



Economic Commission for Africa
Southern Africa Office



**Report of the Ad Hoc
Expert Group Meeting on**

The Impact of **Food Aid** and **Agricultural Subsidies** on
Long-Term **Food Security Sustainability** in Southern Africa





Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
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Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on The Impact of Food Aid and Agricultural Subsidies on Long-Term Food Security Sustainability in Southern Africa

13 – 15 December 2006
Lusaka, Zambia

Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	v
Executive Summary.....	vii
1.0 Background	1
2.0 Attendance.....	2
3.0 Opening Session	3
3.1 Opening Statement.....	3
3.2 Organisational Matters	3
4.0 Presentation of the Draft Report on the Impact of Food Aid	5
4.1 Sub Regional Report.....	5
4.2 National Reports.....	5
4.3 Panel Discussion on Food Aid, Food Security, National and Sub Regional Food Aid Policies	9
5.0 Presentation of the Draft Report on the Impact of Agricultural Subsidies	14
5.1 Panel Discussions on Agricultural Subsidies	15
6.0 Open Discussions on Food Aid and Subsidies.....	16
7.0 The Outcome of Group Synthesis	19
7.1 Terms for Definitions	19
7.2 Target Audience for the Findings of the Study	19
7.3 The Food Aid, Subsidies and Food Security Link.....	20
7.4 Action Plan on Food Aid	20
7.5 Action Plan on Agricultural Subsidies	23
7.6 Recommended Structure of the Final Report	24
8.0 Recommendations of the Meeting.....	25
9.0 Way Forward.....	26
10.0 Closure of Meeting.....	27

Annexes

1	List of Participants	28
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Figures

1	Food Aid, Agricultural Subsidies and Food Security Framework	20
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Tables

1	Short and Long run Impacts of Food Aid.....	12
2	Terms to be Included in a Glossary	19
3	Action Plan on Food Aid	21
4	Action Plan on Agricultural Subsidies	23

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEGM	Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ATPSM	Agricultural Trade Policy Simulation Model
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ECA-SA	Economic Commission for Africa, Southern Africa Office
ECA-FSDD	Economic Commission for Africa, Food and Sustainable Development Division
ECA- ACGSD	Economic Commission for Africa, African Centre for Gender and Social Development
EWS	Early Warning System
FAMIS	Agricultural Market Information Systems
FANR	Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
FFW	Food for Work
FFA	Food for Assets
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICE	Intergovernmental Committee of Experts
LRA	Livelihoods Recovery Approach
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARPAN	Southern African Regional Poverty Network
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Executive Summary

This is a report of a meeting of experts in food aid, food security and agricultural subsidies which took place in Lusaka, Zambia from 13 to 15 December 2006 to consider the outcome of a study on the impact of food aid and agricultural subsidies from developed countries on food security sustainability in Southern Africa. The Economic Commission for Africa, Southern Africa Office (ECA-SA) commissioned this study in the background of increasing food aid to the sub region and concern within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) about its possible effects on food production, exports, employment and income.

In reviewing the study, the experts recommended that the link between subsidies, food aid and sustainability be developed convincingly in early parts of the report and then respective recommendations to overcome the challenges posed by this linkage be outlined. Further, the report needed to incorporate the findings of country studies, strengthen the discussion on trends and determinants of the food security situation in Southern Africa and emphasize the integration of food aid policies into agricultural policies. The experts emphasized that the message of diversification from maize as a staple food and from rain-fed agriculture should come out clearly in the report. With respect to minimizing exposure to droughts, the meeting recommended land reform programmes supported by the development of small-scale irrigation schemes coupled with increased support to the smallholder sector through enhanced access to seed, fertilizer, technology and other inputs as part of the agricultural strategy in the sub region. The experts highlighted the need for the study to address the HIV/AIDS, food security and development nexus and provide policy recommendations in that regard. In conclusion, the experts emphasized that the recommendations of the study needed to be more elaborate and assertive, provide answers to the research question and give clear indications of areas where there is insufficient evidence and isolate any areas that require additional work.

1.0 Background

1. Concern over the impact of food aid and developed countries' agricultural export subsidies and domestic support on food security sustainability in the sub region has been raised in different fora in Southern Africa. The Ninth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) in Maseru, Lesotho in February 2003 expressed such concern and recommended that ECA-SA undertake a study on the impact of agricultural subsidies in developed countries on the sub region and highlight the implications on food security sustainability. At sub regional level, the SADC Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security adopted in Dar-es-Salaam in May 2004 also raised concern about increases in food aid and emphasised the need to critically analyse the impact of recurrent food aid on sustainable agricultural development and food security in order to help design appropriate short and long-term policies to foster food security sustainability.

2. It is in the background of these recommendations and concerns that ECA-SA commissioned the study on the impact of food aid and agricultural subsidies and convened an Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting to review the outcome of the study.

2.0 Attendance

3. The Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting (AEGM) on The impact of food aid and agricultural subsidies on long-term sustainability of food security in Southern Africa was held at Cresta Golf View Hotel in Lusaka, Zambia from 13 – 15 December 2006.

4. A selected group of experts in food aid, food security and agricultural subsidies from academia, research institutions, ministries of agriculture, SADC, COMESA, AU, other UN agencies, sub regional and local NGOs attended the meeting. Staff from ECA-FSDD and ECA-ACGSD and ECA-SA participated in the ad hoc expert group meeting. Names of participants and their affiliation appear as Annex I.

3.0 Opening Session

3.1 Opening Statement

5. A representative of the ECA-SA welcomed the experts to the AEGM and introduced the Director of the ECA Office in Southern Africa, Ms Jennifer Kargbo to the meeting and invited her to deliver the opening statement.

6. In her opening remarks, the Director, thanked the experts for accepting the invitation to the meeting. She identified the factors contributing to food shortages and food insecurity in Southern Africa and leading to increased food aid to include persistent droughts, flood, policy and institutional weaknesses, poverty, lack of support for smallholder agriculture, lack of support for needs of women farmers, limited access to credit, inputs and markets, limited access to improved agricultural technologies, subsidies and poor infrastructure for transportation and storage inputs. The Director informed the meeting that Southern Africa was concerned about the adverse impact of subsidies on the sub regional agricultural sector especially through their effect on global overproduction leading to lower world commodity prices. She observed that removing these developed countries' subsidies would result in higher commodity prices leading to higher production in those countries with a comparative advantage and with it increased domestic food availability, food access and increased incomes and employment as well as improved food security.

7. Turning to the focus of the AEGM, the Director underlined the importance attached to the study and its findings as it addressed one of the ECA pillars, which focuses on meeting Africa's special needs and challenges. She emphasized that the study was expected to assess the impact of food aid and subsidies from developed countries on the long-term sustainable food security in Southern Africa. She urged the experts to review the study and make suggestions to improve the methodology, content, consistency and presentation of the draft report. The Director tasked the experts to also review the proposed national and sub regional policy recommendations and strategies and develop an action plan for implementing the recommendations. In conclusion, she reminded them that HIV and AIDS, gender, WTO negotiations and GMOs were important issues in food security sustainability and needed to be thoroughly interrogated.

3.2 Organisational Matters

8. The participants elected the following bureau to guide the meeting;

Chairperson	Ms. Thabsile Mlangeni, Principal Finance Officer, Ministry of Finance, Mbabane, Swaziland
Vice Chairperson	Mr. Uuyuni L. Thomas, Agricultural Economist, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Windhoek, Namibia
Rapporteur	Mr. Alfred Hamadziripi, Programme Manager, Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPAN), Johannesburg, South Africa

9. The Agenda shown below was adopted for the meeting.

1. Opening Session
2. Presentation of the Draft Report on The Impact of Food Aid and Agricultural Subsidies on Long-Term Sustainability of Food Security in Southern Africa
3. Plenary Discussions
4. Group Work
5. Presentation of Group Reports, Conclusions and Recommendations and Way Forward
6. Closure of the Meeting

4.0 Presentation of the Draft Report on the Impact of Food Aid

4.1 Sub Regional Report

10. The presentation of the draft report on food aid focused on the motivation of the study, the methodologies used and the recommendations derived.

11. Using the findings of the national studies, Dr. Tembo informed the meeting that the negative impact of food aid on productivity was localized in some countries but could not be discerned in others. As such, the study was inconclusive in as far as production disincentive effects were concerned. Dr Tembo noted that quantitative analysis had shown that rainfall and epidemics were more important determinants of levels of production than the volumes of food aid. Other causes of decline in production identified in the study included the inability of countries to sustain production incentives and subsidies and provide supportive infrastructure and the poor implementation of policies. He concluded by emphasizing the need for investment in structural transformation to enhance productivity, encourage regional trade, reduce transaction costs, and develop productivity-enhancing technologies including smallholder irrigation to enhance food security.

12. The presenter alluded to existing efforts by member States in the sub region to manage the impacts of food aid. He observed that SADC had in place mechanisms of doing the same and was working with member States in this regard. However, he emphasized that there was need for further enhancement and harmonization of these national and sub regional efforts to ensure food security sustainability.

4.2 National Reports

13. Presentations from Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe outlined the food aid and food security challenges in the respective countries and the approaches used by governments to address them.

4.2.1 Malawi

14. The Malawi report highlighted increasing levels of food insecurity and the resultant increased food aid flows during the last few years and alluded to efforts by government to address these challenges through the creation of appropriate legal instruments. The presenter attributed food insecurity to poorly developed grain

markets, which are unable to transmit price information timeously and this impacted negatively on production decisions as small traders were unable to react to market conditions.

15. The government's involvement in commercial maize importation and food aid was a major concern, as it was strongly perceived to have more negative impacts on the market, especially private sector participation. In this regard, the presenter advocated for limited government involvement in selling of maize at subsidized prices and argued that the marketing should be left to the private sector. The government should focus on monitoring the pricing structure and on addressing constraints to productivity.

16. To improve the country's food security status, the presenter recommended the following; streamlining the targeting of food aid, improved government support towards local or sub regional procurement and the use of cash transfers instead of transfers in kind.

17. The presentation bemoaned the slow response to food emergencies by all stakeholders and called for timely decision making by government and donors on ways of addressing food shortfalls and allow the private sector to participate in addressing the food gap.

18. He informed the meeting that Malawi was developing a National Social Security Policy, which would include food aid issues to address some of the current constraints.

4.2.2 Swaziland

19. Although, overall, the results of the study on Swaziland generally showed that food aid did not have a negative impact on quantity of maize produced, localised effects were discerned. The presenter emphasized that as long as pricing was right and the targeting was focused, no negative effects could emerge from food aid. The limited negative impact was because food aid availability in the affected regions had not gone beyond the threshold that was likely to disrupt the market. He emphasized that supply/demand balance still existed in most cases. Despite the existence of localized negative impacts, the presenter recommended that studies be undertaken in other areas in the country to ascertain if this was also the case so as to inform policy. The study concluded that at the national level, household recipients of food assistance ordinarily purchase a large proportion of their food requirement and distribution of free food aid would therefore result in reduction in market demand and thereby affect prices.

20. The presenter recommended that the Government should reconsider the coordination of food aid within its own system and especially address the underlying problems of poverty and livelihood insecurity. Other important considerations in food aid issues should focus on the promotion of the local procurement of the food to be used in food aid programmes. If enforced, local procurements would increase the producer incentive for local farmers.

21. He emphasized that external assistance programmes should complement local food security programmes rather than being the only source of such protection. In this regard, emphasis should also be placed on strengthening the food security policy and on the promotion of food-for-work (FFW) or income-generating projects aimed at diversifying rural livelihoods and boost household food security.

22. Regarding policy, he highlighted the need for a balanced, mutually-reinforcing mix of policies and programmes that address both the production and marketing constraints to food availability and that raise the real incomes of the poor and thereby increase access to food.

23. At sub regional level, the presenter emphasized that SADC should strengthen its central role in consolidating the individual country policy recommendations and factor them into the sub regional food security agenda to ensure that food aid interventions augmented the existing food security programmes as enshrined in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).

4.2.3 Zambia

24. The presentation informed the meeting that although Zambia did not have a food aid policy, a National Disaster Management Policy and Disaster Management Operations Manual that provided guidance on the distribution of food aid and other relief in cases of disasters existed.

25. With respect to effects of food aid on production, the presenter highlighted that localised negative effects on production had been discerned in some parts of the country. He noted that the presence of a food aid dependency syndrome in some regions in the country as reported by the Zambia Vulnerability Assessment Committee was a cause for concern and the structural causes had to be addressed for sustainability.

26. To address problems related to coordination and targeting of food aid in the country, the presenter recommended the harmonization of food gap assessment methods to avoid contradictions. He also emphasized the need to strengthen the early warning systems (EWS) as well as natural disaster preparedness systems so that the country could anticipate any food disasters and take appropriate action.

27. To avoid dependency, emergency food aid should only be used in areas that had both an outright shortage of food and where markets failed to respond to demand stimuli. Further, he emphasized that the targeting of food aid should be improved, and that the selection of beneficiaries should use both social and economic criteria. Both communities and aid agencies should participate in the selection of beneficiaries to ensure transparency and proper targeting.

28. The challenges of determining the right balance between the goals of reducing long-term food insecurity and/or providing short-term safety nets necessitate the need for food relief agencies to use food for work (FFW) and food for assets (FFA) programmes to assist the food insecure.

29. In the same vein, the presenter observed that there was need for periodic detailed studies in areas receiving food aid on the impact of the aid on prices and markets of locally produced commodities to facilitate policy planning. In this regard, he recommended the creation of a think-tank of food policy experts to monitor and analyze inflows of food aid and its impact on the long-term sustainability of food security in the country and advises accordingly.

30. In conclusion, the presentation emphasized the importance of Regional Economic Communities in the provision of expertise, finance and the necessary equipment to ensure realistic estimates of the sub regional food gap. From a government perspective, the study recommended sensitizing communities on the dangers of food relief dependency as this has the potential to destroy a community's creative power

4.2.4 Zimbabwe

31. The presentation alluded to increasing food insecurity in the country during the past decade, a phenomenon that has been more pronounced during the last five years. Food insecurity coupled with the HIV and AIDS pandemic had created immense challenges for Zimbabwe. She emphasized that no negative effects of food aid on production were discerned from the study and attributed the decline in food output to structural constraints.

32. To address the challenges posed by food insecurity at national level, she recommended the following;

- Addressing structural inequalities through organised land reform and use of broad based economic growth and wealth redistribution policies;
- Supporting the Agrarian reform to improve agricultural productivity through provision of agricultural inputs, extension, technology and price incentives;

- Addressing the policy implementation gap through effective coordination and monitoring between government and humanitarian agencies;
- Providing adequate humanitarian financial and human resources to enable the country to move from relief to recovery and developmental programmes;
- Development of irrigation, food and agriculture markets through adequate investment in irrigation to mitigate the effects of drought, scaling down controls in food markets and agricultural factor inputs; and
- Enhancing international confidence to improve the country's image so as to improve the flow of international assistance, which could be channeled to the agricultural sector.

33. The presentation emphasized that addressing the HIV and AIDs, food security and development nexus was critical in Zimbabwe given the high prevalence levels. To address the pandemic and rebuild the capacities and agricultural assets of affected households, she urged the international community to channel more financial resources to the country.

34. The presenter reiterated the need for co-ordination and accountability on food aid in Southern Africa through sub regional guidelines. These would help the region better coordinate responses to food insecurity, strengthen regional food security assessments and improve disaster planning and management.

35. In conclusion, she emphasized the need for strengthening of food production systems in Southern Africa through coordinated research, procurement of agricultural inputs, food production and marketing using the comparative advantage of the different countries, regional stocks management including clear policies on buying, selling and movement of such stocks. Further, member States should use of the Livelihoods Recovery Approach (LRA) to address the underlying causes of household vulnerability and food insecurity in the sub region.

4.3 Panel Discussion on Food Aid, Food Security, National and Sub Regional Food Aid Policies

36. The ECA-SA Director, Ms Jennifer Kargbo chaired discussions during this session. Presentations on food aid, food security and on national and sub regional food aid policies were made.

37. A discussant from Malawi observed that there were sections of the report that needed further elaboration and these included;

- the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS,
- the SADC food balance sheet,
- government importation of food,

- implementation of food security policies and
- food aid policies and monitoring of food aid flows.

38. With regard to HIV/AIDS, the discussant highlighted that the pandemic impacted negatively on household nutrition and also on labour supply, which in turn led to a fall in food production at household level. For policy purposes, it was important for the report to bring out strongly the relationship between HIV/AIDS and household food security. He observed that the pandemic had led to a situation where financial resources were depleted leading to dependency on food aid. HIV/AIDS had also resulted in the rise in coping mechanisms at household level like prostitution, which further exacerbated the pandemic. He stressed the need to pay special attention to the dietary requirements of the infected and to integrate HIV/AIDS in vulnerability issues.

39. On the sub regional food balance sheet, he observed that, for completeness, this needed to take into account food stocks from the previous season at household and small traders level when calculating food available and determining the food deficit. Such an approach would eliminate the possibilities of under-estimating the sub regional food basket or alternatively over-estimating the food aid requirements. He emphasized that as part of proper planning, this would ensure that the sub region had appropriate strategies.

40. It was important to evaluate issues surrounding the importation of food for relief by government as this could potentially have negative consequences if not handled well. Governments could end up exerting their energies on importing food instead of developing long-term strategies to reduce the need for food aid. He emphasised that there was need to empower private traders in food aid programmes so that government concentrated on long term planning. He also observed that food aid planning and programming needed to be done at sub regional level to ensure that food production is not undermined.

41. He emphasized that the report needed to address the causes of food insecurity in the sub region much more thoroughly, especially the implementation of food security policies. Some insecurity was due to the non-implementation or partial implementation of agricultural policies within countries and the sub region. In this regard, the report should come out more strongly in urging member States to implement food security policies currently in place and share experiences.

42. With respect to the monitoring of food inflows into the sub region, he underscored the need for constant monitoring at country level to facilitate the development of guidelines aimed at discontinuing food aid and increasing production. Coordination

between government, the private sector and farmers' representatives in the monitoring process was important.

43. A discussant from the African Union (AU) observed that the report was not explicit about the target audience for the findings and recommendations of the study; this needed to come out clearly. She recommended the integration of food aid and subsidies issues in a convincing manner and the development of relevant recommendations.

44. She emphasized that sub regional recommendations should focus on key challenges including the impact of GMOs and outline strategies towards dealing with them. The GMO debate had assumed global dimensions and Southern Africa had to adopt a unified approach by developing policy guidelines to enable member States to make informed decisions. She informed the meeting about a basic framework on GMOs developed by the AU, which member States in Southern Africa could access and adapt.

45. The lack of detailed discussions on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the sub region's agricultural sector was a serious gap in the report and its recommendations. Further, she observed that the gender dimension of food aid and food security was not treated with the thoroughness it deserved in the report despite its implications on food security sustainability.

46. The discussant alluded to the importance of the development of the seed sector in Africa as a way of addressing food shortages and hence reducing the need for food aid. She informed the meeting that the AU in conjunction with FAO had developed a seed policy, which member States could adapt. In conclusion, she emphasized the need for policy harmonization within SADC and COMESA on food security issues.

47. In his contribution, a discussant from the University of Zimbabwe observed that there was a missing narrative in the report explaining observed trends in national and regional food security and covering critical issues such as domestic policy failures, climate change, global food market price distortions and distortions caused by food aid. He observed that since the report was tackling two complex issues of great interest to African countries, it needed to be framed properly. In this regard, these two issues needed to be developed sufficiently into convincing arguments informed by objective evidence-based analysis.

48. The presenter outlined considerations to be factored into developing a theoretical framework for analyzing the impact of food aid on prices and productivity. Table I presents the suggested causal relationship.

Table 1: Short and Long run Impacts of Food Aid

Scenario	Impacts
1	Absence of food aid aggravates both short -run and long-term food security impacts of supply side shocks
2	Presence of food aid enhances both short run and long run impacts of the supply side food security shocks
3	Presence of food aid program mitigates short run food insecurity but worsens long-term food security prospects Food aid depresses long-term food prices below pre-shock long-term trends stimulating demand for imported food grains Food aid depresses long-term per capita food production growth met from imports and food aid and food aid depresses per capita real income growth

49. He observed that the information in national reports was not captured adequately in the sub regional analysis. He identified the existence of policies in the four countries as an indication that something was being done in the sub region regarding food aid, and this needed to be brought out in the sub regional analysis. The presenter emphasized that the Food and Nutrition Security policy framework in Zimbabwe and Zambia, National (Drought) Disaster Management Policy framework that cover aspects of food aid management in all countries and the National Social Security Policy in Malawi which also covered food aid issues needed to be highlighted in the sub regional analysis. In analyzing these policies, he challenged the report to answer the question of whether it was necessary for countries to have explicit policies on managing food aid and humanitarian assistance processes and actors.

50. He called for a more critical analysis of both the supply side and demand side of food security issues in the sub region. Supply side policies are focused on production and demand side food security policies focus on increasing access to food. He emphasized that the discussion needed to cover policies to protect vulnerable households from food insecurity.

51. The discussant observed inconsistency in defining food security and relating it to food aid and subsidies and emphasized that this needed to be smoothened out. He also raised concern over the cosmetic treatment of gender issues in the report and emphasized that more discussion was needed including the potential gender bias in food aid programs. The persistence of gender bias is a challenge to food security issues in the sub region and policies to address this had to be developed.

52. A discussant from the SADC Secretariat, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) emphasized the need for Southern Africa to exploit comparative advantages at country and regional levels, and to implement food diversification polices to reduce food aid and boost production and reduce the need for food aid. It was imperative for the sub region to have a properly designed food reserves programme together with an

agreed financing mechanism for such a programme. This would enhance food security in the sub region.

53. He stressed the importance of Information Systems on food aid, food security and the environment and the need for policies to that effect at country and sub regional levels. The discussant bemoaned the lack of adequate discussion on food access and GMO issues in the report. These were important in the whole food aid debate.

54. The discussant underscored the importance of member States implementing sub regional and Africa-wide declarations and the critical role of SADC in monitoring the process to facilitate feedback on what countries were doing.

55. In his contribution, a discussant from COMESA outlined measures the REC was taking to address food security issues in the sub region. The measures included: developing a Food and Agricultural Market Information System (FAMIS); convening national and regional workshops on Bio-technology; handling and monitoring cross-border issues; implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP); undertaking joint SADC/COMESA/ECA efforts aimed at addressing HIV/AIDS impact on small holder agriculture; undertaking joint COMESA/AfDB support to cross border traders to address the pandemic and the joint COMESA/USAID “Maize without Borders” trading arrangement. He urged member States to take advantage of some of these measures and programmes to minimize duplication of efforts.

5.0 Presentation of the Draft Report on the Impact of Agricultural Subsidies

56. A representative of ECA-ACGS presented the findings of the study on the impact of agricultural subsidies on long-term food security in the sub region. She informed the meeting that the findings from the study were derived from using three methodologies: a synthesis of existing literature; an analysis of food import dependency and import capacity and from modeling using the Agricultural Trade Policy Simulation model (ATPSM).

57. The presenter noted that, overall Southern Africa's total welfare effect from the removal of subsidies is positive but varied between countries. In the short run net importing Southern African countries suffered from higher food prices and would be worse-off especially in the case of wheat and rice while net exporting countries benefited from increased production and exports in the case of sugar, maize and bovine meat. She recommended that in the short run countries that are highly vulnerable to food insecurity due to the removal of agricultural subsidies needed to find ways of mitigating these impacts.

58. In the long run the removal of developed countries' subsidies was desirable as it could stimulate domestic supply capacities to meet food security needs.

59. Regarding the negative impacts of subsidies, the presenter emphasized that there was need to develop strategies for mitigating the increase in the cost of importing wheat, maize and rice through, for example, a negotiation of the removal of subsidies to avoid price shocks. Other strategies included influencing a change in the tastes of the local population from wheat-based products to other sources of carbohydrates. She emphasized that strategies to improve domestic supply capacity should be pursued and these should include development of the irrigation sector, improved capacity to meet sanitary regulations and value addition. She also emphasized that strategies should consider the role of women in the agricultural sector and assist them appropriately.

60. In conclusion she emphasized that in the long run elimination of subsidies was desirable, however, in the medium to short term, there was need to improve domestic supply capacity so as to improve availability of food and exports. She also emphasized the importance of the support of COMESA and SADC to member States in negotiating the removal of subsidies by developed countries, capacity building and resource mobilization.

5.1 Panel Discussions on Agricultural Subsidies

61. Dr Renneth Mano of the University of Zimbabwe chaired the panel discussions.

62. On the world market and the production of goods, the discussants emphasized that in a fair trading environment, countries should be able to produce and export products based on comparative advantage. They noted that subsidies distorted the fair trading environment and presented challenges to the sub region to reap the benefits of such specialization. In the same vein, discussants also expressed concern about the impact of production subsidies by developing countries, especially their sustainability given the budgetary challenges. They emphasized that developing countries had to move to sustainable methods of supporting agriculture, methods focused on improving production and productive efficiency.

63. On food consumption, the discussants emphasized that it was important for Southern Africa to diversify consumption and production patterns. To facilitate diversification, prices of alternative sources of food had to be right in order to stimulate production.

64. The discussants noted that the removal of subsidies by 2013 did not provide developing countries with enough lead-time for the benefits to positively influence the attainment of the MDGs by 2015. They argued that it was important for developing countries to continue pushing for adherence to 2013 so that some of the benefits of the removal of subsidies could contribute towards the attainment of the MDGs in the sub region.

6.0 Open Discussions on Food Aid and Subsidies

65. In the ensuing discussions, a representative from World Food Programme (WFP) informed the meeting that issues surrounding the impact and targeting of food aid had been discussed at length within WFP. She emphasized that in revising this report and in developing recommendations, it was important to take cognizance of recent WFP work in this area. The representative observed that the lack of strong evidence on food aid dependency syndrome at household level had important implications on the role of food aid in closing the food gap. She underscored the need for more detailed work to evaluate the impact at micro-level.

66. The WFP representative underscored the need for more consistency in the definition and measurement of food aid used in the report to avoid misleading conclusions on the issue. She proposed that social protection policies be combined with food aid to simplify implementation and enhance effectiveness.

67. A representative from ECA Headquarters emphasized that the report should include a discussion on increased biofuel production which has both positive and negative implications on food production and hence food security. He emphasized that there was need for Africa to focus on agricultural and rural transformation to enhance the productive capacity of farmers and in that way reduce the need for food aid.

68. The presenter identified the poor linkage between producers and the market as one of the causes of food shortages as information on prices did not flow timeously. This disconnect had to be addressed to transform the sector from subsistence to a market driven sector. In this regard, he underscored the importance of an Africa-wide approach in infrastructure and market information issues to enable RECs and the private sector to make informed production and marketing decisions. He stressed the importance of a global view of agricultural development in Africa in which industrial and trade aspects were appropriately situated to enable the continent to be an effective player.

69. A discussant from Zambia's Ministry of Agriculture highlighted the need for a shift of focus away from food aid to improved productivity of the agricultural sector to achieve food security. In this regard, the discussant called for more investment in irrigation, research and extension, and in the control of animal diseases. In the same vein, other experts called for sustainable policies to reduce vulnerability to climate changes as a way of improving crop production and food security sustainability. They identified development of small-scale irrigation schemes as one such strategy to help smallholder farmers cope with droughts. Experts emphasized that country studies had

indicated that food shortages were the result of adverse weather conditions as most farmers were dependent on natural rains and therefore the sub region should, focus on addressing problems related to drought in the first instance.

70. A representative from Lesotho emphasized that it was cardinal to change farming practices and land tenure systems to facilitate effective multi-cropping to improve productivity and achieve food security. He also called for the development and implementation of appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS on food production and food security. With respect to food aid, he highlighted the need to reduce the dependency syndrome through strategies targeted at addressing productivity constraints. Other experts concurred with this observation and reiterated that food security strategies should also focus on the impact of HIV/AIDS on productivity at household level. In this regard, emphasis should be placed on capacity building or sustenance of livelihoods of the infected and affected individuals and households, and on improved care and general health for the vulnerable.

71. Experts observed that low productivity and food insecurity in the sub region was also due to structural factors such as; limited access to land, poor infrastructure including on-farm storage facilities and a poor road network, limited financial support to farmers and for research and extension services, lack of technical support and limited access to seed, fertilizer and farm machinery. To overcome these challenges, the experts recommended that governments in the sub region allocate adequate budgetary resources to the sector and concentrate their efforts on enhancing the capacity of smallholder farmers who played a critical role in food production. In this regard, countries should strive to achieve the 10% national budgetary expenditure on agriculture, the AU-CAADP threshold. Further, support to agricultural research and extension should be a priority for the sub region. Experts reiterated that subsidies to boost production was not the answer, instead, the sub region should concentrate on sustainable methods of supporting agriculture, methods focused on improving productive efficiency.

72. Another constraint identified by experts as a major contributor to food production deficits was the poor early warning system in the sub region. This limited the ability of farmers to plan accurately as they could not anticipate these challenges in time. The sub regional EWS needed to be improved through addressing the financial, technical and human resources constraints it currently faced.

73. Experts identified other constraints to increased agricultural output to include the undermined role of women in the sector due to structural constraints such as limited access to credit and land. Women were major players in the small to medium scale agricultural sector in Southern Africa and hence any strategies targeted at increasing production should address the constraints they faced.

74. In addition to structural factors, experts identified conflict as one of the causes of food insecurity in the sub region as displacement of people from food producing areas due to conflict led to food shortages. Experts emphasized the need for positive intervention (directly or indirectly) into regional conflicts to avert displacement of people and hence food shortages and the need for food aid.

75. In the case of Zambia, one expert observed that an improvement in the coverage and timely delivery of social protection and security would also help overcome the problems of food insecurity. He noted that the late payment of pension benefits and payment of compensation for damage to crops, livestock and assets caused by wildlife in game management areas resulted in affected communities being unable to access food. The presenter recommended an improvement in social security schemes for such eventualities and the increase in the use of safety net approaches and the development of disaster mitigation strategies. He emphasized that the provision of survival and life-skills training for members of low-capacity households, especially orphans and vulnerable children would improve the food security situation.

76. At sub regional level, the experts highlighted that the efforts in member States to redress structural factors to food insecurity vulnerability should be supported. The creation of a sub regional strategic food reserve was critical for food security in the sub region. Regarding this, the sub region needed to resolve issues such as what food crops to include in the strategic reserve, the proportional contribution of each country and the food security status of countries in relation to drawings. Greater regional cooperation and harmonization of food aid policies and strategies would be of immense benefit to the individual member States. Also, the sub region should share market information to guide production and marketing strategies.

77. The experts agreed that food insecurity needed to be tackled at household level through the use of programmes such as food for work and food for assets. However, these needed to be evaluated in terms of their long term assistance to households by dealing with questions focusing on whether individuals or households are really creating assets for building resilience to food shortages or alternatively are these programmes minimising dependence?

78. In his contribution, a representative from the Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPAN) proposed a critical look at research output and the promotion of irrigation and their efficacy and called for properly designed policies to achieve food security and reduce dependency on food aid. He emphasized that research output had to be linked to policy development so that the sub region benefits from the outcome of research activities targeted at finding solutions to food insecurity.

7.0 The Outcome of Group Synthesis

79. The objective of group work was to deepen discussion on the impact of food aid and agricultural subsidies on food security sustainability in Southern Africa; make suggestions on any changes needed to improve the report, specify or recommend the target audience for the report and provide additional recommendations on taking the study forward.

7.1 Terms for Definitions

80. The meeting agreed that key terms used in the report needed to be defined upfront in order to make the report reader-friendly. In this regard, the experts agreed that in developing a glossary of the terms shown in Table II, internationally accepted definitions should be adopted, adapted and contextualised as used in the report.

Table 2: Terms to be Included in a Glossary

Development Assistance	Subsidies
Dependency syndrome	Domestic support
Disaster	Export Support
Food Aid (programme, project and emergency)	Export and import parity price
Food security	Comparative advantage
Food Availability,	Food import dependency
Food Accessibility	Food import capacity
Food Utilization	Food import value
Long term sustainability	Market distortions
Poverty	Preferential trade arrangements
Region/Sub Region	Total Welfare
Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)	Consumer Surplus
Social Protection	Producer Surplus
Triangular procurement	Liberalization
Vulnerability	Partial and general equilibrium

7.2 Target Audience for the Findings of the Study

81. To ensure wider circulation and implementation of the recommendations of the study, the meeting agreed that in addition to member States and SADC/ COMESA, these findings should also be shared with other important stakeholders at both national and sub regional levels.

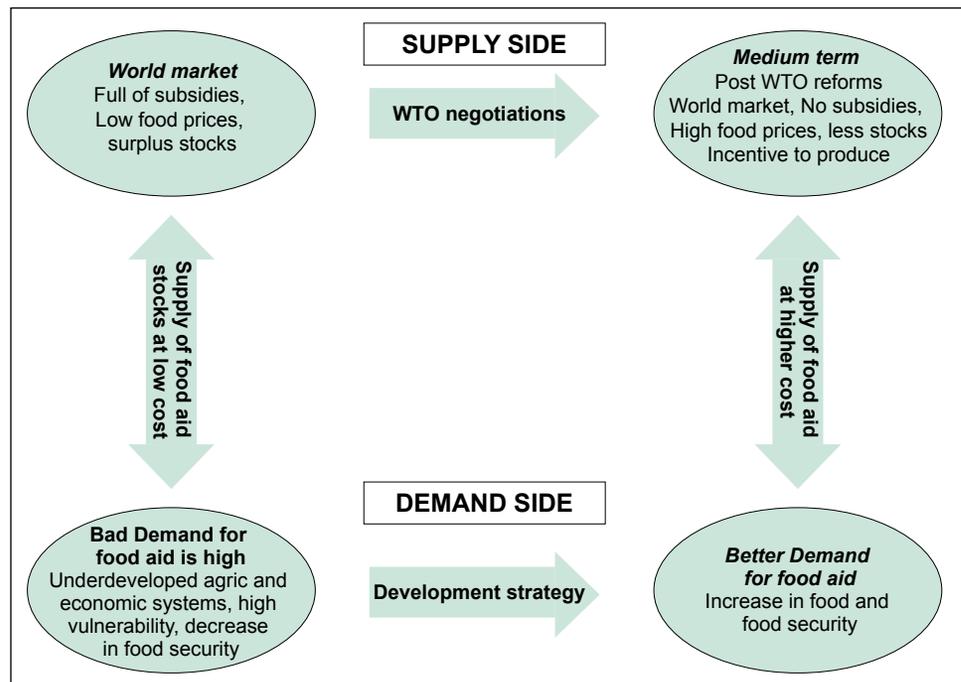
- At national level, the study should be targeted at: civil society (NGOs dealing with food security issues), the private sector, policy makers in Government, and cooperating partners, and

- At sub regional level, the study should be distributed to civil society and cooperating partners and at the Africa-wide/Pan African level the target should include; AU/ NEPAD and cooperating partners.

7.3 The Food Aid, Subsidies and Food Security Link

82. The Groups recommended that the framework for analysing the synergy between food aid, agricultural subsidies and food security sustainability should center on the food security pillars of; access, availability and utilisation. In this regard, the meeting recommended that Figure I be used to develop the analytical framework for this linkage.

Figure 1: Food Aid, Agricultural Subsidies and Food Security Framework



7.4 Action Plan on Food Aid Issues

83. Table III presents an action plan to address concerns specific to food aid and provides strategies to overcome these concerns and identifies the responsible institutions.

Table 3: Action Plan on Food Aid

Issues/ Concerns	Actions/Strategies	Responsible Institutions
The impact of HIV & AIDS on food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen assistance under social protection programs Formulate assistance policies and streamline implementation mechanisms Develop mechanisms to coordinate actors in the sector Conduct needs assessment to improve targeting Improve financing and distribution of food Develop distribution, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms 	Governments Donors NGOs CBOs Private Sector
GMOs and the contamination of food systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop consistent and binding sub regional policy guidelines and strengthen those already in existence such as quick testing, handling of food aid, policy and regulations, capacity building, public awareness and participation Strengthen regional bio-safety clearing houses Formulate harmonized GMO policies and policy guidelines and strengthen them Provide technical support to member States on GMOs 	Governments COMESA SADC AU CSOs Donors NEPAD
The gender face of poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use food for assets to improve access to capital by women Mainstream gender in development programmes Develop gender-sensitive financing mechanisms Use advocacy tools to get women out of poverty 	Governments CSOs NGOs WFP
Strategic Grain Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist national governments to hold adequate strategic grain and/or cash reserves Encourage households to have grain and/or cash reserves through appropriate policies 	SADC COMESA Cooperating partners Governments
The implementation of Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policy status and strengthen capacity to implement policies Develop an M&E system for policy implementation Mobilise resources to help in policy implementation Raise awareness and strengthen accountability 	Governments CSOs Donors SADC COMESA NGOs
Assessment of food gap and food needs at national and sub regional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake comprehensive assessment of food needs Integrate market issues into food gap and food needs assessment 	Governments CSOs SADC COMESA

Table 3: Action Plan on Food Aid (cont)

Issues/ Concerns	Actions/Strategies	Responsible Institutions
Coordination of Government, International community and Private Sector initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop common guidelines • Strengthen the role of government in leading the process • Consult all stakeholders regularly • Review existing assessment, procurement and distribution structures and capacity 	Governments SADC COMESA AU WFP C-SAFE NGOs Donors Private Sector
The effect of food aid on local prices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and improve the targeting of food aid through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Learning from experiences o Proper Assessment of food needs using early warning system o Type of commodity used as food aid and its effect on substitute prices 	Governments WFP NGOs Private sector Donors Recipients
Dependency on food aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve targeting through improved selection methods to reduce potential dependency • Enhance the diversification of sources of income • Enhance development of the agricultural sector through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Adequate budgetary allocations o Skills training o Infrastructures provision o Improved access to inputs o Extension and research • Develop appropriate technology to suit the needs of women, elderly and the chronically ill • Develop irrigation schemes • Improve awareness and communication strategies • Promote and increase Intra African Trade 	Governments Donors Private Sector Academics Media AU SADC COMESA
The politics of food aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate empirical evidence for informed decisions • Raise awareness of issues around food aid among politicians and recipients of food aid • Implement food aid programmes according to laid down procedures 	Academics Research Institutions Governments SADC COMESA Implementing Agencies Media NGOs CSOs
Externalization of response to the food crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance mobilization of internal financial and manpower resources • Empower and capacitate civil society organizations and communities • Build capacity of governments to early response 	Governments Civil Society Donors SADC COMESA
Procurement – the sources of food used as aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage national/ sub regional procurement if surplus exists and the market functions properly • Harmonize sanitary quality standards • Integrate market issues into the needs assessments • Support traders and facilitate access to credit • Develop procurement infrastructure • Improve timeliness of procurement of food • Develop guidelines on food aid procurement and distribution 	WFP C-SAFE NGOs Donors Governments Private Sector SADC COMESA CSOs

84. The meeting emphasized that the general lack of evidence on the negative impact of food aid on national productivity and on dependency could be due to the measurement methodology used in the different countries. They recommended a strengthening of the capacity of the sub region to conduct impact studies to enable them to design appropriate policies and strategies.

85. Other important issues in the management of food aid identified by experts and which needed closer scrutiny included; the administrative costs of food distribution, co-ordination, transparency and accountability and the development of food aid policies as a component of food security.

7.5 Action Plan on Agricultural Subsidies

86. Table IV presents an action plan for dealing with issues specific to subsidies and the suggested strategies and identifies the responsible institutions/organisations.

Table 4: Action Plan on Agricultural Subsidies

Issues/ Concerns	Actions/Strategies	Responsible Institutions
Bias to terms of trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support WTO negotiations to eliminate subsidies through coordinated lobbying and advocacy 	SADC COMESA ACP WTO African Group Governments CSOs
Formulation and implementation of policies to address food security and food aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate appropriate policies Strengthen implementation of policies Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms Provide technical support to member States for policy implementation 	Governments CSOs SADC COMESA FAO
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, operate, maintain and improve appropriate infrastructure 	Governments SADC COMESA Private sector AfDB Civil Society
Market distortions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a conducive investment climate through the development and implementation of appropriate policies Stimulate domestic trade Provide up-to-date market information Establish and operationalise agricultural market information system 	Governments Private Sector SADC COMESA AfDB

7.6 Recommended Structure of the Final Report

87. To enhance the content, structure and flow of the report, the meeting recommended that it be recast according to the following outline;

1.0 Introduction

- Outline the motivation and objectives of the study

2.0 Conceptual Framework

- Present a conceptual framework showing the linkages between subsidies, food aid and food security to help articulate the discussions in the rest of the report. In addition, develop and frame the three issues into sufficient and convincing arguments informed by objective evidence-based analysis

3.0 Literature Review

- Present a situational analysis; include information captured in country reports and also cover issues such as poverty and HIV/AIDS
- Review the food security situation in Southern Africa and outline the determinants of the trend

4.0 Methods and Procedures

- Integrate the assessment of the impact of food aid and farm subsidies of developed countries on food security in the sub region
- Integrate findings from Country studies into the main report as illustrative boxes

5.0 Impact of food aid on sustainable food security

- Present an analysis of the impact of food aid on sustainable food security.
- Revise methodology for analysing food aid, for food security use anthropometric measure in addition to food production e.g. proportion of undernourished, percent stunted. Alternatively use the food gap.

6.0 Impact of agricultural subsidies on sustainable food security

- Present an analysis of the impact of subsidies on sustainable food security

7.0 Conclusions

- The conclusions must answer to the research question regarding the impact of food aid and agricultural subsidies on food security sustainability. Demonstrate and elaborate on what the assessment or study has brought out. Are there any new findings or it is the same issues as from other studies.
- The linkages between food aid, subsidies and food security must be reflected in the conclusion.

8.0 Recommendations of the Meeting

88. To enhance the report and discussions and the recommendations generated from the study, the meeting agreed that;

- Key issues raised be taken into account in finalising the report;
- A discussion of the seed sector be included in strategies to enhance the productive capacity of farmers in the sub region and reference to the Africa Seed and Biotechnology Programme should be made in the discussions;
- The discussion on the seed sector should also include GMO issues;
- A discussion on the development of a sound agriculture information system should be included as a strategy to provide up-to-date market information to farmers so as to guide production and marketing decisions;
- A more in-depth discussion of the gender dimension should be included given the role of women in the agricultural sector in the sub region;
- A thorough discussion of the HIV/AIDS, food security and development nexus should be included in the report;
- A discussion of diversification from dependency on maize should be included in the recommendations as a strategy to overcome drought-induced food shortages;
- The recommendations should emphasize the need for countries to focus on social protection instead of solely on food aid;
- The report should emphasize that food aid policies should be integrated in agriculture policies besides being in disaster management policies in which they currently reside for most countries;
- The recommendations should emphasize that agricultural subsidies deserve to be a priority on the agenda of WTO given their impact on food security sustainability. In addition there is need for further interrogation on the role of different stakeholders in enhancing refinement of discussions and engagement on WTO issues;
- The recommendations should emphasize the need for better preparation among government officials for WTO negotiations and the need for capacity building in government for effective engagement at such fora. Further, the recommendations should emphasize the need for the African region to develop a common agenda on WTO issues; and
- Recommendations needed to be more elaborate and assertive and give precise indications of areas where there is insufficient evidence and on areas requiring additional work.

9.0 Way Forward

89. The experts agreed that;
- The revised report should be circulated to experts before finalisation;
 - Further research to deepen this study and incorporate a community level dimension was needed;
 - Capacity to implement the recommendations of the study needed to be developed at national and sub regional level;
 - A policy brief teasing out major issues in food aid, food security and subsidies needed to be developed and circulated to all stakeholders;
 - An integrated plan of action to implement the recommendations of the study should be developed by the RECs; and
 - ECA-SA should initiate dialogue with policy makers to ensure a buy in of the findings of this study.

10.0 Closure of Meeting

90. The Chairperson of the Bureau, Ms Thabsile Mlangeni, thanked all the participants for their hard work, professionalism and dedication during the discussions. She expressed confidence that the recommendations of the meeting would ensure that the report assisted the sub region in developing appropriate policies and strategies for dealing with food aid and subsidies for food security sustainability. She expressed satisfaction that the tasks set by ECA-SA at the beginning of the meeting had been achieved.

91. In offering a vote of thanks, a representative of the African Union, Dr Jenet Edeme, thanked ECA-SA for organizing such an important meeting and for inviting a diverse group of experts to deliberate on the subject. She expressed satisfaction at the progress made during the meeting and the good rapport during discussions and reiterated the commitment of the group towards improving the quality of the report. She challenged her colleagues to continue providing inputs to that effect.

92. In closing, the Director of ECA-SA, Ms Jennifer Kargbo, thanked The Chairperson of the Bureau and all the participants for their hard work and dedication during the meeting. She assured the meeting that the recommendations of the meeting would assist the sub region in developing appropriate policies and strategies for dealing with food aid and subsidies for food security sustainability. The Director emphasized that the review had provided ideas for the benefit of the whole sub region, especially in outlining the effects of food aid and agricultural subsidies on food security sustainability and provided important recommendations to address some of the challenges.

93. The Director informed the experts that the meeting had also provided an opportunity for ECA-SA to expand its network of professionals in the sub region. In that regard, she informed the meeting of plans to launch an electronic platform to facilitate discussion and dialogue and enhance networking among experts.

94. She reiterated that ECA-SA would continue to call on the experts until the report was finalized and disseminated. The Director re-emphasized that recommendations of the meeting would be taken into account in revising the report and that the report would be circulated to all of them before finalisation.

Annex I

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