

Taking Action for the World's Poor and Hungry People

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SPEAKER SUMMARY NOTE

Session:	Experiences That Have Resulted in Progress in Reducing Poverty and Hunger
Keynote Speaker:	<i>Daniel Kalenga, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Zambia</i>
Title:	Zambia's Experiences

INTRODUCTION

" Firstly, I wish to thank the organizers of this conference (IFPRI) and the State Council Governing Body for Poverty Alleviation in China of The Peoples Republic of China for according me this opportunity to share with you Zambia's experiences regarding poverty reduction strategies."

"My presentation will mainly focus on some of the actions or strategies that we have put in place in the agriculture sector in Zambia. This is because the majority of the people of Zambia, particularly the rural population, depend on agriculture for their livelihood".

Agriculture in Zambia is one of the key priority sectors that contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction. In Zambia, extreme poverty is defined as the inability to meet basic minimum food requirements based on monthly cost of the food basket. Poverty levels in Zambia are estimated at about 68 per cent of the total population with about 53 per cent being extremely poor and an estimated 15 per cent are moderately poor.

Currently, the agricultural sector in Zambia accounts for about 22% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides livelihood for more than 50% of the population. The sector employs 67% of the labour force and is by far the main source of income and employment for the Zambian people, especially women who constitute 65% of the rural population. In the recent years, the agricultural sector has also emerged as an important foreign exchange earner.

RESOURCE ENDOWMENT

Given the vast resource endowment in terms of land, labour and water, Zambia has the potential to expand agricultural production. Of Zambia's total land area of 75 million hectares (752,000 square Km), 58% (42 million hectares) is classified as medium to high potential for agricultural production, with rainfall ranging between 800mm to 1500mm annually and suitable for the production of a broad range of crops, livestock and fish.

ZAMBIA'S AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The Agricultural Policy in Zambia emphasizes the need to provide effective services that will ensure sustainable agricultural growth. The objective of the policy is to promote the development of an efficient, competitive and sustainable agricultural sector which assures food security and increased income.

The main thrust of the National Agricultural Policy are increased production, sector liberalization and commercialization, promotion of public and private sector partnerships and provision of effective services that will ensure sustainable agricultural growth.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS TO ADDRESS POVERTY AND HUNGER

Zambia has drawn up a Plan, the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP), which covers the period 2006-2010. The Fifth National Development Plan is a broad based national development plan. It aims to target in the next five years both wealth creation and poverty reduction. Since agricultural development has the potential impact on extreme poverty and hunger, under the plan, Zambia is focusing on the following priority areas:

- Opening up of new farm lands for increased production and improvement of agricultural infrastructure such as roads, farm storage facilities, dams and supply of electricity.
- Promoting the productive efficiency of livestock by improving the quality of livestock stock feeds and putting in place disease control measures. Where the livestock populations have reduced due to disease, re-stocking of livestock is being done.
- Promotion of agricultural research in order to provide appropriate, efficient and cost-effective technology to assist farmers increase agricultural production and productivity.
- Promotion of agricultural marketing, trade and agri-business; this is being done by facilitating market information flow among stakeholders, imparting agro-business skills to market participants and farmers especially women, facilitating the development of rural infrastructure such as roads and rural storage infrastructure; encourage financial institutions to be established in rural areas and promotion of crops with both domestic and export markets.
- Improving smallholder farmers' access to agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and seed for them to increase food production.
- Promotion of irrigation; this is intended to promote a well regulated and profitable irrigation sector that is attractive to the farmers. Socially desirable and economically viable irrigation schemes have been designed to allow for all year round production of both food and cash crops, construction of communal bulk water supply systems and establishment of an Irrigation Development Fund.

The above are the strategies, policies and programmes that we are implementing. Going forward, we have fully embraced the African Union (AU) vision, working with Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) to implement the comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) agenda.

This involves stock taking all our activities and refocusing on those with the highest poverty reducing impacts. This will help in ensuring that our 10% budget commitment goes to the areas that will bring the most growth and the most poverty reducing effect.