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Executive Summary: ZIMBABWE ZERO HUNGER STRATEGIC REVIEW



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FOREWORD

The Zero Hunger Strategic Review report aims to refocus attention to the critical issues needed to accelerate the attainment of zero hunger in Zimbabwe. This report is a result of thorough review of existing literature, field visits and extensive consultations at various levels by the research team consisting of Prof. Charles Muchemwa Nherera, Dr. Tendai Nhenga-Chakarisa, Mrs. Julia Tagwireyi and Dr. Mabel Hungwe under the leadership of Prof. Hope Sadza of the Women's University in Africa.

The report explains the UN Secretary General global Zero Hunger Challenge and contextualizes it for Zimbabwe. It provides an overview of the food and nutrition security situation in the country and establishes an understanding of the country's demographics and socio economic context. It compares the provisions of the Zero Hunger Challenge with the prevailing situation regarding food and nutrition security, and outlines the causes of hunger in the country and presents the key drivers of food and nutrition security. The report extensively reviews relevant statutes, protocols and frameworks at national, regional and global level that underpin Zimbabwe's response to food and nutrition security. It highlights the key national responses to food and nutrition security by Government and non-state actors and articulates the gaps and opportunities in achieving zero hunger in Zimbabwe.

The Zero Hunger Strategic Review is an illustration of the increasing support Government and indeed the country is receiving from the United Nations agencies and other development partners in addressing issues that improve the well-being of our people. As highlighted in the report, development challenges are best tackled through collaboration and a multi-sectoral approach that includes Government, development agencies and the private sector.

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While thankful for all the inputs, suggestions and comments, the findings, views, and interpretations published in this report are those of the authors.

Introduction:

The Zero Hunger Challenge is an international multi-level and multi-sectoral call for action made by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2012 towards a vision of a world without hunger. It brings together different stakeholders at country level to contribute to eliminating food and nutrition insecurity. The Zero Hunger Challenge is structured upon the following five pillars:

- Pillar I -- Zero stunted children less than two years;
- Pillar II -- 100% access to adequate food all-year round;
- Pillar III -- All food systems are sustainable;
- Pillar IV -- 100% increase in smallholder productivity and incomes; and
- Pillar V -- Zero loss or waste of foodⁱ.

The Zimbabwe Zero Hunger Strategic Review seeks to identify opportunities to reorient existing programmes and strategies towards a common goal of eliminating hunger and malnutrition. The Review integrates and is informed by key national policy and strategic frameworks such as the National Food and Nutrition Policy, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset) and the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF).

The main objectives of the Strategic Review were to: 1) establish a comprehensive understanding of the context of the national food and nutrition security; 2) review existing food and nutrition security related strategies, policies, plans and programmes in Zimbabwe and identify gaps in the national response; 3) provide an overview of priority areas and potential measures to accelerate progress towards the five pillars of the Zero Hunger Challenge; and 5) Initiate the development of a national Zero Hunger Roadmap.

Situation Analysis:

Country Context

Zimbabwe is a land locked country with a population of 13,061,000, of which 40 percent is under 15 years of age, 52 percent are female and 67 percent reside in rural areas. As of 2011, about 62.6 percent of Zimbabweans were living in poverty with 16.2 percent living in extreme poverty. Rural areas have higher poverty rates than urban areas (76 versus 38.2 percent), and rural poverty is most prevalent in communal (79.4 percent) and resettlement areas (76.4 percent), where over half of the country's population lives. The HIV prevalence rate is 13.7 percent, with an estimated 1.4 million people living with HIV.

Zimbabwe has a total land area of 15.8 million hectares, of which 4.3 million are arable. During the 2014/15 cropping season, a total of 2.8 million hectares was cultivated. Farming remains an important income source for more than half of the adult population in Zimbabwe, i making up about 45 percent of total exports and 70 percent of livelihoods. Over 42 percent of the country's arable land is occupied by about 1.1 million communal smallholder farmers living in marginal areas where the natural productive capacity is low. In the 1980s, Zimbabwe was a net exporter of food, but this has changed over the last 15 years due to economic, political and climatic reasons. In 2000, the Government introduced the Land Reform Programme to stimulate broad based, inclusive economic empowerment.

The services sector makes up largest portion of the economy (40.6 percent), followed by the industrial (31.8 percent) and agricultural (16 percent) sectors.xiv After a very difficult decade (1998-2008) of stagnation and hyperinflation, the economy showed signs of recovery from 2008. Economic growth has since slowed to an average annual rate of 3 percent due largely to low levels of domestic revenue generation and rising recurrent expenditures.xv In 2013, the Government unveiled the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimASSET, 2013-18) in an effort to revamp the economy.

Owing to recurrent food insecurity and economic difficulties over the past years, Zimbabwe is off target to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal which is to halve extreme poverty and hunger.

Zero Hunger Challenge in the Zimbabwe Context

Zero stunted children less than two years: Stunting remains the most prominent nutrition challenge in Zimbabwe, as 27.6 percent of children under five are short for their age.xvi This represents a steady trend of improvement since 2005 and should be encouraged and accelerated. Boys have a higher tendency to be stunted than girls. About 56 percent of children 6 – 59 months old are anaemic.xvii Less than 10 percent of Zimbabwean children under the age of two receive the recommended minimum acceptable diet - eggs, meat, milk products and legumes.xviii The relationship between food and nutrition security is complex as it is both a driver and consequence of vulnerability. As a result, there is a concerted effort to expand and strengthen preventive and treatment programmes.

100 percent access to adequate food all year round: Trend analyses of food security situation shows large fluctuations in food access over time. These fluctuations are due to a combination of natural and economic factors which affects the ability to obtain sufficient, diverse and nutritious food. This results from the recurrent effects of climate change, weather variability in which erratic rains and flooding are becoming a norm, widespread poverty rates, HIV/AIDS, dwindling yields, high price fluctuations and difficulty of maintaining adequate national supplies through the strategic grain reserve. Poverty is a principal cause of hunger, and its consequences are manifested in failure to access adequate food, as well as food availability, which is aggravated by seasonal food price fluctuations of between 30 and 40 percent. As a result many of rural households are unable consume acceptable diet all year round.

All food systems are sustainable: Only 15 percent of rural households participate in groups that promote sustainability. Forty-four percent of irrigation schemes are deemed only basically functional and are prone to frequent breakdowns. xix In 2000, 250 000 hectares of land were under irrigation in the country, but this has declined to 135 000 hectares. Poor water management practices have led to many water sources drying up due to siltation. There is inadequate draught power and appropriate mechanization to sustain food production. The food pricing and marketing system, particularly for grain and livestock, is not robust. Lastly, there is inadequate use of climate resilient agricultural practices such as conservation agriculture.

100 percent increase in smallholder productivity and income: Over the last ten years, average maize yields in Zimbabwe have been only 0.8 tonnes per hectare against a

regional average of 3-4 tonnes per hectare. Similarly low productivity is reported in the livestock sector. Limited extension services (at 1:300-400 extension work: farmer ratio) and low fertilizer usage are key contributing factors, as are structural marketing issues, particularly for cereals.

Zero loss or waste of food: Zimbabwe food loss and wastage figures are estimated to be around 30 percent but the data is not conclusive in the absence of appropriate and comprehensive food value chain research.

Response Analysis:

The constitution of Zimbabwe enshrines the provision of adequate and appropriate food, and the country is a signatory to most international and regional declarations that seek to improve food and nutrition security. The Government has adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, but will be unable to achieve Millennium Development Goal 1 which aims to eliminate poverty and hunger by 2015; this commitment will be reaffirmed once the emerging Sustainable Development Goals are adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015.

The policy environment in the country is conducive for promoting food security and nutrition, and institutional frameworks such as the Food and Nutrition Policy and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation have the potential to facilitate desired improvements.

The Review also found that national food and nutrition security responses have not been modelled along the Zero Hunger Challenge because of its recent vintage, but most interventions under the five pillars of the initiative were identified in the strategies and plans of key sectors such as agriculture, health, social services, water and sanitation, community development, and local Government. Many programmes are supported by UN agencies, NGOs, other development partners and the private sector.

Gaps and Recommendations

Based on the situational and response analyses, the Review identified the following six strategic gaps: 1) weak implementation of policies and programmes, 2) inadequate response to climate and disaster risk, 3) limited market integration for smallholder farmers, 4) inadequate involvement of the private sector, 5) lack of sustained advocacy to enhance awareness on food and nutrition security issues, and 6) limited attention to food loss and waste.

Weak implementation of policies and programmes

The country has an enabling policy environment for food and nutrition security programming; however, implementation of the policies, strategies and plans remains problematic. The main challenges affecting the translation of the comprehensive framework into efficient and effective programmes were identified as:

- <u>Insufficient financial resources:</u> The slowing of the economy has undermined the
 capacity of the country to adequately invest in food and nutrition security, and has kept
 it from meeting its budgetary allocation commitments made as part of the Maputo
 Declaration and the CAADP process.
- Weak coordination: Existing institutional structures do not adequately foster the required integration of efforts across key government sectors and at all levels to manage a coordinated response to the food and nutrition security goals of the Government. The Food and Nutrition Security Council's management and coordination ability is well utilized in assessment processes but is not fully leveraged in programme planning and management. Engagement with relevant external partners is also fragmented, with much programming being overly influenced by specific donor priorities
- <u>Inadequate and inaccessible data:</u> The unavailability of relevant data undermines assessment, design, and programme management processes. It has resulted in programmes being unrealistic, poorly planned and under-resourced.
- <u>Capacity constrained human resources:</u> Personnel responsible for implementation lack the knowledge and skills to unpack policy pronouncements, and to design and manage the needed programmes and projects.
- Response approach overly top-down: Programme planning is driven by policies originating at the central level, with inadequate consultion with the communities they are intended to serve.

The Review established that the country has an adequate policy framework and appropriate institutional structures to address food and nutrition security challenges, a sentiment echoed by the UN Resident Coordinator: "There is no need to create new structures, there are enough already. You only need to build capacity for coordination." In order to strengthen the implementation of policies and programmes and contribute to addressing the strategic gap as laid out above, the Review recommends the following:

- (a) Capacitate the Food and Nutrition Council to enhance its central coordinating role in operationalizing the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and ZimAsset Cluster;
- (b) Provide a guaranteed budget allocation to the FNC, and normalize allocations to line ministries in fulfillment of the Government's commitments under the Maputo Declaration and CAADP;
- (c) Create a food and nutrition security fund that would be coordinated through the National Food and Nutrition Security Task Force that involves the private sector and relevant development partners;
- (d) Involve local communities in the planning and management of programmes; and
- (e) Capacitate key officials with the skills to assess food and nutrition needs in their areas.

Inadequate response to climate and disaster risk

Agriculture is particularly vulnerable to the changing climate due to smallholder farmers' heavy reliance on rain-fed production and climate-sensitive resources. Localized weather related disasters are recurrent in Zimbabwe, but Government and its partners have yet to develop significant adaptation and disaster risk preparedness plans. Early warning systems are limited and ineffective. National and local institutions have not sufficiently prepared for the recurrent disasters they face – continuing to be reactive rather than proactive. Conservation agriculture is poorly understood by the vast majority of smallholders and not adequately covered by existing extension services. Despite clear connections, properly addressing climate and disaster risk is largely absent from food and nutrition security policies, strategies, plans and programmes.

In order to strengthen the response to climate and disaster risk faced in Zimbabwe and contribute to addressing the strategic gap as laid out above, the Review recommends the following:

- (a) Strengthen the knowledge and skills of farmers to adapt production to climate change, with particular focus on food crops and livestock production;
- (b) Promote climate-smart agriculture in both livestock and crop farming;
- (c) Develop an effective early warning system for climate and disaster risks to make farmers aware of the hazards they face, how to prepare for them, and how to deal with them;
- (d) Increase land under irrigation and strengthen community maintenance structures/systems;
- (e) Develop an insurance-based social protection strategy to enable the poor and food insecure to bounce back and respond to growing complexities and risks;
- (f) Strengthen public and market-based social protection mechanisms that build local capacity for people or communities to bounce back after a climatic disaster; and
- (g) Improve emergency assistance measures to minimize negative impacts and consequences of drought, and floods.

Limited market integration for smallholder farmers

Smallholder farmers face several challenges in profitably engaging with domestic and international agricultural markets, including relatively high input costs and low productivity; poor road networks and high transport costs. Smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe generally engage in trading individually, reducing their bargaining power and limiting their ability to add value to their production by processing prior to sale. Meeting quality standards demanded by the formal market is beyond the capacity of most smallholder farmers, and they generally lack access to up to date market information relevant for small producers. These challenges are exacerbated by limited access to affordable financial and credit services. Furthermore, the subsidization of agricultural products has put smallholder farmers at a further disadvantage, as their production operations are not subsidized. While the Grain Marketing Board establishes a national floor price for maize, payments to

farmers are often delayed for substantial periods of time, leaving smallholders no choice but to sell what surpluses they have through informal channels at lower prices.

In order to improve market integration for smallholder farmers and contribute to addressing the strategic gap outlined above, the Review recommends the following:

- (a) Scale up support of farmers in the production, marketing, post-harvest handling, grading and quality control of their produce;
- (b) Establish and maintain market extension workers to train farmers on market trends, trade rules and policies; assist in the establishment of joint ventures in processing or value-added activities; and collective marketing through associations;
- (c) Promote linkages with agro-processing and export companies and establish market information centres that recognize the vast diversity of 'smallholder farmers', while facilitating their linkage to constantly evolving markets;
- (d) Assist in the development of farmer-controlled commodity marketing cooperatives and developing new markets locally and abroad;
- Reduce market risk for smallholder farmers which includes support that lowers transaction costs, potentially by setting up markets in remote areas, and encouraging investment in rural infrastructure;
- (f) Regulate markets that are sensitive to smallholder needs, disseminate market information, and facilitate seasonal credit and other financial services; and
- (g) Introduce smart subsidies that do not distort markets or create a donor dependency and that serve as stimulants for gradual market development in weak markets that have been distorted by handouts.

Strategic grain reserve non functional

Financial constraints and management issues have limited the Grain Marketing Boards' ability to procure, store, manage and rotate significant stocks of domestically produced grain. Over time, this lack of investment has led to national food transport, storage, and handing infrastructure is now dilapidated and in need of rehabilitation or replacement. The Board intends to redevelop a national strategic grain reserve that would hold up to 250,000 metric tonnes of grain at any one time, and would have the capacity to release these food stocks on the market and/or for distribution to the most vulnerable in periods of severe stress. The Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization, and Irrigation Development estimates that this would cost well over US\$ 51 million.

In order to re-establish a functioning national grain reserve and contribute to addressing the strategic gap outlined above, the Review recommends the following:

- (a) Urgently rehabilitate existing silos that are already strategically located across the country;
- (b) Establish strategic partnerships from the private sector and Development Agencies through 'lease and rehabilitate' arrangements for agreed periods of time with the GMB;

- (c) Utilize rehabilitated GMB infrastructure to operationalize the Warehouse Receipt System whose framework is already in place;
- (d) Establish a commercial wing within the GMB for revenue generation that would be separate from the strategic grain reserve and could be accountable to the multi-sectoral National Food and Nutrition Task Force to ensure transparency; and
- (e) Promote the establishment of micro grain reserves at local community and household level, utilizing traditional granaries (*hozi*), metal silos and other methods.

Inadequate involvement of the private sector in food and nutrition security interventions

The role of the private sector in food and nutrition security remains uncoordinated and undocumented. Public-private partnerships have long been touted in development discourse but have hardly been tapped into for food and nutrition security interventions in Zimbabwe. Opportunities exist for partnerships involving Government, farmers, the food industry, development agencies, NGOs and donors. Companies are in a position to invest in research and development for better crop and livestock yields. They are also in a position to come up with simple, inexpensive machinery and storage facilities that are affordable for smallholder farmers. Given the harsh economic environment, there is need to find mechanisms to facilitate meaningful private sector engagement in food and nutrition, and develop a scheme of incentives to motivate the sector take up its role in food and nutrition security interventions.

In order to enhance private sector involvement in the food and nutrition security sector and thereby contribute to the strategic gap outlined above, the Review recommends the following:

- (a) Enhance capacity to create public-private partnerships by coordinating action at the local level in support of entrepreneurship and farming as a business;
- (b) Develop an integrated, long term strategic approach to engaging the private sector in food and nutrition security issues, with the development of the approach led by Government and involving development partners, agri-businesses and other food chain partners;
- (c) Assist small and medium scale agri-business enterprises such as input suppliers as well as food manufacturers, distributors and retailers, to develop locally adapted solutions;
- (d) Engage private sector companies to develop proactive procurement procedures that include smaller scale producers in value chains;
- (e) Engage private companies to develop technologies for beneficiation and commercialization;
- (f) Engage private sector in reducing food loss and waste all along the food value chain and improving the quality and nutritional value of products;

- (g) Explore partnership potential with communications technology companies to allow information sharing in real time, linking smallholder farmers to local, national and international business and markets:
- (h) Encourage private sector participation beyond food processors, producers and input manufacturers through establishing a comprehensive Zimbabwe SUN Business Group; and
- (i) Create an enabling environment for farmers and the private sector to partner in value addition and to promote policies which enable the private sector to innovate and invest in the food and agriculture sector sustainably and profitably.

Lack of advocacy on food and nutrition security issues and the path to zero hunger

The framework provided by the Zero Hunger Challenge has, understandably, not yet been mainstreamed into the national food and nutrition security discourse. Currently, there is little effort focused on advocacy and enhancing awareness about food and nutrition security issues among key segments of the population. Like in many parts of Africa, malnutrition is not generally considered a priority problem in Zimbabwe. Communities tend to lack the knowledge and understanding of the significant costs that malnutrition imposes on their social and economic well-being over time. Basic knowledge of the importance of a balanced and diversified diet is still limited among much of the population.

In order to strengthen advocacy and awareness raising about food and nutrition security issues and Zimbabwe's path to zero hunger, and thereby contribute to addressing the strategic gap outlined above, the Review recommends the following:

- (a) Formally adopt the Zero Hunger Challenge as a framework to guide and focus the FNC's programming and coordination role in addressing food and nutrition security, including a review that ensures country specificity and achievability;
- (b) Develop a robust awareness strategy to sensitise communities on behaviour change in crop and livestock choices and to promote the consumption of a healthy diet;
- (c) Engage consumer organizations on advocacy for food safety, quality, nutrition, etc. and assist in providing education and information, empowering to make appropriate choices for a safe and nutritious diet;
- (d) Engage civil society to exert bottom-up pressure for the implementation of national programmes, recognizing that grassroots communities represent a generally untapped force that can transform the Government's approach to addressing hunger, and can be mobilized to demand services and conditions to improve their nutrition and that of their children;
- (e) Exploit windows of opportunities for policy change on food and nutrition security, particularly during a disaster or other crisis and keep food and nutrition high on the political agenda;

- (f) Raise awareness on indigenous knowledge systems on preserving food; and
- (g) Conduct a Cost of Hunger Study that provides policy makers with information on how economic growth is affected by under-nutrition and food insecurity.

Limited attention to food loss and waste

Until recently, there was no systematic way of assessing losses incurred throughout the value chain for various crops, nor for wastage at the retail and household level, that could facilitate the development of a strategy to address the issue. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that food loss and waste remains unacceptably high. Food loss results from wideranging management and technical limitations in harvesting techniques, post-harvest storage and handling, transportation, processing, packaging and marketing systems. The lack of proper commodity management technologies and processes results in large food losses each year, particularly as a result of infestation by rodents or other pests. Limited value-addition processing capacity and poor access to markets has meant that much food produced, particularly that which is easily perishable, is simply left to rot. Despite the high food loss and wastage, there has been limited Government and/or NGO attention given to the issue.

In order to ensure that reduction of food loss and wastage is an integral to sustainable food systems in Zimbabwe, and thereby contribute to addressing the strategic gap outlined above, the Review recommends the following:

- (a) Develop a comprehensive and effective national that includes a roadmap of prioritized challenges and opportunities relative to food loss post-harvest issues;
- (b) Increase investment in research and development to develop technologies and innovations in the post-production segment of the value chain that blends modern science and Indigenous Knowledge Systems;
- (c) Research food loss and wastage through the entire food chain for all key foods and to regularly monitor food losses and wastage.
- (d) Promote infrastructure development e.g. rehabilitation of roads, energy, storage facilities, improved transportation and logistics management, etc. that reduce food loss and wastage between the farmer and the markets; and
- (e) Open up dialogue with the private sector to reducing tariffs, import costs, concessions, targeted subsidies to providers of storage equipment and tools.

Next Steps for the National Zero Hunger Challenge Roadmap:

The Zero Hunger Challenge calls on all nations to play their part in achieving zero hunger in our lifetimes. It calls for a multi-sectoral approach involving government, the private sector, civil society, development partners, and the public in turning this vision into a reality. The Zero Hunger Challenge is not legally binding but provides a useful framework to guide policy, strategy and programme planning that is aligned to the post 2015 Development Agenda. Zimbabwe stands to benefit by adopting the Challenge to facilitate

collaboration among all relevant stakeholders coordinated by the Food and Nutrition Council.

The Review recommends the formal adoption of the Zero Hunger Challenge as the key strategy to addressing food and nutrition security in Zimbabwe. This implies reorienting current efforts to ensure their alignment to the five pillars of the Challenge while each pillar needs to be contextualized according to ground realities. The framework provided by the Challenge will shape a Monitoring and Evaluation Log-frame with clear indicators, milestones and actors. This will ensure implementation as progress towards specific issues concerning food and nutrition security are closely monitored at national level. The Food and Nutrition Council should coordinate a multi-sectoral monitoring and evaluation team that collects relevant data regularly through the provincial and district structures. Multi-sectoral review meetings should be held to get updates on each pillar. Monitoring and evaluation reports should be submitted to the National Food and Nutrition Task Force through the FNC.

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