

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION: ZIMBABWE'S PERSPECTIVE

Chairperson of the Conference

Director General and Staff

Representatives of Member States

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Zimbabwe joins other member states in **congratulating** the **Chair of the 38th Conference** and **his Deputies** on **election** to steer the work of this very important meeting. I would like to **commend** you for the **sterling work** you have done thus far.

Allow me to **express** the Zimbabwe delegation's **appreciation** of the **outstanding work** by the **Director General** since assuming office in January 2012. May I also take this opportunity to **congratulate** the **Director General** for his excellent reports on the **State of Food and Agriculture** and **Programme of Work and Budget (PWB)**.

Turning to the **theme** of the general **debate**, the Zimbabwe delegation believes that much more can indeed

be achieved by taking a food systems approach which goes beyond production to give deserved attention to post-harvest processing, distribution and marketing. The approach takes into consideration changing production and consumption patterns to ensure food is available, accessible, safe, diverse and nutritious.

The challenge that many developing nations face – Zimbabwe included – is how to achieve sustainable food systems. Allow me, Chairperson to share Zimbabwe's experience as it relates to sustainable food systems.

1.Sustainable Food Systems are Based on Shared Diagnosis of National, Regional and Global Challenges / Policies

Zimbabwe is committed to the **Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)** and the attainment of a **Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)** and **Millennium Development Goals** within **COMESA** and **SADC** food security and natural resources frameworks.

Informed by these frameworks, Zimbabwe has in place the **Medium Term Plan (MTP)** and **Draft Zimbabwe Comprehensive Agriculture Policy Framework (ZCAP), 2012 - 2032**. The latter is to be implemented

through the **Zimbabwe Agriculture Investment Plan (ZAIP)** which Government is finalizing.

Realizing the **multi-disciplinary** and **multi-sectoral nature** of food and agriculture systems, Zimbabwe is working on a myriad of **policy initiatives**, in other food security **related ministries** such as **Land, Forestry, Water, Environment** and **Rural Development** to provide a comprehensive **enabling environment** for sustainable food systems.

Some of the policies include the recently launched **multi-sectoral** and **multi-stakeholder Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP)** aimed at increasing food production, productivity, diversity, food safety and standards; the **Comprehensive Land Policy** and **Comprehensive Gender Sensitive Agricultural Policy Framework**.

2.Support to Production and Promotion of Market Linkages is Central to Sustainable Food systems

The Government of Zimbabwe in partnerships with **development partners** is supporting **crop and livestock** production through the **Electronic Voucher System** to enable **vulnerable households** to access **breeding stock** for livestock, particularly small stock.

In Zimbabwe, **Contract farming** has emerged as an important agriculture **value chain coordination mechanism** that links farmers to **input and output markets**. In order to extend contract farming to other crops, particularly grains and horticulture to ensure food security and nutrition, the Government of Zimbabwe commissioned a study to develop an enabling **Contract Farming Regulatory Framework** that will promote fairness and eliminate **side marketing**.

In the wake of the inevitable realities of **regional and global integration**, the Government of Zimbabwe is aware of the need of well functioning local agriculture commodities markets. In this regard, Zimbabwe is structuring an **agricultural commodities exchange** that will also provide **local level competitive physical primary markets** for an estimated **1.4 million smallholder farmers** and improve their **access to credit** from the banking system.

3. Investment in Post-Harvest Storage, Handling and Processing Facilities is Key to Sustainable Food Security and Nutrition

The Government of Zimbabwe is working on developing **national capacity** in **crop and pest management** to

address problems that smallholder farmers are facing in **handling and storing food grains** while at the household level Government is promoting building of **metal silos** to **prevent and or reduce food wastages**.

4.Sustainable Food Systems Require Coordination of Stakeholders Across the Value Chain

The Government of Zimbabwe is working on an **Agriculture Sector Coordination Mechanism** that will coordinate stakeholders and interventions at the national, provincial and district levels to ensure sustainable food systems through smooth flow of **inputs, finance** and **information** on production and market conditions.

5.Sustainable Food Systems Conserve the Environment

Zimbabwe is implementing a capacity building project in **Integrated Pest Management Practices** to protect **forest resources** and sustain rural livelihoods. This is in addition to the sustainable management of existing indigenous forests where communities find refuge during droughts to find alternative nutritious foods.

In the wake of **climate change** and **recurrent droughts**, **conservation farming** has emerged as an important

intervention to ensure sustainable food systems. Currently **120,000 Ha**, the rate of adoption of conservation farming however remains constrained due to **low levels of mechanization**.

6. Food Systems are Vulnerable to Drought and Diseases Outbreaks

In order to reduce the vulnerability of food systems to emergencies, Zimbabwe has an **Emergency Drought Mitigation Operation for Livestock** in the dry Southern regions of the country.

Other **preventive emergency programmes** include **provision of agricultural inputs, input and output market linkages** and **capacity building in research and extension**.

7. Conclusion and Way forward

Consistent with promoting sustainable food systems for food security and nutrition in developing nations, Zimbabwe would like to express its **profound support** for the **Programme of Work and Budget (PWB)** presented by the Director General for the next biennium. Zimbabwe prioritizes support to the **Technical Cooperation Programmes**, and **Decentralization** as well as **capacity**

building of technical staff. The concept of an **increased FAO budget** requires further discussion and consensus to ensure that FAO is **adequately resourced** to carry out the **mandate at hand**, especially given the **renewed focus** on increased agricultural production in order to meet growing demand of food by an increasing population.

Zimbabwe will continue to collaborate with FAO in the following areas:

- Gender mainstreaming in agriculture programmes
- Promotion of small grains in dry areas
- Improved coordination of agricultural assistance
- Support to production of quality seeds and improved farming practices
- Capacity building of service delivery institutions
- Smallholder Dairy Production
- Rehabilitation of Dip Tanks
- Promotion of market linkages and contract farming
- Smallholder irrigation rehabilitation and development
- Promotion of mechanization for conservation farming
- Raising awareness on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests to reduce deforestation and enhance livelihoods from the utilisation of both timber and non-timber forestry products

Thank You