

Internal Evaluation

FAO's Response to the Continuing Crisis in Southern Africa

The main findings in the paper were discussed at a workshop of FAO staff in southern Africa and commented on by TC Department and technical units, but represent primarily the views of the evaluation team, except where otherwise stated.

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J. Markie – Evaluation Service – Team leader
M.J. Watt – Consultant
M. Zaroug – Consultant
C. Tarazona – APO Evaluation Service
- The evaluation team was also assisted during part of its visits by G. Hemrich – ESAF

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Executive Summary

- 1) The evaluation of FAO's response to the continuing crisis in southern Africa was commissioned from the Evaluation Service by TCE, on behalf of the TC Department. The evaluation was to contribute to strengthening the overall FAO strategy of cooperation in the countries of southern Africa, with the emphasis on priorities and lessons for the future. It was conducted by a team of four persons, including two specialist external consultants and two from the FAO Evaluation Service. Upon completion of the mission's field work, a two-day workshop, to further validate and expand the findings, was held with participation by the evaluation team and 22 FAO staff from throughout the southern Africa sub-region and from TCE, TCI and ESA.
- 2) The drought in southern Africa (2002) produced a substantial emergency response but also drew attention to the overall plight of the sub-region. Many countries of southern Africa appear to be in the grip of a downward spiral of poverty as a result of HIV-AIDS, failures of governance (including conditions for economic growth), declining soil fertility and inadequate donor investment. There has been an increase in rural households subject to continuous food insecurity and of households subject to seasonal food insecurity. The increase in the number of vulnerable households means that any crisis, whether it be due to climatic shocks, civil disturbance or economic mismanagement, becomes increasingly difficult for the communities to absorb. The sub-region is thus suffering from entirely predictable food insecurity which becomes steadily worse and is accelerated by each crisis.
- 3) The momentum to tackle HIV-AIDS is growing but it seems almost certain that infection in the proportion of the active population in rural areas will continue to rise for the coming years and deaths from AIDS will rise more steeply from the currently infected population. In agriculture, the number of single-parent households, orphan households and households headed by the elderly will grow significantly. This will further compound with the effects of malnutrition, frequent pregnancy, and diseases such as malaria to lower the productivity of labour. At the same time, despite the increase in illness and death among the active working population, the rural and urban populations will continue to grow, albeit more slowly.
- 4) The threats from rural poverty and HIV-AIDS are closely related and it is clear that the best buffer for vulnerable households is surplus within the community and the best buffer for vulnerable communities is rising prosperity in the country. Agricultural development focused on basic food security for all, thus needs to promote both growth and safety nets for households which are in continuous or periodic food deficit. In the rural economies of southern Africa, agriculture remains the main potential motor for economic growth as well as the main potential origin of decline.
- 5) The overall implications of this for rural households and agriculture are:
 - a) There will be a growing number of rural households which cannot be viable. These will need to receive assistance for food either continuously or on a seasonal basis. They also need to be provided with the means to produce what they can for themselves;
 - b) Households with depleted and weak physical labour need, to an even greater extent than others, to increase economic returns and food production per unit of labour and to reduce the need for physical strength. Probably the single most important way of reducing this physical effort is to increase the value of production per unit of area. The ways to do this include irrigation, higher value crops and fertilizer application, but other factors of importance include:
 - i) income from small livestock;
 - ii) use of farm power especially animal drawn equipment;

- iii) spreading the work of cultivation during the dry season, as has been done with conservation farming in Zambia; and
 - iv) reducing domestic labour requirements by, for example, addressing domestic water requirements along with irrigation and improving supplies of fuel wood;
 - c) Irrigation has to come much more to the fore in providing for intensification;
 - d) The maintenance and improvement of soil fertility needs to receive greater attention; and
 - e) Special attention needs to be given to the enabling environment for equitable economic growth, in particular removing barriers to trade at sub-regional level and within countries.

- 6) There is some indication that donors do recognize the southern Africa crisis as different and may be willing (albeit on a reduced scale) to fund programmes aimed at continuing relief and rehabilitation. The recognition now being given to the scourge of HIV-AIDS also represents a funding opportunity to tackle contributory causes and results of the pandemic.

- 7) In southern Africa, FAO responded effectively to the emergency and in several countries provided a differentiated response, not only based on seeds and tools. In Angola, recovering from civil war and major population displacement, the assistance quite rightly emphasized the basic means of production. The total volume of FAO technical cooperation for development in southern Africa has been declining substantially and the evaluation found examples of both effective projects and interventions of limited appropriateness and impact.

- 8) The mission concluded that FAO's basic priorities for the region were sound and would highlight the following concentration areas:
 - a) Building from successes in the emergency response for development, putting together ad-hoc packages of funding as done for emergency assistance. The most successful of the emergency interventions appear to have brought together NGOs and viable systems technology for potentially sustainable development in line with SPFS objectives (here, the examples of conservation farming in Zambia and treadle pump irrigation in Malawi were the most striking);
 - b) Basic information systems with emphasis on food security and vulnerability information, including production data but also wider agricultural and rural development data;
 - c) Policy development, where the mission would draw particular attention to:
 - i) Removing disincentives in the market and contributing to market stability, in particular minimization of national and sub-regional barriers to trade;
 - ii) Provision of an enabling environment and support for the development of small rural enterprise for trade and value added;
 - iii) Safety nets and sound food aid policies for vulnerable and deficit households and individuals in rural and urban areas, including those with HIV-AIDS;
 - iv) Land tenure issues;
 - v) Enabling relocation of households to areas with levels of low population density and higher production potential (of the countries visited, this is a possibility in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia but to only a marginal extent in Malawi); and
 - vi) Maximization of returns to human physical effort.

- 9) The greatest issue for increased agricultural productivity and thus food and income, is increasing return to physical effort (including for those households with depleted labour resources due to HIV-AIDS). Important in this are both policy and demonstration work for appropriate irrigation development and appropriate mechanization (including minimum tillage) to increase the area under rainfed cultivation with low-input systems. Diversification is also critical and the role of small livestock and aquaculture are important in this.

10) The evaluation also found that whereas in southern Africa donors feel FAO has a useful role to play in emergencies, they have a more limited view of what the Organization's development role should be, stressing in particular information and policy work. The Organization will need to further unify its emergency and development response in fighting vulnerability to hunger, in the context of the challenges posed by a downward spiral of poverty and stalled economic growth, building upon those areas where both donors and governments agree that the Organization has a comparative strength.

11) Rolling 3-4 year national FAO programme frameworks should be piloted in southern Africa. Each framework should be developed in discussion with government and take account of donor priorities, existing donor programmes and FAO's own priorities, coalescing around no more than three to four priority areas. The formal agreement of the government should be sought on the framework and FAO-TCP assistance would normally be focused within those areas. TCE emergency plans of action would then be linked wherever possible to achieving the goals of the longer-term programme frameworks.

12) To increase capacity in-country, FAO should appoint national technical resource advisory panels for scientific and policy matters, composed of specialists within the country. Consultants and support staff should also be hired, spread on a medium-term basis over several projects (which should be easier if there are concentration areas within a national framework).

13) FAO did not generally follow a standardized seeds and tools response in southern Africa and this would not have been appropriate to this type of emergency. In emergency situations, FAO should:

- a) seek out appropriate viable farming technologies and systems' approaches which have already been proven at the local level and have organizations which can assist their further expansion, when given additional support. These should then be actively promoted in the emergency response;
- b) build the maximum flexibility and definition of process into the projects. This means that donor support within budgets should be sought for key aspects which often cannot precede design and thus need to be addressed at the start of implementation, including detailed identification and targeting of beneficiary households, needs assessment and monitoring and evaluation; and
- c) in addition to continuing efforts to improve response times, establish a minimum acceptable period between the completed formulation and approval of an emergency project and the latest date for satisfactory planting. No project should be approved for assistance which does not meet these time criteria.

14) In line with the concern of AGA and policies of EMPRES, considerably more attention needs to be given to livestock emergencies and the role of livestock in vulnerable households' food security and survival strategies. The first priority must continue to be overcoming epidemic diseases. In most countries of southern Africa, with the continued decline of government services, a new strategy is, however, required that combines government facilitation with non-governmental, farmer and commercial activities. It is also possible that a new strategy will help to convince donors that something can be done.

15) The mission welcomes the wider and more flexible concept of the SPFS now being developed in Mozambique. It is recommended that in southern Africa the SPFS be regarded more in terms of programme goals to be achieved and less as SPFS projects. In this regard, the opportunities provided by the emergency development work and the cooperation with NGOs should be built upon and there should be less reliance on government.

16) FAO needs to give even greater attention to the strengthening of national information systems on all aspects of food, agriculture and related vulnerability. In doing this, FAO should work for complementarity and networking of systems for efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. In addition, every effort needs to be made to continue to strengthen the provision of remote sensing/GIS analysis through SADC.

17) In southern Africa, FAO should treat the policy and strategy development processes as continuing and involving the executive, parliament, civil society, donors and the civil service. The greatest need is for understanding of issues and not generally for fully elaborated solutions. This implies that FAO has to be prepared to make continuing inputs in support of the FAOR.

18) The mission attaches high importance to the integration and development of trade for the small economies of the sub-region. Priority is therefore attached to regional projects which can help to reduce trade barriers. Some capacities, such as that for remote sensing/GIS early warning information analysis, can also be most effectively and efficiently provided at the sub-regional level but realism is required on the capacities which can be sustained in sub-regional institutions.

19) It is essential in considering institution building to exercise a great deal of realism on the prospects for sustainability, including whether it is likely to continue to receive donor support into the medium term. The limitations on civil services as a result of HIV-AIDS and budgetary constraints are considerable. Networked solutions bringing together government, donors and NGOs are often most likely to succeed and it is important to examine if the institutional capacity to be established or strengthened is best in the public, NGO, private or mixed sectors. Other important questions concern whether it would be more appropriate to establish the capacity within the framework of a sub-regional institution, such as COMESA, SACU or SADC.

20) The report identifies a number of issues which will need to be examined in the forthcoming evaluation of decentralization. In addition, attention should be given to those implementation issues discussed in the report and not addressed directly by the studies currently underway of administration and procedural arrangements for both emergency and development projects. It needs to be borne in mind that field and decentralized staff attach the highest priority to resolution of these issues in improving FAO's efficiency and performance. These include in particular issues related to:

- a) Flexible provisions in emergency projects for detailed needs' identification, etc. after projects approved (Recommendation 4);
- b) Minimum acceptable time between project approval and input distribution (Recommendation 5);
- c) Levels of authority, payment delays, contracts and letters of agreement (para. 193);
- d) FAORs' operational responsibilities (para. 194);
- e) Emergency coordinators (paras. 195-197); and
- f) FAO-TCP (paras. 198-199).

I. Introduction

21) The evaluation of FAO's response to the continuing crisis in southern Africa¹ was commissioned from the Evaluation Service by TCE, on behalf of TC Department as a whole. The evaluation is internal to FAO. As per the terms of reference (see Annex 1), the purpose of the evaluation was to contribute to strengthening the overall FAO strategy of cooperation in the countries of southern Africa, with the emphasis on priorities and lessons for the future. Taking realistic account of available resources, the evaluation was intended to concentrate on the validity of priorities and the balance and design of the overall project and non-project assistance in the FAO portfolio.

22) Basing its overall judgement on the future potential for the FAO programme and its constituent projects to have a sustainable impact on the livelihoods of the people of southern Africa, in particular their nutrition status and capacity to withstand HIV/AIDS, the evaluation was planned to examine:

- a) needs assessment and policy;
- b) programming;
- c) resource mobilization;
- d) the efficiency of FAO's management and coordination processes for programme development and implementation;
- e) partnerships and liaison and coordination with others in particular with WFP;
- f) the immediate effects of FAO's assistance;
- g) the sustainable impacts (actual and potential) of FAO's assistance; and
- h) recommendations and lessons, particularly with respect to an integrated response to the emergency, rehabilitation and development.

23) The evaluation was conducted by a team of four persons (John Markie - FAO Evaluation Service, Team Leader; Michael Watt - consultant specialist in crop protection, production and emergencies; Mahgoub Zaroug - specialist in livestock, range and water use; and Carlos Tarazona APO - FAO Evaluation Service). During part of the country visits, the mission was also assisted by Günter Hemrich - food security specialist FAO-ESAF. Upon completion of the mission's field work a two-day workshop to further validate and expand the findings was held with participation by the evaluation team, 22 FAO staff from throughout the southern Africa sub-region and from TCE, TCI and ESA. Those from the sub-region included: the Sub-regional Representative, SAFR and a member of SAFR staff; FAORs, Deputy FAORs (programme) and emergency coordinators (the list of participants is provided as Annex 2). Except where otherwise stated as being the comments of workshop participants, the findings elaborated in the report are those of the evaluation team, which were discussed at the workshop, but not necessarily in detail.

24) Following finalization of the terms of reference in discussion with TC Department, work on the evaluation has been carried out in four phases, i.e.:

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the group of countries being referred to as southern Africa in this evaluation, excludes South Africa itself and covers Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe which were included in the July 2002 UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) and where assistance is coordinated, along with Mozambique, by the FAO sector of RIACSO (Regional Inter-Agency Coordination and Support Office) in Johannesburg. It also includes Angola which has its own CAP following the civil war, and Mozambique which remained outside the CAP but was affected by many aspects of the same emergency and suffered from severe floods in January 2000.

- a) desk study and discussion with Headquarters officers of the overall scope of FAO work in the sub-region and of the programme in the four countries selected for country visits (Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia);
- b) country visits of approximately one week each to the four sample countries where, with the aid of a country check-list, a sample of projects was visited and discussions held with beneficiaries and discussions also held with government, UN agencies, donors, and NGOs to gain their perceptions on priorities and FAO's work;
- c) visits to SAFR and SADC; and
- d) two-day sub-regional workshop with FAO staff as discussed above.

25) The final step in the evaluation is to be completed through consultation on this discussion paper with FAO headquarters units and the FAO staff engaged in the workshop and visited during the mission.

II. Background and Context

A. The Crisis

26) In July 2002, southern African countries made an appeal for emergency assistance under the UN CAP procedure². Angola has been subject to a separate CAP over the many years of conflict. The drought produced a substantial emergency response but also drew attention to the overall plight of southern Africa, where poverty and food insecurity are generally found to have been on the increase and the HIV-AIDS situation is steadily worsening. This context has led many agencies, including those of the UN system, to reassess not only their emergency but also their development response.

27) The evaluation found that there were significant differences between countries but in southern Africa overall there is an increase in rural households subject to continuous food insecurity and of households subject to seasonal food insecurity. The increase in the number of vulnerable households means that any crisis, whether it be due to climatic shocks, civil disturbance or economic mismanagement, becomes increasingly difficult for the communities to absorb. The underlying reasons for this situation have at their base the failure of the economies of southern Africa to take off on a growth path and a steadily worsening rise in HIV-AIDS and also malaria.

28) Of particular importance for the agricultural sector have been economic and crisis mismanagement, a decline in extension and social services, as a result of policy changes, budgetary constraints and most recently HIV-AIDS. The removal of unsustainable subsidies to fertilizers and tractor hire services has also had a profound impact on the total production levels of basic foods, especially maize. The recent impact of HIV-AIDS cannot be overstated. For example in 2001, some 22 percent of Zambia's adult population was HIV positive and life expectancy had dropped from 54 two decades ago, to 38 years of age.

29) However, if effective action is to be taken, there also needs to be an understanding of what the southern Africa crisis is not. Although parts of South Africa, Zimbabwe and southern Zambia may have suffered a slight decline in rainfall, there is no evidence of major climatic shift. Probably more important is the continuing level of decline in the fertility of many soils, as periods of fallow have become shorter or been eliminated entirely, as with growing population density the possibility to open up new lands has decreased.

² www.reliefweb.int Regional Humanitarian Assistance Strategy in Response to the Crisis in Southern Africa (US\$ 611 million appeal for 12.8 million people)

30) Even at the height of the 2002 emergency, it is unlikely that there was a shortage of total food in southern Africa as a whole and several countries continued to have national surpluses. There has not yet been a major decline in the agricultural workforce, although this will almost certainly now happen as a result of HIV-AIDS. Also, the productivity of the existing labour force has been falling, partly as a result of the decline in soil fertility, but also because of the vicious circle of poverty which contributes with supply side factors to declining fertilizer use. The decrease in farm power as the number of working tractors steadily decreases and animal draught power, depleted by disease poverty and lawlessness have all played their part.

B. Resources for the FAO Programme in Southern Africa

31) As with other parts of the world, the total volume of FAO technical cooperation for development in southern Africa has been declining substantially (see Table 1).

Table 1: Delivery of Field Programme (US\$ 000)									
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Angola - Total Delivery	675	814	1,249	638	945	1,105	2,292	2,438	5,378
- Delivery Emergency Only	388	415	313	84	0	81	1,418	1,767	4,636
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	287	399	935	554	945	1,024	874	671	741
Botswana - Total Delivery	1,088	1,185	965	267	192	57	26	54	80
- Delivery Emergency Only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	78
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	1,088	1,185	965	267	192	57	26	54	2
Lesotho - Total Delivery	682	635	184	88	93	125	137	62	12
- Delivery Emergency Only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	682	635	184	88	93	125	137	62	12
Malawi - Total Delivery	1,783	1,593	1,283	992	582	535	337	832	990
- Delivery Emergency Only	0	0	0	0	29	219	86	368	419
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	1,783	1,593	1,283	992	553	316	251	464	571
Mozambique - Total Delivery	4,041	3,614	3,484	3,352	4,316	5,293	6,278	11,026	6,449
- Delivery Emergency Only	229	123	1,038	77	117	320	2,081	6,368	2,846
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	3,812	3,491	2,446	3,275	4,198	4,973	4,197	4,657	3,603
Swaziland - Total Delivery	1,047	469	486	381	176	165	264	139	404
- Delivery Emergency Only	256	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	282
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	791	469	486	381	176	165	264	139	121
Zambia - Total Delivery	2,968	2,548	2,328	3,699	2,535	2,014	1,286	1,605	4,029
- Delivery Emergency Only	0	188	1	36	147	161	48	262	3,696
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	2,968	2,360	2,327	3,663	2,388	1,853	1,238	1,343	332
Zimbabwe - Total Delivery	1,627	241	408	176	507	280	200	693	341
- Delivery Emergency Only	0	0	0	0	92	0	0	454	258
- Delivery Excluding Emergency	1,627	241	408	176	415	280	200	239	84

[source FAO FPMIS]

32) The relationship between development and funds mobilized under the emergency for the 2002/3 period is estimated from available information in Table 2 below. These figures are very approximate because data had to be compiled from somewhat varying time-periods, and expenditure data was not firm, but figures do provide orders of magnitude.

Table 2: Summary of FAO annual programme delivery in southern Africa for the 2002/3 Emergency (US\$ million)				
	Delivery Emergencies including Livestock	Delivery Development	Total	Ratio of Emergency to Development Assistance Delivery 2002/3
Angola	5.12	0.91	6.03	5.6
Lesotho	0.53	0.10	0.63	5.3
Malawi	0.64	0.73	1.37	0.9
Mozambique	2.24	7.14	9.38	0.3
Swaziland	0.70	0.98	1.68	0.7
Zambia	6.2	1.30	7.50	4.8
Zimbabwe	2.7	0.35	3.05	7.7

Source: FPMIS

33) It can be seen that there are very major contrasts between countries. Mozambique has a high overall expenditure and the place of emergency expenditure is relatively low, as no emergency declaration was made in 2002. Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe also have relatively high overall expenditures, but the picture is dominated by emergency assistance (it should be noted that, as will be discussed later, in Zambia and Malawi substantial development activity has been undertaken with emergency funds).

34) With regard to development expenditures Table 3 summarizes the total delivery and purposes of expenditure for the four years 1999-2002. Angola is excluded because there was so little development expenditure during the civil war.

Table 3: Estimated annual development delivery and purposes of expenditure 1999-2002							
	% of Total Delivery					Average Annual Delivery US\$ (000)	% TCP
	SPFS, Nutrition and Poverty Alleviation	Policy, Strategy and Legislation	Information and Data	Other Institution Building	Other		
Lesotho	18%	-	67%	15%	-	66	82%
Malawi	82%	12%	1%	5%	-	408	51%
Mozambique	10%	15%	19%	18%	38%*	4,224	3%
Swaziland	60%	3%	7%	30%	-	228	79%
Zambia	62%	8%	-	27%	3%	1,110	36%**
Zimbabwe	40%	-	-	20%	40%	195	100%

* Mostly one community forestry and wildlife project
 ** Most non-TCP accounted for by one project
Source: Mission calculation on basis of FPMIS data

Table 4: Emergency Delivery in Relation to the Appeal Year 2002/03			
	US\$ million		Percentage of Adjusted Requirement met
	Original Appeal (OCHA)	Adjusted Requirement (OCHA)	
Angola*	5.2	6.9	75%
Lesotho	3.3	2.2	24%
Malawi	1.6	1.3	49%
Swaziland	1.4	2.0	35%
Zambia	2.6	5.7	91% (now over 100%)
Zimbabwe	16.1	10.8	25%
Total	30.2	28.9	35%

* Angola year 2002
Source: OCHA

35) The evaluation team examined the underlying reasons for the divergences in the size of the FAO programme between countries and FAO's relative performance in attracting funds for the programme. In this regard, it may be noted that as a proportion of total development assistance (OECD-DAC) the figures are not as disparate as they at first appear. As Swaziland receives relatively limited donor funding, FAO TCP in fact makes the programme there the largest as a ratio to total donor funding. For Zambia, the figure for development assistance is relatively low, but that for emergency assistance high. Although Mozambique was the largest programme, especially the largest development programme, it was close to the median in terms of a proportion of total donor assistance to the country. Malawi had much the smallest programme when looked at in terms of total donor assistance.

Table 5: Major features of the FAO Emergency Response in the Countries Visited by the Mission	
Angola	Some four million internally displaced people are now settling and FAO coordinates and provides agricultural inputs, principally of seeds and tools.
Malawi	FAO supports several rehabilitation efforts among which the most important are provision of cassava planting material and the supply of treadle pumps in cooperation with NGOs.
Mozambique	Has little emergency work in response to the drought. Some agricultural input supply work continues in response to the 2000 floods and agricultural input fairs have been piloted.
Zambia	FAO has coordinated the overall agricultural relief effort, with concentration in the Southern Province and provides seeds and fertilizer, largely linked to the expansion of conservation farming.

III. Resource Mobilization and Programme Development

A. Emergency Funding

36) In the humanitarian crisis, by far and away the greatest appeal was for food aid but among the UN agencies apart from WFP, FAO appealed for more resources than any other single agency, although the largest sector appeal was not for agriculture but for health (WHO, UNICEF). Excluding food aid, FAO was also the most successful among the agencies in the percentage of appealed for funds which it obtained. FAO appealed for US\$ 25 million which was over-subscribed in Zambia but had an overall response rate of 35 percent. In the view of the participants in the evaluation workshop, the most serious implications of this were in Zimbabwe (due to political considerations on the part of donors).

37) For emergencies, the key to resource mobilization was strong involvement in the CAP process and with some donors (e.g. DFID, Sweden and the Netherlands), FAO's engagement to design projects which integrated a development/recovery dimension into the emergency assistance and the presence of capable staff on the ground. For southern Africa, FAO funded an emergency coordinator who was first of all based in Harare and shortly afterwards moved to the combined United Nations system office in Johannesburg (RIACSO). With the significant exceptions of Zambia and Mozambique where the FAORs played a strong role, the capacity of FAO to prepare proposals and liaise with donors was very much a function of the presence of coordinators in country. This improved rapidly as resources began to be mobilized (a finding shared with thematic evaluation of Strategy A3)³.

38) The country in which FAO mobilized the greatest emergency funding was Zambia. There, the FAO Representative saw the potential of emergency funding to pursue a development agenda (the spread of conservation agriculture). He had the respect of the donors as chair of the donor-government agriculture group and moved very quickly to develop project ideas as the emergency emerged. In other words, in Zambia the FAOR did the work of an emergency coordinator right from the start, with the added advantage that he knew the country and had a wide range of donor and NGO contacts already well established. The position taken by this FAOR on the emergency assistance contrasted with other situations where (with weaknesses on both sides) there has not always been full collaboration between FAORs and emergency coordinators, who viewed both their mandates and lines of responsibility and authority as different.

39) For southern Africa as a whole the willingness of some donors to give sub-regionally without a fixed allocation per country gave FAO some flexibility to move resources to those countries where specific national donations were below target (e.g. Malawi) and has as a side effect raised the Organization's profile in those countries.

40) One other factor which appears to have been important in the relative success of FAO in mobilizing resources for emergency has been that in executing the programme, the Organization has worked through NGOs as contractors, rather than through government or undertaking direct execution. Donors prefer that the work of emergency input distribution and related activities be undertaken by NGOs but also find it onerous and often difficult with their procedures to work directly with the NGOs quickly and flexibly. As an intermediary FAO is appreciated in this role.

B. Development Funding

41) FAO's success in obtaining development funding is illustrative for Mozambique. Overall donor funding for the country has been high. There was a congruence achieved within the framework of PROAGRI between government and donor priorities for agriculture. FAO played an important honest broker role in PROAGRI and there was relative continuity in the posting of FAO Representatives. These representatives appear to have taken the attitude that the important issue was to assure balanced support for PROAGRI and not that FAO necessarily execute projects. This gained the respect of donors and government. A significant proportion of the FAO programme was also in two areas which donors have consistently stated they feel to be areas of FAO comparative strength, i.e. information and policy. Mozambique was also a priority for major funding partners of FAO, in particular Italy. The presence of a programme of reasonable size gave FAO a reservoir of technical competence which could assist in the further development of the programme.

³ Thematic Evaluation of Strategy A.3: Preparedness for, and Effective and Sustainable Response to, Food and Agricultural Emergencies. Report prepared by the Evaluation Service for the 88th Session of the Programme Committee, 9-13 September 2002.

42) The situation in Malawi was in many respects the antithesis of this. There was no overall government policy or mechanism similar to PROAGRI. Donors did see a coordinating role for FAO but this was as administrative secretary to the donor group. The situation has been one of strong individuals on the donor side with a break in the continuity of FAO representation to the country. In so far as the mission could ascertain, there has not been the same harmonization of views of the government, donors and FAO on where priorities lie.

C. Lessons for Programming and Resource Mobilization

43) The evaluation concludes that there are valuable lessons from the emergency programme for the mobilization of resources for development. The CAP is a framework agreed with government. It allows for a basket of funding to be assembled and it also allows FAO to quickly sign agreements with individual donors within that framework, with the formal signature of government often coming later. Although this might be construed as reducing government or national ownership, in so far as the evaluation team could ascertain, civil servants and politicians do not see it that way, presuming that there has been adequate consultation on the CAP framework itself.

44) UNDAF has certain similarities for development and it is important that FAO involve itself in the UNDAF processes, but UNDAF is generally very UNDP-centric and, in most of the countries visited, it was found that agriculture and food security did not receive prominence within it. Also, UNDAF in no way avoids the necessity for individual project agreements with government once the framework has been agreed. In Mozambique, the mission was informed that the role of PROAGRI was declining partly due to the increasing importance attached to the PRSP and budget support. However, it has provided an important structure of priorities for the agricultural sector within which FAO was able to work, and the FAO Representation has in fact developed an FAO programme document for Mozambique, although this has no official status. The FAO Representative for Malawi is also interested in developing a document which clearly indicates priority areas for FAO's work and the FAOR Tanzania informed the workshop that a document had been developed for Tanzania. The mission also noted that the new reporting guidelines for FAORs require that annual reports include a draft strategic programme framework for the Organization's work in the country.

Recommendation 1: It is suggested that the development of rolling 3-4 year national FAO programme frameworks be piloted in southern Africa. Each framework should be developed in discussion with government and take account of donor priorities, existing donor programmes and, of course, FAO's own priorities (including SPFS), coalescing around no more than three to four priority areas. The formal agreement of the government should be sought on the framework and FAO TCP assistance would normally be focused within those areas. It is emphasized that this should be very much a framework of priorities as distinct from a list of projects. FAO would then work flexibly with the donors to fund work in the priority areas. This, it is believed, would complement project preparation support being provided by FAO in the context of NEPAD.

45) Also related to the issue of resource mobilization and FAO programme development, the mission was informed repeatedly by many donors in the different countries, some government staff and some FAO Representatives, that "*FAO was not regarded as a source of country-specific technical expertise*". The basic point seemed to be that technical inputs for individual country situations can be relatively easily contracted locally (both nationals and expatriates), and in each of the countries visited some of the donors had larger agricultural staffs in their national offices than FAO had in the Representation. In terms of the capacity of the FAORs, this point will be returned to later. As the mission's point of departure was that FAO was first and foremost a technical resource, this message was found unpalatable and pursued at some length with key informants. For example, donors were asked if their use of FAO in emergency work was not precisely because it brought a technical input but the team was informed that this was not the case. FAO was appreciated for

coordination and management and indeed, in some cases donors felt they had a clearer view of the technical package that should be provided than did FAO.

46) The mission concludes that FAO has to rebuild credibility as a technical resource. A key in this would be the willingness to provide technical inputs to donor-funded programmes under TCP funding where these coincide with FAO's programme framework as discussed above. In the view of the evaluation team, this would also be likely to increase the return on FAO's investment and the prospects for sustainable impact when compared with relatively small stand-alone TCP assistance.

Recommendation 2: It is suggested that in southern Africa FAO make considerably more use of TCP funding to provide technical inputs to donor-funded and executed programmes which coincide with national and FAO priorities.

IV. The FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Response

A. Programming and Selection of Interventions

47) The emergency in southern Africa (with the exception of Angola) has been quite different from an emergency where people are totally displaced for extended periods from their homes and thus the emergency response could move immediately to rehabilitation. As distinct from food aid, the provision of agricultural inputs is the first step in enabling farmers to produce food and earn incomes for themselves. Seeds in particular are also an opportunity to spread improved genetic material which will endure in the planting material of farmers; a central issue must thus be the extent to which the varieties provided and the means by which they are provided do in fact facilitate this.

48) While some of the factors for success in the selection of interventions are common to FAO's work in all emergencies, others were a fortuitous combination of circumstances where the Organization took the initiative.

49) In Zambia, the then FAO Representative took the emergency as a corporate challenge for FAO, with the programme response to be determined in full consultation with him, rather than by regionally-based TCE emergency coordination staff acting in comparative isolation. He and his staff determined the initial approach and worked quickly to include comprehensive proposals in the UN-CAP:

- a) There was an available technology package which it was believed could better enable farmers to stabilize production under conditions of marginal rainfall and fertility (referred to as conservation farming). It was thus possible to pursue a campaign within the emergency context rather than just distributing agricultural inputs for business as usual;
- b) There were a group of NGOs with a widespread network already actively promoting this technology and with a willingness to extend it further;
- c) FAO was firm that it would work directly through NGOs rather than attempting to provide delivery itself or involving government in the chain at the top. Government was willing to accept this and also welcomed the involvement of its staff at field level, who were in practice given incentives by the NGOs to be involved in the programme. Government has accepted the reality that field staff can achieve little in the absence of a particular programme and an additional sense of an objective to be achieved;
- d) Parallel activity by WFP provided food as an incentive to apply the improved farming package, not just the provision of inputs. This link will be formalized in the coming season; and
- e) Training for farmers in the technology package was provided as an integral part of the programme, although this did not always work well and many farmers received no training (where this happened, it is now planned for the coming season).

50) The integration of development into the emergency response, rather than limiting it to delivery of seeds and tools, was also marked in Malawi. Here, treadle pumps and support for training was provided to an NGO, Total Landcare, which had developed a system of training support for the introduction of small-scale irrigation and also a credit package with irrigation clubs (this NGO was actually contracted by the government to train its own staff). One thousand-seven hundred and fifty pumps are being distributed with FAO support to individuals who are grouped in clubs for training, assisting each other in field layout, etc. Farmers are also provided a package of inputs, in particular vegetables. They are only provided with the treadle pump and inputs once they have completed a good part of the preparatory works and the efforts made by the farmers to establish irrigation layouts and plant winter crops seen by the mission were impressive. In Zambia treadle pump farmers were starting to invest in summer/rainy season production, but in Malawi the potential of irrigation for crop diversification was not being exploited.

51) With financial assistance from Sweden, FAO is also supporting cassava nurseries for improved virus-free material in Malawi. Here again, an aspect of the success to date has been the technical support provided by the IITA-Southern Africa Root Crop Research Network (SARRNET) which has its regional coordinator stationed in the country. With a further grant from Sweden, nurseries are being extended to provide optimum coverage.

52) There is some evidence that donors are interested in carrying forward development initiatives born in the emergency towards rehabilitation and development. In Mozambique, the successful implementation of an 'emergency' project for the rehabilitation of fishermen affected by the 2000 floods has led to agreement on funding for a second phase 'development' project that essentially will undertake much of the same type of activities as the 'emergency' intervention. Donors in Zambia are carrying forward work in conservation farming but still on the basis of annual funding. There is similar experience in Angola with work on land tenure.

53) FAO units did not always facilitate the inclusion of rehabilitation/transition packages in emergency assistance. For example, TCOT apparently objected that cassava had too long a growing season to be included in an emergency response. AGLW questioned whether treadle pumps could be seen as part of an emergency response, as irrigation development was a long-term endeavour.

54) There is a dilemma in inclusion of a development component in emergency responses, which concern the sustainability of the support to be provided to farmers. In this context, only time will tell to what extent the interventions summarized in southern Africa will contribute to continuing development, but three factors may be important in this:

- a) All the technologies discussed have immediate benefits for farmers. They start to see results from the first season and thus are likely to continue the technology and there is some expectation that their neighbours will emulate them;
- b) Conservation farming in Zambia and the treadle pump package in Malawi were extensions of existing NGO programmes, endorsed by the Department of Agriculture. Thus, not only was there a basis for development but there is some prospect of continued support when emergency funding ceases; but
- c) The mission's concern with these efforts was the lack of attention which was being given to markets. While some thought and liaison for industrial cassava use was being provided by SARRNET, in the case of vegetable production there was a real fear of market gluts and farmers becoming discouraged.

Recommendation 3: In emergency situations, FAO should seek out appropriate viable technologies and systems which have already been proven at the local level and have organizations which can assist their further expansion if given additional support. These should then be actively promoted in the emergency response.

B. Design and Process for Emergency and Rehabilitation Programmes and Projects

55) With the exception of the situations in Zambia and Mozambique where the continuing FAO Representation took a strong interest, there was little time at the start of the emergency to carry out very detailed programme design. This is ceasing to be the case as the continuing nature of vulnerability and the need for a continuing response similar to that in an emergency, is recognized by donors in southern Africa.

Beneficiary identification and targeting

56) The mission found, in line with the findings of the 2002 Thematic Evaluation of Strategy A.3, that beneficiary identification and targeting was often an area which required closer attention. In southern Africa, this needs to be addressed through broadening the national and regional VAC⁴ processes with respect to agriculture and not just food. The thematic evaluation of Strategy A.3 noted that much valuable information can be obtained at a local level during the initial emergency planning process and target identification. It considered how this information could be used more systematically and recommended the development of a consolidated database of country information to facilitate impact and needs assessment for future emergencies.

57) Beneficiary identification and targeting also needs to be built into projects as part of the process of implementation and can be linked to monitoring and evaluation (see below). A particular aspect of targeting which is important for the design of the response is targeting of households within the community. This can only be done by the communities themselves in discussion with the NGO and government partners on the ground. A degree of realism is also required on what can be done in the time available and what is acceptable in the local socio-political situation of the village. Sampling and information from an improved VAC could often be adequate to define targeting criteria. Household targeting will then be done locally by the communities themselves who must have the criteria and the reasons for them clearly explained. In defining criteria for targeting households and in designing appropriate packages (see below) in southern Africa (excluding Angola), it needs to be recalled that in most communities there are households that :

- a) need no assistance and/or even in an emergency situation have the potential to produce more for the benefit of the community;
- b) with assistance will be able to move towards household sustainability; and
- c) can produce something but will still remain non viable and will continue to need food assistance, etc.

Needs' assessment

58) As well as identifying and targeting beneficiaries, the mission found that it is also important, preferably through participatory processes, to find out what intended beneficiaries delineated by target groups (as discussed above) actually want. While the process had been largely decentralized in most emergency projects seen by the mission, with beneficiaries usually involved by the NGO implementing partners, there appeared to still be a general reliance on rather standard packages of inputs, without taking into consideration the diversity of farming conditions, state of vulnerability and capacity to produce. The mission must again emphasize that in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, targeting and package design should not delay implementation but rapid design of

⁴ VAC = Vulnerability Assessment Committee.

differentiated packages and then targeting these packages during the distribution process in the communities is a possibility. In southern Africa, the situation is now one of second generation projects in elements of a continuing emergency and there is time to improve design.

59) At the most basic level, farmers need to be asked what variety of which crop they really want planting material for. The mission noted that not only did emergency packages not always take account of farmer preferences on seeds, they could also provide a prescribed hand tool or tools (which had not particularly been lost as a result of the drought). Also, as farmers in the majority of cases seemed to plant larger areas of maize than they were provided seed for (sometimes quite substantially), fertilizer doses were reduced and spread over the whole crop. Sometimes maize seed was distributed without fertilizer. The role of vouchers and trade fairs in meeting household choice is discussed below.

Monitoring and evaluation

60) While provision for monitoring and evaluation in the project budget is essential, it is also a process issue. The mission did see examples of monitoring systems where, for example, NGOs in Zambia were collecting and analysing a surprising amount of information on beneficiaries response to the conservation farming package (although this included very little information on how results compared with the non-application of the package). Also in Zambia, DFID had provided funding to FAO for an independent study of the conservation farming emergency assistance. In general, however, monitoring and evaluation were not strong. In one country, it was found that the emergency coordinators had not left the capital for six months. In another case, information on widespread chicken deaths following a distribution went unreported and so no action was taken. In Angola, it was observed that military returnees being transported by air were often not able to take with them the inputs and tools they had been provided at the transit centres. This is the type of problem that informal inspection should identify and allow alternative strategies to be designed.

61) The mission found certain of the calls for collection of monitoring information unrealistic. In some countries, the personnel on the ground whether NGO or government, are limited in their capacity to understand and, thus communicate to the beneficiaries, requirements for complex information. Information needs to be kept simple and deal with key essentials. Basic monitoring does, however, need to be a contractual obligation of the partner organizations delivering assistance and needs to:

- identify beneficiaries by category, geographic location, gender etc;
- specify the assistance provided;
- report on use of the assistance (e.g. were all seeds planted); and
- cover results of the assistance supplied, in terms of benefits compared with production which was not assisted.

62) More complex and evaluative information is generally best handled in independent sample studies carried out post-season under separate contracts with, for example, universities, as is the case in FAO's use of the Universities of Reading and Zambia to assess the results of the programme on conservation farming.

Recommendation 4: In emergency situations, the maximum flexibility and definition of process needs to be built into the projects. This means that donor support within budgets should be sought to cover key aspects during implementation which often cannot precede design, including detailed identification and targeting of beneficiary households, needs assessment and monitoring and evaluation, all of which were found to be areas for improvement. In southern Africa, these aspects can now be better determined in the actual design of second generation projects.

Individual emergencies not covered by a UN-CAP

63) When emergencies occur for relatively small groups of communities, due for example to localized floods, these are not the subject of a UN-CAP. In many cases, donors are reluctant to provide emergency assistance, tending to see patterns of recurrent disaster as ongoing problems to be tackled rather than emergencies. Although it is evident that these are very serious for the affected communities, it is argued that response is something which is largely handled by local coping mechanisms, government and NGO relief, etc.

64) The most important issue with respect to such localized emergencies in southern Africa is that these form part of the pattern of continuing vulnerability and FAO needs to work with governments, donors, other members of the UN community (in particular WFP) and major NGOs to establish mechanisms of coordinated and joint rapid response at the national level.

65) Sometimes FAO assists in such cases with TCP assistance and an example of this was reviewed in Malawi, with a TCP project for flood relief⁵, for the provision of maize seed, fertilizer, hand tools and some veterinary drugs. The intention was to allow the affected communities to plant a winter crop on the flood recession, following major flood damage. Some 130,000 families and 62,000 hectares were found to have been affected to varying degrees by floods which occurred at the end of February 2001. A request for assistance was received on 8 March, TCP assistance was approved on 4 May 2001 following formulation work by a consultant completed on 18 April.

66) Both NGOs and agriculture department staff were involved in the input distribution. One of the NGOs involved failed to provide the agronomic support it was contracted to as part of the package of assistance. The outcomes can be summarized as follows:

- a) Input delivery started in July and was completed in August after the end of the normal winter planting season (which starts in May and is completed in June). In some cases fertilizer distribution was not synchronized with seed distribution⁶;
- b) As a result of this, rather few households planted in the winter and the rest retained their seed for use in the summer rainfed planting. At that time, there was also distribution of seed under non-emergency programmes;
- c) There was crop failure from the seed planted in the planned winter season due to the very late planting; and
- d) There were also problems with the summer planting due to the erratic rainfall pattern.

67) This can be characterized as a very standardized response (for example tools were not generally lost in these floods, so their inclusion in the package was arbitrary). However, the main problem was that probably no agency could have initiated action in time to get the inputs distributed for planting. Certainly with project approval after the winter planting period was supposed to have started, this was absolutely impossible.

Timeliness considerations in emergency programme design

68) For any programme, whether it be development or emergency, inputs which arrive after the planting season are of little use, at least for that season. In the case of the immediate aftermath of emergency, the generally stated intention is to ensure a food crop for the following season. This, of course, calls for measures to speed-up the whole process of funding, input purchasing and distribution. As discussed under implementation below, efforts are being made to improve this, but

⁵ TCP/MLW/0166: Emergency Provision of Agricultural Inputs to Flood Affected Farm Families within the Districts of Chikwawa and Nsanje.

⁶ Because of a problem in procurement, when re-tendering was necessary.

there is also a need for **realism**, as indicated by the above example, on when it will be possible to meet the next season and when it will not. In stand-alone projects, failing to meet the next season has been the rule rather than the exception, as discussed in the evaluation of Strategic Objective A.3. If it is not possible to meet the next season, it may be better to plan more carefully for a fully appropriate response in the season following. It may also be noted that it is essential to clearly indicate the planting dates in requests for crop production emergency assistance and this is quite often not done.

Recommendation 5: In addition to continuing efforts to improve response times, FAO should establish a minimum acceptable period between the completed formulation and approval of an emergency project and the latest date for satisfactory planting. The mission has the impression that this is of the order of three months, unless there is the capacity in terms of management and input availability to carry out all operations locally, when it may be of the order of two months. No project should be approved for assistance which does not meet these time criteria.

Protection of the input package and working with food aid providers

69) In situations where agricultural inputs are being provided on the international market, WFP can be an essential partner for logistics. In southern Africa, most inputs have quite rightly been purchased on the sub-regional market so this is less of an issue. However, the mission heard of cases where non-food items were either sold or, in the case of seed, consumed as food. From the point of view of local logistics, knowledge of the local situation, etc., it normally makes sense for the NGO supplying food aid to also supply the agricultural package as has been the general practice in southern Africa. Coordination of the delivery of food aid with delivery of inputs is essential as early in the process as possible to remove the necessity to monetize or eat the input package. Coordination can also be important in incentivising the adoption of new technology. In Zambia, some of the NGOs made receipt of food aid conditional upon completing a certain amount of conservation farming work (see also Strategy A.3 evaluation).

Choice of implementing partners for emergency programmes

70) NGOs, both international and national, were generally involved in emergency input distribution in all countries visited, usually in cooperation or agreement with government agencies. Only a few examples were seen of direct distribution by government. The choice of implementing partners is a key element in the success of the programmes.

71) In addition to the factors discussed immediately above, with respect to coordination of food and agricultural rehabilitation assistance, in as far as the mission could judge, the best results in terms of efficiency and compliance with contractual obligations were found where international NGOs worked with their own national affiliates and local NGOs. International NGOs without local knowledge had much the same difficulties as FAO would have in working directly, whereas local NGOs working on their own were found on occasions to suffer greater problems of efficiency and in one case there was attempted misappropriation of funds. Another problem stems less from the NGOs than from FAO. Because FAO is slow in making payments⁷, it is only possible to work with organizations which can bankroll themselves for a reasonable period. This often is not the case for local NGOs.

72) The operating partners need to be selected on the basis of the package to be delivered (i.e. the skill mix of the partners needs to be appropriate). If the primary concern is logistical capability to move quickly, the choice of partner is evidently different from where a major concern is to support

⁷ In so far as the mission could ascertain the slowness in making payments is a function of the limited signing authority at the FAOR level and the backlog of payments in AFF. See discussion of implementation issues.

the technical package. As already observed, in the southern Africa context the greatest rehabilitation benefit was seen where a farming package (such as conservation farming or treadle pump irrigation) could be delivered within the emergency response. In both these cases, it was actually NGOs which had developed the packages. An important consideration was also the possibility for some continuity of support beyond the end of the emergency input. In Zambia, the technical NGO was partnered with NGOs concerned primarily with relief to carry out the work. In the case of treadle pumps in Malawi, the time scale for action has been a little less critical and the delivery capability of the technical NGO higher, so it has worked largely on its own. Where NGOs primarily concerned with relief worked, even on delivering just seeds and tools, without support from government extension staff or a technical NGO, the value of the package was reduced. The mission would emphasize the importance not only of NGOs but of government staff at the technical level.

73) In summary, **key factors in selecting local partners** were thus found to be:

- a) logistical capacity and ability to work quickly and efficiently with a minimum of bureaucracy;
- b) agricultural technical capacities and possibilities for continued technical support beyond the end of emergency assistance;
- c) local presence and knowledge;
- d) willingness to work collaboratively with others including government;
- e) probity;
- f) financial robustness (i.e. having a reservoir of funds which means they can act without waiting for payment); and
- g) linking of food aid to agricultural rehabilitation relief as necessary.

The place of extension and training in the response

74) In an immediate crop-based rapid response to an emergency, the aim is to lift the agricultural community back to where it was by providing them with the means to plant for the next season. However, this is not entirely the case in continuing complex emergencies (Angola) and the continuing situation of vulnerability, as southern Africa now is, and arguably was at the time of the 2002 drought. Indeed, the best emergency interventions commented upon used the occasion of the emergency to extend improved farming practices. In many other cases, the emergency package is used to introduce improved planting material. Even with something like vegetable seed it is not safe to assume that farmers know the optimal planting requirements or even less how to keep seed for next year. This requires that training be built into the emergency response. The linking of technical personnel (NGO and government into the work) has been discussed above, but also wherever possible:

- a) the NGOs and government personnel involved in the distribution should be provided basic training in the farming package and situations in which the package will not be effective and thus should be suspended until the next season, for example for reasons of timeliness; and
- b) the package should be accompanied by leaflets, always in the local language, and to the extent possible illustrated with pictures.

75) Also of importance is the training of NGO staff in the criteria for distribution (beneficiaries and any differentiation in packages) and in monitoring requirements.

C. Issues in Major Components of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Response

Emergencies and livestock (neglected by TCE emergency coordinators and donors)

76) In southern Africa, only a small proportion of the population has livestock as its main source of income, but livestock have been an important source of national income (e.g. Botswana and

Zimbabwe), farm power, and an additional source of income (including a family bank for adversity). The reduction in farm power is crucial when the health status and thus ability to carry out hard physical work of farm families is declining. The loss of livestock as a bank against adversity increases vulnerability. It may also be noted that livestock raising is one of the less physically demanding agricultural activities, an important consideration when the aged and children form a growing proportion of the agricultural population.

77) **Transboundary diseases:** Livestock, especially cattle, have been devastated in recent years by disease. Government-operated control systems for tick-borne diseases (Corridor Disease/East Coast Fever) have largely broken down. Similarly, those monitoring systems and controls which were in place through vaccination have been undermined for CBPP and FMD. The spread of diseases across borders has been hastened by the decline in government veterinary services, as well as problems of civil war and law and order with cross-border cattle theft of importance. Livestock, as with people, are susceptible to droughts, with drinking water near vegetation becoming a major issue for cattle.

78) Control of livestock diseases is naturally more complex than input distribution and one emergency coordinator commented to the mission that since emergency coordinators are almost always crops specialists they tend to forget the livestock. Unfortunately, this lack of attention also seems to be reflected on the donor side of the fence and sometimes by FAORs (perhaps for the same reason). Donors also note that despite their support to livestock disease control in the past, the situation has deteriorated, leading them to question the efficacy of this use of funds. FAO's work in livestock emergency in southern Africa has thus tended to be outside the framework of the CAP and the main stream emergency response. With the ending of Danish- and Belgian-funded projects for tick control in Zambia in 1998, FAO's response to livestock disease in the countries of the region has relied mostly on TCP funding and donors remain largely unconvinced of the feasibility of traditional control measures. FAO (AGAH and TCEO) is now working with SADC in a US\$ 14 million appeal, for transboundary diseases. Launched in September 2003, it is to be merged into the CAP.

Box 1: Recent work to counter FMD and CBPP

Working with TCP funds*, FAO worked to strengthen the institutional capability and to introduce barrier vaccination for the control of Transboundary disease in particular FMD and CBPP. The projects, (in particular the regional project TCP/RAF/2809) brought together veterinary officials from the concerned countries to coordinate control. Vaccines, etc. were also provided for barrier vaccination. Veterinary services are poorly resourced and their capabilities are limited or declining. Angola was an important focus of infection and is only now emerging from civil war. Success in mobilizing donor funds was minimal. There was little or no involvement of NGOs in the work, a distinct contrast from other emergency activities in the sub-region and from the strategy for animal health followed by FAO in the Afghan emergency, now being transferred to other countries in that region. This was perhaps in part because there are few livestock-oriented NGOs in southern Africa, in contrast, for example, to southern Sudan. Actual barrier vaccination with TCP support tended to accompany the spread of disease rather than placing a barrier clearly before it. Although there were delays in TCP funding approval, the deficiency of project response seems to have been mostly as a result of poor reporting and poor planning by veterinary departments (e.g. in Zambia) and the overall inadequacy of resources.

It was reported to the mission that motivated primarily by the need to protect its own industry, South Africa mobilized resources and used many of its own staff to control FMD in Zimbabwe and Botswana, at a large distance from its own borders.

*TCP/RAF/2809 Control of Foot and Mouth Disease and other Transboundary Animal Diseases in Southern Africa (US\$ 351,000 June 2002 –Aug 2003)

TCP/ANG/8922 Bovine et d'autres maladies transfrontalieres (US\$ 247,000 Nov 1999 – Oct 2001)

TCP/MLW/8822 Containment of Transboundary Spread of Foot and Mouth Disease (US\$ 211,000 Nov 1998 – July 2000)

TCP/SWA/6712 Emergency Assistance to Control Brucellosis in Small Ruminant Phases I & II (US\$ 108,000 Nov 1988 – Feb 03)

TCP/ZAM/0169 Emergency Control of Transboundary Diseases – CBPP and ASF (US\$ 297,000 Dec 2001 – Nov 2002)

TCP/ZIM/0168 Emergency Assistance to Control Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak (US\$ 400,000 Sept 01 – Dec 01)

Recommendation 6: In line with the concern of AGA and policies of EMPRES, considerably more attention needs to be given to livestock emergencies and the role of livestock in vulnerable households' food security and survival strategies. The first priority must continue to be overcoming epidemic diseases. In most countries of southern Africa, with the continued decline of government services, a new strategy is, however, required which can bring in additional players and resources. It is also possible that a new strategy will help to convince donors that something can be done. FAO can support development of this new strategy and include donors in the thinking from the start in order to get buy-in. Elements may include:

- rethinking of early warning systems for livestock disease, including the role of non-governmental actors, especially traders, and the integration of livestock information systems with those on other aspects of vulnerability, including crop and vulnerability assessment (VAC and VAM);
- cross-border cooperation more locally organized, relying less on central veterinary departments in far away capitals (including in the cooperation NGOs, traders and pastoralists);
- reinforcing legislation, where necessary. Within this context both penalties and incentives need to be examined. At the moment, slaughterers, traders and pastoralists would often find it to their immediate economic advantage to conceal disease, rather than report it;
- greater involvement of NGOs and private veterinary auxiliaries (barefoot vets) in all aspects of prevention and treatment; and
- development of international agreements, including in the context of SACU, COMESA and SADC for the support of control in weaker countries by those economically and institutionally stronger.

79) **Livestock in the input package:** The mission and TCEO-RIACSO believe that small livestock must play a significant role in the strategy for rural households in continuing vulnerability, including those where the vulnerability results from HIV-AIDS. In many communities households have familiarity with goat and poultry raising. Although there are at present limited numbers of potential NGO implementing partners with the necessary experience, the mission is of the view that through appropriate contracts, including some training, NGOs could manage distribution of small livestock. In most countries some NGOs are engaged in this as part of their development effort. It should form an important component in the response to “the continuing emergency” and it was noted that in Angola, a TCP had been designed to demonstrate the feasibility of small stock rehabilitation interventions⁸.

Seeds and planting material

80) Almost all FAO emergency responses have the opportunity to introduce improved planting material which can have a continuing benefit. However, if that benefit is to be maximized, effort is needed to ensure that the seeds distributed are indeed better or the longer-term results can be exactly the reverse of those intended. At the same time, basic extension advice should be contracted through the NGO partners on how to preserve the benefits of the seed (generally by encouraging farmers to grow in blocks and regardless of whether they grow in blocks to harvest seed from true breeding plants in the centre of the plot). Unless seed banks can be established on the basis of existing communal effort, the mission is not convinced of their viability. Often individual farmers will conserve their seed better than a village seed bank.

81) Another issue for seeds in southern Africa is that of hybrids, especially hybrid maize, which is widely used, including by small farmers, in the Anglophone countries of the sub-region. This arose

⁸ TCP/ANG/2906(E) Réactivation du petit élevage villageois par les femmes chefs de ménage.

partly through subsidies, especially for the necessary fertilizer. With adequate fertilizer and rain, it out-yields the best improved open-pollinated varieties by a factor of as much as 200 percent. However, for most small farmers, the yield increment is generally insubstantial, as insufficient fertilizer is applied and rainfall may be inadequate (average yields are only 500-600 kg per hectare). Hybrid seed cannot of course be re-used (although some farmers claim they do so and still see a benefit in the second and even third seasons).

82) In seed relief, a practical issue has been that enough open pollinated maize seed of improved varieties was simply not available. The seed companies have much more hybrid seed and much greater interest in its marketing than is the case for open-pollinated varieties. Thus, the only seed which can be bought at short notice suited to the agro-ecological zone may be hybrid. Similarly, in much of southern Africa vegetable seeds are purchased by farmers, not retained from their own plants.

83) Taken against the farmers' interest in hybrids and the yield potential, the mission concluded that in countries such as Angola, only improved open-pollinated varieties should be provided and instruction in how to maintain seed should form part of the relief and rehabilitation package (in any case for many years sufficient hybrid seed is unlikely to be available for local purchase in Angola). Good improved open-pollinated varieties have more possibility to make a long-term contribution to the genetic base of farmer seed than hybrids. Thus, open pollinated seed should also be the norm elsewhere and should always be accompanied by fertilizer. This is generally reflected in donor policy, although not generally in funding levels for fertilizer as part of an input package.

84) Related to the issues of training and extension already discussed, to secure the maximum benefit from seeds, there should be picture leaflets or labels on the bags to go with the seeds, preferably in local languages. This can be a condition of contracts and FAO can supply the text and pictures.

85) The mission was also informed by local emergency coordinators that it was difficult to get adequate account taken in the central FAO placement of seed contracts of:

- a) guaranteed delivery data to ensure adequate time for delivery to farmers; and
- b) previous performance of the company (in this context it may be noted that for locally made purchases in southern Africa there is no central repository of information on performance).

86) Instances were reported of the seeds provided not being of the variety specified and written on the label (e.g. Zambia) and of poor germination rates. It is also clear that if a seed company delivers after the distribution time to farmers the seeds are of no use.

Recommendation 7: There need to be clauses in contracts with seed companies which provide heavy penalties for late delivery and provide for retention of monies until after the germination and purity is clear. An open (intra-net) southern Africa data base could also be maintained on the performance of seed companies. To speed up and simplify the preparation and clearance of seed purchase and also to help ensure that all seed does make some contribution to genetic improvement, an agreed FAO seed list should be developed for southern Africa, by agro-ecological zone, and kept updated.

Box 2 Basic Guiding principles for seed relief

The following guiding principles for seed relief have been developed by AGPS and were agreed at a workshop in June 2003. They are endorsed by the mission.

1. A needs assessment should underpin any decisions to undertake seed relief and guide the choice among possible interventions. This needs assessment should be holistic, putting seed security in the context of livelihood security.
2. Seed relief interventions have to be clearly matched to the context (for example, a crisis caused by drought may require very different actions from a crisis caused by war). By supporting food production, seed relief should decrease dependence on repeated food aid.
3. Seed relief activities should aim to both:
 - be effective with the immediate objective of facilitating access to appropriate planting material; and
 - contribute to the restoration, rehabilitation or improvement of agricultural systems in the longer term.
4. Ideally, considerations of seed system sustainability should be built into seed interventions from the beginning. As a minimum, seed aid should do no harm to farming systems. Thus, emergency relief activities should support local seed system development, ideally by integrating long-term needs in the design of the project.
5. Seed relief activities should be built upon a solid understanding of all the seed systems farmers use and the role they have in supporting livelihoods. The local system is usually more important in farmers' seed security and has shown to be quite resilient. Depending on the context, the focus in an emergency should normally be on keeping the local seed system operational. One practical problem is that seed systems are often not sufficiently understood, especially in emergency situations. Hence, there is a need for more emphasis on understanding seed systems, and their role in supporting livelihoods, and on needs assessment.
6. Seed relief interventions should facilitate choice by farmers of crops and varieties. Seed relief interventions should aim to improve, or at least maintain seed quality, and aim to facilitate access to varieties that are adapted to environmental conditions and farmers' needs.
7. Monitoring and evaluation should be built into all seed relief interventions, to facilitate learning by doing and thereby to improve interventions.
8. An information system should be put in place to improve institutional learning and as repository of information gained from cumulative experience. Such information systems should be institutionalized at national levels, to the extent possible.
9. A strategy to move from the acute emergency response to a capacity building or development phase should be included in the design of the intervention.

Development of markets and issues in farmer choice (vouchers and input fairs)

87) Where long-term civil strife has destroyed the local infrastructure, as in much of Angola, there is no local trade but in most other circumstances, by bringing in free inputs, FAO emergency assistance runs the risks of undermining local trading in inputs and community coping mechanisms, including those for seeds. Farmer choice of inputs is also generally eliminated with the distribution of standard packages. This has been evident in the southern Africa crisis with both positive and negative elements:

- **FAO seed purchasing was done entirely on the sub-regional market⁹, benefiting local business at the commercial level.**

⁹ With the exception of some purchases in Angola.

88) **Vouchers:** There is considerable discussion on the role of vouchers for inputs, but very limited experience in southern Africa. The main arguments in favour of the use of vouchers are that they:

- a) facilitate farmer choice;
- b) allow purchases to be made in the market, stimulating local trade;
- c) can be used in compensation for public interest works;
- d) can be provided more flexibly (for example, issued directly once particular farming operations are completed like irrigation or conservation layouts); and
- e) the burden of logistics and transport is shifted from FAO to the suppliers.

89) The main arguments against them are that:

- a) they can be more easily used to buy unintended items than can physical inputs. They are also less open to corruption or outright theft than is money but there are more possibilities than with physical inputs;
- b) there is less opportunity to control the quality of the physical inputs, in particular seeds and planting material, than when these are distributed directly, which stresses the need for subsequent quality testing; and
- c) support may need to be given to traders to ensure that adequate supplies of inputs are in fact available to be bought with the vouchers, especially in remote locations.

90) It is clear that vouchers for agricultural inputs will be diverted from their intended use if the family is in acute food deficit. The importance of a protection package of food is thus essential in such situations, and food could also be handled through vouchers.

91) **Input trade fairs:** While in general it has to be said that free distribution of seeds, as a side-effect, is likely to undermine the local supply channels, there was one significant exception to this, with the experience with input trade fairs in Mozambique (see Box 3), which parallels the Kenya experience discussed in the evaluation of Strategic Objective A.3. The fairs provide a check on two of the criticisms made of input vouchers which can be used with assigned traders, outside of a fair:

- a) the quality of the inputs on offer could to some extent be checked; and
- b) there was less opportunity for vouchers to be used for other than the purposes intended.

92) Fairs may also invigorate local weekly markets where these exist. The planned impact studies may facilitate the further development of input fairs as a mechanism in the rehabilitation process.

Box 3: Input Trade Fairs in Mozambique

Two pilot tests were carried out in 2002 with the Department of Agriculture and the NGO Action Aid. Following this, in three drought-affected provinces with funds available under an Italian funded project, 18 seed fairs were conducted by the Department of Agriculture and 18 by NGOs. In 2003/4, a further 55 fairs are planned with DFID funding. This latter project incorporates impact studies.

Vouchers for purchase of inputs were provided to vulnerable farmers (women and men) considered able to cultivate land. The targeting was carried out by Department of Agriculture officers, NGOs and the communities themselves. The fairs facilitated the development of the local seeds market and the role of traders was enhanced rather than undermined by seed distribution. Farmer choice was also extended. Farmers without vouchers were also able to buy directly at the fairs and this was probably advantageous, as there are not regular local markets in these parts of Mozambique.

Potentially the fairs offered an opportunity for extension, although it is not clear to what extent this took place. Although there was consultation in targeting beneficiaries, there was not the same level of discussion with traders on the organization of the fairs and the involvement of commercial seed suppliers was limited.

D. The Overall Effects and Impact of FAO's Emergency Response

93) **Effects and impacts:** It was not possible for the mission to explore impact in depth for southern Africa and, as is evident from the discussion above, the mission was very encouraged by the extent to which a development component going beyond rehabilitation had been built into several of the projects. There were also some projects in the drought affected countries which adopted a classic seeds and tools supply approach and this was considered by the mission to be less useful, although in many situations it may be the only feasible rapid response.

94) In Angola, FAO's work has undoubtedly contributed substantially to the capacity of families returning to their homes to establish themselves in the first season and for those households who have not been displaced to increase their output, (although for these latter by how much is very unclear). As with the rest of southern Africa, the ability of FAO to flexibly fill gaps in coverage by other agencies and play a coordinating role increased the total benefit of the emergency assistance in agriculture from all sources beyond the scope of just the inputs supplied by FAO.

95) For the remainder of southern Africa, the crisis is of a different nature. There is little doubt that farmers realized an immediate benefit, as the improved inputs were introduced into an established farming system, rains were mixed but on the whole reasonable and although there were delays, inputs were mostly there in time.

96) It will take some time to judge the development impacts of genetic materials and of the new farming packages introduced. The biggest concern with respect to work in irrigation and cassava is the lack of attention to markets which may limit final impact.

97) **Cost-effectiveness of the emergency response:** An essential criterion for assessment of any intervention, including that for emergencies, is the benefits in relation to the costs. For emergency interventions, benefits beyond the actual numbers of beneficiaries, quantities supplied and an estimation of the actual production are not generally possible. Although it may be possible to estimate incremental production, this involves a growing number of assumptions. Application of this crude measure of cost-effectiveness would, however, also lead to misleading answers. The number of beneficiaries and immediate production in proportion to cost will be maximized when

there is an emphasis on seeds and fertilizer distribution only, with little finesse in targeting, no differentiation in inputs supplied in a package, no supporting training, little monitoring and certainly no attempt to build a continuing development impact into the emergency response. The mission thus concluded that it is only realistic to look at cost-effectiveness in qualitative terms or through in-depth ex-post studies for purposes of developing improved overall approaches. Key factors in cost-effectiveness are reflected in the assessment provided in this report. In southern Africa where the emergency response has to be viewed in a context of a drive for continued development and a growing number of households faced with ongoing food deficit and vulnerability, these factors include:

- Timeliness;
- The identification of agricultural improvements including genetic material, technologies and approaches which can be introduced in the emergency response;
- Improved targeting and differentiation of packages for people's needs;
- Support to the introduced technology in terms of training, extension and sometimes credit; and
- Strengthened monitoring and evaluation.

98) **Selection of implementing partners:** A further critical element in longer-term impact is the selection of implementing partners. An important criterion, even at the loss of some efficiency, is the continued presence and activity of the implementing partners in the agricultural sector after the completion of any emergency. Some international and national NGOs may not meet this criterion. The desirability of linking technical skills from government and the NGO sectors with emergency delivery capacity has already been discussed and can be an important element in developing a sustained development and vulnerability response for rural households. The emergency can serve to develop new partnerships for the future and build capacity in both NGOs and government services.

V. From Emergency to On-Farm Development and the Role of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS)

A. Introduction

99) As is evident from the above discussion, the FAO emergency response throughout southern Africa has always included a rehabilitation component and sometimes included a significant grassroots development element. The greatest limiting factor in the development role is the extent to which the programme has any continuing element and in some cases this was offset by the partnership with NGOs which had a continuing development role on the ground. The SPFS had been active in each of the sample countries visited by the mission; in addition, there were three other projects concerned with bottom-up livelihoods and food security.

100) One small project¹⁰ in Malawi was spoken of enthusiastically by UNDP who were implementing it, but other observers were more critical. The project was in a single village and had worked with a sustainable livelihoods approach. It established mushroom production, a product which satisfied the criteria for low physical effort – high potential value, which is important for low-income households where old people and children predominate and active adults are sick (e.g. HIV-AIDS affected households), but there appeared to be major marketing difficulties and as yet no multiplier effects.

¹⁰ MLW/97/010 Sustainable Livelihoods Programme US\$ 530,000

101) Two Belgian-funded projects in Zambia and Mozambique¹¹ addressed the improvement of nutrition and household food security in specific provinces (Luapula in Zambia and Manica in Mozambique). That in Mozambique is only just now starting and no assessment can be made. That in Zambia began work in January 1997 and a second phase is due to begin shortly. The project was evaluated in 2001 and the mission found that there had been important impacts in developing community awareness and action planning. The establishment of oil palm was predicted to reduce vitamin A deficiency. Seed and planting material availability had been increased for groundnuts and cassava. Nevertheless, the project was found to have substantial problems of lack of focus. There had been major problems in stationing sufficient government staff of adequate calibre and motivation in this relatively remote location and there was little systematic information on the number of households involved, their characteristics and the benefits of the programme.

B. The Special Programme for Food Security

Angola

102) The SPFS¹² funded by Italy with about US\$ 4.8 million was jointly executed by FAO, IFAD and WFP beginning in 1998. The project was planned to be started in Uigem province as a rehabilitation programme and a Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) was carried out there at a cost of about US\$0.75 million. In the event, because of the outbreak of war the project was transferred to Bengo Province at a series of sites chosen by the government on a line of security around Luanda. It started work in September 1999 without further in-depth studies. WFP had a subcontract with an Italian NGO (INTERSOS) for roads and other infrastructure and IFAD had a contract with another Italian NGO (MOVIMONDO) for distribution of planting material, goats, boats, etc. FAO was supposed to provide coordination and technical inputs but this situation of *primus inter pares* was not respected by the other two partners.

103) The project has been assessed by missions from TCI. They found that due to delays and interruptions, there was some 28 months of field work over a period of 40 months to January 2003. Project staff were commuting from Luanda and there were military incursions into the area. The government extension staff were trained but have not worked much in the area as they had little incentive to do so. Also, according to an assessment mission, there is little farmer respect for their knowledge. The infrastructure of roads, health centres, etc. was said to have been put in without consultation with the population and although for some items there was a theoretical requirement for repayment into community funds (moved to a commercial Bank), in practice this was never enforced.

104) Health posts were reportedly not staffed. The roads were said to have been built below specification. Apparently, the population also said that seeds distributed were unsuitable and that there were poor germination rates. The introduced chickens were not vaccinated against Newcastle disease and started to die so they were eaten. The project provided free land preparation by tractor and this service was said not to have been available equitably. It was also found that there had been inequity in the distribution of pumps and that these were not always used to provide water to neighbours. According to a TCI mission the tomato production was not economic.

105) The remaining funds under the project, US\$ 400,000, are now to be utilized about half by FAO for participation training and half for provision of water points.

¹¹ GCP/ZAM/052/BEL Improving household food security and nutrition in the Luapula Valley US\$ 3.7 million and GCP/MOZ/027/BEL Improving nutrition and household food security in Manica Province US\$ 4.4 million.

¹² GCPS/ANG/005/ITA

106) **Overall effects and impacts:** The current evaluation found that although the overall assessment of this programme by several missions and observers was negative in terms of its cost-effectiveness and social impacts, the project had had some positive benefits. In particular, it was noted that:

- a) farmers are continuing to produce tomatoes under irrigation. It was also noted that irrigation farmers had deposited money in group accounts in the bank, which was enabling them to hire tractors to cultivate about half the irrigated area this season. The cassava variety brought in by the project seemed to be being widely adopted as a cash crop (it is a bitter variety and sold as flour);
- b) the road network and other physical facilities were still in place and usable, although maintenance would become an increasing problem;
- c) the goats and fishing boats distributed by the project are much appreciated, even if the system for providing them to further households through cash repayments or as goat offspring has not been established; and
- d) income and employment is being generated in the irrigated areas. The mission thus questioned the major emphasis on equity. The charging by pump operators to others may increase the sustainability of operations and, as noted above, there was some communal action on depositing of funds for use of tractors, etc.

107) In retrospect, the mission concluded that the formula of an artificial grouping of the three Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) had been misplaced, as it did not in this case grow out of mutual complementarity and synergy of roles in the project. Economic returns would have been greater if either the project had switched to an entirely emergency mode of operation or had been suspended completely pending the cessation of hostilities. The complete reliance on power pumps and tractorization for the irrigated areas was very questionable. Insufficient attention had definitely been given to both economic viability and social factors, but it is doubtful if in the present Angolan context any project could realistically meet normal bankability criteria.

Malawi

108) SPFS activities were implemented through TCP assistance to water control (US\$ 353,000 Phase I, US\$ 51,000 Phase II) and diversification (US\$ 194,000)¹³. These projects cover eight sites where beneficiaries benefited from irrigation (motorized and some treadle pumps), goats and poultry distribution, improved animal housing, aquaculture, agricultural inputs (seed, fertilizer) and training and technical advice. Starting January 2002, an ADB-funded project (US\$ 952,000) began assisting eight additional sites.

109) One site was visited by the mission and although the visit was unannounced, a government extension agent was present on the site. It was evident that this was comparatively a very prosperous community and the farmers involved in the SPFS were the largest in the village. They were creating casual labour employment opportunities for people from outside the area. The programme impacts on irrigation and expansion of area under irrigated crops were visible but limited. Diversification of production aquaculture was expanding. Goat and poultry housing improvement was adopted by participating farmers and in the case of the former, also by non-participants. Improved buck goats had largely died. Vegetable production was constrained by limited marketing opportunities.

110) The mission noted that the work supported by the NGO Total Landcare as part of the emergency assistance had achieved much greater effect in a short time, in terms of numbers of households reached, irrigation area expansion and quality of the irrigation layout. This was

¹³ TCP/MLW/8921,9065 & 0065; UTF/MLW/025/MLW

achieved at much less investment (treadle pumps only and no assistance for the irrigation layouts which, while of higher quality, were done entirely by self-help). Also, in the case of the Total Landcare work, the mission had grave concerns over marketing. There had been no involvement of NGOs in the SPFS and this would have been a very valuable complement in improving the irrigation and extension.

Mozambique

111) The SPFS for Mozambique (GCSP/MOZ/062/ITA - US\$ 1.76 million) began work in 1997 and was evaluated by a tripartite team in November 2002. The tripartite evaluation found that the project had not led to a sustainable demonstration of replicable rainfed or irrigation technology. The project was active with relatively prosperous farmers in high potential areas. In all, there were about 200 beneficiary families, and 500 farmers and 200 technicians participated in training. The technology for rainfed agriculture relied on inputs on credit which the farmers were not in general asked to repay. Sixteen hectares were brought under irrigation in two piped schemes at a high capital cost. There were fears concerning the market for irrigated produce but farmers had realized income improvements. The tripartite evaluation team regarded the fish ponds as a positive and sustainable development. They also felt that there was potential for treadle pumps and that vaccination of chickens against Newcastle disease had been positive. The work by the project on national irrigation policy level was considered a useful input.

112) A proposed second phase project (PAN II –National Programme for Food Security GCP/MOZ/ITA) will attempt to address weaknesses identified in the first phase, by:

- a) demonstrating and documenting financial returns, market linkages and sustainability;
- b) being bold enough to address areas of food insecurity and work with the most vulnerable groups;
- c) developing an extension strategy that allows scaling up of results at a low cost; and
- d) promoting sharing of experiences, partnership, and influencing decisions on food security.

113) To achieve this, the proposed PAN II has a simple and flexible design, focussing on participatory extension for strengthening local capacity to plan and implement development initiatives, and on food security strategy networking-communication. Information obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture indicates that this proposal continues to be under review, particularly in terms of the type of extension approach to be used by the project.

Zambia

114) The main FAO SPFS activities took place for three years (1995-96 to 1997-98). There was a full-time national coordinator during this period. SPFS funding came to an end in 2000. The project was not generally looked upon as a success by the government and FAOR staff consulted, but it was the main initiator of treadle pump irrigation in Zambia which has spread steadily in the Southern Province since that time, first with support from IFAD but now under its own momentum. The SPFS evaluation team in 2001 found some problems with marketing of vegetables produced under irrigation but the current mission also observed that a few farmers were expanding diversification into irrigated rainy season cropping as an alternative to much more risky rainfed production.

Overall conclusions on the SPFS

115) The work done under the SPFS in the countries visited has been within the traditional framework. This is now changing and the new project in Mozambique with its emphasis on extending the FFS approach, reflects some of those changes. The biggest lesson from the review of experiences in the four countries was that more could have been achieved through innovative partnership with NGOs. In many respects, work now being pioneered under the emergency

programme is in pursuit of SPFS goals and there is the opportunity to continue this work with a more development orientation and greater attention to sustainability considerations, including marketing and credit aspects.

Recommendation 8: The mission welcomes the wider and more flexible concept of the SPFS now being developed in Mozambique. It is recommended that in southern Africa the SPFS be regarded more in terms of overall development programme goals to be achieved and less as SPFS projects. Thus, SPFS concepts can be built into rehabilitation and in formulating overall programmes in the context of NEPAD. In this regard, the opportunities provided by the emergency development work and the cooperation with NGOs should be built upon and there should be less total reliance on government.

South-South cooperation

116) In Malawi, south-south cooperation was well spoken of and had got off to a useful start with a limited number of specialist technicians (not field extensionists) from Myanmar designing field irrigation works. In Mozambique¹⁴, there were reported to be considerable problems in recruitment and retention of Indian cooperants and out of 50 intended posts, only three were reported to be filled. At the evaluation workshop, participants from Lesotho reported similar problems.

117) The mission conclusions on south-south cooperation in support of the SPFS in southern Africa were thus largely in line with those of the 2002 external evaluation of the SPFS, i.e. that cooperants were most useful in an intermediate technical specialist role and there needs to be great care in the selection of appropriate people.

VI. Technical and Associated Institutional and Policy Issues in Emergency Rehabilitation and Grass Roots Development

A. The Key Issues

118) Households with depleted and weak physical labour including from HIV-AIDS need to an even greater extent than others to increase their economic returns and food production per unit of labour and to reduce the need for physical strength. In general, the most back-breaking work in agriculture is hand-hoe cultivation with hand-hoe weeding coming a close second. **Probably the single most important way of reducing this physical effort is to increase value of production per unit of area. The ways to do this include irrigation, higher value crops and fertilizer application**, all of which also require higher investment, which cannot generally be mobilized by the families themselves. Similarly, other factors of importance include:

- a) income from small livestock;
- b) use of farm power, especially animal drawn equipment;
- c) minimum tillage technologies (conservation farming planting sites may be described as minimum tillage after the first year in digging the sites);
- d) spreading the work of cultivation during the dry season, as has been done for conservation farming in Zambia;
- e) reducing domestic labour requirements by, for example, addressing domestic water requirements along with irrigation and improving supplies of fuel-wood;
- f) reducing the physical effort of equipment (for example, in Malawi it was noted that there were three makes of treadle pump being distributed under FAO projects and these pumps required different levels of effort)¹⁵;

¹⁴ UTF/MOZ/068/MOZ

¹⁵ AGST is currently releasing a case study on labour saving in Africa.

- g) appropriate use of herbicides (for example in Zambia, a relatively low cost and less physically arduous alternative to application of herbicide by knapsack sprayer was weed wipes); and
- h) facilitating resettlement on higher potential land, with more production per unit area, is a possibility in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia.

B. Sustainable Intensification and Lifting Yields

119) Many rural households are producing insufficient food for themselves and for the market. A major challenge is to increase the yields of major staple food crops produced by small holders. This is particularly the case for maize because of its dominant place in farmers' preferences. There is clearly a feeling among many donors, NGOs and in parts of the national civil services that farmers in much of southern Africa should be actively discouraged from growing maize, and that other, more drought resistant, staple food crops should replace them. While the mission would accept that in areas where rainfall is clearly too low (say less than 700 mm/annum), farmers should be encouraged to grow alternatives by a process of allowing them to experiment with crops like cassava, sorghum or millet. Simply to tell farmers that they should grow these crops is only ignoring the reality of the majority of farmers wanting to eat and, therefore grow, white maize.

Soil Fertility

120) The technology needed to increase current yields of maize from about 500 kg per ha to 1,500 kg/ha – still below the average for Africa as a whole – is well understood but it benefits from improved seed and generally requires inputs of fertilizer. The mission had to ask itself what in reality can be done in a situation where rainfed yields are tending to decline rather than increase after 30 years of extension effort. It is not that farmers are unaware of improved seeds and fertilizer but they are in general unable to afford them, especially fertilizer. Also in many of the areas with very high transport costs and risks from irregular rains, fertilizer application is often not financially viable, even at reduced rates. Economic viability is, however, another question.

121) It was pertinent to note that for the moment DFID, a major donor in Malawi, has been prepared to pay for some free fertilizer and seed distribution. Fertilizer gives a much higher return to expenditure in terms of food availability, than does food aid and is much less disruptive of local markets. Even if food aid donation is regarded as a free good, the mission was informed that foreign exchange costs of local logistics considerably exceeded those for food produced as a result of fertilizer donation to low-income households. A policy linking some form of fertilizer subsidy by donors for small farmers in higher potential but more remote areas is probably fully justifiable and this should eventually help to develop markets from those areas. Supplementary irrigation could also be important in markedly lifting yields and rendering fertilizer application financially as well as economically attractive.

122) A major question continues to be the extent to which viable alternatives to fertilizer are available. The mission did see two encouraging possibilities, both of which have their limitations:

- a) **Faidherbia albida** is a native leguminous tree to Africa south of the Sahara. It sheds its leaves naturally during the rainy season, thus adding nutrients to the soil while removing the shade for a field crop. It is also produces protein-rich pods (11% protein) and leaves for livestock fodder. A mature tree can produce above 20 kg of pods per season. The tree can be lopped to provide fuel wood. Unfortunately, its natural growth is spotty and until recently, production of *Faidherbia* seedlings met with major transplanting difficulties as damage to the massive tap root meant the tree did not grow. Transplanting can take place at 5 weeks' old but the seedlings are then very vulnerable. Alternatively, as discovered in recent pioneering research undertaken at the behest of NGOs in Malawi, seedlings can be raised in an open-ended container on a platform that elevates them above the ground. Then, developing tap roots will naturally stop

growing as soon as they come in contact with air; however, the fine lateral roots will continue to grow without any interference. Planting in the field should be done with the beginning of the first effective rainfall; and

- b) **Tephrosia** is a fast growing leguminous shrub which is inter-planted during the rainy season in cereals. It is not eaten by animals and provides some firewood and nitrogen. However, uptake in Malawi has been limited after nearly ten years of demonstration and significant promotion by ICRAF. The reasons for this are thought to be that: i) the major boost from nitrogen comes only in the second year and whereas in much of Zambia or Mozambique a one-year fallow is not a major problem, in much of Malawi it is; ii) there is a high labour demand associated with clearing the Tephrosia from the field for planting; and iii) significant but much less important, -if tobacco or tomatoes are planted subsequently they will suffer from nematodes.

123) Manure and compost are also important possibilities but generally more applicable to restricted areas of high value crops, such as vegetables, as they have a high demand for labour. Compost also provides rather little of the nitrogen essential for cereals. These examples illustrate that possibilities are there but there is no magic answer. Every new possibility has to be worked through with farmers to explore its viability and each farmer has to either see distinct success in neighbours' fields, or experiment for themselves to become convinced of the value of an innovation.

Irrigation

124) The prevailing wisdom among many donors appears to be that irrigation development has failed and an enabling environment for irrigation should be provided but then commercial forces should take over. The mission does not share this view. It saw many examples of irrigation that although quite evidently not up to Asian standards, were providing income and food security to farmers and covering running costs. However, for small farmers, priority does have to go to small, simple schemes which as much as possible do not rely on powered pumps. The most positive examples of irrigation were where the needs for collective management were negligible or a relatively small group was involved. The impression was gained in Angola, Malawi and Zambia that powered pumping was most likely to be sustainable when an individual owned the pump and sold water to others. As already noted, the most impressive work in irrigation was seen by an NGO Total Landcare, but it should also be noted that as with many intensification efforts, the mission was concerned that little attention was being given to markets.

125) The mission was also of the view that every effort should be made to address clean drinking water requirements along with irrigation, in the interests of reduced labour requirements and human health.

Sustainability and conservation of the natural resource base

126) The productivity of cropped land in most of southern Africa is declining and contributing to vulnerability as fallow periods are reduced or eliminated. In the African context, where intensification is generally at a very moderate level, one of the best ways of restoring fertility is in fact more intensive production on higher potential lands which allows low potential rainfed land to undergo increased fallow. Another important but difficult issue, which also has relevance for livestock production, is decreased burning early in the dry season. In addition to intensification, several other factors which improve household viability go hand-in hand with sustainability, in particular reducing fuel wood requirements. As wood becomes scarcer, collecting it becomes a greater and greater part of the work load, often falling on women and children. The problem is not new and the link between soil fertility, fodder for livestock and fuel wood has been pursued in agro-forestry for many years. The key is to realize immediate benefits from the trees, and small fast

growing individual lots just for fuel or in combination with animal fencing could be part of the answer. Other early benefits could result from more emphasis on fruit trees. More efficient stoves and solar cookers have been piloted endlessly but perhaps without the concentrated and concerted push that develops real local consciousness and a local industry. The mission believes that the farmers' field school approach to discussing a system and farmer experimentation, lends itself extremely well to progress on these types of issues, but it must be done on an adequate scale.

C. Institutional Issues

Credit and grants

127) The need for additional finance in cash or kind was self evident if households were to increase their viability and it formed an element in all the emergency and community-level development work reviewed; however, no fully viable credit schemes were seen. It was also noted that many intended credit schemes in the SPFS had no real guidelines and everything was left very much to the discretion of extension staff. In emergencies, FAO did not particularly review NGO credit policies so the situation could arise where one NGO provided inputs against some form of credit (perhaps to be repaid to the NGO) while others did not.

128) The mission reached the following general conclusions on the choice between credit or grants and rules of thumb for credit provision:

- a) Cash or inputs that are provided either as grants or credit to vulnerable households that are below minimum income levels are likely to be diverted to the most urgent needs such as food unless they contribute immediately to the households' needs, or they are "protected", e.g. by food aid;
- b) Credit that does not lift the household up to and above the minimum income needed for survival cannot be repaid – this may sound obvious, but appears to be frequently forgotten! Chronically viable households need safety nets of grants. Households which are marginal may need to initially receive a mix of grant and credit to lift them to viability;
- c) Naturally, not only must the household be viable to repay the credit, but the enterprise for which credit is provided must also be viable;
- d) Credit may be more likely to be repaid if it is managed through a group that will continue to benefit from revolving funds, rather than funds returning to an institution such as a bank or NGO – the credit scheme operated by Total Landcare in Malawi retains the funds in the group, as does the scheme operated by SPFS farmers in Angola. Many of the small livestock schemes also operate on this principle with the credits being revolved to additional farmers in kind. If use can be made of existing groups and groups are not solely for credit but other forms of mutual collaboration there is most chance of success; and
- e) While credit which is not in reality expected to be repaid merely undermines discipline and the possibilities for future credit, the reality probably also has to be accepted that in many cases community operated revolving funds will gradually lose capital. If they fulfil a real need, the community itself may re-finance them.

129) **And perhaps most importantly**, the issue of farmer financing should be thought through and agreement reached on what is to be done in each case. It should not just be left to front line staff (government, NGO, etc.) to decide.

The role of associations and private sector traders and other small entrepreneurs

130) The mission noted that in all countries visited "working through farmers' or village associations" has become something of a mantra, especially among NGO partners, and indeed it appears this is increasingly seen as the most effective way of delivering extension services, as well

as inputs, credit, etc. to smallholder farmers. As indicated above, the mission is convinced that farmers can be empowered by the formation, through their own efforts, of groups and associations that start to give them a voice and improved means of helping each other, and saw some evidence of this happening in Mozambique, for example. It is less convinced of the sustainability and effectiveness of associations, cooperatives, etc. that are formed by governments, NGOs and projects, as a pre-requisite for programme delivery. Southern Africa has many examples of defunct cooperatives, unrealistic irrigation schemes which were supposed to be jointly managed, failed programmes for joint ownership of machinery, livestock, etc., empty seed banks and failed communal woodlots. While the mission saw examples of lack of real competition and exploitative behaviour by small entrepreneurs, it also saw examples of small traders and village entrepreneurs (such as pump and farm machinery owners) providing a service to the community despite the support being given to ineffective associations, etc.

131) The mission believes that, while encouraging local self-help groups when there is adequate basis, equal attention should be given to the potential of local traders and entrepreneurs to serve farmers and to mobilize investment and create employment. It was clear from discussions held by the mission that some major donors, including EU and USAID, see this as a major way forward for rural development in southern Africa and a major initiative in this direction has just been announced by UNDP.

Introducing change - Farmer training, extension and education

132) The mission is convinced that the key to successfully managing the transition from emergency to recovery for smallholder farmers in southern Africa lies not only in technologies but in the process by which households are introduced to technologies and technologies are seen as part of holistic household livelihood systems. The process must empower the farmers, recognizing, that they are the only ultimate decision makers on their household development/survival strategy and agriculture. If farmers are to change, they need to be convinced through their own experimentation and observation and to be convinced that whatever support is required for the changes in terms of inputs, markets and finance will not disappear with the end of the programme. Those working with them need not only to know if changes really are taking place (monitoring formal and/or informal) but be willing to find out why farmers have reservations about change, if that is the case. It is odd how often it seems to be forgotten that the proposed change may not be ideal and that farmers accept or reject changes for solid reasons.

133) The mission noted with interest the finding of a recent thematic evaluation of FAO's activities in support of crop production¹⁶ that the Organization's support to crop production in many African countries has now become focussed in particular on spreading the Farmers' Field School (FFS) process. The FFS methodology is proving itself valuable and promising in the context of smallholder farming in Africa. The approach:

- a) recognizes the farmer as decision maker and encourage farmer trial and experimentation;
- b) adopts a systems approach;
- c) works intensively with farmers, using adult education techniques, over an adequate duration for the farmers to acquire an understanding of the methodology themselves and hopefully develop their own capacity for enquiry and advancement in a group;
- d) helps build farmer-controlled groups and networks that give farmers a voice and improved means of helping each other; and
- e) encourages farmers to act as leaders for new groups, further extending improvements.

¹⁶ Thematic evaluation of FAO's Activities in Support of Crop Production. Mission two: Africa, May 2003.

134) While all countries visited by the mission have used FFS training processes to a greater or lesser extent, it is only in Mozambique that enough experience has been accumulated to make any assessment and even there, it is rather early to say whether all the benefits which have been seen from FFS elsewhere can be realized. Senior government officials in Mozambique have some reservations about the large-scale adoption of the FFS training process, as is being proposed under SPFS PAM-II, stating to the mission that the process is now being imposed in much the same way as the World Bank in the past insisted that countries adopt the Training and Visit system, and that Farmers' Field Schools (FFSs) are "expensive" to operate, particularly in remote areas. Criticisms such as these can only be answered when there is sufficient body of demonstration and FAO will need to pursue the FFS approach also with an open mind for improvements and adaptations.

135) **Partnerships with NGOs:** It is clear that in the present situation of government extension services in most of southern Africa, it will be important to pursue partnerships with NGOs in developing the FFS. There is often an advantage with NGOs in that they have sympathy for the methods but unfortunately not always the technical capacity. It is also of interest to note that the two technical NGOs whose packages were successfully being introduced as part of the recovery programme¹⁷ employed a top-down training approach. In general, NGO partners in emergency programmes need more training support as was done for conservation farming in Zambia. In Mozambique, the NGO AMDU was only active in the social sector prior to receiving FAO assistance. In implementing FAO emergency projects, AMDU entered into agricultural activities and provides an example of how FAO can foster responses to food security that integrate agricultural concerns with health, education and social concerns.

136) **Training linked to schools and feeding centres:** The mission noted with interest joint efforts under discussion with UNICEF (of which nutrition and kitchen gardening was being introduced in child feeding centres on a pilot basis for mothers in Malawi) and separate efforts by FAO to introduce agricultural and nutrition education in schools (Zambia). The work in Zambia had not as yet proved successful. Nevertheless, the mission believes that if this kind of training can be well integrated, it can prove useful. In the case of school education, if it is seen as an integral part of the curriculum, it can help to prepare children for life, as well as sometimes, helping to reach their parents or older children who have become head of the household due to sickness and death. The Farmers' Field School approach is particularly relevant in educating children, as well as adults, as has been demonstrated outside the region in Thailand.

137) **HIV-AIDS:** Because of the overriding emergency importance of HIV-AIDS in rural areas, the mission believes that **all** farmer training, extension and education must have significant HIV/AIDS components. As with other aspects of extension, this can best be approached from a systems' perspective both to HIV-AIDS prevention and living with HIV-AIDS and its aftermath.

Land tenure¹⁸

138) Issues of land tenure are found both at the levels of national policy and the grass roots (or meso/micro) often closely linked to intensification, and thus to rehabilitation and farm households' ability to produce more at less physical effort. Security of tenure is fundamental to investment in land improvements from irrigation to permanent crops, to fencing. It is also basic in the development of land markets. A draft land policy currently being discussed in Malawi proposes to register the land in the name of all family members, rather than in the name of the head of household alone. This policy change is intended to secure access to land by surviving family members when the head of family dies. Such a change in policy is, however, likely to have far-reaching implications for traditional authorities and may meet resistance, as they derive part of their

¹⁷ Conservation Farming Unit – Zambia and Total Landcare – Malawi.

¹⁸ The mission did not visit Zimbabwe and did not thus study the land tenure issue there.

power from decisions on land allocations. This may help secure access to land by widows and orphans where the father has died, including from HIV/AIDS.

139) In Angola, FAO's work in this area has been welcomed by the international community. It is based on the considerable experience gained in Mozambique. It involves piloting a participatory approach, which helps people to recognize the importance of their rights and to have communal land titles registered and thus, afforded legal protection from incursion. There has also been internal dialogue with government on the new land law and a workshop is proposed. The evaluation team found this work very encouraging and it was noted that several donors have contributed, including from emergency funds (Netherlands, Sweden and USA). It is probable that work on tenure is of more immediate importance in those areas where there is the greatest interest in land by those who wish to develop large farms (often military and political figures who do not have in fact the resources or interest to develop them adequately). This would currently appear to be around Luanda and in higher potential areas such as Huambo. It was further felt that the grass roots work should also address tenure within the community, perhaps working towards sub-titles which can prevent future problems within the community itself and help to create a market in land. There should also be more emphasis on the early issue of titles which provide the only legal protection to the community. The evaluation team is also concerned that the overall legislation and policy should receive adequate discussion, for example the place of land taxation in encouraging the productive use of land.

140) Land tenure issues in southern Africa impose a brake on development, household income and food security which goes beyond HIV-AIDS, but an important issue for HIV-AIDS is that of the rights of households to land where one or both parents have died. Other key issues, varying from country to country in southern Africa, all of which discourage investment and thus higher intensity of land use with more income for less physical effort, include:

- a) access of animals to land and the disincentive and difficulties of producing dry season crops on irrigated or flood recession land;
- b) access to land next to water sources for irrigation (which is an equity issue as well as an issue of security of tenure for investment);
- c) security of tenure under customary tenure;
- d) security of tenure for migrants from lower potential to higher potential areas; and
- e) incentives and disincentives to the unproductive use of lands, particularly higher potential lands (land taxation could potentially have a role in encouraging productive use and employment generation on larger holdings).

VII. Issues in Establishing Information Systems and in Other Forms of Institution Building

A. Information Systems

141) It almost goes without saying that information is a prerequisite for any meaningful policy or action and the better the information base the more appropriate that action is likely to be. In southern Africa, the recent emergency brought the importance of early warning and vulnerability information sharply into focus and **information was the only area in which all funding agencies spoken to by the mission gave a priority to the role of FAO.**

142) In all of the countries visited, FAO has been active in the establishment of information systems. In Angola, rapid rural appraisal of the agricultural sector (UTF/ANG/004/ANG) provided part of the basis for the Agricultural Recovery and Development Options Review and subsequent

workshop. With TCP, FAO also supported reorganization of the fisheries statistical service¹⁹. In Malawi, the Agris/Caris centre was supported with TCP (TCP/MLW/6713) and in Mozambique, part of the assistance to PROAGRI was for information, in particular agricultural census²⁰. Also in each of the countries, FAO supported the development of early warning and food security information systems and further support, with DFID assistance, is planned in Malawi. At the regional level, support was given to development of SADC capacity, especially for remote sensing. In a related activity, emergency coordinators frequently have as part of their terms of reference, the establishment of an information system more or less linked to forecasting of agricultural input needs which supplies information on donor and NGO response.

Country and SADC experience

143) In Angola, with EC funding, support was provided for establishment of a food security unit in the Ministry of Agriculture²¹. This unit is now being provided further assistance with EC funding and it is felt too early to draw lessons, but experience in Zambia and Mozambique do provide some valuable insights. In general, efforts to establish information systems suffered from the same weaknesses as other institution building efforts discussed below.

144) **Zambia:** The long standing input to establish an early warning system in Zambia where FAO/Netherlands support was provided for over 10 years²² resulted in an early warning unit in the Ministry of Agriculture with FAO assistance. FAO also executed a project UTF/ZAM/051/ZAM Development of the Food Security, Nutrition and Health Monitoring System (FHANIS). Under the current emergency coordination, FAO has set up a simple harvest monitoring system with information provided by Department of Agriculture staff who are given allowances to facilitate data collection. These various initiatives have been based or partnered on two separate sections of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, but also with the Disaster Monitoring and Management Unit, the Food Reserve Agency and the Statistics Department. For a variety of reasons, including loss of staff, low priority for funding and institutional rivalries, the units within government have proved to not sustainably provide timely and adequate food, vulnerability and early warning information. The only really active effort at the moment is the VAC which is chaired by the Disaster Monitoring and Management Unit but is effectively lead and funded by WFP. Although it provides valuable insights, the VAC approach of repeated surveys is believed to be too costly in both time and money to be sustainable in its present form, even with donor support.

145) In **Mozambique**, the situation until very recently had substantial parallels with that in Zambia. There had been very substantial support and FAO had been involved in assistance for development of a number of units and systems, which were largely functioning as a result of continued donor support. The group for early warning in the Ministry of Agriculture (performing mostly crop forecasting) was supported by EC/FAO from 1995²³. Netherlands/FAO support developed the household food security and nutrition information network²⁴ based in the Ministry of Planning and Finance. FAO/EC and USAID support also assisted market information in the Ministry of Commerce. A Médecin Sans Frontières consolidated information system was especially appreciated by donors and the EC funded the transfer of the system to the Ministry of Agriculture.

146) The project GCP/MOZ/058/NET, Consolidation of the Household Food Security and Nutrition Information Network in Mozambique, illustrates the issue of uncoordinated systems. The

¹⁹ TCP/ANG/0065 and 9065 (US\$ 286,000 July 2000 –June 2002).

²⁰ MOZ/98/012 (US\$ 307,000) TCP/MOZ/0065 (US\$ 78,000) UTF/MOZ/066/MOZ (US\$ 348,000) June 1999-May 2003.

²¹ GCP/ANG/024/EC.

²² GCP/ZAM/039/NET.

²³ GCP/MOZ/049/EC and 060/EC (US\$ 2 million) and TCP/MOZ/8822 (US\$ 264,000).

²⁴ GCP/MOZ/058/NET (1997-2000 US\$ 1.9 million).

project had no connection with other information systems and proved unsustainable. Despite their usefulness being demonstrated in planning emergency interventions, data sheets of the food security and nutrition situation developed have not been updated. The exit strategy contemplated in the original project was not followed. This consisted basically in integrating within the government staff workload at the central, provincial and district levels the data collection, reporting, analysis, and dissemination processes. Lack of incentives and other calls on staff time including for the flood emergency were advanced as major reasons for the absence of sustainability.

147) The growing dissatisfaction with the fragmentation of effort and the lack of coordination of systems led FAO and the EC to cooperate in developing a networked system. First of all, a secretariat for national early warning coordination was established in the Ministry of Agriculture (SENCAP). However, it was rapidly felt that early warning alone was too narrow a definition of the purposes to which information needed to be put and it was decided to include SENCAP within SETSAN, the existing Ministry of Agriculture secretariat for food security issues. SETSAN is now being further supported through an EC/FAO project²⁵ and FAO's collaborative role has been positive for the image of the Organization. GTZ is supporting training and FEWSNET is housed in the same building to facilitate coordination. The work of the VAM unit supported by WFP and, to some extent the Save the Children (UK), remains outside the structure but is intended to be networked within it.

148) **SADC:** First with assistance from Japan and the Netherlands and more recently with EU support, FAO has been assisting the development of the SADC Regional Remote Sensing Unit²⁶. The current project will come to an end in 2004. The unit has seven professional and two support staff and all but one of these are paid from the project budget. It is intended to move from Harare to Gaborone along with the rest of the SADC secretariat but the timing for this is unclear and the necessary supporting infrastructure is not in place. Currently, remote sensing, agro-meteorological and GIS information is provided to national early warning units and a 10-day monthly and seasonal bulletin is published with data by country.

149) Supported by several agencies in addition to FAO, including the EC, USAID, Netherlands and Japan, SADC has played a significant role in the development of both regional and national early warning systems and the vulnerability assessment committee (VAC) approach. At the political level, SADC was successful in bringing about much greater coherence and comparability between the VAC approaches applied at country level. However, while information was available at the national level and in the SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate, the SADC Secretariat itself was not able to agree on the extent of the drought emergency in 2002 and the food aid requirements until some time after the CAP appeal had been made. The UN system was thus able to work faster in this regard than SADC.

Effects, impacts and issues for the future

150) **National level:** Food security, nutrition and vulnerability information functions have not been sustainably established in government departments in southern Africa. There has been enduring donor concern in Mozambique, but in other countries support has tended to ebb and flow with emergencies. The underlying reasons for the lack of sustainability in information systems have included the exclusive reliance on government with its relatively weak overall capacity, overlap of efforts, and systems which tried to collect too much data on a regular basis, rather than carrying out special studies once an additional information need was identified.

²⁵ UTF/MOZ/071/MOZ (2002-05 US\$ 3 million).

²⁶ GCP/RAF/296/NET; GCP/RAF/351/EC.

151) Sustainability cannot be looked for in the medium term based on government funding and government staffing. Institutional solutions will need to be tailored to individual countries but the networked approach pursued in Mozambique will of necessity form part of the framework. The association of FEWSNET in Mozambique SETSAN has brought together governmental and non-governmental actors. It may be that in time governmental and non-governmental relationships can be formalized, as well as basket funding from donors, who will continue for many years to be major users of the information systems. An important requirement is to draw the WFP-VAC activity into this broader process.

152) Other problems extended to the lack of attention to the information needs of potential users and to means of disseminating and packaging information to make it usable. In general, donors and NGOs have been the largest users of information and a major challenge is to make information relevant to national users. In Mozambique, the decentralized levels of government and the private sector have been identified as major potential users that need to be provided appropriate information. The mission would also identify politicians at all levels as important potential users, both in informing their advocacy of policies and in providing information to assist in advancing the interests of their rural constituents.

153) **The importance of SADC:** SADC provides an essential and unique service to its members. They cannot, and it would be most inefficient for most of the countries in the region to try, duplicate remote sensing and related GIS analysis provided by SADC. It is a clear case of the regional solution being the most cost-effective.

154) However, the remote sensing meteorological, crop and GIS information from SADC needs to be further strengthened. This is not a function which is going to become self-sustaining within SADC within the foreseeable future. This field is also advancing quickly, meaning that with technological change, investment in improved systems and training remain a continuing necessity. FAO needs to work towards a continued commitment by donors for a basket of funding and, at the same time, the governance of the SADC service needs to be widened.

Recommendation 9: FAO needs to give even greater attention to the strengthening of national information systems on all aspects of food, agriculture and related vulnerability. In doing this, FAO should work for complementarity and networking of systems for both efficiency and effectiveness. Although it is unlikely that all encompassing systems can be designed addressing every aspect of vulnerability, the maximum degree of complementarity should be the aim. In general, basic systems should collect the essential minimum of data and supplement this with special studies when required. In this regard, Mozambique provides a valuable example. Flexible formulae should be sought for increasing the inter-action between various information providers and ensuring flexible basket funding from donors into the medium term. In addition, every effort needs to be made to continue and strengthen the provision of remote sensing/GIS analysis through SADC. This capacity can be most appropriately developed and maintained at a sub-regional rather than national level.

B. Institution Building

Project experience

155) It is in the area of institution building that the evaluation found the least evidence of sustainable impact and with the exception of information systems, FAO assistance in this area appears to have been declining more rapidly than that for other forms of technical assistance.

156) The mission followed-up on a number of institution building projects undertaken in recent years to examine the sustainability of their impacts. These included:

- a) Collection of genetic material and establishment of a gene bank in Angola (TCP/ANG/6713 US\$ 187,000). Despite the war situation material was collected of a large number of land races and efforts made for field and cold store facilities for a gene bank. It seems that the field facilities were not maintained. At least some of the material is in the cold store, but the mission questions why the future of the material was not assured through deposit in CGIAR gene banks and whether it was reasonable to rely on national capacity in such a war situation;
- b) Introduction of Pesticides Registration and Control Scheme (TCP/MLW/4451 & 6715 – US\$ 312,000). This project was intended to establish the necessary laboratory facilities and the supporting legislation. It would appear that the project had no sustainable results in terms of a registration and control scheme or laboratory testing. In the view of the mission, this is an example of an activity which could best be tackled by SADC and/or the regional economic grouping COMESA (SACU apparently bases its regulations of those of South Africa);
- c) Capacity Building for Forest Policy Implementation (TCP/MLW/8923 -US\$ 64,000). The project produced a forestry development strategy and a participatory training of trainers module as planned and the module was used by forestry officers to train forestry extension staff. Forty-five extension staff were trained out of the 200 in the Forestry Department. The overall effectiveness of forestry extension is limited by budget constraints which tend to limit staff to remaining in offices;
- d) Nutrition education in primary schools (TCP/ZAM/8923 & 2803 -US\$ 323,000). This project had prepared education modules which had been tested in Luapula province where FAO has an ongoing nutrition project. However, at the time of the mission the person responsible in the Ministry of Education had died and no use was being made of the materials; and
- e) One emergency project reviewed contained a significant institution building element (OSRO/MOZ/003/ITA: Rehabilitation of Family Agriculture in the Provinces of Manica, Maputo and Sofala 2000-2003). This project included rehabilitation of infrastructure. At the veterinary laboratory in Xai Xai, equipment was supplied to the laboratory without voltage stabilization arrangements, a condition that may be responsible for the cold chamber breakdown. The sustainability of the project improvements is already in doubt due to lack of government funds for maintenance and other recurrent expenditure.

Issues for the future

157) It is clear that institutions in the broad sense of the word underlie a country's capacity to develop. However, in southern Africa, there needs to be a very realistic appraisal of the justification for establishment of capacities at national level in relation to stage of development and the potential of regional institutions, such as COMESA, SACU and SADC. The countries of southern Africa covered by this review have populations varying from one million in the case of Swaziland to 18 million for Mozambique. Their economies (excluding the mineral wealth of Angola) are small.

158) In addition, in the countries visited, with the exception of Mozambique, the capacity of civil services has been declining. This is due to policy changes on the role of government, budgetary constraints, resignation of staff to take up higher paid jobs with NGOs, donors, international organizations and, to some extent, the private sector, and increasingly losses due to HIV-AIDS.

159) For example in Malawi where a UNDP study²⁷ was made of the impact of HIV-AIDS on the public sector, including the Ministry of Agriculture, there were increased vacancy rates in almost all

²⁷ The impact of HIV/AIDS on Human Resources in the Malawi Public Sector, February 2002, UNDP-Malawi .

occupational categories between 1990 and 2000. The rate of loss of staff had risen to 9.5 percent per year and the rate of death from 0.3 percent to 4 percent. The rate of loss of professionals per year had risen to the extent that 67 percent of professional posts and 43 percent of research scientist posts were vacant by 2000. Impacts on particular units could be devastating: in one research department approximately 50 percent of staff had died. It was surmised that a rise in early retirement and resignation was also impacted upon by HIV-AIDS.

160) The mission believes that with the present state of development in many southern African countries and the capacity for provision of goods and services by the public sector, provides justification for continuing donor support to carry out central functions. Information systems have already been discussed in this context and transfer of development knowledge to rural populations is another key area, with extension services largely dysfunctional. It is, however, often unreasonable to expect that government will be able to entirely fund or staff these in the medium term.

161) Such capacities thus can probably best be continued, with networked solutions and public-NGO-private sector cooperation. In Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, it is both government policy and the *de facto* situation on the ground that development activity, including agricultural extension, is carried out with government – NGO partnerships. The NGOs often channel resources to extension workers and other civil servants to enable them to assist in development activities. In the commercial sector, and to some extent through traders, there is also private sector involvement in extension and this has been demonstrated elsewhere in the world, particularly with para-vets.

162) It would appear that in the present development situation of the southern African countries covered in this review, stand alone FAO-TCP projects with their short duration, are unlikely to yield meaningful sustainable impacts in institution building.

Recommendation 10: It is essential in considering institution building to **exercise a great deal of realism on the prospects for sustainability** and to examine if the institutional capacity to be established or strengthened is:

- best in the public, NGO, private or mixed sectors;
- more appropriate to be established within the framework of sub-regional institutions, such as COMESA, SACU or SADC (in terms of convergence for trade and efficient use of resources);
- an appropriate priority use of international, and more importantly national, resources at this stage of development and with the current development situation; and
- likely to continue to receive donor support into the medium term.

Networked solutions bringing together government, donors and NGOs are often most likely to succeed.

VIII. The Contribution to Policy Development, Governance and In-Country Coordination

A. Policy and Governance

163) **Policy work by FAO was a high priority for Ministries of Agriculture and also for many donors**, stating that FAO was respected for its neutrality. The UN Secretary-General, the World Bank and most of the major donors emphasize that they see improved governance as an essential pre-requisite of development in southern Africa.

Country experience

164) **In Zambia**²⁸, FAO has been very substantially involved in policy dialogue and support to the government. For many years this was mainly with regard to maize marketing and input supply, but more recent policy work has addressed forests, aquaculture, food security and water and irrigation. The government has at no stage adopted a comprehensive agricultural or food security strategy for Zambia although, as part of structural adjustment, there was a reduction in the civil service support services and a partial withdrawal of government from agricultural marketing and supply.

165) The basic importance of maize in Zambia's agricultural production and household food security has meant that political response is almost inevitable from government and this has contributed to an unstable environment for large farmers, smaller surplus producers and merchants. FAO has worked quietly to draw the government's attention to negative impacts of policy swings and short-term interventions.

166) In forestry, the FAO work on an action plan was reported to have provided a basis for dialogue with donors which FAO has facilitated. With subsequent assistance, FAO has also contributed to a better prioritization of the plan which can contribute to realistic development and facilitates discussion with donors. The Forestry Department feels that the plan has facilitated understanding of the inter-relationship between trees and forests and agriculture, livestock and wildlife. They also felt it has given more prominence in government thinking to the importance of the forestry sector, albeit this view is not universally shared.

167) The FAO work on water is regarded as an important contribution to an eventual policy. The mission did not entirely share the policy prescription in the FAO proposals which almost exclusively emphasized commercial irrigation. It was felt that in addition to ensuring an enabling environment for commercial agriculture and horticulture under irrigation, which particularly in the case of horticulture is job creating, attention does need to be given to small-scale development. Use of treadle pumps introduced under former IFAD/FAO assistance does appear to be continuing to expand and although small dam projects have often failed for lack of markets and adequate extension support, the mission is of the view that this is part of the solution for dry season food and additional income. Involvement of adequately trained NGOs and encouragement to the smallholder entrepreneur may be essential elements in their success.

168) **In Angola**, following the temporary peace in 1996, FAO assisted in the Agricultural Recovery and Development Options Review February 1996-July 97²⁹. In association with IFAD, UNDP, the World Bank, WFP, the EU and French Cooperation, FAO's TCI carried out the review using an international team and the findings were discussed at a workshop in Luanda in May 1997 where broad agreement on the strategy was said to have been reached. The main elements of the strategy included a major emphasis on liberalization, the down sizing of the Ministry of Agriculture, with an improvement in capacity to support rather than undertake agriculture, and a stress on the role of NGO's and the private sector. The FAOR reported that although the report was not widely available it was still consulted and provides a useful basis. She felt that FAO has not sufficiently publicized the review.

169) Following the 1997 review, FAO TCP/ANG/6715 Technical Support for Managing the Agricultural Sector Reform Process (November 1997-99) was intended to support the reform

²⁸ ZAM/93/004 Zfap Planning; TCP/ZAM/6613 Assistance in Revising and Preparing the Fisheries Legislation; ZAM/97/005 Support to the Formulation of Environment and Natural Resources Management Programme; TCP/ZAM/2901 National Strategy for the Aquaculture Sub-sector; TCP/ZAM/0167 National Irrigation Policy and Strategy.

²⁹ TCP/ANG/6612 US\$ 397,500 and TCP/ANG/6714 US\$ 66,000.

process in the Ministry of Agriculture. It produced a series of documents including: Rehabilitation of Agricultural Services in Mexico Province; Guidelines for the preparation of rural development pilot projects; a conceptual document for the establishment of a development fund which would reactivate the rural economy; and a document on access to and use of land and a land conflict resolution case study for Quenguela Norte (land conflict between entrepreneurs and small farmers). It is doubtful if in the war context most of this work yielded much effect but the work on land tenure has continued to be followed-up.

170) The evaluation team believes that there is now a window of opportunity for change in Angola which will subsequently become more difficult. This is because the more open playing field which emerged after the war will rapidly start to coalesce around certain policies and lines of action. Also, the forthcoming elections provide a climate for discussion and a desire to satisfy voters which may not be repeated for some time. FAO can use this climate of opportunity to facilitate the opening-up of informed debate on policy and strategy. As indicated by the recent FAO TCA mission on transition strategy, the Organization needs to have a clear vision of the direction in which it feels the country should move. The evaluation team shares the view of the TCA team that the emphasis needs to be on small farmer development, including the necessity of markets which offer the incentive for development and the means for rural livelihoods.

171) **In Mozambique**, FAO has had a leading coordination role within PROAGRI with donors. This has facilitated continuing policy dialogue and involvement in programme development. Agricultural policy has been significant in the PRSP and Mozambique was among the earliest countries approved for debt relief.

B. Coordination

172) The mission found the coordination role of FAO could be closely linked to its capacity for policy and strategy development both in emergencies and development. In all countries visited, FAO was respected as a key member of the UN country team and the emergency team.

Emergency coordination

173) In all of the countries visited except Malawi, FAO was recognized as the main coordinator for agricultural relief. The conditions which permitted this were that FAO received sufficient funds to be a major contractor of the NGOs in agricultural relief work. The NGOs were thus willing to exchange information and respect some coordination by FAO. FAO was also able, thanks to the flexibility of the funds with which it had been provided, to undertake gap filling, where programmes funded by others were not active. Something of a virtuous circle was created in that the donors recognized FAO's coordination role and funded it, thus FAO was better able to perform the role. However, it was much more difficult to be effective where there was not this respect, few resources, and FAO was seen as being placed in a control relationship by government (as occurred in Malawi).

174) The mission also saw evidence that where FAO committed itself to development of UN emergency strategy (CAP) at the level of the FAOR, as in Zambia, there was greater credence given to the importance of agriculture and there was less possibility of agriculture taking second place to social programmes, which was a danger in Angola. The regional emergency coordinator in RIACSO was able to offset weak FAOR involvement to some extent but was not a substitute for it and national emergency coordinators did not command the respect afforded to a head of agency or normally have the same strategic vision.

175) **RIACSO** brings together in Johannesburg, under one roof, with WFP in the chair³⁰, most of the major UN system organizations concerned with relief and rehabilitation in the sub-region, including FAO. In contrast to the usual arrangement, OCHA acts more as secretary to the group than lead coordinator. Experience has been very positive to date and there is a heartening lack of bureaucracy and a high degree of team work. It is clear that most of those working in RIACSO place a high degree of importance on tackling the problems of vulnerable households and perhaps because RIACSO was established so recently, institutional rivalries have not developed. There could be advantages in trying to further reinforce a RIACSO-type approach to coordination at country level, although the FAO emergency coordinator should not become separated from the FAOR by housing them in a central emergency coordination unit.

176) The mission believes that FAO should continue its strong commitment to RIACSO as it moves from acute drought emergency to tackling the long-term problems of vulnerable households. RIACSO is now placing the emphasis on HIV-AIDS affected households and the mission feels that this reflects both an important reality of the crisis in the sub-region and an opportunity for funding. However, FAO must ensure that the medical agenda is not allowed to dominate at the expense of the need of vulnerable households for food and remunerative employment. Indeed, it needs to be emphasized that strengthening nutrition underpins both reducing vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and the effectiveness of treatment drugs.

Development coordination

177) In Mozambique in the PROAGRI process and in Zambia as chairman of the donor working group for liaison with government on agriculture, FAO had a strong coordination role on overall policy and strategy, but this was through neutrality and substantive technical support on issues. In Malawi for some time with support from DFID, FAO provided the secretariat for the donor-government food security and agriculture group, but the lead for this group was at the time with DFID and has now switched to the EC, which is also providing the Secretariat. FAO was not seen as having a substantive role and did not provide significant technical inputs.

C. Issues for the Future

The policy development process

178) The mission concluded that there have been significant changes in the way national policies and strategies are determined, and this has implications for the way in which FAO assists countries and how the Organization can make a contribution to reinforcing democracy and improved governance within democracy. An important feature of the way in which policy making has changed is the growing role of parliaments and thus of parliamentarians. The fact that many parliamentarians are elected by rural constituencies makes it more difficult to neglect the needs of the rural areas. On the down-side, essentially populist short-term decisions become more likely and the role of formal strategies and policies may be diminished.

179) The influence of civil society organizations, the media and of the business community has also increased. Donors appear to increasingly base their resource allocations on their agendas for policy change and there is greater agreement among donors on the changes they are working for. The role of civil services in policy making has declined, both because of the increased influence of the other parties referred to above, and because of the declining capacity discussed above in the context of institutions. The law has become less easy for the executive to ignore, due to the role of parliament, the media and civil society organizations.

³⁰ As representative of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Southern Africa, who is also the Executive Director of WFP.

180) This means that policy making and implementation becomes a more iterative ongoing process. It may also be based to a greater extent on what is seen to work and catches the popular imagination. FAO can no longer prepare a policy with the civil service and expect it to be implemented. The nature of the process necessitates continuous support and advocacy. There is a need to facilitate the public debate, assisting the issues to be understood and answers derived nationally. Politicians, the media and civil society need to be targeted for information. Thus, aspects of information system development become closely related to support to policy development.

181) The best results appear to have been achieved (Mozambique and Zambia) when the FAOR was able to play a strong supporting role and this was closely linked to the role in coordination, where FAO provided substantive technical inputs as well as a neutral “venue” for discussion of policy and strategy.

Recommendation 11: In southern Africa, FAO should treat the policy and strategy development processes as continuing and involving the executive, parliament, civil society, donors and the civil service (agriculture, finance, etc.). The greatest need is for understanding of issues and not generally for fully elaborated solutions. This implies that FAO has to be prepared to make continuing inputs and may have particular implications for the type of support provided by TCA, TCI and the Regional and Sub-regional Offices, with need for more recurrent inputs by single individuals or small teams, supporting the FAOR (see also FAO capacities below).

Some key areas for policy impact backed by normative work

182) As already noted, many donors see a strong role for FAO in policy development. The key role which FAORs have to play in this was noted above and improved guidance for them and a need for greater adequate normative underpinning has been identified by the mission in a number of areas. In identifying these areas, the mission notes that there may be others of greater priority which can be best identified by the FAORs themselves.

183) Important policy issues in the situation of continued vulnerability for many households include:

- a) the make up, conditions for and targeting of safety nets and related food aid. None of the countries visited in the region had well articulated policies for this and FAO has not been active in this aspect of policy development, including the role of donors;
- b) also included in a) is the need to improve response to localized emergencies which form part of the pattern of continuing vulnerability and where FAO needs to work with governments, donors, other members of the UN community (in particular WFP) and major NGOs to establish mechanisms of coordinated and joint rapid response at national level. It is clearly not sufficient to say that these can be handled entirely through national coping mechanisms;
- c) the identification of communities and households at risk and the targeting of assistance (both for food and agriculture). While targeting of communities has proved relatively easy, targeting of households was found by the mission to be much more problematic, both in terms of identifying the households (which has to be done by the local communities) and the acceptance of targeting by the communities. Indirect targeting through, for example, children in schools could be effective but still tended to bypass the most vulnerable. Targeting through such places as health centres was also found to be an option and one FAO project in Malawi was training mothers in kitchen gardening and providing take-home starter kits at nutrition rehabilitation units;

- d) the understanding of traditional coping mechanisms and why they are increasingly breaking down. Part of this is, of course, the far greater overall vulnerability of households and increased pressure on the natural resource base but there may be important lessons to be drawn from the past and built upon for the future;
- e) the economics of fertilizer use alternatives to increasing rainfed production per unit of land and of labour (including also comparison with the cost of food aid); and
- f) the group of issues surrounding land tenure, already discussed above, which go, of course, beyond vulnerable households and extend to the potential for employment generation and economic growth.

184) In addition to the major issues of vulnerable households, the mission would draw attention to the groups of issues discussed above in relation to grass roots development, including those issues of technology and institutional approach (finance, role of associations and the private sector, introducing change).

185) Finally, the mission would note that in southern Africa (perhaps also taking in other similar parts of Africa) the time is ripe for major studies of actual experience and cost-benefit on two key areas in increasing returns to labour and land, i.e.

- a) technical and institutional experience with irrigation and water harvesting for small producers (in this context it should be noted that the mission sees no alternative for increased donor support for agricultural water. Small farmer water projects may not provide economic rates of return but they can provide livelihoods and the experience is not all negative); and
- b) why there is such limited success from energy development programmes.

IX. The Sub-Regional Dimension and the Place of Regional Projects

186) As previously noted, in southern Africa the countries, with the exception of South Africa, are too small and not at a stage of development where they can establish institutional capacities nationally for each aspect of agricultural development and food security. The example of the efficiency gains from SADC provision of remote sensing and GIS information for food security and early warning has already been discussed. Recent FAO assistance at the regional level concentrated on transboundary issues, included:

- a) Transboundary livestock disease: In addition to direct emergency assistance for livestock disease discussed above, two TCPs worked for establishment of a Transboundary Disease Early Warning System, including the establishment of TADinfo (a disease data base) for SADC with the Namibian Veterinary Department³¹. The various projects have meant that senior staff in the various countries have met with and know their counterparts in the sub-region, which should facilitate both formal and informal cooperation. It is not clear whether the Namibia based system is intended for transfer to Gaborone with other SADC services but it would appear that it was not able to play a central role in the recent foot and mouth and CBPP outbreaks and as with any information system it relies on the capacity and interest of countries to provide data. The weakness of national veterinary services meant that this did not happen in a timely way;
- b) A series of three TCP projects³² supported the development of international legal and institutional arrangements for the management of Lake Nyasa/Malawi by Malawi,

³¹ TCP/RAF/2809.

³² TCP/RAF/0065, 6719 and 9065 – US\$ 606,000.

Mozambique and Tanzania. The project which is just completed developed a combined report on resources and resource use and a draft management agreement. This agreement has apparently been approved in draft at the technical level by the three countries; and

- c) A TCP for establishment of COMESA common agricultural policy³³ may mark the initiation of a process. At the moment it does not seem to be taken seriously at national level but may gradually start to have impact.

187) In general, FAO assistance at the sub-regional level is likely to be most effective when it addresses transboundary issues which is the case with the three projects discussed above. However, of the other four projects³⁴ briefly reviewed by the mission, this was the case for only one of them, and for the remainder the concentration was on technical networks which appear to have had more limited impact, perhaps because of the declining institutional base in the civil services at national level in most of the countries concerned.

188) Projects addressing transboundary issues are appropriately situated with a regional organization and SADC has been an important partner for FAO in this regard. However, the focus of countries for development of trade in a common market seems now to be focused more on SACU and COMESA. Major donors including the EC and USAID are reviewing the level of their support to SADC which at the same time seems to be concentrating on regional project development rather than development of a common market. It is difficult to say at the moment how the situation will develop, but FAO will undoubtedly need to work with all three partners and in the view of the mission should focus its assistance on trade development. Greater integration of national markets will be an important factor in the development of the small economies of the sub-region. In trade development, FAO has a comparative strength in non-tariff barriers to trade in food and agricultural products (SPS-TBT) but needs also to be aware of the activities of others; for example, the EC has been providing some support to SADC, with respect to harmonization of sanitary and phyto-sanitary barriers to trade.

Recommendation 12: The mission attaches high importance to the integration and development of trade for the small economies of the sub-region. Priority is therefore attached to regional projects which can help to reduce trade barriers. Some capacities, such as that for remote sensing/GIS early warning information analysis, can also be most effectively and efficiently provided at sub-regional level but realism is required on the capacities which can be sustained in sub-regional institutions.

X. FAO's Capacities, Administrative Arrangements and Procedures

189) The evaluation has identified a considerable number of challenges. It also examined FAO's capacities to address these. At the workshop of FAO Representatives and emergency coordinators to discuss the preliminary findings of the evaluation, there was what can only be described as extremely strong criticism and concern with the resources provided to FAORs, the Sub-regional Office (SAFR) and the associated FAO administrative and procedural arrangements. It is difficult to overstate the degree of frustration expressed by workshop participants as regards FAO delegated authority levels and procedures, which as they saw it were the single greatest constraint in FAO's working. Those present at the workshop in general regarded these as the issues which FAO had to confront if it was to better serve the countries of southern Africa. The mission shared many of the participants concerns, but at the same time felt that substantive programme issues, as discussed above were of major significance and stressed that FAO had to work within a relatively fixed envelope of regular budget funding. Participants in the workshop recognized that there would be the

³³ TCP/RAF/0180.

³⁴ TCP/RAF/8933; GCP/RAF/297/ITA; GCP/RAF/319/AUS; RAF/97/032

opportunity to further examine many of the issues in the context of the upcoming evaluation of decentralization.

A. Enhancing the Capacity of FAO Representations to Support Development in Southern Africa

190) If FAO is to increase its effective response to the crisis in southern African development, it is evident that a lot depends upon the effective capacity of the FAO Representations. As already noted, although administration and coordination becomes an increasing burden, the larger the FAO programme, the larger the technical resources of consultants, national staff, etc., the FAOR has to draw on and the greater the visibility of the Organization. FAO Representatives attending the workshop placed a lot of emphasis upon being given greater financial resources, including a larger share of support cost income on projects. They also sought greater flexibility to use TCP resources and an increase in the FAOR facility. In absolute terms, given the other calls upon the Regular Programme, it would require a major policy change to significantly increase FAOR resources directly. The mission noted that these are all issues which are being reviewed internally at present and which will undoubtedly, be subject to discussion during the evaluation of decentralization. The team did, however, have two immediate suggestions:

- a) If FAO concentrates its programme in each country around a restricted number of priorities as suggested in the proposals for rolling 3-4 year national strategic programme frameworks, it should be possible to recruit the same consultant/staff member (whether national or international) across several projects allowing them to be in the country continuously. If more of these staff were placed in the FAO Representation (as with emergency coordinators who are hired in this way) the capacity of the Representation would be increased. Similarly, if in addition to normal support costs, support staff were included more systematically in the project budgets and stationed in the FAORs, there would be an increase in capacity. This generally happens already in emergency projects, and sometimes with others, but it could be much more the norm; and
- b) Many FAORs have local contacts for people nationally and in neighbouring countries who have technical and policy knowledge. If FAO were to formally appoint national technical resource advisory panels for scientific and policy matters with individuals selected purely on the basis of their personal knowledge and experience, this would give the FAOR a source of ad-hoc technical advice and a place to refer others such as visiting donor missions. It is quite possible, given the dedication of many people, that panel members would be prepared to make quite a lot of input without remuneration, especially if the panels had an official status wherein the Organization acknowledged their advisory role. The mission is of the view that (leaving aside the numerous calls on FAO technical officers limited time) for local problems, expertise already in the country is very frequently going to be more pertinent than that in FAO headquarters and Regional Offices.

Recommendation 13: FAO should:

- Develop rolling 3-4 year national strategic programme frameworks, permitting concentration of resources in a few priority areas;
- Spread consultants and support staff on a medium-term basis over several projects within the framework; and
- Appoint national technical resource advisory panels for scientific and policy matters composed of specialists within the country.

B. Role of the Sub-regional Office for East and Southern Africa (SAFR)

191) The mission regarded SAFR as a key component in FAO's capacity in the sub-region. As with the other issues discussed in this section, the role of Sub-regional Offices will be examined in detail in the evaluation of decentralization. The mission thus presents some preliminary thoughts, specific to southern Africa, which it feels require more in-depth examination. The mission found a high level of frustration among SAFR staff regarding their capacity to provide an effective service. In general, it was felt that SAFR's over-riding priority had to be the provision of technical inputs to countries in support of the FAORs and projects, and that the real contribution which could be made to FAO's normative work was limited. The fact that some staff could play-off headquarters departments against the sub-region did, however, in some interviewees' views lead to a lack of discipline by some staff and some following of personal agendas. Principal areas of concern in providing an improved service, excluding issues of resource levels, included the following:

- a) Although SAFR is the biggest of the Sub-regional Offices, it was felt to be too small and have too few resources (including for travel) to not work as a fully integrated team, i.e. to be split into departmental groups. Countries often needed a coordinated inter-disciplinary response from several departments within SAFR and SAFR's limited resources could be better managed as a whole;
- b) If technical assistance needs could not be handled within country, SAFR should normally be the first point of reference (unless it was clear that the expertise simply was not available in SAFR), SAFR could then coordinate with RAF and headquarters on the actual supply of technical inputs;
- c) The response to country priorities on the basis of requests from FAORs needed to be decided in SAFR itself (ultimately by the Sub-regional Representative) and the priorities of technical divisions in headquarters could not play a major role in this; and
- d) The other side of this equation was that SAFR should completely respect the priorities identified by FAORs in supporting country development.

C. Implementation Issues

192) In general, the more efficient FAO's implementation of its programmes, the greater the Organization's capacity and the greater its appeal to funding organizations and governments. Many of the same implementation issues apply to emergency operations and development programmes. It was also noted that FAO has undertaken a study of implementation arrangements for development projects based on Asia and the Pacific experience, and this is expected to result in improvements. Similarly, a study of emergency implementation procedures, levels of authority, etc. specifically comparing FAO with WFP is being considered, although no action has as yet been undertaken. The discussion below thus draws attention to those major areas of concern raised by participants in the workshop and by emergency coordinators, FAORs and development partners during the course of country visits. While aware that action on many of them is already under study, the mission shares the workshop participants overall concern with the need to make FAO more efficient and responsive and to empower staff on the ground, in particular FAORs. The mission was not, however, able to verify the importance of the problems summarized below. It also noted that some of these issues are likely to be examined by the overall evaluation of decentralization.

General issues

193) Administrative issues common to both FAORs and emergency coordinators concern principally levels of authority and the speed with which transactions are carried out in headquarters, e.g. as reported by participants in the workshop:

Levels of authority

- a) Letters of Agreement (LOA), contracts and purchase orders cannot be signed in excess of US\$ 25,000. There cannot be more than one LOA with any one organization at any one time even if they are for completely different purposes. Field purchase orders have remained unchanged at this limit for over 15 years. It was noted that in Angola the WFP local authority was for contracts of up to US\$ 300,000 for purchasing, elsewhere it was apparently US\$ 200,000 for purchasing with no specific limit on contracts for logistics;
- b) AFS has stated that it “is of the opinion that any comparisons with other organizations including WFP regarding delegated authority levels is inappropriate unless it includes an analysis of the type of procurement undertaken by these offices as well as the resources such offices have dedicated to procurement activities. While noting the frustration of the FAORs and emergency coordinators with the perceived slowness in delivery of inputs, an analysis of exactly where the bottlenecks are occurring is required prior to assuming that delegating higher procurement authority will be a panacea to the problems. The procurement process begins long before a Purchase Requisition ever reaches AFSP and if the delays are occurring in the operating or technical units responsible, delegating greater authority to the field will not *a priori* address the problem. Furthermore, while recognizing that the provisions on delegation of authority require review, such review must be undertaken in consideration of resources available in the FAORs to dedicate to procurement while providing a minimum segregation of duties and the need for appropriate training so as to ensure that the procurement process is transparent, competitive and efficient. The issue of available, dedicated, resources is a key one and any discussion of a significant increase in delegated authority levels can only be undertaken in this context.”;

Payment Delays

- c) Delays in payment from Rome: This causes major problems with suppliers, contractors and consultants and in effect makes it very difficult to use small local companies or NGOs which cannot fund their operations without payment. The delay was reported by workshop participants to be mainly in the paper transaction to actually authorize and make payment in AFF;
- d) Oracle needs to include a tracking system which can be accessed by FAORs to know where a transaction in the system is in RAF and HQ;
- e) The late payment to coordinators and other consultants of honorarium and expenses at the end of each contract leads to major problems for them as does the fact that FAO does not provide disaggregated statements of honorarium and expenses which enable them to understand what they are being paid;
- f) Payments through UNDP in countries where FAO does not have a full FAOR causes a major difficulty;

Other Issues with Contracts and Letters of Agreement (LOAs)

- g) No central file for suppliers and contractors which allows bad experience to be documented and consulted by others;
- h) AFS has stated that “AFSP maintains a vendor database in Oracle to which, unfortunately, field offices do not have direct access for reasons outside the competence of AFS. However, should field offices wish to check on a particular supplier, they can request AFSP to look in the database and provide information. The issue of including information regarding *bad experiences* in the supplier files is a sensitive one. Oracle allows comments to be included in the database, but if the purpose of such information is to *black-list* a supplier it cannot be undertaken without a detailed review of all the facts related to the negative performance so as to ensure that there are not any extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, one negative experience may not be sufficient reason to black-list an otherwise well performing supplier.”
- i) Penalty clauses: As discussed with respect to seeds in emergencies, penalty clauses apparently have a maximum of 10 percent but in many cases late delivery or delivery of inadequate quality can render the supply more or less worthless; and

- j) Delays in approvals of contracts and LOAs in headquarters were reported by participants to mostly occur in ODG for those over US\$ 100,000, not at departmental level.

Issues specific to FAORs and their operational responsibilities

194) Issues specific to FAORs included:

- a) very small discretionary funds in the FAOR facility and allocated for the FAOR to use directly from TCP and not available to all FAORs. Within the facility, the apparent US\$ 200 limit for payment of secondments is considered much too low and does not allow the use of more independent local consultants, e.g. from universities;
- b) recruitment of all consultants through RAF to which communications are poor: FAORs believed they should have more local authority for recruitments and that for southern Africa, handling through Rome, or perhaps SAFR, could be more efficient; and
- c) Deputy FAORs (programme) need greater opportunities for training and more exposure to the overall capabilities and structure of FAO. FAO has a reputation for being the poorest employer of national professionals in the national UN system in terms of grade and possibilities for advancement. As local staff costs are relatively low, the question of grade equivalency could probably be addressed with comparative ease, that of career opportunities is more difficult and is perhaps an issue for the UN system, as it can only really be provided at national level by movement between agencies.

Issues specific to emergencies

195) It is evident that many of the general issues will have greatest impact in an emergency where speed is of the essence. The mission endorses the present studies to define special fast-track procedures and authority limits for emergencies. The revolving fund referred to immediately below is intended in part to provide for early provision of emergency inputs.

196) The other major set of problems specific to emergencies, concerned emergency coordinators. The issue of early positioning of coordinators in an emergency is being addressed. In line with the recommendations of the evaluation of Strategic Objective A.3, a revolving fund is now being established to assist with this problem. However, it is worth noting that FAO's response to the emergency in six African countries was to field one regional emergency coordinator with no infrastructural support, until donor funds were raised. This limited FAO's immediate visibility and some donors questioned the Organization's commitment.

197) Another major issue both for staff morale and continuity of emergency coordinators in post is the difficulty in offering contracts of reasonable duration, although coordinators are generally in post with breaks for more than one year and often two or three. This is because the coordinators are charged to a series of projects but a contract is only issued against one project at a time. Not only does this lead to breaks in service, dissatisfaction and reduced commitment. Stability of response may be reduced and an image of lack of continuity presented to the outside world. It also creates a lot more work for all concerned. The problem could be overcome if each staff contract was charged to a series of projects which is apparently already possible but not general practice. Also:

- a) Coordinators' terms of reference tend to be too standard, often incorporating such duties as coordination and establishing national information data-bases which may or may not be appropriate;
- b) Coordinators with 11-month contracts and appropriate competence should be granted direct authority for issue of LOAs, local payments etc. in those countries with no FAOR. Terms of Reference should probably be finalized only after a preliminary overview of the situation has been compiled in the month of assignment; and

- c) Where more than one coordinator is employed in a country, the second could be a national, which would often improve local communication, especially with the government, and would also help to establish national capacity, in some cases facilitating later operations by FAO itself.

Recommendation 14: In addition to the studies of implementation arrangements for both emergency and development projects currently underway, attention should be given to those of the above implementation issues not addressed directly by those studies, bearing in mind the major importance field and decentralized staff attach to resolution of these issues in improving FAO's efficiency and performance.

D. FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)

198) As will be discussed below, the mission was not of the view that, in the programmes it had examined, all of the criticism expressed of TCP was borne out with the strength to which it was expressed by participants in the workshop. However, management does need to be aware of the criticisms from the country level, which can be summarized as follows:

- a) The TCP portfolio does not represent the national priorities and the most effective use of the TCP resource as determined by the FAOR in discussion with the government, but rather the priorities of technical units in HQ and the Regional and Sub-regional Offices which work with their counterparts in government to elicit requests which are then approved. Some FAORs complained that TCPs were approved which they themselves had not had the opportunity to review or had advised against;
- b) TCPs require too much documentation for relatively small amounts of money;
- c) Projects are modified in headquarters to include additional aspects, thus losing focus;
- d) TCPs should be a way of flexibly mobilizing technical expertise nationally and internationally but restrictions placed upon the input mix make it difficult to use them in this way;
- e) Projects take much too long to approve (also a concern of emergency coordinators) and part of the reason for delay is the review by overloaded technical officers, which may be unnecessary for these relatively small projects; and
- f) In emergencies it is difficult to get approval of TCPs which go beyond seeds and tools and include a transition or development dimension.

199) With regard to the first criticism, the team did not really find that the mix of projects under TCP funding demonstrated this supposed heavy influence of the technical departments, with the possible exception of Malawi, where TCP does appear to have been used for a number of scattered endeavours with limited impact. Slowness of approval has been a concern of senior management and the mission was aware that efforts are underway to streamline approval procedures and reduce approval times.

Recommendation 15: The evaluation analysis has touched upon several points with regard to TCP in the analysis above and its main findings, based solely on the southern African context are:

- It would be useful to further review TCP procedures with a view to strengthening the role and authority of the FAOR in deciding on TCP approvals, streamlining appraisal and increasing the flexibility of TCP;
- If the concept of strategic national programme frameworks for FAO is piloted in southern Africa, TCP should be used to support the priorities of the framework³⁵;
- TCP is not an appropriate tool for stand alone institution building in the countries of southern Africa;
- Technical cooperation through TCP could be used to much greater extent than is the case at present to complement ongoing donor financed projects and programmes with a technical input. This could contribute to greater impact and sustainability from the TCP and the financial inputs of the donor as well as helping to establish credibility for FAO as a source of technical inputs.

XI. HIV-AIDS and Vulnerability

200) Many countries of southern Africa appear to be in the grip of a downward spiral of poverty, as a result of HIV-AIDS, failures of governance (including conditions for economic growth), declining soil fertility and inadequate donor investment. There is an increase in rural households subject to continuous food insecurity and of households subject to seasonal food insecurity. The increase in the number of vulnerable households means that any crisis, whether it be due to climatic shocks, civil disturbance or economic mismanagement becomes increasingly difficult for the communities to absorb.

201) The momentum to tackle HIV-AIDS is growing but, given the lags in such processes, it seems almost certain that infection of the active population in rural areas will continue to rise for the coming years and AIDS deaths will rise more steeply from the currently infected population. The depleting effects of HIV-AIDS on the educated population and thus on all governmental and non-governmental services may stabilize but current infection figures in most countries mean that staff turnover due to illness and death may average around 20 percent.

202) In agriculture, the number of single parent households, orphan households and households headed by the elderly will grow significantly. This is compounded further by the effects of malnutrition, frequent pregnancy and diseases such as malaria, to lower the productivity of labour. At the same time, despite the increase in illness and death among the active working population, the rural and urban populations will continue to grow, albeit more slowly.

The response

203) The threats from rural poverty and HIV-AIDS are closely related and it is clear that the best buffer for vulnerable households is surplus within the community and the best buffer for vulnerable communities is rising prosperity in the country. Agricultural development focused on basic food security for all thus needs to promote both growth and safety-nets for households which are in continuous or periodic food deficit. The overall implications of this for rural households and agriculture are:

³⁵ TCO comments that in recommending a more programmatic approach in the use of TCP resources, the mission did not take into account the TCP basic criteria which were set up by the Governing Bodies, and in particular the demand-driven, un-programmed nature of TCP.

- a) There will be a growing number of rural households which cannot be viable. These will need to receive assistance for food either continuously or on a seasonal basis. They also need to be provided with the means to produce what they can for themselves. This is essential not only to human dignity but to total national food and income and for the education of children in the household in attitudes to self-reliance and a brighter future for themselves;
- b) Households with depleted and weak physical labour need to an even greater extent than others to increase their productivity per unit of labour and to reduce the need for physical strength. In general, the most back breaking work in agriculture is hand-hoe cultivation with hand-hoe weeding coming a close second. Probably the single most important way of reducing this physical effort is to increase value of production per unit of area. The ways to do this include irrigation, higher value crops and fertilizer application, but other factors of importance include:
 - o income from small livestock;
 - o use of farm power especially animal drawn equipment;
 - o spreading the work of cultivation during the dry season as has been done for conservation farming in Zambia; and
 - o reducing domestic labour requirements by, for example, addressing domestic water requirements along with irrigation and improving supplies of fuel wood;
- c) Irrigation has to come much more to the fore in providing for intensification;
- d) The maintenance and improvement of soil fertility needs to receive greater attention; and
- e) The threat from HIV-AIDS is now so serious that the mission is of the view that all forms of agricultural extension should also include HIV-AIDS awareness information.

204) There is some indication that donors do recognize the southern Africa crisis as different and may be willing (albeit on a reduced scale) to fund programmes aimed at continuing relief and rehabilitation. Significant funding is becoming available for HIV-AIDS related activities both at international level and through funds with National AIDS Committees, Councils, etc. at national level. To ensure a balanced response to the pandemic, which does not primarily address the purely medical aspects, FAO should further increase its efforts to communicate to all those concerned with both development and HIV-AIDS, the following basic messages:

- a) Hungry persons are susceptible to disease, including HIV-AIDS, because they are weaker and because in the case of women and children, they are more liable to engage in risky behaviour to get food. Malnourished persons with HIV will develop AIDS and die more quickly. Drugs will be ineffective;
- b) A hungry child cannot study;
- c) A hungry person cannot work; and
- d) Agriculture is the base of the rural economy and income improvements and employment opportunities in agriculture and rural value added, fight poverty and disease and improve nutrition.

XII. Summary of Recommendations

Priorities in FAO response – Main recommendation

205) In southern Africa, FAO will need to further unify its emergency and development response in fighting vulnerability to hunger in the context of the challenges posed by a downward spiral of poverty, which has at its roots in HIV-AIDS, failures of governance (including conditions for economic growth), declining soil fertility and inadequate donor investment. The recognition now being given to the scourge of HIV-AIDS, also represents a funding opportunity to tackle contributory causes and results of the pandemic.

206) The motor of economic growth has to be restarted, beginning with agriculture which has to be the major point of departure in those predominantly rural economies. At the same time, increased

and continuing focus needs to be given to tackling food insecurity in the context of the HIV-AIDS pandemic and providing both safety nets and the opportunities for households which cannot be fully economically viable to nevertheless make an economic contribution. Special attention needs to be given to the enabling environment for equitable economic growth, in particular removing barriers to trade at sub-regional level and within countries.

207) The mission concluded that FAO's basic priorities for the region were sound and would highlight from the discussion above the following concentration areas for the future, matching needs to donor and government policies:

- a) **Building from successes in the emergency response** for development, putting together ad-hoc packages of funding as done for emergency assistance. The most successful of the emergency interventions appears to have brought together NGOs and successful systems technology for potentially sustainable development in line with SPFS objectives and here the examples of conservation farming in Zambia and treadle pump irrigation in Malawi were the most striking.

In southern African drought-affected countries, the more effective FAO emergency work moved directly to rehabilitation. Integration of the emergency, rehabilitation and development assistance has major implications in design and implementation modalities and, as suggested above, it is particularly important that 'emergency' projects include arrangements for evaluating success which may be carried forward into development and lay the groundwork for that development through sustainable partnerships and adequate attention to training.

- b) **Basic information systems** with emphasis on food security and vulnerability information, including production data but also wider agricultural and rural development data. Information on health and on the make-up of vulnerable households thus needs to be integrated into VAC and agricultural census information. Both GIEWS and FIVIMS need to work for the compatibility and potential to integrate various forms of information on vulnerability.
- c) **Policy development**, where the mission would draw particular attention to:
 - i) Removal of disincentives in the market and contributing to market stability, in particular minimization of national and sub-regional barriers to trade including internal barriers and reduction of disruptive market interventions;
 - ii) Provision of an enabling environment and support for the development of small rural enterprise for trade and value added;
 - iii) Safety nets and sound food aid policies for vulnerable and deficit households and individuals in rural and urban areas, including those with HIV-AIDS ;
 - iv) Land tenure issues, including incentivizing the maximum utilization of land for employment and production, security of tenure for investment by small farmers, inheritance and access for families where the land holder dies, and resolution of access issues between livestock and cultivation and to irrigation water;
 - v) Enabling relocation of households to areas with levels of low population density and higher production potential (of the countries visited, this is a possibility in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia but to only a marginal extent in Malawi); and
 - vi) Maximization of returns to human physical effort.
- d) **Increasing return to physical effort especially for HIV-AIDS affected households:** Both policy and demonstration work for appropriate irrigation development and appropriate mechanization (including minimum tillage). The mission agrees that the greatest issues for increased agricultural productivity and thus food and income, is increasing return to physical effort (including for those households with depleted labour resources due to HIV-AIDS). This

is easiest under irrigation but several countries do have scope for increasing the area under rainfed cultivation with low-input systems. Diversification is also critical and the role of small livestock and aquaculture are important in this.

Summary of recommendations contained in the text

Programming: Recommendation 1: Rolling 3-4 year national FAO programme frameworks should be piloted in southern Africa. Each framework should be developed in discussion with government and take account of donor priorities, existing donor programmes and FAO's own priorities including SPFS, coalescing around no more than three to four priority areas. The formal agreement of the government should be sought on the framework and FAO TCP assistance would normally be focused within those areas. It is emphasized that this should be very much a framework of priorities as distinct from a list of projects. FAO would then work flexibly with the donors to fund work in the priority areas. This it is believed would complement project preparation support being provided by FAO in the context of NEPAD.

Recommendation 2: (see Recommendation 15 on use of FAO-TCP).

Emergencies: Recommendation 3: In emergency situations, FAO should seek out appropriate viable farming packages which have already been proven at the local level and have organizations which can assist their further expansion if given additional support. These should then be actively promoted in the emergency response.

Recommendation 4: In emergency situations, the maximum flexibility and definition of process need to be built into the projects. This means that donor support within budgets should be sought for key aspects which often cannot precede design, including detailed identification and targeting of beneficiary households, needs assessment and monitoring and evaluation, all of which were found to be areas for improvement. In southern Africa, these aspects can now be better determined in the actual design of second generation projects.

Recommendation 5: In addition to continuing efforts to improve response times, FAO should establish a minimum acceptable period between the completed formulation and approval of an emergency project and the latest date for satisfactory planting. The mission has the impression that this is of the order of three months, unless there is the capacity in terms of management and input availability to carry out all operations locally, when it may be of the order of two months. No project should be approved for assistance which does not meet these time criteria.

Recommendation 6: In line with the concern of AGA and policies of EMPRES, considerably more attention needs to be given to livestock emergencies and the role of livestock in vulnerable households' food security and survival strategies. The first priority must continue to be overcoming epidemic diseases. In most countries of southern Africa, with the continued decline of government services, a new strategy is, however, required which can bring in additional players and resources. It is also possible that a new strategy will help to convince donors that something can be done. FAO can support development of this new strategy and include donors in the thinking from the start in order to get buy-in. Elements may include:

- rethinking of early warning systems for livestock disease, including the role of non-governmental actors, especially traders, and the integration of livestock information systems with those on other aspects of vulnerability, including crop and vulnerability assessment;
- cross-border cooperation more locally organized, relying less on central veterinary departments in far-away capitals (including in the cooperation NGOs, traders and pastoralists);

- reinforcing legislation, where necessary. Within this context both penalties and incentives need to be examined. At the moment, slaughterers, traders and pastoralists would often find it to their immediate economic advantage to conceal disease, rather than report it;
- greater involvement of NGOs and private veterinary auxiliaries (barefoot vets) in all aspects of prevention and treatment; and
- development of international agreements, including in the context of SACU, COMESA and SADC for the support of control in weaker countries by those economically and institutionally stronger.

Recommendation 7: There needs to be clauses in contracts with seed companies which provide heavy penalties for late delivery and provide for retention of monies until after the germination and purity is clear. An open (intra-net) southern Africa data base should also be maintained on the performance of seed companies. To speed-up and simplify the preparation and clearance of seed purchase and also to help ensure that all seed does make some contribution to genetic improvement, an agreed FAO seed list should be developed for southern Africa, by agro-ecological zone, and kept updated.

SPFS: Recommendation 8: The mission welcomes the wider and more flexible concept of the SPFS now being developed in Mozambique. It is recommended that in southern Africa the SPFS be regarded more in terms of overall development programme goals to be achieved and less as SPFS projects. Thus, SPFS concepts can be built into rehabilitation and in formulating overall programmes in the context of NEPAD. In this regard, the opportunities provided by the emergency development work and the cooperation with NGOs should be built upon and there should be less total reliance on government.

Information systems: Recommendation 9: FAO needs to give even greater attention to the strengthening of national information systems on all aspects of food, agriculture and related vulnerability. In doing this, FAO should work for complementarity and networking of systems for both efficiency and effectiveness. Although it is unlikely that all encompassing systems can be designed addressing every aspect of vulnerability, the maximum degree of complementarity should be the aim. In general, basic systems should collect the essential minimum of data and supplement this with special studies when required. In this regard, Mozambique provides a valuable example. Flexible formulae should be sought for increasing the inter-action between various information providers and ensuring flexible basket funding from donors into the medium term.

In addition, every effort needs to be made to continue and strengthen the provision of remote sensing/GIS analysis through SADC.

Institution building: Recommendation 10: It is essential in considering institution building to exercise a great deal of realism on the prospects for sustainability and to examine if the institutional capacity to be established or strengthened is:

- best in the public, NGO, private or mixed sectors;
- more appropriate to be established within the framework of sub-regional institutions, such as COMESA, SACU or SADC (in terms of convergence for trade and efficient use of resources);
- an appropriate priority use of international, and more importantly, national resources at this stage of development and with the current development situation; and
- likely to continue to receive donor support into the medium term.

Networked solutions bringing together government, donors and NGOs are often most likely to succeed.

Policy and strategy development: Recommendation 11: In southern Africa, FAO should treat the policy and strategy development processes as continuing and involving the executive, parliament, civil society, donors and the civil service (agriculture, finance, etc.). The greatest need is for understanding of issues and not generally for fully elaborated solutions. This implies that FAO has to be prepared to make continuing inputs and may have particular implications for the type of support provided by TCA, TCI and the Regional and Sub-regional Offices, with need for more recurrent inputs by single individuals or small teams, supporting the FAOR (see also FAO capacities below).

Regional integration: Recommendation 12: The mission attaches high importance to the integration and development of trade for the small economies of the sub-region. Priority is therefore attached to regional projects which can help to reduce trade barriers. Some capacities, such as that for remote sensing/GIS early warning information analysis, can also be most effectively and efficiently provided at sub-regional level but realism is required on the capacities which can be sustained in sub-regional institutions.

Strengthening FAO capacity at national level: Recommendation 13: FAO should, in the context of rolling 3-4 year national strategic programme frameworks permitting concentration of resources in a few priority areas:

- spread consultants and support staff on a medium-term basis over several projects within the framework; and
- appoint national technical resource advisory panels for scientific and policy matters composed of specialists within the country.

Implementation: Recommendation 14: In addition to the studies of implementation arrangements for both emergency and development projects currently underway, attention should be given to those of the implementation issues discussed in the report and not addressed directly by those studies, bearing in mind the major importance field and decentralized staff attach to resolution of these issues in improving FAO's efficiency and performance.

Use of FAO-TCP: Recommendation 15: Based solely on the southern African context, main suggestions with respect to more effective use of FAO-TCP are:

- It would be useful to further review TCP procedures with a view to strengthening the role and authority of the FAOR in deciding on TCP approvals, streamlining appraisal and increasing the flexibility of TCP;
- If the concept of strategic national programme frameworks for FAO is piloted in southern Africa, TCP should be used to support the priorities of the framework;
- TCP is not an appropriate tool for stand alone institution building; and
- Technical cooperation through TCP could be used to a much greater extent than is the case at present to complement ongoing donor financed projects and programmes with a technical input. This could contribute to greater impact and sustainability from the TCP and the financial inputs of the donor as well as helping to establish credibility for FAO as a source of technical inputs.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

A. Purpose of the Evaluation

- 1) The evaluation is internal to FAO and is designed to be formative in examining FAO's overall strategy of cooperation with the countries of southern Africa. The emphasis is on priorities and lessons for the future. Other recent FAO evaluations have given considerable attention to management issues in emergencies, thus, this evaluation will concentrate rather more on the validity of the priorities, balance and design of the total project and non-project assistance in the FAO port-folio. Rather than judging the FAO support of the past against criteria and aims it was not designed to meet, lessons will be drawn from the experience of FAO and the work and views of national governments and development partners in breaking the vicious cycle which has led to the crisis in southern Africa discussed below.
- 2) Most agencies are now said to be looking beyond emergency interventions in southern Africa to alternatives that will protect and develop livelihoods taking account of the wide range of inter-linked factors referred to below. Basic questions are now being raised as to whether the parallel tracks of emergency and development assistance in the agricultural and other rural sectors can be effective in breaking this downward spiral; or if new approaches, or at the least adjustments in the priorities for assistance and the ways in which that assistance is provided are now needed. The emphasis on the links between HIV, food security and gender inequalities are believed to provide an opportunity to push for new approaches across the emergency-development response continuum and to better integrate the PRSP, vulnerability assessment and emergency response processes.
- 3) It is believed that conclusions drawn from the evaluation will also have value for other parts of Africa. Drought is now emerging in West Africa in which some countries continue to face civil unrest and problems of recurrent drought continue in the Horn of Africa. In Central Africa localised droughts and civil unrest remain problems and in all parts of Africa HIV/AIDS continues to be on the increase.

B. Background and Context

1. The Southern African Crisis

- 4) In his remarks to the G8 Contact Group on Food Security in Africa (5.3.2003), the Director-General seconded the statement by the UN Secretary-General in which was emphasised:
 - a) "The latest food crisis in the continent has brought home to us, more than ever before, the urgent need for a strategy to break the pattern of recurrent crises and bring about a Green Revolution in Africa. But achieving this will require radical approaches on multiple fronts. Today, Africa faces a deadly triad of related burdens -- food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and an emaciated capacity to govern and provide services. And this on top of a number of conflicts that are impacting large parts of the continent. We cannot find viable solutions to the challenge of food security unless we address the challenges of AIDS and governance at the same time.
 - b) Food insecurity in Africa has structural causes. Most African farmers farm small plots of land that do not produce enough to meet the needs of their families. The problem is compounded by the farmers' lack of bargaining power and lack of access to land, finance, and technology.
 - c) This further weakens farmers' ability to withstand the impact of recurrent drought and the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic.The devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on food production -- with 7 million African farmers already dead -- is only too obvious. ... Both at the household level and the government level, resources are being diverted from food production to health care. In turn, food shortages fuel the disease, through malnutrition, poverty and inequality.
 - d) Clearly, breaking this destructive cycle poses a huge challenge to governance. It will require strong institutions, improved skills and innovative policies. But in an irony so typical of the age of AIDS, Africa's ability to govern and to provide services is itself being stretched to the breaking point by the disease.....
 - e) That means we must take the following key actions:

- Do more to address short-term emergencies and structural causes at the same time — such as providing food assistance and developing effective approaches to sustainable food security;
- Do more to prevent HIV infection and treat those already infected, including ensuring access to affordable treatment;
- Empower Africa’s small farmers, for example, by supporting micro-finance — with a special focus on women, who are both the key food providers and the key to fighting AIDS;
- Correct the drastic shortfalls in appeals for non-food items in emergency situations. These items, such as support for orphans, education and HIV services, as well as seeds and tools, are crucial to the capacity of communities to recover;
- Work with rural communities to develop new, labour-saving agricultural and natural resource management technologies, appropriate to a depleted workforce;
- Reverse the dramatic decline in publicly funded agricultural research, and place a renewed emphasis on science -- particularly soil nutrition, water management and new, higher-yielding crops adapted to African conditions. This would include looking at new technologies for a Green Revolution in Africa in an open-minded way, including biotechnology;
- Develop and support strong African institutions that can connect the world’s great and growing store of scientific and technical knowledge directly to the needs of small farmers;
- Place a strong focus on building critical physical infrastructure including transport, support services and irrigation; and
- Build markets that work, and which respond to the needs of Africa’s poor, both to maximize revenue and to reduce costs.
- And finally, to address all these issues, we will need to help African governments strengthen governance, by rebuilding the capacity of the State to provide essential public services. Where once we spoke of capacity-building, today we speak of capacity replenishment.

f) We can do this only if we are prepared to look at new approaches. In some countries, the crisis may be so acute that the State can function only with short-term support from outside -- through volunteers and additional technical assistance.”

- 5) Furthermore, FAO and its Director-General have repeatedly emphasised that for sustainable development: “Environmental degradation and poverty are strongly linked. Therefore, initiatives to reduce poverty and hunger should be accompanied by good environmental management, which can only be achieved if the needs and motivations of farmers are given due consideration”.³⁶
- 6) The FAO Regional Conference for Africa in February 2002 stressed the need to recognise the link between HIV/AIDS and hunger, noting the disease had taken a heavy toll on the agricultural labour force where seven million agricultural workers had already died from the disease in sub-Saharan Africa and another 20 million could die before 2020. It was noted that in addition to decimating the labour force, HIV/AIDS also undermines agricultural productivity, as families are often forced to sell productive assets to pay for medical care and funerals, further undermining future incomes and food security.
- 7) A UN report released in February 2003 also notes the susceptibility of malnourished people to actual HIV infection and the vicious circle of poverty which can lead to prostitution in search of the next meal, further spreading the disease.
- 8) The outbreak of drought in southern Africa was the final element pushing countries into major food crises. The attention produced by this emergency has caused the world to focus on the complex underlying structural causes of this continuing disaster and how to better address them.
- 9) SADC defines those countries most acutely in food emergency situations due to drought as Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Also, Angola continues to suffer a food

³⁶ e.g. Address to the Second Preparatory Meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (January 2002)

emergency situation largely as a result of previous or ongoing civil unrest and displacement and may provide valuable lessons on the link between emergency, rehabilitation and development³⁷.

- 10) In the six countries suffering most acutely from drought, out of a total population of 26 million, five million adults currently have HIV/AIDS. In addition 600,000 children under 15 have HIV/AIDS. In 2001 AIDS killed half a million people in these countries. In other words 13% of the world's total HIV/AIDS sufferers are in these countries. The epidemic is increasing its momentum as those previously infected with HIV/AIDS fall ill. In Africa as a whole, 58% of those with HIV/AIDS are women.

3. The Institutional Setting in Response to the Emergency

- 11) SADC has been playing a leading role in the evolving southern African emergency situation, but institutional capacity is inadequate. The UN Secretary General appointed a Special Envoy and a Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (RIACSO) office was opened under WFP coordination in Johannesburg as well as an office for the UN Office of Community and Humanitarian Affairs. All these initiatives are believed to have contributed to a coordinated response at the sub-regional level and the arrangements for the moment are being maintained. FAO has fully supported this by providing a senior emergency coordinator and staff to RIACSO and participating in the two Special Envoy missions.
- 12) The SADC Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) has coordinated two rolling assessments in August and December 2002 and a third round is planned for April/May 2003 to guide the 2003/4 consumption year. This work is directly overseen by the Regional Vulnerability Analysis Committee (RVAC) of which FAO is a member. HIV/AIDS and other non-food security indicators have been included in the assessments. It appears that some tensions have arisen in that SADC VAC has been focusing on livelihoods-based approaches in the assessment of long term goals while some RVAC members, including FAO, have emphasised that quantitative methods for national level estimates are essential and complementary to livelihoods based-approaches which provide a depth of understanding on underlying trends and causalities.

4. The FAO Response

- 13) In February 2003, FAO appealed for US\$ 15 million to help more than half a million households in southern Africa face the nutritional crisis resulting from the weather and HIV/AIDS. Assessment missions in December and January had reported that the legacy of poor weather and the HIV/AIDS pandemic was having an increasingly destructive impact on agricultural productivity. The appeal was designed to address immediate needs for agricultural inputs and the underlying causes of deepening poverty.
- 14) Table 2 summarises the total project response of FAO, including that to the current drought by categories of types of project and by country. As part of the desk review process, this inventory and analysis by category will be updated and strengthened. It is clear that the balance (as distinct from volume of resource mobilisation) with the significant exception of Zimbabwe, has been roughly in line with the scale of the problems – see Table 1. However, this is less the case for the balance in assistance where emergency prevention and preparedness has generally been a minor area of activity. Zimbabwe has not only received a relatively small volume of total assistance but a small proportion of emergency assistance, reflecting the view of donors that problems are those of institutions and governance, rather than production constraints.
- 15) With financial support from DFID and USAID the emphasis in establishing capacity at national level is said to be switching to livelihoods-based vulnerability assessment. This would complement the previous efforts by FAO to establish national early warning capability, in for example in Zambia and SADC itself (see also para 12).
- 16) In addition to early warning and assessment, FAO has undertaken a number of more normative activities of relevance for the development crisis. For example, in 2001 FAO prepared “Guidelines for integrating HIV/AIDS considerations in agricultural emergency operations”. These are due to be updated following

³⁷ D.R. Congo also continues to suffer a food emergency situation as a result of previous or ongoing civil unrest and displacement, but probably would not yield a large number of lessons for the present evaluation.

feed-back from the field. SDWW has piloted the guidelines in Zambia and is having a workshop there. Also in February 2003 jointly with WHO, FAO published a manual on nutrition for HIV/AIDS infected people "Living Well with HIV/AIDS".

C. Scope of the Evaluation and Issues to be Addressed

- 17) Drought is now receding as an immediate problem in southern Africa. The most recent drought was the worst since 1991/92. Drought is a recurring phenomena³⁸ contributing to a vicious circle in which HIV-AIDS (with the reduction in both labour and educated leadership and the growth in the proportion of dependent people), the breakdown of good governance and services to agriculture, the reduction in food security and increase in malnutrition all conspire together to produce further deterioration.
- 18) Taking realistic account of available resources, and basing its overall judgement on the future potential for the FAO programme and its constituent projects to have a sustainable impact on the livelihoods of the people of southern Africa, in particular their nutrition status and capacity to withstand HIV/AIDS, the evaluation will examine:
 - Needs assessment and policy;
 - Programming;
 - Resource mobilisation;
 - The efficiency of FAO's management and coordination processes for programme development and implementation;
 - Partnerships and liaison and coordination with others in particular with WFP; and
 - The immediate effects of FAO's assistance;
 - The sustainable impacts (actual and potential) of FAO's assistance; and
 - Recommendations and lessons particularly with respect an integrated response to the emergency - development continuum.
- 19) For purposes of the evaluation the countries of southern Africa are defined as being the members of SADC³⁹ with the focus of the evaluation on those countries most directly affected by HIV-AIDS, drought and food emergencies, which also result in part from issues of governance and civil unrest.
- 20) The evaluation will consider in their respective contexts all aspects of FAO involvement in working to overcome the development crisis in southern Africa, i.e. first and foremost emergency and development assistance but also including: policy; investment work; resource mobilisation; and international awareness. The emphasis will be on the recent programme but the context will be taken from the period since 1996, particularly for development and policy assistance.
- 21) The evaluation will look at the role of all relevant FAO units as they relate to different stages of the process, including: TCE; centralized and decentralized units of TCA and TCO; TCI, SAFR, RAP, the technical divisions and the FAORs.
- 22) Always bearing in mind that the overall purpose of the evaluation is strengthening the overall FAO strategy of cooperation with the countries of Southern Africa with the emphasis on priorities and lessons for the future; Particular aspects to be examined include, but are not restricted to:

(i) Needs Assessment and Policy

- extent to which the methods used for assessing needs were appropriate, timely and effective;
- effectiveness in communicating needs to the humanitarian and development community; and
- participation in coordinated emergency response planning.

(ii) Programming

³⁸ e.g. there was also a serious drought in 1994/95

³⁹ Members of SADC are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

- the extent to which FAO has had a clear strategy and vision;
- modalities and mechanisms, with respect to emergencies, rehabilitation, and sustainable development;
- collaboration with national government and regional institutions including SADC;
- internal coordination and the extent to which programming is integrated between emergency response and development and between subject matter areas;
- external coordination including:
 - coordination and partnership of humanitarian interventions with others including WFP;
 - account taken of the programmes of other sources of development assistance including FAO participation in coordinated emergency response planning and in involvement in the development of Poverty Reduction Strategies and CCF and UNDAF;
- in the light of the analysis below whether the resultant programme:
 - reflects an appropriate balance between emergency response, targeted safety-net programmes, emergency preparedness and rehabilitation and development and within that the balance between assistance in planning, programming and technical cooperation for institution building and for development, i.e. the connectedness⁴⁰ within the Programme and synergies between the FAO emergency programme and longer-term development assistance;
 - took adequate account of lessons from the past and experience from elsewhere; and
 - was realistic with regard to FAO's own capacities and resources.

(iii) Resource Mobilization

- coordination with others;
- role of governments and regional institutions, including SADC;
- local and international resource mobilization (Role of HQ including TCA and TCE, SAFR/RAF and FAORs).

(iv) The efficiency of FAO's management and coordination processes for programme development and implementation: While management and administrative issues are not the main focus of the evaluation, particular attention will be given to the following fundamental aspects:

- issues of coordination in programme development execution, including dichotomous approaches within the Organization;
- flexibility – capacity and interest to adjust projects to changing circumstances.

(v) Partnerships - For each stage of the programme cycle and for different types of intervention:

- the extent of partnerships both within the UN system and with other humanitarian and development assistance agencies;
- the extent to which the benefits of partnerships have been maximised at each stage of the process and whether the costs and inefficiencies which can result from coordination and partnership have been minimised;
- the roles of NGOs and the private sector; and
- the extent to which programme development and implementation took place within the context of and gave a lead role to SADCC and NEPAD.

(vi) The immediate effects of FAO's assistance, in:

- communicating needs and influencing and mobilising resources to respond in a timely way;
- Influencing the policies and programmes of development assistance agencies, governments and other partners;

⁴⁰ Defined by "the need to assure that activities of the short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context which takes longer-term and inter-connected problems into account"- Minear, L. (1994), The International Relief System: A critical Review. Paper presented to the Parallel National Intelligence Estimate on Global Humanitarian Emergencies, Meridian International Centre, Washington DC, September 22.

- Capacity of regional organizations, governments and other national organizations including the private sector and community organizations to deliver their functions and services; and
- Strengthening people's well-being in particular their resources and capacity to overcome the immediate effects of household and national disaster.

(vii) The sustainable impacts (actual and potential) of FAO's assistance, particularly in terms of sustainable livelihoods, including:

- the policy environment;
- uptake and continuation of FAO demonstrated approaches by others in the development and humanitarian assistance community and national authorities;
- ownership by stakeholders at all levels from regional bodies to local communities;
- sustainable capacity at all levels in areas including capability for:
 - identification of production and food supply and marketing problems, populations and other vulnerable groups at risk of food insecurity and food emergency,
 - response to emergencies and rehabilitation, and
 - development work;
- development of community and household self reliance, including negative or positive impacts on community self-help and on business and national NGO capacity;
- benefits and viability of technologies and institutional solutions with respect to staff capacities, labour and financial requirements;
- stimulation of higher individual incomes through economic growth;
- conserving or degrading fragile environments; and the labour situation as it is evolving with the presence of HIV/AIDS;
- whether in the light of sustainability considerations the programme and individual interventions
 - took adequate account of the capacity of government services both in human and fiscal terms, including the effects of HIV/AIDS;
 - were realistic in considering whether it was reasonable to build national or regional capacity or whether capacities must be provided by the international agencies, for example in early warning or pre-positioning and emergency response capability;
 - adequately responded to the holistic needs in the rural areas, taking account of realities not only in agriculture (including markets) and food production but other areas, particularly health and education. In this context the evaluation will examine any examples of, and the potential for, FAO to work on agricultural and food aspects in wider programmes working for local development including sustainable livelihoods programmes;
 - gave gender, children and the aged the attention they deserve;
 - in the emergency components of the programme have taken into account possible (positive and negative) effects and impacts in the long-run.

(viii) Evaluation Recommendations:

In the light of the above findings the evaluation will draw conclusions and make recommendations for correcting weaknesses and building on strengths and opportunities.

D. Methodology

23) The evaluation will be managed and supported by the Evaluation Service (PBEE).

24) As a formative evaluation for internal learning, it is essential that the methodology be highly consultative and participative. The evaluation will take an overview of the FAO portfolio as a whole and examine a sample of individual projects in the case study countries. The following steps will be followed:

- a) *Desk Review* will be carried out at Headquarters. It will review FAO's assistance to the countries as a whole, making proposals on case study countries and projects. Maximum use will be made of evaluations and reviews of FAO projects in the region and of the evaluations and reviews of their

own work and programmes currently underway by other agencies. Issues and aspects to which the field mission should pay particular attention will be identified and a check list of questions proposed;

- b) *Discussions* in Rome with FAO staff in Headquarters involved in all aspects of FAO's assistance to southern Africa which will examine the desk review, further refine the issues to be examined and develop the check list;
- c) *Field mission* will visit the following four countries for in-depth country case studies: Angola⁴¹, Malawi; Mozambique; and Zambia. In country discussions will be aided by a structured check list and will include: the central government authorities; development partners; national and international staff of ongoing projects; as well as the FAORs and emergency coordinators. A representative sample of emergency and development project sites will be visited for focus group discussions with beneficiaries;
- d) *Workshop in southern Africa* This will be organised at the end of the field mission in Johannesburg to discuss conclusions, bringing in to the extent possible FAORs and Emergency Coordinators with the objective of exchanging views on findings, recommendations and lessons learned before report preparation;
- e) *Final Consultations in Rome*;
- f) *Report Finalisation*.

E. Team Composition

25) The evaluation team will consist of:

- Team Leader – Senior Evaluation Expert (PBEE). The Team Leader will have extensive experience in evaluation, post-emergency situations, organisational learning and strong communication skills. The Team Leader will be familiar with FAO's functioning and structure and will particularly look at the overall strategy development and issues of programme balance and FAO's role vis-à-vis other agencies;
- Two External Specialists who will have the necessary expertise to cover between them agronomic, livestock and water-related issues.

⁴¹ Angola represents an interesting case in that more projects were specifically addressed at rehabilitation in the project portfolio than elsewhere.

**Annex 2 - Participation in FAO Staff Evaluation Workshop
10-11 July RIACSO – Johannesburg, South Africa**

FAO Sub-Regional Office for Southern and East Africa

Ms. V. Sekitoleko, Sub-regional Representative and FAO Representative
Zimbabwe and Botswana
Ms. S. Minae, Farming Systems Development Officer

FAO Representatives

Lesotho Mr. C.P. Camarada
Malawi Ms. L. Setshwaelo
South Africa Mr. B. West
Tanzania Mr. P. Gence
Zambia Mr. Dong Qingsong

Deputy FAORs Programme and Programme Officers

Malawi Mr. A. Nkhoma
Mozambique Ms. L. Hendrickx
South Africa Mr S. Nkosi
Tanzania Mr. Kabyemera
Zambia Mr. L. Bangwe

Emergency Coordinators

Africa Region Mr. D. Donati – Regional Coordinator
Southern Africa Mr. G. Farmer, Sub-regional coordinator – RIACSO
.. .. Ms. M van de Fliert, Reports officer - RIACSO
Angola Mr. J-F Dontaine
Malawi Mr. C. Ferrand
Mozambique Ms. B. Hald
Swaziland Mr. M. Imam
Zambia Mr. T. Quinlan
.. .. Mr. J-C Urvoy
Zimbabwe Mr. M. Samaja

FAO - Headquarters

TCE Mr. R. China, Coordinator Rehabilitation and Humanitarian Policies Unit
.. .. Ms. A. Hinrichs, Operations Officer, TCEO
TCI Mr. M. Wales, Senior Adviser
ESAF Mr. G. Hemrich

All members of the evaluation team