

Enhancing Civil Society Participation in SADC Food security Processes

Conference Report

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WORKSHOP RATIONALE

Strengthening the food security of poor and vulnerable communities in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region is an issue attracting increasing regional and international attention. Countries throughout SADC are struggling with a livelihoods crisis, as communities are less able to cope with social and economic stresses.

A major area of contention is that the policy environment is not conducive to ensure food security partly because the realities from the ground, as articulated by the "voices of the poor and food insecure". A contributing factor to the weakness of policy processes has been the marginal participation of members of civil society in the development and implementation of policies relating to food security. This is largely because civil society organisations work in the arena between the household, the private sector and the state to negotiate matters of public concern. Hence strengthening the participation of civil society actors in policy processes in the region is an important component requiring attention.

As a response, the Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN) in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and SADC's Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) facilitated the regional workshop, aptly entitled "enhancing Civil Society Participation in SADC Food Security Processes". The conference, funded by Australian Aid, provided a forum for actors to discuss ways in which civil society agencies can link up and use their evidence to contribute and influence these policy processes. The participants comprised civil society organisations, donors, regional and international agencies, drawn from the SARPN, FANRPAN and ODI networks.

Earlier activities facilitated by SARPN, ODI and FANRPAN, involving civil society actors from across the region, identified several key policies and processes important for addressing food security. On the basis of this work and after consultation with the SADC secretariat, it was proposed that the workshop focus on the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) as a framework for identifying and engaging key policies relating to the promotion of food security in the region. Thus in view of the importance of the role of civil society in promoting food security, the conference set out to:

- Identify the relevant policies and programmes in the region and their status;
- Establish the nature and extent of existing civil society evidence in relation to these policy areas; and
- Establish the opportunities for civil society to participate in regional food security processes.

THE REGIONAL LIVELIHOODS CRISIS

There is growing evidence of chronic vulnerability to hunger in Southern Africa. In response, interventions have emphasised sustaining people's access to food; via food aid and diverse forms of agricultural and horticultural extension programmes.

However, these efforts are proving to be temporary measures in the face of environmental change, including the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS. There is thus a growing realization that the continued reliance on short-term responses and limited menu of short-term response options - primarily food aid - may be contributing to the ongoing livelihoods crisis.

The intensifying vulnerability has resulted from a range of "entangled crises" such as rainfall failure, widespread disruptions in food availability, failures of governance, extreme levels of prevailing poverty and the continuing erosion of livelihood strategies through HIV/AIDS (see Maunder, 2005). Risk has been driven upwards by often silent but intensifying conditions of political, socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, which requires a modest external threat such as an unexceptional drought, to trigger widespread suffering.

The current food security situation is worsening and could well reach similar levels to the crisis in 2001/02. Initial estimates from CFSM and the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VACs) indicate that crop production levels have fallen widely: Zimbabwe is down 45 percent on last year, Malawi is 36 percent on 5 year average, Zambia is 12 percent on 10 year average, and southern Mozambique is 48 percent down in the southern Provinces. This situation has been reiterated in figures from FEWS NET:

Country	2005/06 Marketing year ¹	
	Assessed Number of Food Insecure	Assessed Food Aid Requirements
Lesotho	548,800	20,244
Malawi	4,224,400	269,600
Mozambique	587,499	69,755
Swaziland	226,640	27,020
Zambia	1,232,661	118,335
Zimbabwe	3,900,000 ²	308,000
Total	10,720,000	812,954

1/ Sourced from the June 2005 VAC presentations to the Stakeholders meeting of 7 - 8 July 2005 pending final reports, and June 2005 FAO/WFP CFSAM Reports. 2/Preliminary results provide a range of 2.9 - 3.9 million people

Acute food insecurity is thus evident in parts of Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland and Lesotho. The recommended responses continue to be dominated by food aid (equivalents) and agricultural inputs. Responses have been organised through Flash Appeals (Malawi, Zimbabwe) and an expansion of existing instruments. Clearly many of the experiences of the 2002 crisis, distilled into policy lessons, have not been institutionalised in the current response. Serious attention must be paid to the policy framework in which these responses and other longer-term development priorities are formed.

THEMATIC AREAS FOR CSO ENGAGEMENT

A number of broad thematic areas emerged during the workshop, articulated during presentations, breakaway sessions, and plenary discussions. These are detailed in the programme provided in annexure one. These discussions developed in response to the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) as the starting framework for identifying and engaging key policies relating to the promotion of food security in the region. Two key papers, presented by Fred Kalibwani of SADC

FANRPAN, laid out a general framework relating to specific regional policies, to identify strategic entry points for CSOs.

The RISDP has an overall goal of facilitating co-operation in food security to achieve sustainable access to safe and adequate food at all times by all people in SADC for an active and healthy life. Five key areas of focus are detailed in the plan:

1. **Food availability:** in order to enhance long-term availability of food in SADC, the objective of regional co-operation in this area is to improve the availability of food;
2. **Access to safe food:** the objective is to improve access to safe food.
3. **Nutritional value of food consumed:** with respect to nutritional value of food consumed, the objective is to improve the nutritional value of food and minimise food losses;
4. **Disaster-induced emergencies:** the objective is to improve forecasting, prevention, mitigation and recovery from adverse effects of natural disasters;
5. **Institutional framework:** the objective is to strengthen the institutional framework and build capacity for implementing food security programmes in SADC.

The workshop prioritised three of these five areas to discuss in breakaway group. Although the nutritional value of food consumed and access to safe food were not discussed, some of the general points that arose had direct relevance for them. It was also noted that CSOs needed to ensure their own agendas, outside of these areas identified by SADC, were not neglected in the discussions.

Three broad issues emerged in the presentations and in the discussions that followed. These have been summarised below and presented in a holistic framework (Figure One), as a prelude to a discussion around specific points that arose in the breakaway groups.

The tension between short- and long-term interventions

A number of presentations reiterated the fact that the region's food insecurity turns on structural livelihoods issues, which have been addressed through short-term relief interventions. Moreover, a number of long-term negative impacts have been associated with these short-term interventions; food-aid has, for example, been cited as a disincentive to agriculture among other negative livelihood impacts.

While short-term interventions may well have a place under certain circumstances, it will nevertheless be important for CSOs to question the future role of food aid, the role of strategic grain reserves (South Africa's emerging integrated grain strategy), social protection interventions, particularly as an important agenda emerging through the Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP) and early warning systems. An overarching issue affecting all types of interventions was how best to address the regional and global trade imbalances.

Evidence and information

Evidence affects learning, which is in turn a driving mechanism of change. The central role of evidence in driving change was reflected in the consensus that emerged during the workshop, both in the introductory presentations and during working group discussions. There is a need to build the region's information base on food security issues across sectors and scales, as there is a great deal that is not well understood, much of which will require participatory processes. One of the key questions to emerge, however, was that of what constitutes the "evidence" required to inform or influence policy-making processes. During discussions it became clear that relevant evidence is seen to include a range of qualitative perspectives as well as research-based information and analysis. In considering how to use evidence to influence policy, there are a range of issues to take into account. These issues include: the political context in which evidence was generated and in which it will be used (particularly relevant for policy research); the quality of evidence (the methods used and its resulting strength); whether it is usable (how research is presented has a great impact on its uptake, especially with regard to policy development); the weight attributed to it (how it is considered compared to other forms of evidence); the extent of sustained analysis (whether research is once-off or has a long-term focus); and legitimacy (influenced by factors such as the source of the evidence).

Disconnects between policy development and implementation

A dominant discourse emerging from workshop participants was that there are number of good policies that already exist in the region, but that many are not being implemented, or not being implemented effectively. This underscores that relevant policy development alone is not powerful enough to shape a food secure region; rather, food security turns on good governance in carrying the implementation of policies through to affect change. Moreover, it was noted that a shift is required in emphasis from policy formulation, towards not only mobilising policy, but instituting mechanisms to review and learn from policy (and other intervention) impacts on food security and livelihoods. Such impacts extend to include successes as well as instances of limited impact or unintended negative consequences.

Policy should thus be viewed as a cycle of development, implementation, reviewing impacts and learning, and re-developing or changing as necessary. Integral to this cycle is the issue of participation; mechanisms that will allow interfaces with civil society and other stakeholders to engage at all stages of the policy cycle in order to enhance the relevance and success of national and regional policies pertaining to food security. In essence, the participation of civil society to policy development, implementation and review is indispensable in building the region's future food security.

Participation

It has long been recognised in the development arena that participation denotes a fundamental rights-based approach to addressing socio-economic issues such as food insecurity. The role of participation was a cross-cutting theme emerging during the workshop. Participation was recognised in the introductory presentations as being about empowerment, democracy, using indigenous knowledge, and entitlement. Participatory development, however, does more than represent the fundamental human right to be heard; civil society (and the grass-roots voices they can access) participation is absolutely necessary if development policy is to be either *relevantly* defined or truly *effective* in supporting the food security of individuals and communities.

Despite the critical and cross-cutting role of participation there was consensus that there is a lack entry points in national governments that accommodates better civil society participation. Moreover, it was acknowledged by participants that effective participation in national- and regional-scale policy processes will also require human capacity building within the NGO and CSO sector.



Figure 1: Summary of key themes emerging for CSO engagement

OUTCOMES FROM WORKING GROUPS AND RELATED DISCUSSIONS

Three groups were constituted to engage with (1) food availability, (2) disaster preparedness for food insecurity, and (3) institutional framework for implementing food security (as derived from the RISDP).

There were two areas of focus in the working groups, the first was *specific Areas for engagement with SADC*, and the second was on *specific strategies to enhance CSO engagement with regional food security policy processes*. Working groups took place within two separate sessions that reflected these foci, and a series of questions was posed to the group in each session, as outlined below.

A. Specific areas of engagement with the SADC:

1. Identify and list key priority issues within each specific focus area;
2. Outline the regional operating environment for the specific area;
3. Detail potential opportunities to engage with SADC processes and to define any challenges that might arise.

B. Specific strategies to enhance CSO engagement with regional food security policy processes

4. Define what strategies were needed by civil society to engage with regional food security processes

5. Detail possible action plans

The specific outputs from each of the three working group's two sessions responding to the above questions (1-5) are reported contiguously for each group in turn in Annexure Two. The outputs from working groups sessions were presented within the plenary sessions and stimulated responsive questions and debates among workshop participants. While Annexure Two provides the important contextual details encapsulated in the presentations, here only two selected generic issues are considered that emerged during the related discussions, and which might partially inform a way forward for civil-society's participation in regional food security processes.

The importance of strategic engagement

There were a number of related issues that arose with regard to the importance of civil society seeking strategic temporal, spatial and policy interfaces with regional-scale policies.

The **first** of these was the issue of their currently being no formal forum for civil society to engage with the SADC at the regional level, and consequently a consideration that was repeatedly canvassed was that of engaging rather at the national level. A number of participants noted that if the initial energy of civil society were focused on developing national-level civil-society networks, these networks or umbrella bodies would be able to more effectively take their collaborative knowledge and voice forward to the regional level. Also identified was the need for stronger collaboration between CSOs, for example in sharing and dissemination of information and using existing networks.

A **second** related issue was that of the heterogeneity of viewpoints and sectors that civil society collectively represents. It was suggested that one of the biggest challenges associated with mobilising civil-society engagement at the regional level was not only the variety of development foci that civil society participates in, but also the associated diversity of development priorities that might be related to these. Some participants suggested developing a *range* of foci at the national level that represent different interest groups among CSOs, and that can then *tangibly* engage with specific *technical* aspects of policy at the national and regional level.

The **third** issue arising with regard to strategic engagement with regional policy issues was the necessity of better understanding the existing national and regional *institutional* environment influencing food security. One suggestion that was canvassed was that of charting the key national- and regional-level institutions - beyond the SADC - to provide a better institutional map for civil society to identify points at which they might best engage.

Closely related to the need for a better institutional map, was the **fourth** issue; that of the need to identify the stages of development and implementation at which existing policies and legislative mechanisms currently stand. This was expressed in various ways by all three working groups as a necessary baseline before civil society can target which policies to engage with and how they might influence them.

The need for making better use of evidence

A second common theme emerging during the discussions of working-group presentations was the need to make better use of *evidence*. Stronger evidence, it was felt, would increase the credibility of civil society in lobbying for changes in national and regional policies. Four issues have been identified that arose in relation to better employing evidence as a resource in this regard.

The **first** was the demand for assimilating and analysing *existing* evidence, whether this be experiential or research-based evidence, from grass-roots organisations, civil society organisations and other sources. It was noted that civil society represents a tremendous under-utilized knowledge base in the arena of policy development and implementation. This knowledge base should be opportunistically packaged to promote advocacy around different policy needs.

The **second** was the need to build civil society's *capacity* for generating evidence, assimilating it and packaging it for greater impact.

Third, it was contended that civil society should channel well-packaged evidence through the *media* in order to draw international attention to the crisis in the region being a crisis of *livelihoods*, rather than a crisis of food. It was felt that if this distinction was better taken up by the public as well as international development partners, it would increase the likelihood of funded policies and programmes designed to address the root-causes of food insecurity. It was also noted that disasters within the region that are applied on top of the existing livelihood crisis frequently go unreported in the media.

Finally, an issue that was reiterated by a number of participants was that in order to intelligently interact with institutions shaping policy at the national and regional level, it would be necessary to become more active in critiquing the successes and failures of existing policies and/or their implementation. Evidence was seen as an important tool, for example, in calling the SADC to account when resolution commitments are not reflected in policy changes, or when legislated policy is not implemented or is implemented poorly.

Action Points

A number of possible action points can be distilled from the above discussion. These may be summarised as follows:

- Develop national-level networks of CSOs, or umbrella bodies, that can better engage with national policy and that might also represent different interest groups that can apply pressure in specific policy areas
- Make use of existing networks to build collaboration between CSOs
- Map the institutional environment, at both the regional and national scales, to provide a clear framework within which CSOs can identify points of entry
- Identify the stages of implementation that existing policies are at, particularly in the areas pinpointed in the working-group discussions
- Locate and collate existing information and evidence that might be used to support calls for changes in policies
- Build capacity among CSOs for mining and making use of evidence
- Package and channel evidence strategically, in ways that maximise the impact of the message CSOs wish to communicate- for example in using the media
- Identify where current policies have had positive and negative impacts on livelihoods and food security and seek ways to feed this information back into participative policy making.

Way Forward around the Look, Learn and Listen Programme

Sue Mbaya summed up the way forward for the Look, Learn and Listen project with a few closing remarks.

She emphasised a few key issues that had emerged during the workshop, which she felt should be recognised by CSOs involved in the project. Firstly the influence of external agencies on regional processes needed to be understood, particularly if a concerted drive to engage with decision makers was to be made. Secondly, she reiterated the importance of advocacy and the different vehicles needed to convey messages. In particular there was need for CSOs to understand how the media could be harnessed for advocacy purposes. Thirdly, she reminded the workshop about the importance of evidence and how it should be used and packaged if CSOs were to be taken seriously in the policy making process.

Ms Mbaya then summed up the Look, Learn and Listen Project, reflecting on what had been achieved and what was planned for the coming months.

The Look, Listen and Learn Project's objectives were to:

- promote the contribution of civil society organisations and their evidence to debate and dialogue at the SADC level food security policy;

- promote the voice of Southern Africa civil society organisations in the international debate on food security policy;
- Build knowledge and publicise within the region and internationally the policy and practice lessons learnt;
- disseminate within the region relevant evidence and policy lessons from civil society organisations elsewhere in the world.

In terms of what had been achieved, Ms Mbaya stated that the workshop represented the end of the pre-pilot phase, which included the conceptualisation and planning of the project, the mobilisation of resources, and the inaugural meeting in May 2005. This had been followed by the development of a regional paper by Fred Kabilwani, which has been presented at this workshop, and the development and dissemination of four policy briefs (twelve planned) to influence policy processes in the region.

The next stage was to involve national linkage activities, which would include national one-day meetings in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These workshops were to focus on the national context of food security, and particular challenges and opportunities for CSOs engaged in food security policy. The workshops would also involve the development of national strategies.

This was to be followed by the development of a synthesis to evaluate the previous stages, including a peer review. A number of concept notes around key policy making opportunities would be selected to be developed into full proposals for the subsequent phase.

By the end of March 2006, it was intended that policy processes would be better understood amongst CSOs in the region and that a number of general lessons around the role of CSOs in using evidence to contribute to pro-poor policy processes would have been achieved. At the conclusion of this final phase, a number of information products would be disseminated and other influencing activities undertaken. These were to target the SADC Council of Ministers, the SADC Parliamentary Forum and other institutions.

Recommendations for Future Dialogue

- The RISDP is a good starting point when evaluating policies and opportunities for engagement at SADC level. However, it is important to move beyond this to other regional opportunities, which will be clearly identified once a detailed institutional mapping has been conducted. This also involves a critique of the policy formulation process and the identification of strategic entry points.
- CSOs need to continue engaging issues of importance external to the SADC framework and which fit their own agendas. SADC should be called to engage with CSOs on their own agenda in a participatory, democratic approach to policy formulation in the region.
- It is important to recognise the current limitations of SADC and what can be effectively derived from engaging with this institution. It is imperative to keep engaging as the Regional Economic Communities are key cornerstones of both the African Union and NEPAD agendas, particularly as the vehicles through which their development planning will be delivered. However, capacity constraints may limit current opportunities within SADC.
- Within the SADC level, there are clear opportunities to engage with more technically focused policies, such as the RVAC 5-Year Plan, which may yield faster results than general frameworks such as the RISDP.

Annexure One

Enhancing Civil Society Participation in SADC Food Security Processes

AGENDA - 14 November 2005

08:15 - 09:00	<i>Registration</i>	
09:00 - 09:15	Introductions and Welcoming Remarks	Session Chair: Susan Mbaya, Director, SARPN
09:15 - 09:35	The South African Government experience and perspectives on civil society's role in regional food security policy,	Keynote Speaker: Ms M Ramabenyane, Senior Manager Food Safety, Ministry of Agriculture, South Africa
09:35 - 09:50	Opening Remarks	Mr. Philip Green, Australian High Commissioner
09:50 - 10:15	<i>Tea</i>	
10:15 - 10:30	LLL Project Introduction and Background	John Howell, ODI
10:30-10:50	Regional background paper: Key food security policy issues	Nick Maunder
10:50- 11:15	SADC Food Security Policy, Processes and Structures and Opportunities for Engagement with CSOs	Fred Kalibwani, FANRPAN
11:15 - 11:30	Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP)	John Rook, Programme Manager, RHVP
11:30 - 12:30	<i>Discussion</i>	
12:30 - 13:00	Emerging Regional Opportunities for CSO	FANRPAN
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00-15:30	Aligning CSO interests and evidence to opportunities available at the regional level	(Breakaway groups)
15:30 - 16:00	<i>Tea</i>	
		Session Chair: Joana Bartolomeu Vemba
16:00 - 17:30	Aligning CSO interests and evidence to opportunities available at the regional level	(Group Presentations to Plenary)

Enhancing Civil Society Participation in SADC Food Security Processes

AGENDA - 15 November 2005

08:30 - 08:45	Recap of Previous Day Proceedings	Dr. Scott Drimie
		Session Chair: Dr. Tobias Takavarasha
08:45 - 09:30	Complementary Regional Processes and Opportunities.	Fred Kalibwani, FANRPAN
09:30 - 10:30	<i>Discussion</i>	
10:30 - 10:45	<i>Tea</i>	
10:45 - 12:00	Strategies to Enhance Participation in Regional Food Security Policies	(Breakaway groups)
12:00 - 12:15	Strategies to Enhance Participation in Regional Food Security Policies	(Group Presentations to Plenary)
12:15 - 12:30	Remarks from LLL Partners	SARPN/ODI/FANRPAN
12:30 - 12:40	Closing Remarks	Alfred Hamadziripi, SARPN
12:40 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	

Annexure Two

OUTPUTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

Group One: Focus on Food Availability

1. Key priority issues for CSO engagement:

- Security of tenure;
- Access to agricultural inputs (depending partly on general availability of these inputs);
- Poor planning and lack of information to inform decisions;
- Markets for products:
 - price controls,
 - low prices,
 - international markets;
- Technical expertise and extension - for example the needs of women farmers;
- Drought;
- Irrigation development;
- Crop diversification;
- Livestock - disease;
- Targeting small-scale farmers, as large-scale farmers have benefited more.

2. & 3. Opportunities to engage with SADC processes and challenges that might arise

Opportunities:

- Different approaches are needed depending on specific issues and the stage of policy development and implementation;
- Need to operate and assimilate evidence at varying scales from the community level up to the national level;
- Make use of opportunities to work with different SADC directorates - and at strategic moments between the summit meetings and the setting of the summit agenda;
- Opportunity to capitalise on article 23 of the SADC Treaty;
- Build capacity of the SADC-CNGO;
- Monitoring and evaluation of SADC decisions and resolutions.

A number of challenges that emerged were:

- Poor record of resolution implementation by SADC and its member states;
- Lack of political will;
- Lack of track record in terms of advocacy and campaigning in the region by CSOs.

4. & 5. The regional operating environment, and strategies and action plans needed by civil society to engage with regional processes

- Identify SADC protocols and agreements
- Need to convene a meeting of civil society at national level and prepare advocacy
- Focus the proposed 10% expenditure of budget on agriculture
- Develop a regional framework for agricultural spending and prepare draft definitions of specific expenditure in agriculture for consultations with CSO community
- Need for CSOs to engage with parliamentary portfolios that deal with agriculture
- League tables can be used for advocacy at the SADC level

Group Two: Focus on Disaster Preparedness for Food Security

1. Key priority issues for CSO engagement:

- Food reserve facility;

- Early warning systems;
- Food safety nets;
- Nutrition, water & sanitation, education;
- Need for “exclusivity” to broaden participation and methodology standardisation;
- Decentralisation to increase relevance at district/provisional level;
- Linkages with other information sources is necessary for validation of issues;
- A livelihoods approach to EWS.

2. The regional operating environment - key actors in disaster preparedness included:

- FEWSNET
- FAO
- WFP
- Concern Worldwide
- Oxfam
- CARE
- WVI
- Action Aid
- SAFAID
- SA Congo
- Grain SA
- SAFEX
- SA Government
- DFID
- EU
- Save US

3. Opportunities to engage with SADC processes and challenges that might arise with regard to disaster preparedness:

Challenges:

- Lack of political will on joint action for the region, particularly within the SADC;
- Lack of capacity to implement disaster preparedness.

In terms of potential opportunities, a few strategies were identified:

- To identify informal ways of meeting with key decision makers, such as through social occasions with for example members of the Council of Agriculture;
- To strengthen engagement with national SADC committees;
- To push the Southern African Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (SACONGO) to sign a memorandum of understanding with SADC, deriving lessons from how gender-focused CSOs have had success in this regard.

4. Strategies needed by civil society to engage with regional processes with regard to disaster preparedness:

Early warning systems were chosen as a priority focus area. Two main issues were identified upfront. CSOs are not organised, which needs to be remedied if SADC and other organisations are to be engaged. There is also a lack of evidence on civil society position. suggested strategies included:

- Do not only address SADC as other regional processes exist such as the RVAC and RVAM
- Use the media as an advocacy tool
- “Be well prepared for advocacy” - amass the evidence and package issues in different forms for different audiences
- Use a three-tier advocacy system - SADC, donors and national governments
- Forge strategic alliances, such as with donors

5. Detailing action plans for early warning systems:

- Advocate for inclusivity and decentralised disaster preparedness systems
- Capacity building for local institutions to collect evidence and present their information as credible for national early warning and VACs.
- Inform debates on disaster preparedness

Group Three: Focus on Institutional Framework

1. Key priority issues for CSO engagement in SADC institutional framework protocols:

- The need for legal instruments to enforce a coordinated framework for food security policies;
- Enforcing existing legal instruments
- Harmonising between regional policies with regard to trade issues - including protocols of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPSS)
- Implementing existing policies - good policies in place but poor implementation
- A framework needed for the mitigation of the impacts of HIV/AIDS, specifically in agricultural and food-security issues - for example food fortification and crop choice

2. The regional operating environment:

Key actors that were identified included:

- Regional Economic Institutions (RECS) such as NEPAD, SADC, COMESA
- Regional organisations and networks such as SARPN, FANRPAN, SACAU, ZERO, Trade Centre
- International development partners, including WFP, FAO, USAID, DFID, ODI,
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), such as SADC Council of NGOs (CNGO)
- Private business forums

Broader observations about the regional political environment that were identified as having both positive and negative impacts:

- The perception that South African government is the 'big brother' in regional development agenda
- The overlap of economic blocks, such as SADC and COMESA
- Bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships such as South Africa's relationship with the EU
- The issue of land-reform as a cross-cutting issue

3. Opportunities to engage with SADC processes and challenges that might arise:

- CSOs need to research the stages of policy implementation in order to be able to engage effectively
- Identify strategic points of entry with regard to temporal and geographic scale, as well as accessibility
- CSOs need a calendar of SADC events well ahead of time
- CSOs need to accumulate grass-roots data
- Inaccessibility of SADC and its representatives
- Better CSO collaboration required- for e.g. develop umbrella bodies at national level representing different interest groups
- Enhancing the capacity within CSOs

4. The following priority strategic areas were identified for civil society to engage with regional processes with regard to institutional frameworks:

- Harmonization of trade policies across region - e.g. transport, custom regulations, tariffs
- Implementation of existing policies / legislation - e.g. trade, fisheries and forestry
- Mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security

5. Detailing action plans as well as key actors for the following specific areas within each of the above areas:

Focus issues in relation to **harmonisation of trade policies:**

- Cross border trade - formal and informal (e.g. SPSS)

How:

- Baseline to determine status quo
- Identify gaps, anomalies etc
- Advocacy and research necessary for change

Key actors:

- Regional and local business orgs. SACAU
- Farmer orgs
- Economic justice network (EJN) FANRPAN, SARPN, CSPR

Focus issues in relation to the **implementation** of existing policies:

- Forestry protocol
- SADC Trade protocol
- Fisheries protocol

How:

- Baseline to determine level of implementation relevant to food security
- Advocacy for accountability to agreements/ compliance
- Advocacy and research necessary for change

Key actors:

- SAFIRE
- Regional and local business orgs. SACAU
- Farmer orgs
- FANRPAN, SARPN, Economic Justice Network - EJN

Focus issues in relation to mainstreaming the **mitigation of HIV/AIDS:**

- Reducing livelihoods vulnerability and mitigation of HIV/AIDS

How

- Baseline to on total impact on agriculture and food security
- Advocacy for social protection safety nets
- Advocating for diversification of the food production base and technology

Key actors:

- PRF
- CSPR
- FANRPAN
- SAFIRE
- ENJ
- Business associations
- SAFAIDS
- RENEWAL