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SOCIAL PROTECTION IN AGRICULTURE

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Executive summary

Increasingly since 2004, member states of the African Union have identified social protection as a key strategy for reducing poverty, assuring food security and enhancing social development. This is coupled with increasing recognition of the need to ensure coordination between social protection and productive sectors. However, little attention has so far been paid to the two-way relationship between social protection and smallholder agriculture, and how this potentially improves rural livelihoods and food security and nutrition. This link is relevant for rural households as in practice, social protection and smallholder agricultural interventions may overlap as they often cover the same geographic space and target the same households in many areas in Africa.

As described in its Strategic Framework, FAO will significantly step up its support to countries in Africa by forging links and promoting greater policy coherence and synergies between social protection, food security and nutrition, agricultural development and rural poverty reduction. FAO and its partners have made some progress in generating evidence on the linkages between social protection and agriculture in Africa, in engaging in related policy dialogue and in supporting social protection schemes.

Over the next biennium FAO will continue supporting countries in developing coherent regional and national policy frameworks, with a view to strengthening coordination between social protection and

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agriculture and other related policies (e.g. poverty reduction strategies food security and nutrition interventions), within a broader systems approach to social protection that encourages coordination and harmonization between sectors and policies so as to more effectively address the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities faced by households.

This support will be provided by generating new evidence on the linkages between social protection and agriculture, developing analytical and policy tools, facilitating policy dialogue between governments, civil society, resource partners and development agencies, providing policy advice and providing related capacity development support.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Regional Conference

The Conference is requested to provide guidance on the following points:

- i. Linking social protection with agriculture and other rural development policies offers potential synergies that can be exploited to help build resilient, sustainable management of natural resources and rural livelihoods.
- ii. Building synergies could be integral to the implementation of strategies and policies for sustainable and long-term rural development that will combine social protection with agriculture.
- iii. Social protection can best contribute to rural development if it is complemented by other policies/interventions in related sectors such as health, education, infrastructures, institutions, rural services within a coherent policy and strategy framework. Mainstreaming social protection into CAADP investment plans and other related policies/plans should be systematized both at regional, sub-regional and national levels.
- iv. Strategic actions to promote social protection into CAADP processes and related policies require partnerships between governments, beneficiaries, FAO, the African Union, NEPAD, RECS, development agencies, NGO's, civil society and other major national and international players in social protection and agriculture.

SOCIAL PROTECTION IN AGRICULTURE

I. Introduction

1. Increasingly since 2004, member states of the African Union have identified social protection as a key strategy for reducing poverty, assuring food security and enhancing social development. Member states have committed to the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action to strengthen social protection schemes, increase their coverage and effectiveness, especially for the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded persons (African Union 2008). Further commitments include the 2006 Livingstone and 2010 Yaoundé Calls for Action on social protection, agreements at the 2007 International Labour Organization (ILO) regional meeting in Addis Ababa and recommendations of the 2008 regional meetings on Investing in Social Protection in Africa. These commitments led to the development of a social policy framework for Africa (African Union 2008). A number of these agreements, as well as more recently the Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) initiative and the 39th Session of the Committee on World Food Security, call for greater coordination between social protection and the productive sectors, and in particular, agriculture.

2. Most Southern African countries have domestically financed, national social protection systems, including non-contributory pensions for elderly and grants for children in poor households. Countries in the rest of Sub Saharan Africa have focused primarily on the provision of cash transfers to vulnerable groups, including the extreme poor and destitute, and orphans and vulnerable children, via unconditional cash transfer or cash for work programmes. Some of these programmes are national in scale, such as the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, while some are in the process of national scale up, such as the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC) in Kenya, the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) in Zambia and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program in Ghana. Others, such as the Harmonized Social Cash Transfers programme in Zimbabwe, at the pilot phase. These programmes are primarily financed by donors, though some, such as the CT-OVC and the LEAP programmes, are increasingly financed by domestic resources, and all are implemented by national governments. Sub Saharan Africa also has a long history in terms of temporary social protection programs focused on food aid, food insecurity and famine and disaster relief.

3. In most countries of Sub Saharan Africa, a majority of the beneficiaries of social protection programmes are households whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and live in rural areas. Most are subsistence or vulnerable small-scale producers. Both social protection and agricultural policy are recognized as important components of poverty reduction strategies, but in practice little attention has been paid to the interaction between the two, nor to the implications for design and implementation of related policies and programmes. Since social protection and smallholder agricultural interventions often cover the same geographic space and target the same households, there is potential for synergies and complementarities that strengthen livelihoods of poor rural households. An uncoordinated approach represents a missed opportunity for articulation of social protection with a broader rural and agricultural development strategy designed to alleviate poverty and assure food security and at worst may lead to conflicting policies and programmes. As recognised within the systems approach to social protection advocated by UNICEF and the World Bank, coordination also needs to be improved between social protection and other sectors such as health, education, infrastructure and rural services.

4. Moreover, though social protection is becoming an increasingly popular development tool in sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of Southern Africa, social protection programmes in the

region largely rely on external sources of funding and capacities for designing and implementing these programmes are relatively low. Conversely, in Asia and Latin America where countries have more extensive experience in designing and implementing social protection programmes – also in coordination with other sectors - substantive funding for these programmes comes from domestic resources and institutional capacities are stronger.

II. Social protection, food security, and agriculture and rural development

5. Almost three quarters of Africa's economically active rural population are smallholders, and over 60 percent of women are employed in agriculture. Most households produce a significant share of their own food consumption. Subsistence farming thus serves as a safety mechanism in the face of food insecurity. Increasing and stabilizing domestic food production is essential for food security. This means improving the productivity, profitability and sustainability of smallholder farming. Missing/poorly functioning markets link production and consumption activities of these households. These include credit, insurance, labor and input market failures, which constrain economic decisions of rural households in investment, production, labor allocation and risk taking.

6. Poor rural households that mostly rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and food security are often constrained by limited access to resources and low agricultural productivity. They often participate in poorly functioning markets and are repeatedly exposed to various man-made and natural risks and shocks that threaten their livelihoods (Dorward et al 2006, HLPE 2012). They are typically ill-equipped to cope with these shocks. Historically, informal community level social networks of reciprocity served as the first line of defence for the poorest households to deal with risks and shocks. But these family and community networks have come under strain and in many cases are overwhelmed by the HIV pandemic, repeated external shocks and economic modernization. In the absence of formal or informal insurance or other risk sharing arrangements, poor rural families may be forced to cope in ways that further increase their vulnerability. For example, they may sell off their productive assets, shift to the production of less risky, but lower yielding crops, or take their children out of school in order to work for income for the family, all of which erode future income earning capacity out of short term necessity.

7. Social protection policies aim at reducing social and economic risk, vulnerability, inequalities and alleviating extreme poverty and deprivation, taking into account different risks and vulnerabilities throughout the lifecycle. When predictable and regular, social protection instruments can also relax the constraints brought about by poorly functioning markets. Social protection thus enables households to better manage risks and engage in more profitable livelihood and agricultural activities. If targeted to women, they empower them, and also improve households' welfare because of women's priorities for food and nutrition for the most vulnerable members of their household and also their children's education and wellbeing (Yoong et al 2012). Social cash transfers that target women can positively transform power relations within the household, giving them a more active role to play not only in household decision making processes but progressively at the community and increasing their bargaining power and social status level (Devereux).

8. Social protection can take on a variety of forms, from cash transfers to school meals to public works. Policies promoting agricultural production, such as input subsidies, may also have a social protection function to the extent, for example, that they help reduce vulnerability of smallholder farm households to price volatility. When targeted at the poorest and most vulnerable, these policies may be seen as social protection interventions in their own right.

9. Social protection measures and policies can be used to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian and development policies and initiatives, mutually reinforcing prevention and mitigation measures of the potential impact of disasters and crises that threaten food and agricultural systems. In after-shock situations or during crises, humanitarian assistance can rely on already existing social protection systems to scale up existing structures and measures to transfer humanitarian assistance to protect or rebuild the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people. When social protection systems are absent or not adequate, external assistance might be provided directly, in the form of in-kind aid or cash transfer for basic agricultural inputs.

10. It is unlikely that social protection alone can sustainably lift households out of poverty, hence the need for complementary programs focusing on income generation. Agricultural policies and programmes can be used to complement social protection since they potentially reduce risks and vulnerability by increasing output, income, direct access to food and household welfare. Moreover, agricultural policies mediate the productive impacts of social protection by influencing expected returns to investments in agriculture.

11. Social protection thus needs to go hand-in-hand with agricultural and rural development policies that help build greater resilience, improve productivity and support sustainable management of resources. Social protection can potentially serve as an important complement to a broader rural development agenda, including a pro-poor growth strategy focusing on agriculture.

III. The Role of FAO in Social Protection and Agriculture

12. For FAO Social protection interventions are an essential element of both short- and long-term interventions to reducing hunger and poverty. Both are required. First, it helps households to overcome undernourishment by providing them direct access to food or means to buy food. Second, it can increase agricultural productivity growth, improve livelihoods and nutrition, and promote social inclusion.

13. FAO's renewed Strategic Framework, endorsed by Conference in June 2013, recognizes the key importance of social protection for improving food security and nutrition and reducing rural poverty. In partnership with other UN agencies and development partners, FAO is supporting these efforts building on its expertise and comparative advantage, which lies at the interface between social protection and food security, poverty reduction and agricultural and rural development.

14. Social protection plays five fundamental roles in the context of the renewed Strategic Framework. Social protection can a) provide direct income support with immediate impact on food security and poverty reduction at the individual and household level; b) support farmers and other rural households in overcoming liquidity constraints and better manage risks; c) enhance the quantity and quality of human capital, leading to increased labour productivity and employability; d) stimulate local economic development with positive feedbacks on agricultural production, employment and rural poverty reduction; and e) support efforts towards more sustainable management of natural resources and resilient livelihoods.¹

15. FAO is committed to significantly strengthening its work and capacity to be able to better support governments, regional initiatives and partners in Sub Saharan Africa to address the challenge of designing and implementing the right mix of social protection measures that will achieve the five roles of social protection. Accordingly, FAO is committed to stepping up its support to countries in forging links and promoting greater policy coherence and synergies

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/029/mi557E.pdf> - CL 148/12. FAO's work in social protection

between social protection, food security, agricultural development and rural poverty reduction. The five roles provide the framework within which FAO will deliver its work on social protection, consistently with its core functions and comparative strengths, and jointly with relevant international, regional and national partners.

FAO's ongoing work in Africa

16. FAO is involved in a number of ongoing activities in the African region with direct support to social protection schemes in the framework of national food security policies and programmes in Africa. Some examples include:

- a) support to the Government of Niger in the design and implementation of the programme for the eradication of hunger within the context of the 3N Initiative (“les Nigériens nourrissent les Nigériens”), which links a comprehensive social protection programme with an agricultural investment plan and a programme for people’s empowerment focused on rural women;
- b) in partnership with WFP and UNICEF, support to the design and implementation of Somalia’s resilience strategy, including leading the technical cooperation for the Cash for Work programme;

Niger 3N Initiative and Social protection

The momentum of the multi-stakeholder 3N initiative is growing as demonstrated by the number of partners joining this. Accordingly, effective implementation of the investment plan requires strong partnerships and a coordinated effort by government bodies and development partners that aim to reduce inequalities as well as hunger and malnutrition in the country. To achieve the expected results the new institutional framework and governance mechanism set up to drive this process needs to be strengthened. Niger’s Government stresses that high-level dialogue needs to be facilitated to translate the existing political commitment into action. To this end the Government has created a High Commission for the 3N (HC3N) under the President’s office.

To support this transformational process the government of Niger requested technical assistance from FAO to “operationalize the 3N initiative“. In response to the request, and within the framework of the Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa, in December 2012 the FAO started providing support to facilitate institutional processes.

Main achievements so far include (i) increased awareness among national partners on the need for strengthening the existing coordination mechanism and partnerships at national and decentralized levels to progressively lead to a common vision on how to act with a focus on equity, synergy and complementarity; (ii) the acceptance to operationalize the 3N Initiative through Zero Hunger approach by simultaneously implementing an integrated package of agricultural, social protection, nutrition and socio-economic interventions and targeting the same zones/communes with predictable funding and clear adaptation of governance mechanisms including the crucial participation of civil society organisations; (iii) the coordination of social protection and agriculture is an integral component of the 3N interventions package for decentralized levels. These achievements will be consolidated through the implementation of the FAO Regional Initiative related to the Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa by 2025 under the Framework the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

- c) technical support to the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) and Household Asset Building Program (HABP), critical components of Ethiopia's Food Security Programme targeted at chronically food insecure households in rural areas;
- d) in collaboration with WFP, support to five African countries in linking smallholder production with local procurement for school meal programmes, facilitated through the FAO-Brazil collaboration for South-South Cooperation (PAA Africa);
- e) support in the formulation of the National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIP) in The Gambia and Sierra Leone, through which roadmaps are designed in the context of CAADP, and support to the Global Agricultural and Food Security Program assisting in the implementation of pledges made at L'Aquila Summit;
- f) support in the design and implementation of social protection programmes closely related to FAO's comparative advantage, such as cash for work programmes with a strong agricultural component, or junior and adult farmer field and life schools.

From Protection to Production

One key example of FAO's role in knowledge generation, policy advice and dialogue is reflected in the From Protection to Production (PtoP) project. The project provides insights on how social protection interventions can contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and economic growth at household and community-levels. The PtoP project analyzes the impact of cash transfer programmes on household economic decision making the local economy and community dynamics using a mixed method approach. This approach combines econometric analysis of impact evaluation data, general equilibrium "Local Economy Wide Impact Evaluation" (LEWIE) models, and qualitative methods. The project, implemented jointly with UNICEF, and supported by the UK Department for International Development and the European Union, builds on ongoing impact evaluations of government-led social protection programmes in seven countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Besides producing analysis, publications and policy briefs for the global development community, the project has a direct impact on the policy debate in each of the seven countries through its collaboration with government and UNICEF. FAO's focus complements the operational and research support provided by other UN agencies, including UNICEF and the World Bank. Analysis carried out by the project has fed into discussions on programme design, future complementary interventions to maximize the economic impact, as well as larger policy discussions on the linkages between social protection programmes and rural development initiatives. In September 2013, FAO and UNICEF organized a regional workshop in Accra that included the participation of government officials from ministries of agriculture, social welfare and finance from eight sub-Saharan African countries, the AU, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank and civil society. The workshop sensitized participants on the inter-linkages between social protection and agriculture and explored the policy and institutional issues related to strengthening coordination between these sectors.

IV. Supporting the African social protection agenda

17. FAO's work in social protection in Africa will focus on supporting governments and other partners to develop and enhance their policies and programmes, maximize synergies between social protection and agricultural policies and in articulating a coordinated strategy for rural development. This involves generating actionable knowledge, developing and sharing tools for policy analysis, providing policy advice and support to programme implementation, facilitating

and engaging in policy dialogue among stakeholders and developing human and institutional capacities to manage policy processes in a more coherent manner.

18. *Generating actionable knowledge on the linkages between social protection, agriculture and food security*

19. FAO will promote the generation of increased actionable knowledge on linkages between social protection, agriculture and food security in Africa. This knowledge will inform decision making processes related to the design, implementation and monitoring of regional and national initiatives, policies and programmes in Africa. More specifically this will include:

- Country-specific and cross-country comparisons on the gender differentiated impacts of cash transfers and other social protection interventions on:
 - household income generating strategies, including agricultural production, productive investments (e.g. crop implements, livestock), access to credit, household labour allocation and participation in social networks that play an important role in informal risk management.
 - food consumption, dietary diversity and nutritional outcomes
 - facilitating sustainable management of fisheries, forests and other natural resources and the uptake of agricultural technologies to better adapt to the challenges associated with climate change
- Country-specific and cross-country comparisons on the impact of cash transfers and other social protection interventions on rural women's economic empowerment
- Comparison of alternative social protection and agriculture policy scenarios on poverty and food security, in a number African countries
- Lessons on institutional mechanisms for supporting collaboration and coordination between social protection and agriculture
- Deepening the understanding of the social protection role played by agricultural interventions based on the analyses of impacts on risk management, human capital accumulation and the local economy multipliers.

20. To achieve this FAO and its partners will complete ongoing impact evaluations in 7 sub-Saharan countries. FAO will also expand coverage to other countries in Africa by drawing from existing and forthcoming datasets (e.g. new LSMS-ISA household surveys) as well as collaborating with data collection activities being undertaken by partners. This knowledge will be generated through a mix of analytical work undertaken by FAO and, where feasible, by partnering with national research institutions, and by providing technical support as required.

21. FAO and partners will also complete the knowledge generation activities included in the ongoing SO3 Programmatic Regional Initiative in Ghana, which tested an integrated approach to programming for small-holder development by complementing social protection interventions with cassava-value chain development. This integrated programming was complemented by data collection that will feed into ex-ante policy scenarios for informing up-scaling.

22. *Development and implementation of analytical and policy tools to inform the design and assess the effectiveness of social protection systems for poverty reduction and food and nutrition security*

23. FAO will focus on developing improved analytical and policy tools support new areas of knowledge generation of relevance to social protection, agriculture and food security in Africa. This will include a conceptual framework and guidelines for policy analysis and value chain approach to social protection at the local level, drawing on the experience of the Ghana regional initiative pilot. Also, an adapted version of the existing LEWIE model will be developed,

allowing the simulation of the ex-ante impact of different social protection and agricultural policy scenarios on household production, welfare and food security at the local and the national economy for a number of African countries. Updated guidelines for the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data will also be made available.

24. A framework will be developed – suited to the different contexts in Africa - describing options to strengthen coordination at national and sub-national levels between social protection systems and agricultural policies and programmes. The framework will be developed by FAO and its partners in close consultation with national stakeholders and is expected to lead to a common vision among partner agencies on how coordination between social protection and agriculture can be strengthened and thereby enable partner agencies to provide coherent policy support on the subject matter.

25. Improved policy support and programming outreach

26. FAO will continue supporting regional and national level policy processes and initiatives in strengthening coordination between social protection and agriculture. At regional and sub-regional national levels these will include the CAADP and its results framework, the Global Agricultural and Food Security Program, the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR), Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience (SHARE); and the Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa. At the country level FAO will support national social protection programmes and policies and NAIPs and inter-agency resilience programmes. This support will be provided by continuing to enhance the policies and programmes for agriculture and rural development, to generate evidence on the linkages between social protection and agriculture, facilitating dialogue between governments, civil society, resource partners and development agencies and providing related capacity development support.

27. Furthermore, FAO, jointly with representatives from African Governments, development agencies, and other partners will engage in policy dialogue at the regional level and in selected countries. This dialogue will include national consultations with representatives from key ministries including social welfare, agriculture, finance, local government as well as civil society, development agencies and donors to develop a common vision on how coordination between social protection can be strengthened and to identify strategic entry points to enhance coordination. The consultations will be complemented by evidence-based policy advice to national policy and programming processes.

28. At the regional level FAO and its partners will support policy process that support social protection and agriculture. This will involve sensitizing policy stakeholders on linkages and providing policy advice on how coordination between social protection and agriculture can be strengthened. Policy dialogue will be complemented by policy outreach and advocacy targeted at state and non-state actors involved in social protection, and in agricultural and rural development policy making.

29. FAO will also support the design and implementation of social protection for rural livelihoods promotion. This area of work will provide policy and technical support to design, formulation of integrated social protection strategies and systems; support to multi-sectoral coordination and governance of social protection and food security, agriculture stakeholders; and community-based extension of social protection programmes through strengthening of local formal and informal institutions and organizations, and fostering linkages with existing social protection institutions. Integrated approaches of social protection to protect and promote rural livelihoods will be developed for implementation in selected countries of Africa.

30. *Capacity development for strengthened capacities for designing and analysing social protection and agricultural policies and programmes.*

31. FAO will work to ensure that staff working on social protection and agriculture in government agencies, development partners and FAO will have increased understanding of the linkages and potential synergies between social protection and agriculture and access to related guidance material. The increased understanding of these linkages and synergies will strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of staff's contribution to national policy and programming processes, including the provision of related policy advice.

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