

Notes on the LDC Food Crisis Conference held on 17 July 2008

Rapporteur Session 1: Mrs Peggy Mlewa, First Secretary Permanent Mission Of Zambia to UN,
Acting Focal Point Agriculture LDC WTO group, Geneva

The following key observations were made by the respective speakers:

1. LDC Coordinator:

- Food crisis has doubled since 1990. Its effect include short fall in supply, social unrest threatening fragile democracies among other. The reasons for the food crisis include populations increase outstripping production of food compounded by productions related constraints and poor technology, as well as the rapidly expansion of the middle class poor/lack of optima distributions and storage characterized by waste, market speculation and climate change .

2. Professor Saner:

- Action points to redress the situations include both trade and non trade solutions such as: substantial reductions in subsidies and domestic support, export competitions as well, trade facilitations to enhance, trade and improve distributions, improved market access through tariff reduction to enhanced or stimulate production and reduce Non Tariff Barriers.

3. H.E. Bhattacharya:

- There are several factors attributed to the food crisis including high cost of inputs and rising fuel/energy cost but there is no consensus on their contribution to fanning the crisis. He however, stressed the importance of correct diagnostic in order to prescribe the right solution. He noted the multi- dimension aspect of the matter and stressed the need for a holistic approach to assessing and resolving the issue. He observed that current solutions have ranged from direct support through provision of the required food to export restrictions and prohibitions/bans. He added that solutions should include bringing the issue of food crisis into the discussion or negotiations in agriculture as well as policy reform with respect to public expenditure so as to priorities the agriculture sector.

4. Dr. Haerberli:

- He attributed the problem to policy inconsistency at global , regional and national level. For instance end of cheap food (subsidies food) may not necessarily end poverty. He thus stressed the need for policy coherence between global and national level. He noted that the current revised text on Agriculture modalities to be discussed by the Ministers contains some proposals on reductions of subsidies but with no reference to differential export taxes. He

observed that subsistence farmers in most developing countries are tax and advised that national policies should discontinue such measures with the view to stimulate production. He called for a gradual policy shift from taxing subsistence farmers to agro-production support by scaling up investment agriculture sector and support technology transfer. He advised that food security must be addressed from an overall development perspective –productions capacity, purchasing power, distribution and marketing policies and strategies.

5. Prof Hermo Claude:

- Highlighted the main factors affecting food security as extensive environmental degradations, lack of integrated marketing due to poor infrastructure, poor sanitation and health, gender discriminations, low capacity to resist shocks and conflict among others. He stressed the importance of Early Warning Systems and outlined the three segments of the system namely, forecast and prediction, warning and reaction. He further advised that this must be accompanied by interventions at global, international and national levels. He added that the the primary responsibilities for addressing the problems lies at the national level where appropriate policy strategies with focus on agriculture must be in place.