Editorial

The Malawi consultation was the second in the five-country series planned for the pilot phase of strengthening FANRPAN country nodes. The selection of a multi-stakeholder interim steering committee as a way forward for revitalizing the Malawi node is a major milestone. The level and depth of on-going engagement and advocacy for food security policies at national level was an excellent indicator of the role that a strengthened FANRPAN platform would play in enriching the dialogue with credible research and evidence for policy development. It will be exciting to monitor the developments in Malawi. FANRPAN is committed to strengthening this process by supporting a full-time node facilitator, through host institution arrangements and funding from USAID. Given that food security is increasingly being viewed as a collective regional objective rather than simply a sole national effort, the ODI-SARPAN-FANRPAN pilot project will be specifically targeting increased CSO engagement in regional level policy processes – where they have been less visible as key actors.

FANRPAN would like to thank Dr A.T. Daudi, the Principal Secretary in the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, for providing leadership to the FANRPAN Malawi country node and for his guidance to the network as a whole in his capacity as member of the FANRPAN Board of Governors. Financial support from our funding partners, who include the USAID, CTA and ODI, is most appreciated and duly acknowledged.

Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, CEO, FANRPAN

The National Consultative Meeting

The setting of the Malawi National Consultative meeting was unusual, in that, it was not hosted at an existing policy advocacy organization. The meeting was organized by Bunda College – the traditional hosts of the Malawi FANRPAN node – at the Kalikuli Hotel, in Lilongwe city. Bunda College is slightly outside the city so it would have been rather difficult for participants to access for a one-day meeting. The dual-capital city concept of Malawi was another unusual factor of this meeting. Several people had to travel over 300 kilometres from Blantyre city to participate in the dialogue. A total of 25 participants attended the consultation, representing a cross-section of government, private sector, civil society, farmer organizations, universities and research institutions.

Official Opening: Dr A.T. Daudi, Principal Secretary, Malawi Ministry of Agriculture

Dr A.T. Daudi, the Principal Secretary in the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), officially opened the consultation. This high-level presence of government was indicative of the window of opportunity for policy influence available within the FANRPAN platform. Governments and universities have recognized FANRPAN as a source of comprehensive policy research. Strengthening and widening this platform will bring many stakeholders in the sector within the circle of influence for policy development. Dr Daudi observed that governments need to focus more on the concept of food security, as opposed to food self-sufficiency. He cited Mauritius and Botswana as food secure countries, despite the fact that they do not produce enough food. He pointed out that government was willing to work closely with CSOs – but observed that CSOs tend to give conflicting and confusing signals, and to criticize policies without presenting viable options. For example, when the Malawi government was implementing the Targeted Input Programme, CSOs complained that the programme distorted markets. Then, when the government switched to the Universal Fertilizer Subsidy – the CSOs still complained that it was killing the private sector. He likened this situation to “football (soccer) being played by spectators” and argued that “giving is better than receiving” – hence CSOs should also give options alongside their criticisms.
Dr. L.M. Sibanda, Chief Executive Officer, FANRPAN

Dr. L.M. Sibanda, the FANRPAN CEO, presented the objectives of the consultation and the FANRPAN operational framework and programmes. She pointed out that the consultation was aimed at bringing together all the leading national stakeholders in the food security sector to map out ongoing policy processes at national level, which have a regional scope and impact. She said that the consultation would explore constraints to participation, involvement and engagement of key players – especially civil society – in food security policy development at regional level. She described the main objectives of the consultation as three-fold: firstly assessing the relevance and contribution of the proposed CSOs’ project to key national players in Malawi; secondly, strengthening the national FANRPAN platform for dialogue between agro-based CSO networks, private sector and government in the food security sector as a way of building a constituency for engagement at regional level; and thirdly, identifying active agro-based CSO networks that will participate in piloting the evidence-based policy advocacy project. She pointed out this consultation was the second in a series of four being carried out in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Policy Advocacy by CSOs

Three leading policy advocacy CSOs – the Civil Society Network for Agriculture (CISANET), the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) and the National Association of Smallholder Farmers (NASFAM) – presented their policy advocacy programmes.

Inclusion of people’s voices and priorities in the national food and nutrition security policy, using the “bwalo” – The Civil Society Network for Agriculture

CISANET presented the study findings of a community participatory consultation process that they carried out in an effort to ensure the inclusion of people’s voices and priorities in the national food and nutrition security policy. CISANET adopted the Malawi community “Bwalo” to suit the citizen jury multi-stakeholder consultation concept – and used it as the tool for community consultation across communities in 16 districts of Malawi. CISANET undertook this work as part of the Food and Nutrition Policy Drafting Task Force. CISANET reported that they had plans to carry out a similar consultation for the national biotechnology policy.

Advocacy against Unequal Taxation of Smallholder Farmers – The National Association of Smallholder Farmers

NASFAM presented its advocacy work against unequal taxation of smallholder farmers and pointed out that it had succeeded in convincing government to withdraw withholding tax on tobacco proceeds for smallholder farmers – for at least three years. NASFAM was pushing for a similar tax relief on other crops. NASFAM represents small farmers on different national level committees – but pointed out that engagement at regional level was still a challenge due to limited financial and human capacity.

Economic policy advocacy – The Malawi Economic Justice Network

MEJN presented a comprehensive economic advocacy programme based on the analysis of government development framework documents, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the national budgets. MEJN is also implementing the Budget Participation Initiative as a project. MEJN is involved in monitoring the implementation of poverty reduction and public expenditure. It is involved in social mobilization through dissemination of economic governance policies. It is also involved in economic policy analytical studies as well as engaging parliament and donors.

From the presentations it was clear that these CSOs would be excellent partners in the project for promoting the use of CSO evidence in food security policy formulation.

Promoting the use of CSO evidence-based research in developing food security policy at regional level – The Look-Listen and Learn Pilot Project by ODI, SARPN and FANRPAN

Fred Kalibwani presented the Look, Listen and Learn Project concept for promoting the use of CSO evidence-based research in developing food security policy at regional level. He outlined the food crisis in Southern Africa, the different roles of the CSOs in
influencing policy, the project objectives and activities, and the roles of the implementing partners: SARPN, ODI and FANRPAN. He said that key on-going policy processes and key actors would be presented at the next dialogue to help CSOs identify entry points for engaging at regional level.

Thematic issues in food security for policy research and advocacy in Malawi: Partner organisations for accompanying the process

In a group exercise, participants identified priority food security themes and issues. One group identified organisations that could engage in policy advocacy on these issues in Malawi. Another group identified organisations in Malawi that could conduct evidence-based research on these themes. The table below presents the issues identified and the key partners for collaboration in research and advocacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Issues</th>
<th>Organisations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Aid – GMOs; dumping, transport protocol, harmonizing biosafety policies, phytosanitary regulations</td>
<td>Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment CEPA, CISANET, JEFAP, CSAFE &amp; National Research Council of Malawi</td>
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<td>Food Reserves - Should a country keep physical reserves or cash reserves; Food prices (how to stabilize them)</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture CISANET, FOSANET, MEJN and ECAMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade - Cross border trade regulations, tariff and non tariff barriers, technical barriers, phytosanitary regulations</td>
<td>CISANET, FOSANET, MEJN and ECAMA, NASFAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crop Protection Products -Irrigation, fertilizer, technology development, seed</td>
<td>CISANET, FO SANET, MEJN and ECAMA, NASFAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Systems - Irrigation, fertilizer, technology development, seed</td>
<td>CISANET, FO SANET, MEJN and ECAMA, NASFAM, Seed Security Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political &amp; Economic Governance - Political will, Regional integration, Social movement, Accountability</td>
<td>CISANET, CDSC, MEJN and ECAMA, NASFAM, APRU, HRCC</td>
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APRU = Agricultural Policy Research Unit
CFSC = Center for Social Concern
CISANET = Civil Society for Agriculture Network
ECAMA = Economic Association of Malawi
FOSANET = Food Security and Agriculture Network
HRCC = Human Rights Consultative Committee
JEFAP = Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme
MEJN = Malawi Economic Justice Network
NASFAM = National Association of Smallholder Farmers
NRCM = National Research Council of Malawi

The new Malawi FANRPAN Node Interim Steering Committee

As a way forward, a multi-stakeholder steering committee for widening and strengthening the FANRPAN node to act as a platform for policy dialogue in the FANR sector was selected, and included the following organizations and individuals:

1. Bunda College of Agriculture – Dr Charles Mataya and Mathews Madola
2. Malawi Economic Justice Network – Mabvuto Bamusi and Collins Magalasi
3. NASFAM – Ms Betty Chinyamunyamu and Timothy Shawa
4. CISANET – Victor Muhone and Sophie Chitedze
5. Ministry of Agriculture – Ian Kumwenda and Dr Grace Malindi

Bunda College was tasked to take the lead and convene the first meeting before August 5, 2005. The committee was tasked to discuss the new host organization for the revitalized FANRPAN node and to recruit a fulltime FANRPAN node facilitator, who will be hosted by the selected organization and remunerated by the FANRPAN regional secretariat.
This policy brief has been published as a guide to policy makers to broaden the scope of public social protection policies to include households whose vulnerability has been increased, not by visible disasters like famine and floods, but by the ‘silent disaster’ of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Most societies have private interhousehold, intrafamily and intrahousehold transfers that promote resilience to shocks, mitigating their negative effects. However, in countries or communities where people are universally poor, there is less to share, particularly in times when shocks affect all or many in the society (such as drought, famine, floods, HIV/AIDS, or widespread structural unemployment), which is precisely when the need for help is most critical. Unlike drought, famine and floods, the impact of HIV and AIDS on agriculture and food security is gradual and not easily visible or quantifiable to attract crisis-type emergency intervention and aid. The HIV and AIDS pandemic has been named as a contributing factor in declaring a state of food emergency in Lesotho and Swaziland – but the disease is heavily affecting the entire sub-region. ‘Social protection’ refers to the public actions taken in response to levels of the disease is heavily affecting the entire sub-region. ‘Social protection’ refers to the public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation that are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society. Social protection is a newer term that incorporates safety net programmes, but also includes a role for ‘renewed state involvement’. It emphasizes a longer term development approach, includes social assistance and insurance, and is often “advocated for as a right rather than a reactive form of relief.”

What is Policy Advocacy?
- Policy advocacy is aimed at creating pro-poor policies and spaces in the formulation process.
- It often takes many forms but we need to be clear about what we want to achieve, why, how, and where the power lies.
- It is important that the underlying value for an advocacy initiative must be the desire for change – i.e., better legislation, more equity, appropriate development, more respect for human rights, a better quality of life, social justice and good governance.

Policy Outcomes
- must be in resonance with strategic priorities
- must minimize wastage of resources
- must be cost-effective.

Upcoming Events

1. FANRPAN Regional Multi-stakeholder Policy Dialogue, 4-7 October 2005, Johannesburg, South Africa.

FANRPAN WILL BE REPRESENTED AND MAKING PRESENTATIONS IN ALL THE STATED UPCOMING EVENTS.