



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

ARC 2020 - SUBREGIONAL PRIORITIES – SOUTHERN AFRICA

Observation of Protocol,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When compared with other regions of the world, Southern Africa's GDP growth between 2011 and 2017 was higher than that of advanced economies. However, the region failed to maintain the growth momentum and had the lowest growth rates in 2018 and 2019 when compared with other parts of the world (Southern Africa Economic Outlook, AfDB 2020). Following the outbreak of COVID-19, regional economic growth is projected to slow down even further. According to the SADC 2020 Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Synthesis Report, close to 44.8 million people in both urban and rural areas of Southern Africa are food insecure. The severity of the current COVID-19 crisis has been compounded by pre-COVID19 challenges that the sector already faced, economic slowdown and/or downturn and the catastrophic impact of recurrent droughts, with dire humanitarian, environmental and productivity consequences, pointing to the need to find more sustainable solutions. The recurrent food security crisis in the sub-region is a strong reminder that sufficient attention has to be paid to addressing key priorities of SADC member-states, subregional partners and stakeholders as outlined in SADC's Vision 2050, its Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (2020 – 2030), among others.

During the current biennium (2020-21), the FAO Subregional Office for Southern Africa will focus its work on identified subregional and national priority issues and challenges. The work will be driven and measured by a results monitoring and reporting framework with specific outputs and indicators. This will ensure a sharper focus at subregional and country level to enable FAO to effectively contribute to the achievement of country level outcomes.

Priorities were discussed and agreed following an in-depth cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary review of subregional issues that took place during formal joint FAO/SADC planning meetings on 23 – 24 September 2019 and 7 August 2020. They also address topical issues of importance to member-states (Country Programming Framework priorities) as well as subregional partners and stakeholders as expressed in various forums (the latest being the SADC International Cooperating Partners - Agriculture and Food Security Cluster - Meeting on 7 October 2020 and the SADC CAADP Biennial Review Stakeholders Meeting that took place on 15 October 2020).

Based on these consultations, the following priorities were identified around three (3) strategic axes:

Strategic Axis 1: Sustainable, inclusive and safe agricultural and nutrition-sensitive food system transformation;

Strategic Axis 2: Sustainable management of natural resources and climate action; and

Strategic Axis 3: Disaster risk reduction and promotion of resilient livelihoods to shocks and crises.

Regarding the transformation of agriculture and nutrition sensitive food systems, the focus is on:

1. Data and information management systems for evidence-based decision making, with emphasis on:
 - Collection, collation and analysis of data and dissemination of information
 - Enabling innovative use of data and knowledge through digital technologies
 - Agriculture, food and nutrition security measurement and monitoring
2. Promotion of enabling policy, regulatory and institutional environment, with emphasis on:
 - Development of instrument-based policies and policy implementation tools
 - Development of regulatory and institutional frameworks
 - Development of normative standard setting guidelines and instruments
3. Sustainable agricultural (crop, livestock, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture) production intensification, with emphasis on:
 - Plant, animal, aquatic organisms, and forest health management systems (using a One Health approach and through access to technologies for control of transboundary pests and diseases)
 - Plant, animal, aquatic organisms and forest integrated production management systems (including improved access to quality inputs e.g. animal feed, genetic materials, breeding stock, seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, among others)
 - Pesticide life cycle management
 - Small and medium scale irrigation
 - Sustainable agricultural mechanization
4. Bolstering agribusiness and agro-industrialisation, with emphasis on:
 - Creating de-risking, risk sharing mechanisms and blended financing instruments to leverage private investment
 - Enabling environment for doing business in agriculture through enhancing the regulatory framework and (re)establish institutions that will improve public investments in order to leverage private investments in agrifood systems
 - Promoting inclusive commodity value chains
 - Promoting urban food systems
 - Promoting agripreneurship through incubators and accelerators
 - Promoting agribusiness for youth and women employment
 - Value addition and post-harvest loss reduction
5. Nutrition and sustainable healthy diets, with emphasis on:

- Food based dietary guidelines and behavioural change
- School nutrition and school feeding guidelines
- Food composition tables to determine nutrient content of foods
- Institutionalization of Minimum Dietary Diversity for women and children.
- Evidence generation on efficacy and effectiveness of agriculture and food systems on nutrition outcomes
- Improving food safety policies, management systems and practices

Regarding sustainable management of natural resources and climate action, the focus is on:

- Sustainable forest and land, marine and inland fisheries management for improved livelihoods
- Strengthening natural resource governance, institutions and policy frameworks
- Land tenure governance and strengthening of institutional capacity for implementation of Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGTs)
- Water governance and management
- Promote mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and build resilience of ecosystems and communities
- Implementation of fisheries instruments (e.g. Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management; Minimum Terms and Conditions for Foreign Fisheries Access in the SWIOFC Region, and Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries)
- Sustainable management of genetic resources (of crop, livestock, forest, and aquatic resources)
- Conflict management in the use of natural resources (e.g. Human-Wildlife Conflict)

Regarding disaster risk reduction and promotion of resilient livelihoods to shocks and crises, the focus is on:

- Implementation of SADC Regional Resilience Strategic Framework
- Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through the Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative (CADRI)
- Responding to emerging threats to agriculture (crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture) and food security (e.g. COVID-19, climate change, etc)
- Promoting the One Health approach and better preparedness for outbreaks and disasters in the agriculture sector
- Food security and nutrition assessment and analysis
- Strengthening coordination mechanisms and platforms for better response to humanitarian crises

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Conference is invited to review and agree on the above Southern African sub-regional priorities for the biennium.

Thank you for the kind attention