Promoting Regional Harmonization of FANR Policies

Enhancing Participation of FANRPAN Nodes in the CAADP Processes: Zambia

The Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF) is a public/private agricultural sector stakeholder-driven consultative forum established to promote dialogue and foster partnerships in Zambia's agriculture. Its vision is to see an inclusive, efficient, sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector and thereby contribute to national food security and income.

ACF Outputs and Products

The core activities of the Forum include facilitation of stakeholder consultations, provision of policy advisory services, stakeholder networking and information sharing, and monitoring of agricultural development programmes.

Stakeholder Consultation: ACF facilitates stakeholder consultation by deliberately and consciously bringing stakeholders together in formal and informal interactive meetings. The ACF aims to hold at least one regular meeting for the main ACF at least once every month. Other meetings involving special interest groups and sub-fora are arranged, facilitated and hosted by the Forum Secretariat as required.

Policy Advisory Services: The primary output of the ACF that drives all activities remains the Policy Advisory Note (PAN). The inclusion of issues raised by stakeholders ensures stakeholder participation and consensus in the formulation of policy and programmes designed to enhance agricultural development in Zambia. The main recipient of the PAN is not only Government. The ACF fully recognizes the key role other sectors have to play in developing Zambia’s agricultural sector. Therefore, ACF sends PANs to other agricultural-related authoritative line-ministries and decision-making institutions, public and private sector, that impact on agricultural development in Zambia. The Forum has also modified the format of the PAN to make it more problem-focused. The PAN is structured in a manner that highlights recommendations and alternative options and points out the consequences of not applying the recommended actions.

Recent ACF events include the following:

(i) Cassava Value Chain Meeting, 1st February, 2007: The ACF, which hosts the Cassava Task Force, facilitated a meeting to review and plan the activities of the task force (feeding trials concluded, promotional campaigns held and draft standards developed). At the meeting it was agreed to continue with the task force and set up two new working groups (replacing the old ones) with a regional focus. One group should be established in the cassava belt (Northern, North-Western and Luapula Provinces) where cassava commercialisation has opportunities on the domestic and export market for human consumption. A second group should be established in the Maize Belt (Eastern, Central and Southern Provinces) where cassava commercialisation should be achieved through its establishment as a cash crop for supplying urban (Lusaka) markets with fresh cassava and supplying the animal feeds industry with dried cassava chips. This was followed by a stakeholders’ meeting on 8th March, 2007 focused on the feed industry supply channel. The objective was to create market linkages. Further, on 16th March, the ACF held a dissemination workshop.
This ACF meeting was a pointer towards increased level of outreach by the Forum. This time around, the Budget Meeting was attended by two full Cabinet Ministers (Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry), while the Minister of Finance and National Planning was represented by a Permanent Secretary.

(iii) Aquaculture Development Meeting, 20th February, 2007: The ACF Secretariat facilitated an Aquaculture Development Group meeting to facilitate the development of a management plan for Cage Farming in Lake Kariba. A follow-up meeting was held on 27th March, 2007. As a result of these meetings, the Aquaculture Development Group (AqDG) is in the process of applying for assistance to CDE (EU Programme) for the development of a Management Plan for Cage Farming in Lake Kariba. As a result of this meeting, the ACF Secretariat submitted an advisory note on the need to revise the Fish Act to include allowing communities to participate in the promotion of good fishing practices.

(iv) Participatory Value Chain Management Workshop, 26th February, 2007: The ACF Secretariat facilitated a participatory value chain management workshop sponsored by the World Bank at the ACF on 26th February 2007. Participants agreed that specific crops and livestock (poultry, cassava, horticulture, goats, farmed fish, honey dairy cows, sunflower, soybeans, groundnuts and cotton) need to be analysed using the value chain approach if not yet done. Further the meeting requested the ACF to establish a documentation centre for value chain type analysis studies. ACF management is currently collecting documents from cooperating partners and stakeholders.

(v) Maize Market Policy Dialogue Workshop, 10th March, 2007: The ACF Secretariat facilitated a Maize Market Policy Dialogue Workshop sponsored by the World Bank at Fringilla in Chisamba. The meeting brought together senior government officials and chief executives of private institutions dealing in grain marketing. The objective of the workshop was to show how (i) decisions made by the government affect traders; (ii) decisions made by traders affect government; and (iii) decisions of government and traders, taken together, determine food prices and food security outcomes. The Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives together with his Permanent Secretary in charge of Marketing and Cooperatives attended the workshop and participated actively.

Three key lessons were learnt by all the participants:

Lesson 1: The performance of the grain marketing system and outcomes for food security and farm welfare depend crucially on the market behavior of government and private sector agents. Trust and incentives are critical determinants of behavior.

Lesson 2: Trust depends partly on reputation and consistency. The private sector needs to trust the government and the government needs to trust the private sector. Reputation is built through repeated interaction.

Lesson 3: National policy goals can be improved through increased transparency and consultation among the market actors, especially if clear decision rules can be identified and credibly implemented.

INPUT VOUCHER STUDY: MALAWI and ZAMBIA

Dr. Julius Mangisoni, Project Coordinator

Four studies were previously implemented by FANRPAN in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia (http://www.fanrpam.org/programmes/seed.php?menu_id=31&ch=53), to assess the importance and share of relief seeds in the overall national and regional trade (Kananji and Phiri, 2006; Simfukwe, 2006). The studies also analyzed opportunities for improving the contribution of relief seed programs to commercial seed market development. Seed market development is a broader objective for improving agricultural input and output markets. It is also a way of unleashing improvements in agricultural production and growth of the region. The main findings of the studies confirmed the importance of relief seeds in countries such as Malawi and Zambia, where they accounted for close to 50% of the total annual company seed sales (Simfukwe, 2006; Kananji and Phiri, 2006). It is therefore in the interest of governments to take advantage of the relief seed programs in order to promote private sector development.

Another key finding was that there are two parallel input distribution channels...
in the case study countries, the non-commercial (government, NGOs, relief agencies) and the commercial (seed companies/private sector distribution networks). These parallel markets are currently not well integrated. Therefore, it is important to assess whether using an input voucher system would help to integrate the two markets. The current study is to test the potential benefits of using voucher systems to integrate the commercial and non-commercial agricultural input distribution channels. Another dimension of the study is to demonstrate the potential impact of implementing a full cycle of policy research, analysis and engagement using the case of input vouchers. The studies are underway in Malawi and Zambia. Mozambique joined more recently. The first phase focused on reviewing voucher-related literature and updating previous studies.

The first phase revealed that a number of interventions are used in Malawi and Zambia to assist households facing chronic food shortages to increase their productivity and improve their food security. These include direct input distribution to target households, seed vouchers and fairs, starter packs, and vouchers of different types. The Zambian Government uses direct input distribution through its Fertilizer Support Program and Program Against Malnutrition’s Food Security Pack. NGOs and international organizations in Zambia and Malawi also use direct input distribution. However, there are pockets of seed vouchers and fairs being used by NGOs and donors.

Subsidies are known to distort the market and to crowd out private sector development. Most business ventures view vouchers as less distorting because, unlike subsidies, vouchers are like real money. They are like certificates by which smallholder farmers are given the ability to pay for inputs such as fertilizer and seeds at a shop of their choice. Vouchers promote free market competition among sellers, which provides the sellers an incentive to improve their services. Vouchers also allow for greater economic diversity by offering small farmers opportunities to purchase inputs which were previously unaffordable. Thus, vouchers also would help to shift small farmers’ mindset to focusing attention on how to get as much value as possible from their vouchers. In other words, small farmers will start to demand that sellers be efficient.

A properly designed voucher system would not only provide some immediate relief during agricultural emergencies but it also could steadily move the region away from state involvement. We therefore hypothesize that the vouchers can be used to enhance the purchasing power of the poor, and the commercial sector can redeem these vouchers and expand its distribution networks.

Through this research we also plan to demonstrate the value of implementing a full cycle of policy research, analysis, and engagement to achieve positive policy impacts. In Zambia, Simfukwe (2006) reported that there was lack of information regarding experiences on vouchers in the distribution of seed and fertilizers. This lack of information and experience made it difficult to convince decision makers in government to promote a voucher policy as an incentive for seed and fertilizer companies to establish retail outlets in remote areas. It was also observed that there was serious concern among government officials and other leaders that vouchers would be forged. Thus, the proposed study will determine anti-fraud measures so that the system is not abused. The Zambia study was very forthcoming on recommending a study on voucher system so that through policy dialogue, awareness can be created among the government officials, relief agencies and NGOs about the significance of the system in input distribution.

The specific objectives of the study are (http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00175/):
1. To test the potential benefits of using voucher systems to integrate the commercial and non-commercial input distribution channels.
2. To demonstrate the potential impact of implementing a full cycle of policy research, analysis and engagement, using the case of seed and fertilizer input vouchers.
3. To bring about policy changes for enhancing input supplies to small farmers.
4. To develop training materials for policy analysts to engage in complete policy analysis cycle.
5. To conduct training of policy analysts and policy engagements at national level.

THE ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE AFRICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION
Lusaka, Zambia, 5–9 March 2007 | Report by Wynand van der Walt

The Annual Congress of the African Seed Trade Association was attended by some 165 delegates from 22 countries and included several senior officials from regional and international organizations. FANRPAN was represented by Dr Wynand van der Walt, from South Africa.

The Congress was opened by His Excellency, Mr Mwanawasa, President of Zambia, who stated that a successful seed trade precedes agricultural productivity. He encouraged seed merchants to make inputs into government seed legislation.

The program included presentations and discussions on seed law harmonization, bio-safety legislation and testing of GM varieties, regional variety lists, the exchange of plant genetic resources, and the role of regional organizations. A session on chemical seed treatments highlighted the benefits of new treatment technologies and new chemicals that improve efficacy, targeted application against pests and diseases, and improved safety to users and the environment. Participants learned that SADC now has a model protocol on variety protection that is at Permanent Secretaries level for consideration. More details can be found on the AFSTA website, www.afsta.org/congress.

The Congress was preceded by a workshop on plant breeders’ rights, held under the auspices of UPOV.
The Competence Platform on Energy Crop and Agroforestry Systems for Arid and Semi-arid Ecosystems-Africa is a large EU-funded consortium. FANRPAN is a partner and leader of its Work Package 6, on “Policy Development”.

The objective of the “COMPETE” Project is to stimulate bioenergy implementation in arid and semi-arid regions in Africa. COMPETE will establish a platform for policy dialogue and capacity building in the major multi- and bilateral funding organizations and key stakeholders throughout the bioenergy provision and supply chains.

The COMPETE partnership comprises 20 European and 23 non-European partners – 11 partners from 7 African countries, 3 regional African policy and financing bodies (African Development Bank; Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, Southern Africa; UEMOA – Biomass Energy Regional Program), 9 partners from Latin America and Asia – and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

In order to achieve the objectives of the COMPETE Project, the consortium will implement it across Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, as well as in the UN and CGIAR systems. They will deliver a matrix of multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral work packages:

- to evaluate current and future potential for the sustainable provision of bioenergy in Africa in comparison to existing land use patterns and technologies;
- to facilitate South-South technology and information exchange, capitalizing on the world-leading R&D in bioenergy in the key countries of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and Thailand;
- to develop innovative tools for the provision of financing for national bioenergy programs and local bioenergy projects, including carbon credits, bilateral and multi-lateral funding instruments, and the role of international trade;
- to develop practical, targeted and efficient policy mechanisms for the development of bioenergy systems that enhance local value-adding, assist local communities and address gender inequalities; and
- to establish a Competence Platform to ensure effective dissemination and knowledge exchange inside and outside the network.

The COMPETE Kick-off and Steering Committee Meeting was held at the WIP-Renewable Energies in Munich. It was attended by representatives from all COMPETE work packages, as well as most members of the COMPETE Steering Committee. Dr Charles Jumbe, FANRPAN Malawi, represented FANRPAN. More information is available at http://www.compete-bioafrica.net/.

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is an autonomous, regional, stakeholder-driven policy research, analysis and implementation network that was formally established in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in 1997. The organization was born in response to a need expressed by SADC governments, who felt that comprehensive policies and strategies were required to resuscitate agriculture. FANRPAN is mandated to work in all SADC countries and currently has activities in 12 of them, namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Vision FANRPAN’s vision is of productive agriculture as a basis for widely shared food security and prosperity using natural resources sustainable in Southern Africa.

Mission FANRPAN’s mission is to promote, influence and facilitate quality agricultural and natural resources policy research, analysis and dialogue at the national, regional and global levels.