

**ISI Satellite Meeting
in Maputo on 13-14 August 2009
STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL
AND RURAL STATISTICS**

**Policy Issues in the Global Economy and Strategic
Plan for Agricultural Statistics**

KEY NOTES

THE MOZAMBICAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

(EN)

Honourable Prime Minister, Excellency

Mr. President of the National Institute of Statistics, Excellency

FAO Representative in Mozambique and in the Kingdom of Swaziland, Excellency

Director of Statistics Division of FAO - ROME

Members of the Diplomatic Body accredited in Mozambique,

National Directors

Dear Delegates and Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture of Mozambique and in my own name, make this intervention addressing, before anything else, a warm greeting to all delegates and guests of this International Satellite Conference on Agricultural Statistics which is held in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique.

At this moment we cannot hide the satisfaction that we, Mozambicans, in particular those statistical and agricultural professionals, felt in welcoming this such important Conference on agricultural statistics, since its holding in this Country contributes, in our opinion, to raise more and more the visibility of statistics and its role as a strategic instrument in promoting socioeconomic development of the countries.

Mozambique gives a great importance to agriculture, consecrated in its Constitution as a basis for economic development. More than 75% of the Mozambican population live in the rural areas and have agriculture as their basis for subsistence. Agriculture represents about 22% of the Country's GDP and has an enormous contribution in food security of the populations. For us, as a Country, it is already clear that agriculture has a big role in strategies for fighting poverty and food insecurity.

Either in Mozambique, or in almost all World countries, particularly the developing Countries, agriculture has a role to play in the interventions for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, in which in the first one of which the world undertakes to reduce up to half the number of people affected by poverty and hunger. How to manage to achieve this goal if, contrarily to what is preconised in the Millennium Development Goals, the number of malnourished people, instead of decreasing, is in the last years, increasing? According to FAO data in 2007 counted to exist about 920 million malnourished people and for 2010 it is projected the existence of more than 960 million people.

Certainly you will agree with me if I say that in order to satisfy the needs of the world population in constant growth, getting out hundreds of millions people from the under nutrition and food insecurity, from chronic hunger and absolute poverty is one of the major challenges for the humanity.

Mozambique has 36 million Ha of arable lands, of which only about 6 million, that is 17% is cultivated area.

The Country, with great agricultural potentials, produces food crops such as cereals, of which maize, rice and sorghum are pointed out, roots and tubers with an emphasis on cassava, beans, peanuts, vegetables and fruit trees. In the group of non-traditional food crops, wheat and potato is experimenting a growing importance. Cotton, sugar cane, tobacco, tea, copra, cashew nuts, sesame seeds, paprika, soya, sunflower, and others are among the cash crops.

Maize which is cultivated by about 80% of the total of 3.7 million of agricultural holdings existing in the Country, and cassava which is cultivated by about 55% constitute the most important food crops complemented with cowpea and peanuts.

Due to unsatisfactory use of modern inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, situated at 3% and 5% of the total agricultural holdings respectively, associated to the very limited use of the irrigation (6% of the agricultural holdings), the levels of productivity are still low. The average production of cereals by agricultural holdings or by agricultural household, according to the Annual Agricultural Survey (TIA), is between 500 and 600 Kg.

The use of natural resources such as forests, water, soils, and others are still unsatisfactory. The practice of uncontrolled clearance of ground by fire, uncontrolled devastation of forests, non adequate handling of soils and water among other aspects of non sustainable use of resources still prevail. This scenery, in spite of having different intensity in developing Countries, is a common denominator in those countries.

Due to unequal distribution of the agricultural production potentialities and agro-climatic conditions which are associated to the natural calamities, problems in commercialization and in food distribution channels, the food security in some areas of the Country is seriously affected. The existence of hunger clusters in which annually more than 600 thousand people are affected, or about 35% of the households is still a reality in the Country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The above described situation, which seems to have similarities in most Sub-Saharan Africa or even in the developing countries, requires from us the accomplishment of concrete actions which may revert the present scenery of agricultural low productivity and production which

contributes to limited food supply and food insecurity and under nutrition in the World. Appropriated policies and strategies should be designed and implemented by the governments in interaction with cooperation partners and other actors and agents involved in agriculture.

The Government of Mozambique recognising the role of agriculture in the economy and food security followed the Green Revolution strategy and designed the Action Plan for Producing Food (PAPA) which are being implemented in the last two years and that for its implementation considerable amount of resources are being allocated, which constitutes unequivocal evidence of the Government commitment to develop agriculture.

Although we do not have conclusive data it seems to us that we are following the right path. The increasing use of improved seed, such as in maize crops which exceeded 6% in 2005 to 10% of the agricultural holdings in 2008, the development of programs for cultivating rice and wheat resulted in the increase of production of cereals and other food cultures included in PAPA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are more and more clear that, at world level and in particular in the developing countries, the importance of agriculture in the strategies for fighting poverty, places this sector in the centre of agenda for development. And in order that agriculture has an accelerated growth to satisfy the world population food needs, the policies and strategies for its development should be strongly based on quality and updated statistical information, which should be faced not only as an instrument but also as an unavoidable component in the process of making informed decision. This statistical information not only enables to design the intervention policies and measures in a more objective and realistic way but also enables to improve the capacity for monitoring and evaluating the policy instruments its performance in order to learn and draw lessons. To be more precise, I would say that the quality statistical information should guide us to where, in terms of geographical areas and sectors, direct the investments, how to prioritize agricultural research programmes, extension, management of natural resources, among other aspects. When well managed this information enables us to succeed in our interventions in favour of agricultural production development, taking into account the strategies for food and nutritional security, fighting poverty, environmental aspects, gender issues, HIV/AIDS, among others of transversal nature.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of our major findings is that there is a need for strengthening and improving radically the quality of statistical information, making it more integrated and accessible satisfying the demand which is more and more sophisticated and demanding, in order to better give us an indication in relation food production versus production of bio-fuels and other non edible

crops, monitor the efforts for fighting poverty, as well as the successes in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

To produce these data based on scientifically recommended statistical methodologies and place them in due time at reach of the users, particularly the public planners, the decision makers, in our view, constitute a big challenge for the scientists, producers of agricultural statistics, governments and their cooperation partners.

The integration of the agricultural statistics information, the coordination and harmonisation of the methodologies that avoid unnecessary duplication and overlapping of efforts and the production of conflicting data shall constitute a process to be led by the national institute or agencies of statistics and should constitute a strategic vision in the production of statistical information for promoting the development in the XXI century. In this perspective, the agricultural statistics shall be part of the national strategic plans for statistical development which shall ensure the rationality and efficiency in the use of resources.

In our Country, the National Statistical System which has its legal basis in the law 7/96 preconises that, under the guidance of the National Institute of Statistics (INE), responsible for the production and dissemination of official statistics, some competences for producing statistics should be delegated to some governmental bodies. It is within this scope that the agricultural statistics are delegated to the Ministry of Agriculture, more precisely to the Directorate of Economy. The Mozambican Statistical System (SEM) which has been coordinated by the Higher Council of Statistics chaired by Her Excellency the Prime Minister, who in spite of her youthfulness has getting big successes in the Country. Led by INE, SEM has been functioning satisfactorily, the statistical operations, the technical and methodological coordination within the scope of statistics has been performed regularly.

The Agricultural Census which are being carried out or are in the phase of preparation in most of our countries within the scope of World Round of Agricultural Census in 2010 promoted by FAO, should be taken as a pillar and foundation of the agricultural statistical sub-system, on which all statistical operations in the area of agriculture and rural economics shall be based as well as an opportunity reinforcing the integration. In Mozambique, we are preparing our second Agricultural Census since the County became independent in 1975. This big statistical operation to be carried out by the Govern of Mozambique, more precisely by the National Institute of Statistics in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, in 2009 and 2010, relies on technical assistance of FAO and financial support of cooperation partners. This Census is being prepared, according to FAO recommendations, of which the strict liaison of the Agricultural Census with the Population Census conducted in 2007 which integrated a module with questions on agriculture and the use of the modular approach are pointed out, according to the big themes of the Census.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the path of improving the relevance and quality of statistical information we also think that the dialogue and interaction between the producers and users of agricultural, rural, forestal, fishing, aquicolous statistics in order to render the statistics more relevant making that they have a major value in use. The academies, Universities and researchers of different institutions should be invited and involved in this challenge to give their contribution to improve de quality of the statistics.

The supply and demand in data and statistical information in the XXI century should be re-evaluated so that the produced statistical information be duly and efficiently used and play its real role, with an indispensable and permanently used component in all the decision making process.

In our view, the following, *inter alia* still prevail as challenges:

- The improvement of coordination among the producers of statistics themselves so that the efforts and resources are not wasted in vain in the production of non harmonised and sometimes conflicting and contradicting statistics;
- The production of statistics that could be used at lower geographical levels, such as the District, which in the case of Mozambique, with the decentralization is taken as pole of development;
- The production of statistics on natural resources such as the use of agricultural soils, firewood, charcoal, wood, small scale fishing, among others;
- Statistics of roots and tubers production such as cassava, banana, vegetables and fruits;
- Production and use of statistics disaggregated by sex and under gender perspective;
- Allocation of adequate resources for producing agricultural statistics by the governments and partners in due time.

We think that these and other challenges shall deserve attention in the debates that shall take place in this conference and many solutions shall be found for getting the results preconised by this International Conference.

At last, let me express my gratitude to all organizers of this Conference, either international or national. Our thanks are also addressed to our partners of cooperation represented herein who have given their support to actions for the strengthening of statistics in general and of agricultural statistics in particular. We address our special gratitude to FAO which

always has supported countries, particularly developing countries in technical and methodological assistance for consolidation of their statistical systems.

Thank you very much!

Maputo, 13 August 2009