

**Concept Note on Scenario-Building Exercise on EAC Food Security**

**Nairobi, Panafric Hotel**

*21-22 February, 2011*

**Background**

Food security relies fundamentally on the growth of the agriculture sector, which can guarantee a plentiful, permanent and harmonious supply of food. In its turn, more jobs can be created, and rural families can receive higher incomes that help to raise their living standards, thus becoming more economically stable. The desire to reach a food secure region has seen the East Africa Community (EAC) Partner States develop a draft “Food Security Action Plan”. In the Plan is the need to develop a regional “Food and Nutrition Policy” and, to this end, the contribution of a range of stakeholders is invited: EAC Secretariat; Partner States’ Agriculture Sector Lead Ministries; Ministries of Health, Trade, Regional Cooperation and Local Government; private sector and civil society.

At the 12<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit concluded on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010, the Heads of State directed that the EAC Food Security Action Plan be reviewed and re-considered during a Special Summit to be held in April 2011. Although the journey towards sustainable food security in EAC starts with the policies and their implementation it is not automatic that the dream of food security will be realised. Past trends support the view that policies and implementation alone are not sufficient; the kind of policies and the manner of implementation matters. There is no doubt that issues regarding food security are complex, dynamic, and uncertain (neither static, linear nor standalone). At the same time, while past challenges of ensuring food security in EAC provide some lessons on moving forward, future challenges will probably be different from those of the past. Some of the future challenges can be foreseen, some of them will be inescapable while others remain uncertain. Policy-making and planning needs to take all of these factors into account. EAC Partner States are also defined by striking socio-political, economic, environmental, and technological heterogeneities requiring different prioritisation for each country; this, too, can create tough dilemmas to policy-makers when stipulating a common policy on food security for the region.

Usually, policies assume that we live in an ideal world and that the most important variables can be controlled to ensure the desired outcome of the policy. But the reality is that most often than not, the

world we want to live in will not be controlled as we would like it to be. The most important questions for EAC are: “what does it need to know and do to ensure that its policy remains viable no matter the prevailing internal and external circumstances? Do the regions policy makers understand the world in which its intended food security policy is expected to operate? What are the key drivers that will influence the EAC’s vision for a food secure region? In summary: Can EAC win the 21<sup>st</sup> Century on Sustainable Food Security Front?”

Given the prevailing complexities and uncertainties, the region cannot afford to maintain a ‘business-as-usual’ approach to food security policy-making. New approaches are needed that are broader and futuristic in perspective. As a contribution to the process of developing EAC food security policy, CUTS-Africa Resource Centre, Nairobi has launched a project dubbed “Scenario Planning for EAC Agriculture Development and Sustainable Food Security in 2020 and beyond.”

### **Scenario-Building Exercise**

Through the support of TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) CUTS has organised a one-and-half day scenario-building exercise to be held on **21-22 February 2011**. It seeks to assemble a number of players in the agriculture and food security sector who include senior agriculture policy makers and planners at national and regional level, scholars, farmers, consumers and traders to discuss and establish what is going on around the region with regards to food security, the challenges and opportunities that present themselves and how these might possibly evolve in the coming years. Through the use of scenarios<sup>1</sup>, the participants will seek to establish possible trajectories that food security policy might take and how the region might respond in order to ensure that its chosen food security policy remains viable.

### **Structure of the exercise**

Discussions will be preceded by briefings on the following aspects in the first-half of day-1:

- the state of the agricultural development and food security conditions in EAC;
- the institutional-policy environment and constraints to agriculture development and food security;
- the regional food trade environment;
- the major drivers and trends influencing food security;
- the risks and uncertainties, threats and opportunities to achieving food security;
- summarised interview reports on the ideology paths towards achieving food security in EAC;

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<sup>1</sup> In this context scenarios refer to stories about futures that we might have to face independently of whether or not we like those futures.

The second-half of day-one, will be dedicated to plenary and small group discussions which will be facilitated by a seasoned scenario-planning expert. The discussions will enable participants to understand the possible worlds in which EAC food security policy might operate, the challenges it might face, the underlying uncertainties and what is inescapable about the future. Given the future population of EAC, the critical task and questions for participants will be to discuss what will influence/determine what future EAC populations will eat, who will grow the food and in what scales, what is going to be the ability of farmers to grow food in future and what will influence the income of future consumers to buy the food. What direction might EAC food security take in future?

By the end, of day-two, the participants should have identified a list of drivers and trends, that could affect food security in the region. This should enable them to begin thinking strategically on what must be done both at national and regional levels for EAC to achieve the its vision of ensuring food security for the region no matter the circumstances that it might face.

### **Objective**

The main aim of this exercise is to contribute to the formulation of a robust EAC food security policy that will foster poverty reduction and improved living standards in the region over the next decade and beyond.

### **Expected Output**

- Understanding of current state of agriculture development and food security in EAC.
- Understanding of the current public policy on agriculture development and food security in EAC.
- Understanding of drivers and critical uncertainties with an influence on EAC food security.
- Outline scenarios for food security in EAC developed.
- Report disseminated to policy makers and policy debate stimulated to influence public policy change at regional and regional level.

### **Organisers**

This even has been organised by CUTS-Africa Resource Centre, Nairobi with the support of TradeMark East Africa (TMEA). Over the past seven years, CUTS has implemented a number of projects on agriculture and trade in Africa (see a separate document attached). CUTS looks forward to continue its resources to strengthen and facilitate development of the region as a whole. Learn more about CUTS and its Resource and Programmatic Centres can be found by visiting the website:

<http://cuts-international.org/>