



SECOND REPORT OF THE THEMATIC COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ON SDG NO.2 - END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

(S.C. 16, 2018)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals and targets, in particular Goal 2, aim to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. In recognising the importance of improving nutrition, Zimbabwe is one of the 193 countries that endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. These included a target to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030, particularly undernourishment, stunting, wasting, underweight, over-weight and micronutrient deficiencies in children and anaemia in women of child bearing age and also in children; as well as to halt the rising trends in overweight and obesity and reduce the burden of diet-related non communicable diseases in all age groups. In achieving this, relevant stakeholders have come up with various programmes to support the success of **SDG No.2**.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Oral evidence sessions held with Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement; Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) and Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA).
- 2.2 Written submissions received from; the National Biotechnology Authority (NBA), Food and Nutrition Council (FNC) and Ministry of Health and Child Care.
- 2.3 The Committee did not carry out fact finding visits due to lack of finances.

3. COMMITTEE FINDINGS

3.1 MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RESETTLEMENT

The Permanent Secretary, Mr R Chitsiko stated that the country had gone through a difficult time of drought and was therefore compelled to import grain. Drought affected areas were forecasted to be very few in the 2017/2018 season. The special three year rolling programme of command agriculture was introduced as an import substitution. The programme however started a bit late. Production was premised on assessment of land, financing, irrigation, water in reservoirs, farmer registrations, affordable fertilizer, transport for inputs, etc.

Private partnerships were realised to the tune of 116 million USD for funding command agriculture with government providing securitisation, 30 million USD for Presidential input scheme and 36 million USD for cotton. A major problem was sequencing of activities due to Stop Orders whose forms should have been signed well before. 136 million USD was mobilised with 36 million being deposited to GMB in 2017 for payment to farmers who will have delivered their grain.

Several schemes are in place of up to 300 000 hectares of irrigation dedicated to grain production. 2 million metric tonnes is the target per annum. The Zimbabwe Brazil More Food Programme had irrigation equipment as its major component. 80 centre pivots were received from Spain to service 230 000 hectares of irrigation infrastructure.

Nutrition had for years been viewed from a quantity lense. The thrust is now on a balanced diet and fortified foods. Production planning must integrate a number of crops depending on the elements those crops are expected to contribute towards a balanced diet. The inclusion of nutrition components of diets helps to mitigate wasting, stunting and obesity. An all stakeholder approach will greatly assist in the realisation of food security and nutrition in Zimbabwe.

3.2 AGRICULTURAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (ARDA)

Mr B Nyabadza, the General Manager ARDA apprised the Committee that there are 21 ARDA estates dotted around the country undertaking maize, soya beans, wheat, potatoes and livestock production to ensure food security in the country. Nine (9) of the estates are under irrigation crop, 1 focusing on sugar cane, two (2) estates are under mixed farming, six (6) estates fall under plantations, three (3) estates are under livestock production and wildlife.

ARDA is in the process of reclaiming its land that was encroached by local farmers in areas such as Chipinge, Mutasa, Masvingo and Muzarabani with assistance from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development. In the process ARDA has given up some of its land for

purposes of resettling the farmers, for example, in the Magudu area in Masvingo Province where it ceded 6 000 hectares on a directive from the state.

The institution further supports farmers through out-grower schemes in Chisumbanje, Antelope and Ngwezi estates. Out grower farmers benefit from the advice of agriculture extension officers employed at ARDA farms. ARDA has served as a point of reference for the value generated from partnership with private sector players in the rolling out of the Command Agriculture Programme. Five of its estates participated in the Command Agriculture Programme, namely; Antelope, Jotsholo, Ngwezi, Rusitu and Doreen's Pride.

The General Manager stated that the major setbacks of small grains production in the country is lack of seeds and little investment in research. There is also great need for investment in technology for processing and harvesting small grains. There is also notable deterioration in the country's position in seed production due to the closure of seed houses and the coming in of external players which compromises intellectual property rights, for instance, SEEDCO has partnered with a French investor, while Paanar has partnered with American and Canadian investors. A nursery of over 80 000 pecan nut seedlings have been planted at Fort Rixon in Matebeleland and will be distributed in due course. Workshops and publicity campaigns on how to grow pecan nuts and access seedlings will also be conducted by the authority to educate farmers.

3.3 ZIMBABWE FARMERS UNION (ZFU)

ZFU informed the Committee that due to the good rains received in the 2016/17 season and the availability of funding which supported agricultural production, the country's food security situation had improved as evidenced by the realization of an estimated 2 443 119 metric tonnes of maize and 350 000 metric tonnes for cereal. In terms of national access to food supplies are stable with household level access improving significantly due to the introduction of multi-currencies which has restored purchasing power and also due to the fact that generally food is accessible physically throughout the country. However, household access to food has been constrained by high levels of poverty, declining remittances, lack of liquidity, low

productivity, lack of knowledge of nutritious food and inadequate employment opportunities among others.

ZFU pointed out to the Committee that findings from the World Food Programme (WFP, 2017) show that 63% of the country's population is still living below the poverty datum line while 16 % living in extreme poverty. In terms of food utilization challenges are compounded by wastage and stunted growth with WFP estimating that about 28% of the population are vulnerable and chronically ill. The association highlighted that the Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS, 2010-11) showed that Zimbabwe is experiencing steadily increasing rates of obesity in women with 40.5% of women in urban areas being classified as obese and 22.5% of women in the rural areas also classified as being obese. Efforts are however being made to reduce nutrient deficiencies, in particular by production of nutrient dense crops such as sugar beans rich in iron, zinc, high quality protein and vitamin A.

However, lack of awareness was reported to be hindering the uptake of these improved varieties.

Small grains are strategic due to the fact that they are drought tolerant and enhance nutritional status. Small grain production went up from 76 457 metric tonnes in the 2014/15 rainfall season to 288 782 metric tonnes in the 2016/17 season, with the most widely grown crop being sorghum accounting for an average of 55.4% of total area planted under small grains and pearl millet being the second most planted crop occupying an average 35.5% of the total planted area. Factors militating against the successful production of small grains include; lack of clear policy in monitoring small grain production; limited research and development of varieties; low consumer demand due to pricing and lack of technology in the area.

3.4 MINISTRY OF LANDS, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RESETTLEMENT

Mr R Chitsiko, the Permanent Secretary stated that Phase 1 has 3, 498, 444 000 hectares settled 71 000 households whilst Phase 2 with 168, 263 808 hectares settled 4 697 households. The fast track programme under A1 and A2 had 5, 979 000 and 2, 978 000 respectively over a total land area of 12, 6 million. That majority of resettlement land was allocated to families as headed by males. Only 10% were

women in their own right. Noting that there are two basic settlement systems that is A1 Permit and 99 Year Lease for A2, the 99 year lease is now bankable for use as collateral by holders as confirmed by the Bankers Association of Zimbabwe through written correspondence to the Ministry.

Illegal settlements have also reduced viability of farming areas by reducing the carrying capacity of farming land forcing some farmers to scale down on production especially those specializing in livestock production. They have further caused siltation of major water bodies and some settlers are involved in mining activities in gazetted forest and farming areas. The Ministry has identified 764 A1 farms that have illegal settlers but however does not have the number of those on the farm. Some illegal settlements are a result of the Ministry's non completion of adequate paper work and the plan is that illegal settlers be allowed to harvest and then vacate the settlements. Most challenges relating to illegal settlements were a result of allocations on either spouses and double allocations due to improper conduct by some officers who wrongfully advise the Minister incorrect information before issuance of a Lease.

The Mining Act has supremacy over the Agricultural Act under current legislation. Agricultural land is infinite and every land which goes into the mining sector becomes a challenge. Open pits are left by miners posing challenges to livestock, soil, water and land degradation is a feature where there are mining activities. There is competition for labour in agriculture and the mining sector. Mining pays better and labour becomes more difficult especially in tobacco farming.

3.5 NATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY (NBA)

The NBA is commended for promoting the use of bio-remedies which are cheaper and environmentally friendly to improve food and nutritional security in Zimbabwe although further studies on new remedies need to be conducted. Bioremedies are meant to fulfil mineral nutrients of agricultural crops. Genetically Modified Foods have not been approved in Zimbabwe and government is doing everything possible to guard against GMOs entering the country markets and conducting laboratory researches.

The establishment of a bio-bank will ensure that Zimbabwe claims ownership of her genetic resources and therefore claim royalties; increase of trade and ease of doing business and information sharing and ensuring food safety and genetic conservation.

There was an increase in the yield of sweet potatoes as a result of the resuscitation and restoration of the tissue culture facility at Horticulture Research Institute. The same programme will be expanded to other crops such as bananas, irish potatoes, sugar cane and other horticultural crops. Trainings were conducted in Murehwa on how to grow and handle tissue culture produced planting material. The orange fleshed sweet potato programme which is rich in Vitamin A is underway to fight against Vitamin A deficiency.

3.6 MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE

Zimbabwe like many developing countries is affected by chronic hunger and malnutrition. This inflicts a major injury to economic developmental achievements. The prevalence of malnutrition in women of reproductive age and children under 5 years of age is unacceptably high. The proportion of women and children suffering from micronutrient deficiencies, in particular vitamin A, iodine and iron is of public health concern. There is an increasing trend in overweight and obesity among the children and adults across the country. Dietary risk factors, together with inadequate physical activity account for about 10% of the burden of disease and disability in Zimbabwe.

The latest evidence from the National Micronutrient Survey of 2012 (NMS, 2012) showed that Zimbabwe has a high burden of Vitamin A deficiency, iron deficiency and anaemia, with 31% of children aged 6 to 59 months being anaemic, and that 21 % of the same age group were vitamin A deficient. Iron deficiency was also found to be high with 72% of children aged 6 to 59 months. Vitamin A deficiency, iron deficiency and anaemia were also high in women of child bearing age, with 62% of women being iron deficient, 26% being anaemic and 24% being vitamin A deficient. The Ministry is committed to the first 1000 days that is from conception to 24 months as part of scaling up nutrition with interventions aimed at reducing prevalence of stunting, anaemia and low birth weight

3.7 FOOD AND NUTRITION COUNCIL (FNC)

The institution stated that stunting had gone up slightly from 26.6% to 28.6%. The Food and Nutrition Council further notes that the boy child is affected more by stunting across all provinces in Zimbabwe and there is need for a study or research as to why boys are affected more by the stunted growth. On the increase in overweight, government is providing awareness on good eating habits. Government has intensified food fortification strategies to strengthen nutrient content in foods.

The institution commends the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes, increase in national herd, vaccination programmes, promotion of livestock among farmers and the multi-sectoral community based model to Food and Nutrition Security Management for stunting reduction.

4. COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

4.1 The Committee noted that there has been poor and ineffective distribution of inputs under the Command Agriculture programme a situation evidenced by the failure to set up sufficient input distribution points in provinces such as Matebeleland and the late distribution of inputs.

4.2 The Committee stressed the need to urge the government to prioritize water harvesting efforts as a drought mitigation strategy. The country can also benefit from reservoirs for water storage and water tanks among others for use by communities since vandalism of irrigation equipment is rampant. The Committee further noted that there is need to diversify irrigation models for instance, drip irrigation in place of flood irrigation.

4.3 The Committee applauded the coming in of private players in financing agricultural production.

4.4 The Committee applauded ARDA in its work of transforming Matebeleland South from a non-productive agro-ecological region to a high yielding province in terms of agricultural produce under the Command Agriculture programme. The Committee

further commended the successful pecan nuts projects undertaken by some of ARDA's Estates and emphasized the need to train more farmers in the production of pecan nuts.

4.5 That ARDA is facing capitalisation challenges and hence relying on ARDA seeds for capitalisation since there has not been any funding from Treasury. The Committee noted with concern ARDA's plight in the lack of capital injection in seed production

4.6 The Committee noted that statistics are a key aspect of agricultural planning, therefore, systems should be put in place to collect and provide accurate information on farming activities on time.

4.7 Farmer associations and other parties involved in agricultural production to include the nutrition education component in their activities.

4.8 There is little or no control of environmental protection in the resettlement area. As such settlers should be discouraged from cutting down trees.

4.9 That productive ex-farm labourers are still resident at resettled farms.

4.10 There is noted increase in trend in overweight and obesity among children and adults in the country.

4.11 The Committee noted the commitment to reduce stunting from 27% to 10% and underweight children to 5% by 2025.

4.12 That there has been a rise in anaemia in women and children. The Committee noted that rural communities are mostly affected by malnutrition.

4.13 That Village Health Workers are assisting in the communities in respect of children with acute malnutrition.

4.14 The Committee noted that some schools were unable to access food through the

school feeding programme. There is also not enough water to support and sustain the nutritional gardens at schools.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Resolutions	Action	Timeframe
5.1 The government of Zimbabwe must invest more in local seed research, production, marketing and financing.	The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Resettlement and the Ministry of Finance and relevant interested parties to spearhead this.	By December 2018
5.2 That ex-farm labourers who are resident at farms and are productive should also be considered in land allocation.	Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Resettlement to identify land to allocate the affected parties.	By December 2018
5.3 There is need to encourage good eating habits and exercise to the public by all relevant stakeholders in the food and nutrition sector for example a mix of groundnuts and foods containing vitamins and proteins.	The Ministry of Health and Child Care must educate on eating habits for the public.	Immediately
5.4 There is need for a full packaged diet for the school feeding programme noting that some do not have access to the food and some not getting the full composition of dietary requirements. Nutrition gardens at schools also need support from government in terms of water provision	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Ministry of Health and Child Care and Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Resettlement to me up with a coordinated approach.	Immediately
5.5 VHW should be present in all communities and incentives should be provided for them to continue spearheading programmes such as supplementary feeding, breastfeeding, etc	The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to come up with a package for VHW to incentivise them on their work.	Immediately

