The 2007 FANRPAN regional stakeholders’ dialogue was held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 4 – 7 September 2007. It was a dialogue with a difference, coming at the peak of the network’s two-year strategic planning process and serving the purpose of dual convergence, first as a stakeholders’ conference, and secondly, to enable a meeting of the Annual General Assembly, FANRPAN’s top governing body. In all, 176 stakeholders from across Southern Africa, consisting of 41 policy makers, 37 researchers, 18 agribusiness representatives, 17 farmers, 31 civil society organisation and representatives from 7 different media houses converged in Lusaka for the two-pronged conference. For the annual policy dialogue, delegates discussed FANRPAN’s 2007 policy research findings and recommendations in four specific areas that significantly impact agricultural growth in the region; namely Regional Economic Integration; Agricultural Trade Competitiveness; The Management and Impact of Technological Innovation and Adoption; and The Impact of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture and Food Security. For the Annual General Meeting (AGM), focus was on reviewing, approving and adopting into use new FANRPAN operational instruments and procedures for the next eight (8) years (2007-2015). I am happy to report that both objectives were successfully achieved and on behalf of the Regional Secretariat, I thank you all for making the 2007 FANRPAN dialogue such a big success.

Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda,
CEO, FANRPAN

Part of the 176 - strong multi-sectoral delegation that attended the annual dialogue in Lusaka, Zambia
Regional governments endorse FANRPAN

With a total of 41 high-level policy makers attending the dialogue, governments across the Southern African Development Community clearly demonstrated their endorsement of FANRPAN. The Minister of Agriculture in Zambia - Hon. Ben Kapita opened the annual stakeholders’ conference, whilst the closing ceremony was presided over by the Secretary to the Zambia Cabinet Hon. Robert Mataka.

Within FANRPAN, government enjoys a unique status – that of a primary stakeholder as well as being the primary client. Although it is one of the five (5) primary stakeholder groupings that constitute the FANRPAN node, government is the primary consumer of all FANRPAN policy research outputs. This “inside-outsider” role that government plays in FANRPAN is an excellent recipe for policy development.

The highest level government presence and participation was a clear demonstration and affirmation of importance that government attaches to FANRPAN policy advice, as well as, the convening power for policy dialogue that the government stake adds to FANRPAN. All government representatives present committed to revitalizing their role in country nodes and to lobby their governments to support country node activities.

FANRPAN must, over the next eight (8) years explore and exploit the resource mobilization opportunities that exist in this partnership. All country node delegations committed to revitalizing the links with their national line ministries and to optimize the partnership with government.

Results of the Annual General Meeting - a new era in FANRPAN

A record 19 amendments to the FANPAN constitution were approved and adopted into use by the 2007 Annual General Meeting (AGM). Key amendments included the electing of a more functional regional board as opposed to the original representation system. To that end, five new Board members who had been nominated were confirmed. These are Dr Sam Mundia (Permanent secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Zambia); Mr Ajay Vashee (President of SACAU); Professor Mandivamba Rukuni (Director, Africa Kellogg Foundation); Professor J F Kirsten (University of Pretoria) and Dr. Lindiwe. M. Sibanda, (CEO and ex-officio FANRPAN Board Member). It was agreed that, at a later stage, the board would co-opt representatives from SADC, the Private Sector and South African Government, the country hosting the regional secretariat. The new board will oversee the implementation of the new strategy. After being signed by representatives of all the nodes, the new constitution came into force immediately.

FANRPAN Ongoing Policy Research Studies

The Impact of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture and Food Security in Southern Africa - The Household Vulnerability Index (HVI)

Since 2004 FANRPAN has been studying the policy implications of the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa on agriculture and food security. Through this research, which was originally commissioned by the SADC Secretariat (2003-2006) and is now funded by the Southern Africa Trust (2006 - 2008), FANRPAN has developed a new statistical tool – the Household Vulnerability Index (HVI) – that can be used to improve vulnerability assessment, as well as the targeting of mitigation responses. The tool enables development practitioners to quantify the different degrees of vulnerability introduced in a household and thus facilitates targeted responses and programming. This tool has been field tested in Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe and the findings were presented at the dialogue. The delegates resolved that FANRPAN should establish how the HVI can be packaged for use by individual researchers, research institutions, civil society organizations and international AID agencies; FANRPAN should work out how current and new users of the HVI can access adequate technical and financial support for institutionalization and wider application of the index; further operational research and wider application of the HVI methodology should be undertaken in at least three additional countries in order to ensure that all the operational constraints of using the index have been dealt with - in preparation for a wider rollout of the tool; there is need to adapt the HVI for wider community participation which entails interfacing the tool with existing participatory approaches such as vulnerability mapping; and that FANRPAN should spearhead a regional adoption and implementation plan for the HVI.

New 8 Year Strategic Plan endorsed

After an arduous two years under the stewardship of Prof. H.K.R. Amani, FANRPAN successfully manoeuvred through a stakeholder consultation process that led to the production of an eight (8) year Strategic Plan covering the period 2007-2015. The 2007 AGM unanimously approved and adopted into use the Strategic Plan, marking the end of the planning phase and the beginning of an 8-year implementation phase. All delegates at the Lusaka AGM made specific corporate and individual commitments towards the effective implementation of the new strategic plan.

The plan is a clear road-map of how FANRPAN is going to revitalise itself to ensure relevance to its customers and clients amidst new realities and challenges. The new strategic framework is symbolised by a 3-legged African pot, with a focus on three pillars, namely; Capacity Building; Policy Research and Voice; to facilitate an environment conducive for positive policy development.

The new strategic framework is based on four (4) strategic objectives that link FANRPAN’s work to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) targets. These objectives are;

(i) Promoting regional economic integration - through harmonisation of policies.
(ii) Positioning Southern Africa for a competitive international trade environment.
(iii) Creating an agricultural policy environment that supports reducing poverty and vulnerability.
(iv) Promoting technology adoption, innovation and adaptation.

FANRPAN’s programming thrust in the 8-year plan will focus on five areas, namely; Institutional Strengthening; Food Systems; Agricultural Productivity; Natural Resources and the Environment, and HIV and AIDS.
Promoting Regional Economic Integration: Evaluating the Potential of Input Vouchers (Fertilizer and Seed) as a Mechanism for Integrating the non-Commercial and Commercial Inputs Markets

1) FANRPAN research has established that two (2) parallel inputs distribution channels exist in most SADC member states, namely; non-commercial distribution through farmer support programmes, and the commercial distribution through retail networks of the various private sector companies. FANRPAN has proposed the use “Input Vouchers” for both fertilizer and seed as a mechanism for integrating the commercial and non-Commercial inputs markets, and thus promoting the growth of the private sector companies, as well as improving access and choice by farmers. Input vouchers are being tested in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique. The findings from these studies were presented at the dialogue and the delegates resolved that FANRPAN should continue to support the voucher study to enable conclusive results in assessing the sustainability of the voucher system; the exit strategy of vouchers and subsid-
dies; and the linkage of vouchers/subsidies to agro-forestry; and FANRPAN should facilitate the publication of best practices emanating from this research.

The Management and Impact of Technological Innovation and Adaptation: Addressing Agricultural Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy Issues to Improve Food Security in SADC

This project aims to document a balanced view of the fundamental information needed to inform SADC’s regional biosafety policy choices. The target countries are Malawi, Mauritius and South Africa.

The delegates resolved that FANRPAN should facilitate further dialogue on issues of harmonisation of biosafety regulatory frameworks in the region; build capacity in the region around biosafety; improve institutional arrangements to facilitate adoption of biotechnology; and spearhead biosafety projects; create awareness on biosafety issues e.g. through the FANRPAN website and policy dialogues.

FANRPAN: A network on networks

The country node (or the national network) will continue to be FANRPAN’s basic operational unit. All the 12 country nodes (country networks) resolved to intensify the sensitising of donors at national level to secure funding for node activities. They resolved to develop new business plans, aligned to the FANRPAN 8-year strategic plan, develop new demand-driven country node research agendas and prepare policy advisory notes from policy dialogues and studies conducted.

The country nodes resolved to intensify collaboration among researchers from different country nodes and to participate more in current national level policy development and proactively engage government around the policy research agendas, organise national dialogues and show case both completed and on-going policy research in order to secure government funding.

Nodes committed to assisting the FANRPAN regional secretariat to finalise the MOU with SADC to enable the country nodes to engage meaningfully with the SADC National Steering Committees and to enhance recognition of FANRPAN by the SADC country desks.

National nodes committed to creating formal channels of communication with all line government ministries and to organise training events to build the capacity of all FANR stakeholders to engage in policy development more effectively.

Resolutions Made at the Annual Policy Dialogue

The four (4) stakeholder groupings that constitute FANRPAN, and a fifth, the Media fraternity, made specific recommendations and resolutions towards their own capacity needs for effective involvement.

A. Stakeholder Commitments

1) Government representatives committed to increase formative and supportive activities. They pointed out that formal requests for government financial support to FANRPAN had not yet been received, but were confident that governments would be supportive. They committed to assisting in the formulation of node work plans; and pointed out that governments are committed to supporting FANRPAN, provided national nodes present and implement relevant programmes.

Researchers, both old and new to FANRPAN, committed to being a vibrant part of FANRPAN country nodes and to assist in identifying new researchable issues that are in line with the FANRPAN research agenda. They committed to assisting in resource mobilisation for FANRPAN and its node activities, as well as, improving the preparation of policy briefs and advisory notes for policy makers.

Private sector representatives resolved to; improve communication linkages with partners; use existing wealthy private sector networks to marshal resources for FANRPAN; and develop linkages with research institutions in a bid to have practical research outputs generated.

4) Farmers’ representatives resolved to advocate for capacity building for farmers and farmers’ organisations to enable them to influence policy decisions.

5) Media representatives, an emerging new stakeholder group, resolved to establish a network in each country for journalists to exchange information on FANRPAN activities; endeavour to understand the technical language of researchers in order to work together; and improve their writing skills for reporting on policy issues.
B. General Commitments

1) Delegates at the stakeholder dialogue committed to reporting back to the Ministers of Agriculture for the benefit of SADC and COMESA.

2) FANRPAN committed to producing policy briefs, to explain its new strategic direction for policy dialogue in the region.

3) FANRPAN committed to mobilising resources intensively; to ensure that programme implementation commences in April 2008.

4) The meeting observed the need to increase the visibility of gender issues and the role of youth in agriculture, in the strategic plan, and recommended that two of the three remaining FANRPAN Board positions be filled by women to ensure gender balance.

5) Delegates also pointed out that the main business of the board is to provide strategic direction to FANRPAN.

6) It was agreed that an update on progress made on resource mobilisation, funded programmes, and a revised business plan be presented at the next AGM.

7) The next AGM will be held during the first week of September 2008 at a venue to be announced by the Secretariat.

Endorsement by Partners

Several development partners indicated commitment to provide strategic support to FANRPAN over the next 12 months.

1. CIDA
   FANRPAN has already submitted a proposal to CIDA and got some positive response. The proposal is covering years. CIDA is keen to support FANRPAN.

2. The Norwegian Embassy
   The Norwegian Embassy indicated that it was their first time to be involved with FANRPAN. They are keen to accompany FANRPAN’s activities.

3. FAO
   FAO indicated that it was their first time to be involved in FANRPAN regional policy dialogues and as a result they now had a better understanding of FANRPAN. They promised to share the results of their commissioned studies through the FANRPAN platform.

4. FARA
   FARA is interested in advocacy and networking and is committed to signing a MoU with FANRPAN and supporting the strengthening of node institutions.

5. CTA
   CTA has been supporting FANRPAN since 2001 and will continue supporting FANRPAN.

6. New Research Partnerships
   FANRPAN has entered into new research partnerships with ICRAF, GECAFS and COMPETE. These partners represent an opportunity for resource mobilisation strategy.

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.