

SURVEY OF FARMER ORGANISATIONS (FOs) IN THE SADC REGION

Preliminary Observations

Presented by: Ishmael Sunga- CEO
(SACAU)

STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION

- INTRODUCTION
- PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES
- APPROACH
- CONSTRAINTS
- PRELIMINARY RESULTS
- CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

- Landscape of farmer organizations in the region has not been systematically mapped
- Incomplete and fragmented information about them.
- Lack of a consolidated database on farmer organizations in the region
- Frustrations in mobilizing broad-based support on key issues
- Communication difficulties
- Difficulties in providing them development support
- Collaboration with FANRPAN

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- Purpose:
 - To develop/compile a database of all farmer organizations in the SADC region for use by SACAU and its various stakeholders.
- Objectives:
 - To identify the main organizations representing farmers
 - To develop a profile of each farmer organization
 - To develop a consolidated and broader understanding of the key capabilities, issues and challenges faced
 - To assess the potential for mobilizing new members for SACAU

Areas of Enquiry

- Types of national FO's in each country
- Contact details
- When established and how registered
- Reason for existence
- Organizational and governance structure
- Membership (number, types, fees, etc)
- Main concerns of their membership?
- Asset base

KEY QUESTIONS (cont'd)

- Communication facilities
- Activities and services
- Key national policy issues being tackled
- Regional and international trade issues
- Budget and funding sources
- Strategic alliances at national, regional and international levels
- Communication with members
- What are their key strengths and weaknesses?
- Development support needs

APPROACH

- 10 countries
- Focus on organizations that have a national constituency
- Not more than 12 FO's in each country
- Unions, Commodity Associations and Cooperatives
- Country based researchers
- Regional coordinator
- Standard questionnaire
- Researchers' workshop
- Convenient sampling
- Field work

Expected outputs

- Individual country profiles of FO's
- A compendium/consolidated report representing a collation of all farmer organizations in the region for publication
- A synthesis report derived from all the individual country reports for publication
- An assessment of the potential for closer cooperation amongst the various farmer organizations for wider dissemination
- Data base of FO's

CONSTRAINTS

- Limited resources
- Limited time frame
- Researchers- different styles and capacities
- Some FO's reluctant be interviewed
- Restricted access to information
- Variable quality of information provided
- Length of questionnaire
- Challenges in collation/consolidation and synthesis – too many variables

PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Coverage
- Characteristics
- Objectives of FO's
- Constraints and challenges
- Weaknesses and threats
- Communication with members
- Access to key facilities
- Main sources of funding
- Linkages
- Development support needs
- Conclusions

Coverage

- Based on returns from 8 countries (excluding Mozambique, Namibia & Swaziland)
- Total of 48 national FO's covered
- Most (65%) are Commodity Associations
- About a quarter (27%) are Unions
- Cooperatives are not very common (8%)

Characteristics

Key observations include:

- FO's at very different stages of development
- Few = quite old, well-established and focusing on large scale commercial farming
- Majority = relatively young, weaker and focusing on small scale agriculture

Objectives of FO's

Main objectives of national FO's relate to

- Provision of technical skills (48%)
- Acting as a mouth piece for members (46%)
- Protecting members' interests (42%)
- Facilitating dissemination of market info (35%)
- Lobbying for favourable policies (33%)
- Facilitating marketing of products (32%)
- Other = less than 15% each

Constraints and challenges

- Poor access to inputs (44%)
- High cost of production (44%)
- Unfavourable economic and political environment (35%)
- Lack of tech training and extension on production (29%)
- Poor infrastructure (23%)
- Land reform/land issues (21%)
- Prohibitive policies and legislation (19%)
- Trade and market liberalisation (19%)
- Others (each less than 18%)

Weaknesses

- Ltd financial resources/weak funding base
- Donor dependence
- Poor/ltd communication systems
- Inadequate human capacity at leadership and secretariat levels
- Ltd skills for advocacy and lobbying
- Lack of assets
- Dependence on domestic markets

Threats

- Unstable macro-economic climate/
changes in government policies
- Trade liberalisation
- Poor infrastructure
- HIV/AIDS
- Non payment of membership fees
- Proliferation and competition of FO's

Communication with members

- AGM
- Annual reports (54%)
- Quarterly & monthly newsletters (48%)
- Telephone (46%)
- Radio programmes (38%)
- Fax (38%)
- Letters (35%)
- E-mail (33%)
- Other (less than 20% each)

Facilities- Owners/Access

- About a third own offices
- 40%+ rent offices
- Vehicle ownership
- Access to internet facilities (42%)
- E-mail facilities (56%)
- Telephones (44%)
- Fax machines (60%)
- Three quarters have computers
- Two thirds have printers
- 40% have photocopiers

Main sources of funding

- Membership fees (56%)
- Donors/donations (35%)
- Levies (31%)
- Business operations (15%)
- Consultancy fees (8%)
- Government (6%)
- Service charges (4%)
- Others (interest, projects, licensing fees) less than 3% each

Linkages

- With national organisations (60%)
- With regional organisations (44%)
- With international organisations (56%)
- Knowledge of SACAU (54%)

Development support needs

- Capacity building (general?) (29%)
- Information management and dissemination (21%)
- Improved production techniques and technology (19%)
- Training in management skills (17%)
- Improvement of service delivery (15%)
- Training in advocacy, negotiation and lobbying skills (13%)
- Secretariat and funding (10% each)

CONCLUSIONS

- **Fragmented landscape/multiplicity of FO's – need for unity programs**
- **Inadequate linkages at regional level – need to facilitate networking and linkages among FO's in the region**
- **Predominance of Comm Assoc.- explore mechanisms of affiliation to SACAU**
- **Variability in capacity – avoid blanket approach to capacity building**
- **Multiple and interrelated issues - need for a comprehensive approach**
- **Pool of skilled experience in mature FO's- harness this for the development of weaker ones**
- **Need for support in policy analysis, advocacy, lobbying and leadership**
- **HIV not featuring as a key issue- Need to increase awareness on the immediate impact of the HIV/AIDS problem**
- **Communication capability is weak- need for programmes in this area**
- **Level of commercialisation of farmers is related to the strength of the FO they belong- need to speed up commercialisation of small farmers**
- **Marketing of SACAU**