

Civil Society & Regional Food Security

POLICY BRIEF NO.1

8 November 2005

The Role of SADC



The Look, Listen & Learn Project Brief highlighted that one of the challenges for CSOs in engaging with regional food security policy was often their lack of familiarity with the programmes agreed by member governments for implementation by its Secretariat.

The first edition of the Look, Listen & Learn Policy Brief is designed to fill this gap in relation to the SADC Secretariat. Policy Brief No. 2 will provide information on major external donor programmes on regional food security, including those implemented outside the Secretariat.

SADC's Re-structuring

After years of studies and deliberations on SADC's limitations in translating political commitment towards regional economic integration into concrete programmes, the SADC Council (of heads of states and governments) approved the restructuring of SADC institutions at the 2001 SADC Summit held in Windhoek.

Within this restructuring, the 21 SADC 'sector co-ordinating units', formerly spread across the region in different countries, were grouped into four Directorates at the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone:

- Directorate of Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI)
- Directorate of Infrastructure and Services (I&S)
- Directorate of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR)
- Directorate of Social and Human Development (SHD&SP)

At the national level, SADC National Committees were set up to coordinate their respective Member States' interests relating to SADC. As before, the work was responsible to the various Councils of Ministers (for Agriculture and Natural Resources in the case of FANR).

Following restructuring, attention shifted to developing a more coherent strategy to eliminate poverty in the region. The preparation of this strategy was tasked to the Secretariat and the result is the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) which is currently being discussed with SADC's 'Development Partners'.

The Food & Natural Resource (FANR) Directorate

The Directorate inherited several information systems originating from the former sector co-ordinating units, among others, the Regional Early Warning System for Food Security (REWS); the crop pest and animal disease surveillance system; the remote sensing project; and regional vulnerability assessment.

In 2003, the Council of Ministers directed that a Regional Food Security Information System be rationalized, incorporating the various information systems projects and networks within FANR. This was a formidable task, and soon FANR was asked to do a great deal more, especially after the SADC Summit on Agriculture and Food Security held in 2004 in Dar es Salaam on *Enhancing Agriculture and Food Security for Poverty Reduction in the SADC Region*. The summit was held in the aftermath of the 2002-03 drought which revealed chronic levels of food insecurity.

The subsequent Declaration has been the guiding document for FANR and has led to a number of new programmes and renewed focus on long-standing programmes.

Disaster Preparedness

The SADC disaster preparedness strategy is built on three pillars:

- an early warning and monitoring component to alert countries of impending emergencies as well as identify and monitor pending emergencies
- vulnerability assessment systems identify populations and areas most at risk, and in the long-term, monitor livelihoods, vulnerability and poverty

LOOK, LISTEN & LEARN:
Promoting the use of CSOs' evidence in policies for food security

An action research project in southern Africa

Malawi

Zambia

Zimbabwe

Mozambique

Angola

mapping and recommend programmes and initiatives linked to poverty reduction

- a regional food reserve facility that allows SADC to respond better to food emergencies

Food Reserve Facility

Since the 1980s, SADC has considered the establishment of a strategic food reserve to deal with the growing frequency of natural disasters. Early proposals were based on considerations of enough physical maize stock for 12 months consumption. The Council of Ministers has agreed that the food reserve proposal should be re-visited and should include consideration of both a physical reserve and a financial facility, following a shift in thinking to a trade-based regional approach.

Training

FANR has been implementing a Regional Food Security Training Programme since 1996. The programme aims at improving food security in the region by strengthening the capacity of the organizations in the public, private and voluntary sectors that are involved in development and implementation of food security policies and programmes.

There are now proposals for a new programme covering wider aspects of food security, including policy harmonisation; trade facilitation; agribusiness development; community based natural resources development; agricultural information systems; and HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming.

Water Management

Another FANR programme is to improve the capacity of SADC countries to sustainably manage existing regional water resources to increase agricultural output while protecting water availability for human and other uses.

This programme is closely related to the Dar es Salaam Declaration focus on improving production and productivity, and is similarly congruent with NEPAD's emphasis upon improved land and water management in its Comprehensive Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

The regional dimension is especially challenging to SADC because of the importance of shared water resources and trans-border rivers.

Trade and Standards

The work of the Secretariat in driving the implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol is principally with TIFI rather than FANR, but there are important aspects of agricultural trade that are the responsibility of the Council of Ministers served by FANR, and these directly impact upon the availability of food and agricultural inputs across the region.

Agricultural products risk rejection by importing countries within the region for non-conformity with national regulations. In recognition of this problem, FANR has studied the degree of deviation of the food safety and plant protection measures from international standards and assessed measures that should be adopted to facilitate trade both within the region as well as internationally. The study revealed the urgent need for SADC to harmonise standards and demonstrated that existing national regulations were an impediment to regional trade (see forthcoming Policy Brief on the seed trade).

CSOs and SADC

Apart from some of the stronger commodity trade associations and farmer unions with links across several countries, CSOs have had only limited involvement with the work of FANR and SADC more generally on regional food security.

Food security in SADC has several components where different CSOs are likely to have different interests and contributions to make on:

- vulnerability and poverty
- measures to promote crop and livestock production
- linking poverty and production to trade policy reform

In all three areas, there are policy issues which are regional, as well as national, in nature, and it is at the regional level that more CSO engagement is necessary for effective policy implementation.

The Role of SADC in regional food security

Food and Natural Resource Directorate (FANR)

Project Brief The Look, Listen and Learn Project

Policy Brief No. 1 - The Role of SADC

Policy Brief No. 2 - The Role of Donors

Look, Listen and Learn is a joint project between

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www.sarpn.org

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