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**INDABA AGRICULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

**Rapporteur’s Report**

**POLICY DIALOGUE ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION IN ZAMBIA**

“Enhancing the link between evidence and agriculture, food and nutrition”

8th December 2015

Government Complex, Lusaka



**ABSTRACT**

Last year, the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) held its first Policy Dialogue event as part of the second phase of the European Commission-funded, IFPRI-led Food Security Portal (FSP) project. The objective of the follow up Policy Dialogue on Food Security and Nutrition in Zambia was to use evidence to achieve the following:

1. Get a clear picture of the global environment of food security and nutrition.
2. Make an assessment of the opportunities and risk Zambia could be facing in terms of its food security and nutrition.

During this year’s policy dialogue, the 2015 Global Nutrition Report was launched by her Honour the Vice President, Inonge Wina, who was the Guest of Honour.

The event was organized by IAPRI, IFPRI and the Civil for Society for Scaling up Nutrition (CSO-SUN) Alliance in Zambia.

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1. **SESSION ONE - LAUNCH OF THE 2015 GLOBAL NUTRITION REPORT**

In the first session, the focus was the launch of the 2015 Global Nutrition Report. It was launched by her Honor the Vice President Inonge Wina, who highlighted that her portfolio is to connect what all sectors of the government can do to improve the food and nutrition security of the Zambian people. And to ensure a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition is adequately implemented.

Ms Wina acknowledged that Zambia’s nutrition status is by almost all measures still in a dire state. She observed that, ‘we can argue about differences in methodologies but the fact remains the same: Zambia’s nutrition is worrying’.

The Vice President delineated measures Government is putting up to redress the situation in Zambia such as,

* The establishment of a cabinet steering committee on nutrition which is meeting regularly to agree on service delivery channels and track progress against targets;
* The Government’s intention to soon revitalise the community welfare centres as focal points for mothers and young children, to access a range of social welfare and nutrition services in the Country;
* Revising the National Food and Nutrition Commission Act;
* Strengthening the accountability of the national food and nutrition commission (NFNC) to adequately coordinate across key sectors.

Speaking earlier during the launch, the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Given Lubinda said that it was embarrassing to have such high levels of malnutrition and that it is time to ensure effective diversification of Agriculture for the production of diverse foods.

In the presentation of the highlights of the Global Nutrition 2015, William Chilufya, Country Coordinator for CSO-SUN, urged the Government and all stakeholders to elevate nutrition across the Seventh National Development Plan that Zambia will soon develop. He appealed to the Government to ensure that at the next Nutrition for Growth summit in Brazil, Zambia makes smarter commitments and above all implements them.

1. **SESSION 2 - POLICY DIALOGUE ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION IN ZAMBIA**

**Theme: “Enhancing the link between evidence and agriculture, food and nutrition”**

**Moderator & Chair**

Ballard A.M.Zulu, IAPRI

**Main Speakers**

1. Dr Maximo Torero, Division Director of the Markets, Trade and Institution Division, IFPRI
2. Robinah Mulenga, National Food & Nutrition Commission
3. Dr. Antony Chapoto, IAPRI
4. Dr. Rhoda Mofya-Mukuka, IAPRI
   1. **PRESENTATIONS** 
      1. **A New Landscape for Food Security: Challenges for Zambia**: By Maximo Torero, IFPRI

**Key Highlights**

Startedby highlighting global challenges relating to:

* Growing Human Pressure**:** exponentialGROWTH in POPULATION and bigger population in urban areas will demand more and better food.
* Climate change**:** Heavy toll on rainfed maize with climate change.
* Ecosystem decline: Food prices increase without climate change; even higher with climate change.

On Africa in Global Trade, the presentation stated the following:

* Need to differentiate short- term variation and medium/long term modification of the trend in order to ascertain the implications of changing prices and demand for energy and food.

Presentation suggested the following levers which could be used to reach the CAADP target (+200% from 2014 to 2025, Malabo Declaration)?

* + Addressing trade policy barriers
  + Improving infrastructure

The presentation delineated the following challenges for Zambia:

**Challenge 1: Improve efficiency or shift of potential frontier**

Long-term trends indicate a serious decline in investment in agricultural R&D in Zambia. Zambia’s agricultural R&D agencies are still contending with the effects of long-term underinvestment and continue to struggle with funding issues that hinder their ability to contribute more effectively to the country’s agricultural and economic development.

* Production of key crops in Zambia: maize and wheat - diversification should focus on empowering local commodities and find commodities that can help improve nutrition and food security.
* Zambia suffers from low yields, spatial patterns (both land and labor).
* There is need to intensity of agricultural research spending and capacity, which has been going down.

As a country, we are far from the frontier of possibilities of production. There is need to look through the value chain to identify deficiency gaps.

**Challenge 2:** **We need to be resilient to climate change and weather shocks**

* EL Nino risks: need policies to mitigate risks of climate change
* Early warning systems are needed to be developed
* Need to put policies to in place/Mechanisms to mitigate impact: efficiency use of water, smallholders safety nets among others.

**Challenge 3**: **Economic Growth is not enough-huge challenge in poverty and nutrition**

* Poverty levels and income per capita has increased but poverty levels remain high.
* Share of the population below poverty datum line remains high.
* Zambia has an alarming global index of hunger.
* Undernourishment levels - Zambia’s ranking is high.
* Food supply of fruits and vegetables have decreased in Zambia

Water and sanitation is key when looking at nutrition. Infrastructure of these is very key.

**Recommendations**

* Agriculture is critical for employment, economic development and food and nutrition Security, butneeds to be inclusive.
* Need to take note of important changes in key drivers: Land constraints, trade, and climate change. This is because demand drivers are changing rapidly.
* There is a huge opportunity in the region: Gains in efficiency and potential, sustainable Agricultural Intensification (SAI), increase value added & enabling environment, but we need proper regulatory environment.

**2.1.2. State of Nutrition in Zambia,** **By Robina Mulenga – Food & Nutrition Commission**

**Key Highlights**

* Situation of malnutrition in Zambia is dire. Currently statistics comparable to 50 years ago, not much has changed. Efforts being done not enough over the years.

Problem of malnutrition in Zambia: challenges and what needs to be done to succeed

Identified a multi-sectoral approach as a comprehensive way of dealing with the problem, and a strategic plan was done in 2011. This led to a program to address stunting in children under -2 years. Programme is limited in scale, as it is only in 14 districts out of about 105.

**Challenges include:**

* Fragmented efforts
* Nutrition has low priority in government
* Despite making commitments of 20% budget for nutrition, we cannot track nutrition investment. As such, it is difficult to hold government accountable. There is need to make nutrition budgets more explicit for transparency and accountability.
* It is difficult to ascertain how much of this is reaching the communities.

**Recommendations**

* Scale-up programme of nutrition to cover entire country. This needs resources.
* Address the defragmentation of efforts, there is need to have one nutrition plan and budget.
* Strengthen community level engagement.
* Information systems are needed as they are none existent. They are needed as a repository for any nutrition information and data.

**2.1.3. Enhancing the link between evidence and policy-making in Zambia’s Agricultural Sector By Anthony Chapoto**

**Key highlights**

The presentation focused on what evidence based-policy making is and why it is important in Zambia. The following key points relating to this were highlighted:

* Implementation of costly but Ineffective programs
  + Disregarding evidence in decision making
  + Limited commitment to try out alternative policies
* Conventional wisdom usually rules the day
* Evidence-Based Policy-Making is key as it ensures: effectiveness, efficiency, service orientation, democracy, accountability and trust.
* Agricultural policies and programs in Zambia are often inadequately informed by research-based evidence due to:
  + information gaps,
  + the need for speedy responses,
  + political expediency
  + lack of transparency
  + the fact that policy makers are rarely scientists and
  + rent seeking behaviour by a privileged few.

**Recommendations**

* Include senior decision-makers from policy making institutions in the early stages of research designs to ensure early buy-ins.
* Communicate research effectively to decision makers and their technical staff
* Continuous dialogue between senior decision-makers, government technical staff and researchers.
* Increase the speed with which evidence is generated.
* Capacity training of key policy makers and their support staff

**2.1.4. Agricultural Interventions for Small and Medium Scale farmers in Zambia: Opportunities and Challenges for Food and Nutrition Security By Dr Rhoda Mofya**

**Key highlights**

The main objective of the presentation was twofold:

* Identify current interventions in Zambia’s agricultural sector
* Examine bottlenecks and opportunities associated with the intervention

The focus was on interventions targeted at improving agricultural growth among Small and Medium-scale farmers and public-private and public interventions (or activities).

There were a number interventions highlighted and 90% of them have been/are being implemented under the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Livestock.

Some of the bottlenecks to these projects include:

* Erratic and untimely release of funds to the project areas.
* Delays in implementation due to lengthy procurement procedures and staffing.
* Lack of/poor exit strategy. Poor project sustainability.
* Low adoption rates e.g. conservation agriculture
* Conflicting goals across the interventions
* Inadequate and unreliable data and untimely reports from the field.

**Recommendations**

* Address problem of delays in project implementation
  + Establish a legal unit within the ministry
  + Capacity building of lower project staff
* Inflation or exchange rate problems –
  + Re-negotiating the loan amount or scale down project
* Problem of beneficiary targeting
  + Utilize research evidence when designing and implementing programs/projects
  + Transparency in selecting beneficiaries
  + Tailor the project to address the main problems affecting the recipients
* Use evidence of successes and failures from past projects/programs
  + Quality of project evaluations is key

**General Presentation Remarks by Dr Namukolo Kovic:**

* The presentation questioned whether the agricultural interventions are addressing nutrition and not just productivity. This is because more food does not translate into nutrition and access to food.
* Evidence based policy: to be looked at holistically as a cycle, particularly M& E has to be taken into account throughout the project life cycle and not just at the end. In addition, evidence must be collected during implementation process, for redirection, in the event that the project is not progressing as planned or in the intended direction.
* Nutritional budgets: commitments to allocate 10% to agriculture, there is need for accountability for use of any finances put to nutrition and agriculture. Target should be activity specific.

1. **DISCUSSION: ISSUES RAISED & PROPOSALS**
   1. **Participants’ Comment & Questions:**

* Zambia needs to start looking at Zambian answers.
* Support the establishment of a legal wing in the ministry.
* Questioned whether and how globalization and capitalization are influencing hunger situation/change of lifestyle in Zambia?
* Called for diversification into high value crops, felt that there was not much support or incentives to small scale farmers.
* On climate change, felt that still taking agriculture as usual, and questioned whether models from developed countries are used or come-up with indigenous solutions.
* Questioned whether having enough income or growing more nutritious food the solution to food security and nutrition in Zambia.
  + 1. **Comments/Responses from Panel:**
* Felt that there are no interventions addressing nutritional values.
* Felt there was a narrow approach to fighting malnutrition in Zambia. Most activities in the main Ministry not designed with a nutrition specific goal.
* Not much emphasis on productivity: there is need for ownership of projects, as there is a considerable funding but not seeing results or impacts.
* Longevity is key to projects, hence the need for sustainability and commercialization of project activities.
* Need to do things differently to have impact.
* Need for clear understanding of priorities.
* Policies to improve nutrition and wellbeing of people in the country should complement each other.
* Need for solid agenda of food security and nutrition which should have clear tracking indicators and see performance for easy adjustment. This should be multi-sectoral approach.
* Agenda should be driven by government, donors should be able to respond and follow this, hence priority should be set by government.

1. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Nutrition is a problem nationally and globally. There is need to ensure agricultural policies to mainstream nutritional issues.

In addition, water and sanitation should be domesticated when it comes to food security and nutrition. This is the right time to address issues of nutrition, and put nutrition high on the development agenda, and most importantly, need to move from talk to action.

Researchers were implored to talk to policy makers and across stakeholders.