy. The Ministry shall inform regularly the Council of Ministers on the situation of food security in the country.
- (ii) The Ministry of Planning and Finance through DNPO will bear the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan at central level, using the Social and Economic Plan and the development

of policy planning and analysis instruments to direct the interventions at long term.

The Economic Council of the Council of Ministers will regularly evaluate matters of food security.

The Technical Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security shall be the focus point for the coordination of the implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan, operating as a secretariat to the Economic Council in matters of food and nutrition security.

Members of the Secretariat are: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation – DPCCN; Ministry of Planning and Finance; Ministry of Public Works and Habitation – DNEP and DNA; Ministry for the Coordination of Social Action – INAS; Ministry for the Coordination of the Environment; Ministry of State Administration; National Institute for Rural Development; representatives of NGOs and international organizations working in the field of food security.

The Secretariat will be headed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The ministries that have a role in the implementation of the Action Plan shall be represented by technicians at management level.

The Secretariat's collective responsibility will be to ensure that all future recommendations and initiatives in the area of food and nutrition security be elaborated and implemented within the same inter-sectorial framework; each ministry represented in the group will maintain its responsibility according to its specific mandate.

At provincial level, Provincial Technical Secretariats for Food and Nutrition Security shall be constituted where the same sectors that are part of this organ at central level will be represented. The Provincial Directorates for Agriculture and Fisheries shall be responsible for their coordination.

The Provincial Governments will ensure executive coordination, at provincial level, of all matters with regard to food and nutrition security.

GLOSSARY OF BASIC TERMINOLOGY – NOT FOR QUOTATION -

Food Security	Food Security is defined as the physical and economic access for all individuals, at all times, to sufficient food to enable them to lead a healthy and active life. There are three inherent dimensions to the concept of food security: availability, access and utilization. ¹
Availability	Means the existence of sufficient quantities of foodstuffs of adequate quality to cover all nutritional requirements in terms of quantity (energy) and quality (to ensure all essential nutrients). In addition, the foodstuffs have to be safe (without toxic elements or other contaminants) and of good quality (in terms of taste, texture etc.). The foodstuffs available at national level, in the markets and at household level should be, as much as possible, culturally acceptable. The availability of foodstuffs is guaranteed through production, import (including food aid) and available reserves, deducting losses and other utilizations for non-nutritional purposes.
Access	The ability of families and individuals to retain sufficient resources to acquire adequate nutrition according to their requirements. This calls for the existence of environmental sustainability set in a public and communal management that is appropriate to the natural resources contributing to the provision of foodstuffs, and of economic and social sustainability in terms of the conditions and mechanisms ensuring the access to foodstuffs. This implies a just distribution of income, an effective system of markets and networks of formal and informal social protection.
Utilization	Adequate utilization of foodstuffs is evaluated at family and individual level. At family level, adequate utilization of foodstuffs is related to the process of transforming available foodstuffs into an adequate diet (including processes such as selection of foodstuffs, processing, food preparation and inter-family distribution). Factors to be considered at family level are related to the utilization of the women's time, knowledge, eating habits, including child nutrition and breastfeeding, use of preventive and

¹ Some analysts of food security refer to the concept of stability to refer to the necessity to minimize the possibility that in some seasons the consumption of foodstuffs may be below requirements. However, in this document the notion of stability is analyzed in each of the considered dimensions (availability, access, utilization).

curative health services, hygienic habits, taboos and beliefs. At individual level, adequate utilization of foodstuffs is related to the ingestion and absorption of food and the biological action of nutrients in the body. The utilization at individual level may be affected by diseases reducing the absorption of nutrients or increasing the requirement, and by deficiencies in specific micronutrients (e.g. vitamin C is important for the absorption of iron). At communal level, there is a series of factors that affect the adequate utilization at family and individual level such as the quality of the environment (biological pathogens and chemical pollutants in air, foodstuffs and water) and the availability, cost and quality of sources of drinking water, electricity supply services, basic sanitation and primary health services.

Food insecurity

Is the situation in which people are unable to acquire sufficient foodstuffs at any time. It is important to distinguish two types of food insecurity with reference to their duration:

Chronic food insecurity refers to a persistent lack of purchase power or other form to obtain foodstuffs.

Transitory food insecurity refers to the temporary lack of purchase power or access to food products, due to failures of the household mechanisms in times of unstable production, price fluctuations for foodstuffs or income fluctuations of the household. This may occur in a cyclic form, such as in the periods between crops, or in a sporadic form such as may result from external impacts (floods).

Food economy

The food economy is the segment of the economy comprising the activities related to the production, processing, storage, distribution of food products and preparation and consumption of food.

Parity prices

An important factor determining the volume of food production and of demand and offer are the prevailing effective prices on the market. In an open economy without restrictions to commerce (import and export) and without interventions in the market, the internal prices are determined by the prices on the international market, or parity prices of import, that is: the price of the world market plus international transport costs plus handling costs. A great disparity between parity prices and internal prices implies the existence of state intervention in the economy through taxes, subsidies, minimum prices etc. or a

failure of the market which may be caused by deficiencies in the information and transport systems, monopolies etc.

Food security reserve

The concept of Strategic Food Security Reserves was widely spread and supported in the sub-Saharan countries during the period in which the state largely intervened in the economy, in particular in the production and commercialization of foodstuffs, either by realizing these functions directly or by controlling the activity of the private sector. With the introduction of economic reforms, the anxieties with regard to market instability made the governments wish to maintain a control over the cereal trade. The existence of strategic reserves would be a component of this intervention, having two objectives:

Stabilizing of prices: which involves the purchase of excess offers of cereals on the market and the accumulation of stocks, during the period in which the market is supplied, and the selling on the market when the product begins to be in short supply.

Humanitarian aid: considering that an important part of the population depends on subsistence production, the governments together with donors and NGOs, continue to have the responsibility to intervene directly in case food shortages occur. The necessity of this assistance may be determined on a very short-term basis, in case of the occurrence of a sudden and unforeseen disaster, which has formed the motive for the constitution of food reserves with this objective.

Present analysts consider that just as food reserves are not synonymous to food security, food security is not impossible without the presence of strategic food reserves. As an alternative to the creation of voluminous physical food reserves with difficult and costly management it is being suggested to constitute financial reserves for the purchase of foodstuffs. However, the necessity of small physical reserves for humanitarian emergency purposes is recognized.

Self-sufficiency

The concept of self-sufficiency is associated to the capacity of the country to satisfy its food requirements on the basis of internal food production, that is: the implied idea is that the best way to ensure food security of a country is to increase its self-sufficiency ratio (SSR), i.e. the percentage of national production with regard to total consumption. The application of the principle of self-sufficiency implies

the adoption of policy measures compatible with this objective, with a view, on the one hand, to stimulate the national producers, and on the other hand, to protect national production from the competition of imports. These measures may include minimum prices for the producer, subsidies, taxes and disciplining tariffs in importing foodstuffs and, in a general way, may favour the inefficiency of production which is borne by the consumers who obtain the products for higher prices than such as would be obtained in a system of free trade.

The concept of self-sufficiency is distinguished from the notion of self-sustenance, fundamentally by considering national production as the only source of availability, while the former takes imports into consideration, including food aid, as possible sources for the national food provision. Therefore it is consistent with the development approach that incorporates international specialization and comparative advantages.

Gender

Set of factors that define and socially relate men and women. Gender relations are relations that are established between men and women on the basis of determined social conditions, and that are reflected in a certain social and economic status between the two sexes. As they are of a social and traditional basis, these relations tend to last long, but they can be modified according to the evolution of socio-cultural and economic patterns of a society. The gender perspective in the context of food and nutrition security is of extreme significance since the woman has the main responsibility for the production and preparation of foodstuffs as well as for childcare. This fact is not reflected in important aspects that determine food and nutrition security such as ownership or control of resources, educational level etc., in which women are clearly disadvantaged. These aspects therefore should be considered so that policies and action programmes for the improvement of food and nutrition security can be rendered more efficient.

Acute malnutrition

Acute malnutrition (low weight for body height) indicates a deficit in muscle mass compared to the expected quantity in a child of the same height. It may result from either failure to gain weight or from a loss of weight. It may be precipitated by infection or similar crisis and usually occurs in circumstances when the food availability of the family is limited and food consumption by the children is low. Often

seasonal episodes of low weight per height occur related to variations in either the provision of foodstuffs or in the prevalence of diseases. One of the main characteristics of acute malnutrition is that it may develop very fast; under favourable conditions it may also be quickly eliminated.

Chronic malnutrition

Chronic malnutrition (low height for age) means delay in skeletal growth. The rhythm of skeletal growth may be reduced since birth but a significant degree of low height for the respective age, representing the accumulated consequences of delayed growth, may not become evident for many years. Low height for the age is often associated to poor economic conditions, chronic or repeated infections as well as to inadequate food intake. The measurement of height for age is expressed in percentage of the reference pattern, whose categories of classification are: normal between 90 and 100% and very low for the age at less than 90% of the pattern. Insufficient growth levels of less than 16% are considered to represent a situation of generalized malnutrition in the population of the respective area.

Micronutrients

Micronutrient deficiency is a term used to refer to diseases caused by insufficiencies in vitamins and minerals. The perturbations caused by vitamin A, iron or iodine deficiencies are the main forms of malnutrition caused by insufficiency of micronutrients in Mozambique. Micronutrient malnutrition has long-term negative effects on the health, learning ability and productivity, therefore being a great impediment to the socio-economic development and contributing to the vicious circle of under-development in detriment of the most disadvantaged groups.