

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Food Security<sup>1</sup> and Nutrition Working Group

#### Context

Southern Africa has experienced three major food crises during the last 10 years, in 2001/3, 2005/6, and 2008/09. The risks of extreme climatic events such as drought or flood and economic and policy shocks are ever present. Most countries in southern Africa have intolerably high levels of chronic poverty and food insecurity, alarming rates of HIV and inadequate government capacity to meet these challenges. Persistent socio-economic and/or political shocks further exacerbate humanitarian and development efforts. Long-term climate change in southern Africa is expected to lead to more frequent and intense incidents of extreme climate events, such as floods, cyclones and drought. Increased droughts are forecast outside the tropical belt and more rainfall and flooding within.

Despite these growing threats, not enough has been done to proactively identify and formulate responses and actions that build the resilience of vulnerable households and their livelihoods to mitigate potential impacts. Response is typically reactive, arising after the shock occurs and when the lives or livelihoods of vulnerable populations are already at risk. Increased efforts are needed to make people's livelihoods more resilient to the shocks and hazards. When there is food security crisis there is also a need to ensure adequate recovery and rehabilitation that is linked to longer term development.

There are multiple layers and complex roots to the livelihood crisis, and the resultant food and nutrition insecurity. Most assessments have understood these crises to result from an overall decline in livelihoods, rather than as simple food shocks. Food production, donor aid flows, government budgetary allocations to agriculture and rural development have declined while food imports, food aid, and population have substantially increased.

This complex "long wave" crisis is reflected in the reversal of development gains. The result is increasingly apparent with a large number of people who are chronically hungry at any time, but especially during the lean season. This situation is reflected in data on child nutritional status which has either remained stagnant or further deteriorated, reversing positive trends seen in Southern Africa during the early 1990s. Across the SADC region levels of stunting reach 45%, prevalence of wasting is between 4-9%, the percentage of children under 5 years who are underweight ranges from 14-30%. There is increasing uncertainty as to whether the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved.

The interrelationships and accumulated impacts of climatic shocks, food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and weakened capacity for service delivery demand a broad multi-sectoral response anchored by national ownership. The UN, NGO's and other humanitarian and development actors, have a

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<sup>1</sup> Food security is defined as existing when "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO 1996).

common responsibility to ensure that its collective action is coordinated, aligned and harmonized for a more effective and accelerated response in support of national and regional priorities for reducing food security, nutrition and livelihood vulnerability of communities. This includes increased support of programming and collaboration is needed to address food security disaster risk reduction through focused on improved prevention and risk mitigation measures for reducing household and livelihood vulnerability. As well, as food security programming to address underlying causes of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, and ensuring that early recovery and rehabilitation after a crisis is adequately linked to longer development.

### **Regional Director's Team (RDT) Mission and Objectives**

The objective of the United Nation's Regional Directors' Team is to provide effective support to UN country teams (UNCTs) to respond to the Triple Threat, thereby accelerating progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the RDT has the following outcomes:

- Strong and effective UNCT performance in planning and implementing nationally aligned strategic programmes for a high quality, efficient and timely response to MDG driven national development priorities
- Increased mobilization of human, information and financial resources at country and regional levels to enhance the UN systems, and other development and humanitarian actors contribution to achieving the MD and MDGs
- Strategic partnerships developed and strengthened with regional entities, bilateral donors, NGO's, civil society and other stakeholders in support of UNCT, actions.

Strengthened coordination and partnerships within the UN agencies, NGO's and other development stakeholders in Southern Africa are critical in order to better achieve these results. In recognition of this, the RDT established six technical thematic Working Groups as a way of maximizing interagency programming and responding to the needs for improved programming in a coordinated manner. The Food Security and Nutrition Working Group was one of the working groups formed. The development of the Working Group complements the UN Reform process, the vision of the RDT, and promotes the strengthening of partnerships among stakeholders. The Working Group's work will be guided by the MDGs, SADC Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, the AU Africa Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and Programme, and other conventions that have been ratified by the majority of countries in the regions.

## **The Southern Africa Food Security and Nutrition Working Group**

### **1.1 Mission**

The mission of the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) is to facilitate inter-agency efforts and partnerships in support of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in particular MDG 1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The Food Security and Nutrition Working Group works to further the recommendations from the report of the Secretary General's High Level Panel on UN Reform and its emphasis on "delivering as one".

The overall goal of the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group is to contribute to enhanced programming for improved Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods in southern Africa. The Working Group seeks to reduce food insecurity and livelihood vulnerability in the region and increase the resilience of these populations to natural and socio-economic shocks and hazards. The Working Group focus will be on issues related to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and underlying causes of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition.

### **1.2 Role of Food Security and Nutrition Working Group**

The key roles of the FSNWG will be to:

- Provide complementary areas of expertise for technical and programming support for inter-agency work of the UN country teams and partners (partners are defined as members of the FSNWG and key food security stakeholders in country). This includes support for strategic planning and review exercises and the mainstreaming of risk reduction and livelihood social protection within key national policy and programming instruments (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategic Programmes, National Development Plans, SWAPs); support for the preparation, implementation and review of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and joint UN food security programmes; and the provision of training/learning, and experience exchange opportunities to build the food security competence and capacity of the United Nations Country Teams (NCTs) and partners.
- Provide an information sharing platform to facilitate common understanding of the food insecurity, chronic malnutrition and livelihood vulnerability situation in the region, as well as to facilitate sharing of programming and policy best practices and lessons learned.
- Facilitate and promote improved programming, increased partnerships, harmonized approaches and enhanced coordination.
- Mobilise regional resources and institutional partnerships to address food insecurity. This includes the provision of coordinated capacity building support for regional inter-governmental organisations (i.e. SADC, COMESA) and regional resource institutions (especially those providing training, research, technical assistance); and facilitation of communications and coordination among UN, donor and non-governmental organizations.
- Support assessment, monitoring and reporting on vulnerability to food insecurity.
- Support existing mechanisms to manage regional knowledge repositories relating to food security, nutrition and vulnerability information.

### 1.3 Functions of Food Security and Nutrition Working Group

The key functions of the FSNWG will be to:

- Develop, implement, monitor and report on the Food Security and Nutrition work-plan.
- Coordinate technical and programming support of RDT for UN country and partner programming, implementation support and review exercises related to food security,
- Broker technical assistance needs of UN country teams and partners: i.e. assist country teams to identify and respond to technical assistance needs and gaps; liaise with UNCTs and regional level Technical Assistance providers on technical assistance needs;
- Provide information to ensure that all partners are kept abreast of the latest policy, technical and programming guidance, research and best practice within the food security area; document best practices and lessons learned to orient and inform policy and programmatic decision-making;
- Encourage participation of multi-lateral agencies, IGOs, NGOs, donors, private sector, etc. to enable information and experience exchange, coordination and collaboration, and to seek the guidance and advice from stakeholders on gaps, needs and areas requiring FSNWG support.

#### Team management

The FSNWG will work closely with and support regional level partners, UNCTs and member governments under the leadership of the RDT. Representatives on the FSNWG are delegated by Regional Directors on behalf of their agencies/organisations and will communicate the Working Group's position back to their agencies/organisations. FAO will co-chair the FSNWG, with a NGO. The co-chairs are responsible to coordinate the work of the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group. This coordination will:

- ensure good communication and coordination between FSNWG team members on food security related issues.
- act as the secretariat and will be responsible for sharing information, organizing meetings as well as following up and monitoring implementation of activities.
- oversee the development, implementation and reporting of FSNWG
- advise the Regional Directors Team on progress and issues to be addressed by the UN in support of an expanded response to food insecurity in southern Africa.

### 1.4 Team accountability

- The **Co-chairs of the FSNWG (one UN Agency and one NGO) will be elected by majority vote** during the Annual Management Meeting and will be rotated on an annual basis.
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- **The Food Security and Nutrition Working Group and the RDT:** The FSNWG is an integral part of the UN's regional support team for southern Africa. FAO co-chairs the Working Group with a NGO.

- **Countries served by the FSNWG:** The Working Group is responsible for mobilizing and coordinating inter-agency support for the following SADC and southern African countries: Angola, Botswana, D.R. Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- **Scope of work:** the FSNWG will work to support both regional food security and national UNCT and partner food security initiatives. The FSNWG will coordinate inter-agency support to UNCT and other partner requests, and share information on agency specific support to countries to reduce overlap and duplication.
- **Support to UNCTs and partners:** the FSNWG will both respond to demand driven requests from UNCTs and partners, as well as proactively seek and support opportunities for more effective coordination and response in supporting food security related MDGs.
- **Coordination with other RDT WG** will be achieved through representation and participation in the activities of the Programme Support Group (PSG). The FSNWG will support and directly advise the RIASCO WG as required to ensure appropriate food security emergency responses linked to early recovery, rehabilitation and longer term development.
- **Team composition.** The FSNWG is open to all regional UN entities, NGOs, International Organizations and other stakeholders with programmes or activities related to food security and nutrition in Southern Africa. Recognizing that the food security agenda involves many other important players in the region, relevant Regional Economic Organizations, donor partners and other stakeholders will be encouraged to join the team or attend meetings as observers.
- **Team characteristics and commitments.** The work of the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group will be results led and service oriented. The core characteristics and commitments of the FSNWG is that they share a common vision and mission; collaborate to achieve common results and be accountable to the team for these; agree to a division of labour which is based on comparative advantage and agency strengths; and to use common methods and tools.

## 1.5 Work-plans, meetings and reporting

Four major instruments will be used to guide and manage the work of the FSNWG. These are:

- An Annual Management meeting to elect the co-chairs, define strategies and priorities for the coming year
- an annual **workplan** will be used to define work priorities and results for the year.
- **regular** meetings and communication between FSNWG members, and between the FSNWG and country level colleagues, will be maintained to ensure coordinated support for workplan implementation and responsiveness to evolving country needs.
- progress will be reviewed by the FSNWG on a quarterly basis and **reported** to the PSG on a monthly basis and the RDT and UNCTs on a semi-annual basis (i.e. mid and end year).