Abstract
This report summarises the recommendations and conclusions of the Regional Dialogue on Agricultural Recovery, Food Security and Trade Policies in Southern Africa, held in Gaborone on 26-27 March 2003. The dialogue brought together senior policy advisors from Ministries of Agriculture in the SADC member countries, representatives from FANRPAN national policy nodes and other invited persons from international aid agencies currently dealing with food and agricultural recovery strategies in the region (USAID, EU, WFP, UNDP, World Bank, DFID, FAO and SADC). During this meeting the invited professionals

- identified and examined key and immediate policy strategies that need to be addressed to ensure the permanent recovery of the agricultural sector and promotion of regional trade
- advised FANRPAN by indicating where member states and development agencies will need to target their technical and financial support to implement the proposed recovery measures, including action steps to be taken

Keynote presentations were followed by group discussions on emerging policy issues. Two of the three keynote presentations highlighted preliminary findings from two studies commissioned by FANRPAN. The studies indicated that issues such as the management of strategic food reserves, domestic marketing and pricing policies, input supply strategies, as well as measures to promote speedy cross border movement of food are at the forefront of key policy measures that need to be addressed to come up with long term lasting solutions. The other keynote presentation gave an international perspective on agricultural recovery and long term food policy. Technical papers were delivered in emerging policy issues groups as a resource to move discussions from a general to the specific focus on agricultural recovery, trade and food security.

The policy dialogue proposed agricultural and trade policy recovery strategies for onward submission by FANRPAN to the SADC FANR Ministers at their annual meeting. The following broad recommendations were made in several areas and action steps to be taken were identified for
some of these areas: re-establishing a regional and integrated approach to agricultural research, promoting financially viable and sustainable irrigation, promoting crop diversification, investing in improving the production base, improving the quality of information systems for food security, allowing markets and food security to solve most food security problems, improving market access at local, regional and international level, and harmonisation of seed polices. Also noted was that good governance and political commitment for regional integration will facilitate the implementation of most of the recommendations. In particular, increasing agricultural productivity was seen as the main priority to achieve food security in the region. The policy dialogue emphasised the need to set priorities, on which African nations must focus and achieve sustained growth. FANRPAN was commended on the steps it is taking as a network to improve the food security situation in the region.

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