



COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

## *AAMP Proceedings Report*

**Trade in Food Staples: Promoting Price Stability and Food Security through Intra-Regional Trade**



### **African Agricultural Markets Programme**

Training Workshop and Policy Seminar

Nairobi, Kenya

December 2008

## Acknowledgements

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\* The proceedings report was prepared in January 2009 by the workshop team. The report was prepared in good faith, but does not necessarily represent the views of the presenters, participants, or COMESA.

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# 1. Background and Introduction

The African Agricultural Markets Programme (AAMP) was launched by the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture at their 5th meeting in Mahe, Seychelles in March 2008. AAMP is one of the key

*A partnership for capacity-building, policy dialogue, and regional coordination on agricultural input and output markets in Eastern and Southern Africa*

programmes within the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 2. AAMP is a regional programme to support enhanced access to regional markets, trade, and private sector participation in agriculture. The programme is managed by the COMESA Secretariat in partnership with the World Bank and supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development.

AAMP aims to enhance regional capacity, policy dialogue, and coordination on agricultural input and output markets through a series of policy seminars, training, and analytical work. The programme currently covers both COMESA member and non-member countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The policy and training series will cover agricultural inputs, production, trade and marketing, and risk management. Country-specific analytical work will respond to issues raised in the policy seminar and client country demand.

A particular focus of AAMP is on food staples, which remain by far the most important traded commodities in the region and with significant impact on people's incomes and nutrition. Increasing trade in food staples is the major objective of efforts to promote regional integration. This first event in the series addressed the issue of regional trade and how it contributes to stabilizing prices and food security. Effective policies are key to creating value added markets in the region. Total intra-COMESA trade has grown from US\$3 billion in 2000 to US\$9 billion in 2008, of which trade in agricultural commodities is 40 per cent. Future events will cover other issues including development of input markets.

The event was held in Nairobi, 9-11th December 2008 and had two components:

- A training program for technical staff was conducted on 9 and 10th December 2008. The training introduced tools and techniques for policy analysis and strengthened understanding of the practical implications of trade policy.
- A policy seminar was held on 11th December 2008. The policy seminar was



attended by permanent secretaries, parliamentarians, researchers, and the senior private sector representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. These officials made important policy recommendations which will assist in deepening regional integration and growing the region's agricultural sector. On behalf of the Minister of Agriculture in the Republic Kenya, Hon. William Ruto, a welcome statement was read by Anne Onyango, Director of Policy and External Relations.

A summary of these sessions is provided in this report. For more details, readers are encouraged to go through the actual presentations provided in the attached CD-ROM.

## 2. AAMP Training Module: Trade in Food Staples in Eastern and Southern Africa

Training was conducted in three technical sessions covering enabling legal agreements, the price differentials among maize markets in the region and the potential impact of cross-border trade on regional farmers and consumers. A final session discussed the policy implications of supporting inter-regional trade for food security and agricultural growth.

### 2.1 Regional trade agreements and cross-border trade in food staples in Eastern and Southern Africa

The first session examined how current and proposed regional trade agreements will affect cross-border trade in staple foods. In theory, regional trade agreements encourage cross-border trade by lowering quantitative and tariff restrictions and by harmonizing standards and customs procedure. In practice, however, most governments in Eastern and Southern Africa intermittently prohibit cross-border trade in maize.



COMESA's vision is to attain a fully integrated and internationally competitive regional economic community - a community within which there is economic prosperity with high standards of living of its people, with political and social stability and peace, and a community within which goods, services, capital and labour freely move across borders. The heads of three African trading blocs, COMESA, SADC, and EAC met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 and signed the tripartite agreement to create the largest free trade zone in Africa, covering over half of the continent's GDP and population. Many factors influence integration, political as well as economic. Without peace and security we cannot have trade across the region, whilst trade also supports peace and security through political and economic integration. Small and fragmented economies cannot attract investment. But COMESA has a market of 400 million people and larger free trade zone will have a market of 526 million.

A free trade area means goods produced within the member state should move within the area on a duty and quota free basis. Goods produced within the region include those which:

- are wholly produced or obtained in the region,
- have local content of 60% from within COMESA,
- have at least 35% of the value added within the region,
- have changed tariff heading, or
- are of particular economic importance to the region but do not meet the 35% value added criteria.

Some of the main challenges to the trade are: the cost of transporting goods; supply side constraints; lack of timely and accurate data; export/import bans; non predictability of policy; high cost of production, for example input costs; and sanitary and phytosanitary measures which are used inappropriately to restrict trade. The free trade zone agreement includes agreement to remove non-tariff barriers (NTBs).

*Many factors influence integration, political as well as economic. Without peace and security we cannot have trade across the region, whilst trade also supports peace and security through political and economic integration.*

Article 50 (c,e and f) of the COMESA Treaty provides a legal basis for export/import bans. The article stipulates circumstances under which a member state may invoke export or import bans. These include the protection of animal and plant health, protection of citizens in the event of war and famine and items deemed to be of national importance. The article is backed by a proviso that member states should not introduce the restrictions or prohibitions with the aim of inhibiting free movement of goods. The restrictions or prohibitions so imposed should not extend for more than necessary to achieve the aims it was intended to and shall be applied on non discriminatory basis. The member state should notify the Secretary General of COMESA of their intention to introduce an export or import ban.

There are many opportunities for, and benefits of, trade in food staples as a result of the expanded single market. These include increased production, which will improve food security; increased competitiveness and better utilization of resources towards more efficient producers and more efficient sectors; increased foreign direct investment and

intra-regional investment; employment creation; reduced imports from third countries; and ultimately, economic growth and development.

So there are many incentives to trade, but there are also enforcement mechanisms. COMESA encourages dialogue as a first step, but the COMESA Court of Justice is available for enforcement.

The way forward for trade in Eastern and Southern Africa is four fold.

- First, address supply side constraints including enhancing production levels, energy, road and rail infrastructure as well as air transport for high value exports.
- Second, hasten the process of harmonization of standards and SPS measures as well as customs procedures with twenty four hour operating border post.
- Third, support the decision of the leadership of COMESA, EAC and SADC to merge into a single market for the region to experience prosperity.
- Fourth, promote public private dialogue on issues of trade policy.

During this session comments and questions from the floor covered the issues of:

- Why did some COMESA countries not join the free trade area in 2000?
- What enforcement mechanisms encourage member states to comply with the treaty?
- Why do governments impose export bans?
- What role does mistrust, poor information and politics play in such decisions?
- Infrastructure and supply side constraints.
- Nontariff barriers at border posts and informal trade.
- Whether the time is right for the extended free trade zone.

Having identified the key challenges, participants at the training session broke into four groups to discuss what should be done about them. Recommendations to COMESA and Member State Governments were as follows:



**On Export bans**

- Raise productivity - most domestic production is inefficient, but favouring cheaper imports is politically unfeasible.
- Actively promote dialogue on Member States obligations under the treaty, possibly through the Alliance for Common Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA).
- Develop regional information systems.
- Secure reliable data by ensuring all interested parties have a stake in it.

**On Competitiveness**

- Research and extension services should improve capacity and be demand driven.
- Ensure adequate credit facilities to allow farmers to purchase inputs.
- Targeted input subsidies if the ratio of input to output prices is too high, managed in collaboration with the private sector.
- Support the processing sector to become more efficient, improve storage and processing facilities to improve quality.
- Regional investment in agriculture.
- Review exchange rate policies.

**On Standards**

- COMESA accreditation of standards.
- Capacity building for institutions.
- Call upon consumers to demand higher standards.

**On Infrastructure and investment climate**Transport:

- Better linkages of regional and national roads.
- Investigate alternatives to road, e.g. better rail infrastructure to surplus areas.
- More consideration of NTBs, e.g. bribes, road blocks, weigh bridges.
- Develop regional investment plans and align national investment plans.
- Mobilize funds for investment.
- Introduce efficient road funds, e.g. petrol levies.

Storage:

- Promote warehouse receipt systems where storage receipts can be used as collateral or means of exchange.
- Assess feasibility of regional storage facilities.

Information:

- Develop a regional market information system, building on existing national systems, ensure the information trickle down to farmers.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the rules of origin requirements and administrative requirements such as transport licenses.

## 2.2. Regional Trade in Food Staples: gains from trade and contribution to price stability

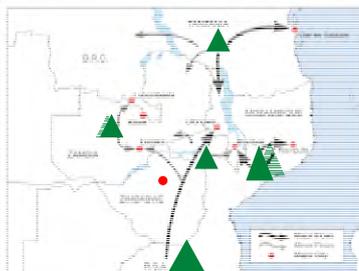
Presentations explored the spatial dimensions of regional food staples markets, demonstrated how Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools can be used to map food staple zones, and reviewed some basic trade theory to examine the impact of open borders on domestic grain prices.

### Mapping maize markets

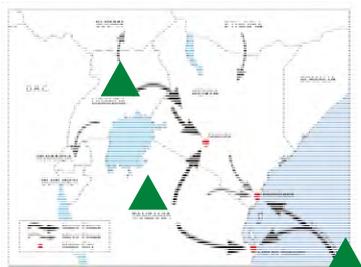
Maps showing deficit markets or 'hunger spots' and nearby food surplus areas were presented. Very often grain flows across national borders between surplus and deficit markets - arbitrary political boundaries cut across natural markets.



South East Africa Market Shed



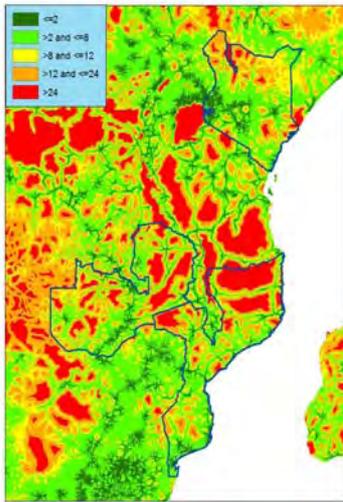
East Africa Maize Market Shed



The presentation demonstrated how geographical data and mapping tools can help understand cross border markets for food staples. Key market information such as production surpluses and prices; consumption, quantities, price; population; roads, borders, transport costs; and price differentials can be shown on maps using GIS tools.

The two main types of spatial data are rasters and shape files. Rasters are grid data, every cell in the grid has a value, e.g. the population of the area, rainfall, elevation, output, price, data in each area. A useful application of raster files is to map travel times to major destinations.

Regional Travel Times to 20k City Size (hours)



Shape files are points, lines, or polygons. These are good for representing cities, rivers and roads, and countries. Each item can take a different size and shape. Shape files are good for showing the data for districts or particular geographical units. For example, where does most maize come from and where does most cassava come from. These maps showed that there are some important “dual staple zones” which can use cassava as a substitute food staple in bad years. Thus mapping can be useful for understanding the behaviours of farming households and resolving spatial food policy issues.

### **Gains from trade**

The gains from trade refer to the benefits to a group of people from exchanging goods and services with other groups of people as compared with producing everything they consume themselves. Both groups, in these case countries, can and generally do benefit from trade, though the benefits may not be equal.



There are at least four sources of gains from trade:

comparative advantage; competition; returns to scale; and dynamic gains from trades.

Allowing exports increases the price from the self sufficient price to the world price with the effect that producers gain and consumers lose, but overall there is a net gain. Allowing imports

reduces the price from the self sufficient price with the effect that consumers gain and producers lose, but overall there is a net gain. Reducing the import tariff increases

***Myth: “When two countries trade one wins and one loses.”***

***Reality: Trade is not a zero sum game, there are winners and losers in both countries.***

imports and reduces the domestic price with the effect that producers lose, consumers gain, the government loses tax revenue, but overall there is a net gain.

All of these gains and losses can be calculated if you have data for the current price, the new price and how the volume of trade will change. The dynamic gains are much harder to measure but are probably much more significant. A recent study comparing growth rates between 1950 and 1998 found 1.5 to 2 percentage points higher growth rate per year after trade reforms to open borders.

So why are there restrictions on trade? Some of the arguments given are:

- Infant industries which need some protection to develop into a viable concern. But if they are never exposed to competition, infant industries may never grow up.
- Concerns about poverty. Even if there is an overall gain you may not want to allow exports if the losses are born by the poorest in society. However, there may be other ways to alleviate poverty and compensate the losers.
- Government dependence on tariff revenue. Tariffs are distortive but a relatively easy way of raising revenues and governments would need to find alternatives.
- Concern about volatility in world markets. However it is not clear that world prices more volatile than domestic prices
- Political influence of producers. Producers maybe more aware, more motivated, and more organized than consumers.

**Myth: “Some countries are so inefficient they don’t have comparative advantage in anything”.**  
**Reality: Every country has a comparative advantage in something. Comparative advantage compares relative ability of the country to produce particular goods.**

**Myth: “The country should promote exports and restrict imports.”**

**Reality: Exports help economy through jobs and income. Imports help economy by lowering cost and increasing variety of inputs for producers and goods for consumers.**

Participants at the training session used a spreadsheet-based model to simulate the effect of: a change in tariff; a reduction in supply; and a reduction in income; on domestic price, consumers, producers and government revenues for the case of the Kenya wheat market.



### The role of trade in stabilizing prices

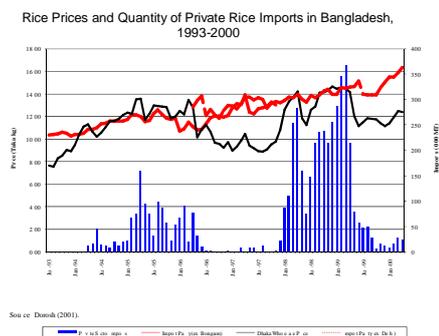
Food staples are the biggest market in Africa and likely to be growing fastest. Maize is the main staple, but cassava and bananas are significant. Food staples are the biggest commercial opportunity, essential to poverty reduction and food security as well.

*Regional trade in food staples reduces price volatility and improves food security in deficit zones, and improves producer incentives and accelerates agricultural growth in surplus zones.*

Political boundaries cut across the natural markets. We know the deficit markets very well, but less about surplus markets. Mapping shows that the surplus areas are often on the other side of the border to the deficit markets they serve. It doesn't make sense to try and solve food shortages from within our own boundaries. Mozambique has surplus in the north and deficit in the south, why pay the transport costs to move maize from north to south when deficit Maputo is closer to South African surplus, and Malawi closer to Mozambique's surplus.

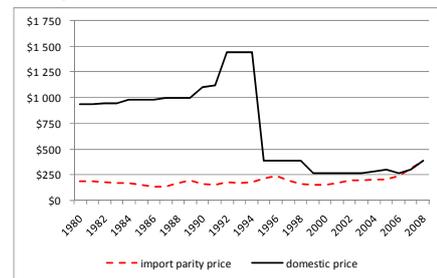
Trade moderates price volatility. In a drought year prices shoot up and with closed borders prices in the deficit zone can easily double. With an open border the import parity price provides a price-ceiling. During a bumper harvest the price falls. In this case, allowing trade allows the export price to form a floor-price. Flows from surplus to deficit areas are an important buffer for localized price surges. Without trade, price volatility is greater than production volatility. This is seen in the cases of South Africa and Bangladesh.

The case of Bangladesh illustrates that in a bad year the domestic price reaches the import parity price and imports come from India. For example during the 1998 flood 2 million tons were imported and domestic prices were held to that level. Two factors improved government's confidence in the market. First, the very high number of traders ensured no-one had market power. Second, it was possible for government to verify the volumes traders were importing by checking their letters of credit.



The alternative is the case of Saudi Arabia. When the fear factor prevailed after the oil shocks in the 1970s, Saudi Arabia sought to be self sufficient in wheat with the result that the domestic price was more the four times the import parity price at over 1000 USD per ton.

Saudi Arabia, domestic and border prices for wheat, 1980-2008



Within Eastern and Southern Africa the main causes of prices shooting above parity are foreign exchange shortages; export bans; and late policy decisions and information, for example to subsidize prices. When the conditions are in place, regional trade in food staples reduces price volatility and improves food security in deficit zones, and improves producer incentives and accelerates agricultural growth in surplus zones.

Food security problems are caused by maize. Maize production varies widely from one year to the next because of its sensitivity to moisture stress. In contrast, highly drought tolerant crops such as cassava, Africa's second largest provider of food calories, offer highly stable food production from one year to the next. Moreover, secondary staples such as cassava and banana allow farmers in surplus zones to export maize. Because they are hardier and more flexible in harvesting they can be harvested any time of year and over multiple years. So they can be harvested for local consumption during a poor maize harvest, allowing farmers to export maize to deficit zones. Regional trade and secondary staples are both shock absorbers. Trade can limit price volatility by half. Secondary staples can substitute for half of the maize deficit.

The policy implications are:

- Open borders stabilize prices, improve investment incentives for farmers and traders in surplus zones, and ease shortages in deficit zones.
- Export bans drive trade into informal channels which raise transaction costs and discourage investment in staple food production and trade.
- Secondary staples can play an important role in food security, but need public investment in research.
- Trust between the public and private sectors is imperative. This will require stable, predictable policies, open dialogue and communications, competitive

markets which the government has faith in, good crop forecasting and market information systems.

Training participants used a computer exercise to calculate parity prices for Kenya. Import parity price is the price in the location of production plus the costs of delivery to the market (including the trader's profit margin). Export parity price is the price a commodity would have to be purchased in a production location in order to be sold at a market price, that is, the price in the location of consumption less the cost of delivery.



The conclusion of the discussion was that well intentioned interventions for consumers often have unintended consequences. Traders will not import if they don't know what price they will be able to sell at and consumers ultimately suffer. There has got to be honest dialogue between traders and governments. Government has to be able to trust the traders about the price and quantity of imports and the traders have to be able to trust that the Government will not import and flood the market.

### 2.3. The Influence of World Markets: food price movements and their welfare implications

Presentations reviewed the underlying causes of price movements in the region, the food security implications, and the welfare impact of price increases on households.

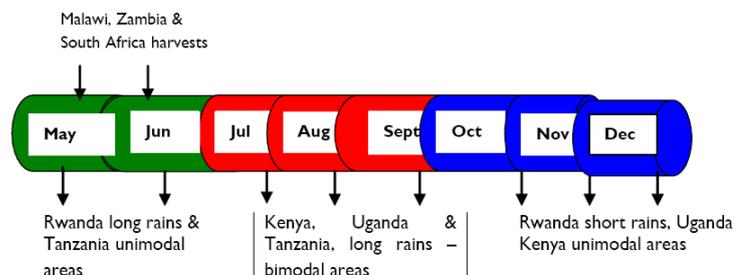
#### Causes of recent price movements

Over the past year world food prices have increased drastically. There are several reasons.

*Within the region the causes are: rising incomes and urbanization; climatic variability; and poorly integrated markets.*

On the demand side: rising incomes in developing countries and increased demand for meat, increased use of grain for animal feeds and bio fuel, increasing world population, and increasing urbanization. On the supply side: rising prices of inputs, restrictions on exports, and speculative investments.

COMESA countries seem to have some immunity to world price rises. Apart from Tanzania, there does not seem to be price transmission from world to domestic prices in the region.



Source: EWSNET,2008

Within the region the main reasons for price rises are: rising incomes and urbanization; climatic variability; and poorly integrated markets. Climatic variability leads to staggered marketing and peaks and troughs in productions. Because markets are poorly integrated trade does not smooth the price volatility. Additional factors are declining investment in agriculture and under investment in research and extension service leading to low and decreasing yields in some countries; trade and market policies, e.g. price controls and export bans; conflicts; global social changes; and rising input prices.

The discussion questions participants tackled were whether food prices increased in real terms and whether the prices were soaring above normal levels. Participants used a computer exercise to decompose price rises in four countries for inflation, trends, seasonality, and random shocks. The conclusion of this session was that good data was important to critically identify the real underlying changes in prices.

### **Winners and losers of price rises**

Will small holder farmers be better or worse off when food prices increase? Common sense tells us that higher prices of consumer goods hurt

*Higher grain prices benefits the rural area but the benefits tend to be concentrated among a few households.*

households and higher prices of crops benefit farm households, but how much do they gain or lose? And what about households which buy and sell the same good? There is not an overall answer, it will depend on the characteristics of the farmer, in particular whether they are net buyers or net sellers of food over the year. This is determined by their access to land/farm structure, productive assets, input prices, and access to markets.

The welfare impact of price increase in the case of producers is the amount of additional income that producer would get if there was no change in output. The welfare impact of a price increase in the case of consumers is the amount of additional income that would allow that consumer to consume as much as before the price increase. We can use the NBR to understand the welfare impact of price changes on households.

Net benefit ratios (NBRs) are an approximate but simple measure of the welfare effects for an individual household of change in food prices. NBR is the value of net sales of a crop divided by total household income, for example, a farmer sells 6X50-kg bags of rice per year for \$100/bag and his household income is \$2000. So his NBR for rice =  $(6 \times 100) / 2000 = 600 / 2000 = 0.30$ . For this household, the effect on income from a change in the price of rice is the product of the NBR and the percentage increase in price, e.g., a 20% increase in price of rice has an effect of increasing household income by 6% ( $0.30 \times 0.20 = 0.06$ ). It is approximate measure because it assumes the household doesn't respond to the price change, therefore could be seen as a short term measure. The net benefit depends on how much the household buys and sells and the price, and the household income. Positive NBR means net sellers benefit from higher prices. Negative NBR means net buyers lose from higher prices.

Empirical results of the impact of price rises from surveys in Africa show that the largest proportion of rural households are net buyers of food. Thus more people will be worse off than better off as a result of higher prices in the short run. Net buyers tend to be urban households, labourers, and very small farmers. Net sellers are medium to large farmers. A small percentage of net sellers accounts for bulk of sales. Thus the benefits of higher grain prices tend to be concentrated among a few medium to large farmers. There are households who neither buy nor sell in the market. This group includes farmers in remote areas or farmers growing other staple crops and have no role in the staple food market.

| Type of household | Zambia maize | Mozambique maize | Kenya Maize | Ethiopia Cereals |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Only seller       | 19           | 13               | 18          | 44               |
| Net seller        | 5            | *                | 12          |                  |
| No trade          | 39           | 24               | 8           | 1                |
| Net buyer         | 3            | *                | 7           | 54               |
| Only buyer        | 33           | 51               | 55          |                  |
| Total             | 100          | 100              | 100         | 100              |

\* Net sellers and net buyers together are 12%. Source: Jayne et al, 2005, Tefera and Seyoum, 2008, Dorosh and Minten, 2006

In the long run higher prices could benefit Africa if productivity was higher. The key policy question is how to improve small holder productivity so that they can gain by participating in markets as net sellers. Areas for public policy and investment include improved seed varieties, improved transport infrastructure, research and extension services. Policy outside Africa towards food aid, energy and biofuels, and domestic agricultural and trade policies will also play a role.

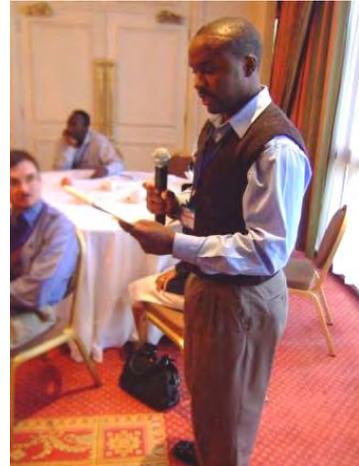
Participants in the training session used a computer exercise to calculate NBR and the effect of price rises on income, expenditure, and the overall net impact for representative households. This data is available for many of the countries involved.



## 2.4. Productivity, Strategy, Investment: priorities identified by training participants

In the final session of the training event, participants broke into three working groups by region to review the policy briefing note and prioritise recommendations. The top priorities of the respective groups were:

- Improve productivity and competitiveness.  
Export bans are a reaction to low productivity. The root cause of the problem should be the priority. However, export bans should be a last resort and member states should adhere to the rules governing their use.
- Develop a long run strategic plan for food staples including secondary staples and response to shortages.
- Invest in infrastructure, particularly road and railway systems but also in irrigation and water management.
- Good statistical data and timely, accurate market information should be the basis for policy, trade, and production decisions.



In the concluding remarks, participants appreciated training in using statistics to inform decision making and noted the need for training to reach a wider group and different levels of administration at the country level. In his closing comments, Cris Muyunda highlighted that this had been the first training session under AAMP and there are more to come over the next year. He invited participants to nominate stakeholders and topics or challenges for inclusion in future events. Moreover, COMESA will take the recommendations to the key policy makers such as the COMESA Council of Ministers and Ministers of Agriculture. He concluded by thanking participants for insightful contributions and asking them to publicise the programme, as there is more to be done to achieve a unified market throughout Africa.

### 3. AAMP Policy Seminar: The Role of Intra-Regional Trade in Price Stability and Food Security

The seminar was an opportunity for the Eastern and Southern African community to meet and discuss the role of regional trade in price stability and food security. In attendance were parliamentarians from Uganda, Zambia and Mozambique and senior policy makers from Zambia and Tanzania and chief executive officers of national and regional agribusiness associations. Three sessions were conducted and covered trade policy in the region and implications for trade in food staples, role of regional trade in price stability and food security and the way forward for regional trade in food staples. Participants' discussions and recommendations are identified. Full details of the presentations are attached.

#### 3.1 Trade Policy in the region: understanding the rules and recognising the opportunities

The policy seminar began with a presentation from Helen Kenani, COMESA, on Regional Trade Agreements in Eastern and Southern Africa. COMESA's vision is to attain a fully integrated and internationally competitive regional economic community. A free trade area means goods produced within the member state should move within the area



on a duty and quota free basis. Goods produced within the region include those which:

- are wholly produced or obtained in the region,
- have local content of 60% from within COMESA,
- have at least 35% of the value added within the region,
- have changed tariff heading, or
- are of particular economic importance to the region but do not meet the 35% value added criteria

There are many benefits of free trade in food staples and the ultimate one is economic growth and development. But significant challenges remain including high transport costs, non-tariff barriers and the use of trade bans. The main legal basis for

export/import bans are the protection of animal and plant health, protection of citizens in the event of war and famine and items deemed to be of national importance. COMESA encourages dialogue as a first step whenever trade rules are breached, but COMESA Court of Justice is available for enforcement.

The next presentation was on the role of Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) in facilitating the development of structured grain trading systems. The presentation was done by Bridget Okumu from EAGC. EAGC is a member based organization for the grain value chain. Current members are from Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and S. Africa. Its mission is to bring order to the regional grain trade, practicing and promoting approaches to trade that help farmers, suppliers, processors, traders and consumers transform their businesses and lives. EAGC's goal is to promote structured grain trading systems and open trade policies. Bridget described one example of structured trading system - the Warehouse Receipt System. She described how it works and described EAGC's experience in piloting this system in Kenya. She emphasized the pre-requisites for trade as market intelligence, an enabling environment, infrastructure and coordination.

Comments from participants addressed the social obligations that governments have to their citizens. Concerns that change of tariff headings are a threat to domestic production in other member states were expressed. The absence of a regional policy framework for agriculture, for example, on food reserves, genetically modified crops and trade was identified as a serious drawback in implementing regional agreements.

### 3.2 The role of regional trade in food security and price stability

During the second session presentations were given by Thomas Jayne, MSU, on the 2008/09 food price and food security situation and by Steven Haggblade, MSU, on regional trade and the role of secondary food staples.

#### **Implications for Immediate and Longer-Run Responses**

On the impact of higher food prices, there are six key facts:

1. Both Eastern and Southern Africa are gradually moving from grain surplus to



grain deficit, although other agriculture sectors appear to be filling the gap because agriculture as a whole is growing.

2. Maize prices in the world market have tumbled along with other commodity prices recently, but not in this region.
3. Zambia and Malawi may face consumer food shortages by early 2009, not because food prices are abnormally high, but because of uncertainty over need to import
4. Opportunities to relieve maize deficits and stabilize prices are hindered by regional trade barriers that raise costs to consumers and reduce prices to farmers. Farmers in northern Mozambique are highly dependent on markets in Malawi, while southern Malawi is highly dependent on northern Mozambique for food security. Production in Malawi and Mozambique are not correlated. This lack of correlation is key to gains from trade.
5. The price of fertilizer rose even more than maize. When maize-fertilizer ratios are low there is less incentive to use fertilizer on crops.
6. This suggests there will be less fertilizer used in 2008, and thus lower output in 2009 in countries that make relatively intensive use of fertilizers, and greater need for imports in these countries, perhaps from countries like Mozambique which don't use much fertilizer. Relying on regional trade is going to be even more important.

In summary the supply-demand balance remains tight, imports are arranged late which keeps prices high, and the outlook for 2009 remains precarious.

Of all the grain imported into sub-Saharan Africa only 5% is from farmers in other African countries, 95% comes from other continents. Rather than limiting the availability of trade, we should seek to encourage intra-regional trade. Export bans don't stop trade they increase the costs and consumer and farmers are paying the cost. We need to ask how we can get African farmers feeding African people.

Member states should consider ramping-up investment in crop science, infrastructure, irrigation, farmer knowledge. In good seasons, member states should consider programs that support incomes (food for work, cash transfers) for vulnerable groups, production contracts, local food purchase and build cash reserves for import when needed. When there is a production shortfall, member states should remove tariffs/taxes on food imports, position early for food import, seek imported food aid not local purchase.

Donors should consider supporting local crop science, local food purchase or imports, improved crop production estimates and market information, overhaul of food balance sheet approach and reconsider energy policy impacts on food prices and the climate.

### **Regional trade and the role of secondary food staples**

Food staples markets are big, growing and important to the rural and urban poor. Yet Africa's political boundaries cut across natural market sheds. COMESA and other RECs enable cost savings by facilitating low-cost cross-border flows. Regional trade in food reduces price volatility and improves food security in deficit markets. On the other hand regional trade improves producer incentives and accelerates agricultural growth in surplus zones.

Haggblade highlighted the importance of developing perennial secondary food staples such as cassava and banana. These staples can be harvested any time of year and over multiple years. These crops are also moisture tolerant. Farmers in locations in the region where there is production and consumption of multiple staple crops can expand perennial staple production for local consumption and export maize to deficit zones in times of stress. Substitution among food staples adds to the capacity to absorb food insecurity shocks by stabilize food and feed availability during drought years.

Common themes in the presentations were the negative impact of export and import bans and the importance of timely and credible information on domestic output and policy responses. During the comments it was suggested that COMESA or the ACTESA programme could play a role in ensuring the provision of good market information as well as analysis of the impact of trade bans on consumers and farmers. In instances where political imperatives lead governments to impose import or export bans, COMESA could work with the concerned governments to ensure adequate notification of other member states of their intention to invoke these exceptional controls under Clause 50 of the COMESA treaty. Other issues raised were how to increase structured trade and how small farmers can participate actively in the international markets, and how member states can minimize predatory dumping when there are surpluses on either side of border.

Participants pointed out that the objective of government is feeding citizens and the important policy question is what will reduce the cost of feeding citizens fastest. Traders acknowledged the social objectives of government interventions but highlighted the importance of dialogue and shared knowledge of the market implications of policy decisions.

### 3.3 Moving forward together

The final session was a participatory session to chart a way forward for food staples trade in Eastern and Southern Africa. Participants broke into four groups to discuss:

- What roles can regional trade play in promoting growth and food security?
- What worries you the most about the behaviours/actions of the public/private sector?

The comments are summarized in the table below. Some general comments from participants highlighted the importance of increasing domestic production, addressing subsidies for agriculture in developed countries, and the importance of overarching regional economic and agricultural policies.



|   | <b>Role of regional trade in growth and food security</b>   | <b>Concerns about the actions of the public / private sector</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>South East Africa Private Sector</b> | Dialogue between the sectors will help with evidence based decision making and policy.  | Concerns are intervention from government without consultation, delays in decision making, and inaccurate information on occasions.   |
| <b>South East Africa Public Sector</b>  | Trade can increase productivity by expanding the market and increase food security by efficiently allocating surpluses to deficit areas and stabilizing prices. | Concerns are that the private sector is singularly motivated by profit with no social function or feeling of responsibility for feeding the nation, and lacks recognition and respect for the public sector.<br><br>There is insufficient dialogue between the sectors. |
| <b>Eastern</b>                          | Trade offers a bigger market with all   | Uncertainties are created by decision   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Africa<br/>Private<br/>Sector</b>            | the advantages of economies of scale and cuts transition costs with benefits to the consumer.   | making process and lack of transparency in communication and rationale for policy. Policy is not always honestly implemented.                       |
|   | A large regional trading block will enhance efficiency and allow farmers to exploit comparative advantages.   | There is a lack of good research and information to base policy on.   |
|   | Risk and uncertainty can be mitigated by creating a safety net for the farming community.   | There is a lack of trust on both sides.   |
| <b>Eastern<br/>Africa<br/>Public<br/>Sector</b> | The role of regional trade is recognized and can be supported by active participation in RECs.  | The public sector recognizes some inconsistencies in policy e.g. export bans, and that standards are important for the promotion of regional trade. |
|   | The major issue is food security and addressing it may support regional trade. Smallholders do not produce tradable volumes and will need alternative support from the public sector. | Many opportunities for trade remain unknown and need to be uncovered to facilitate trade.   |
|   | Foreign exchange issues need to be addressed.   |   |

A panel formed of one representative from each group was asked to identify areas of agreement and disagreement between the public and private sectors, and suggestions for constructive next steps. The main points emerging from the panel and the plenary discussion were agreement on the key issues of:



- The importance of trade, but some disagreement between the sectors on how we get there.
- The importance of food security and increasing productivity, but the question remains how this can be achieved. Some people will be food secure by going to the market, others will need support to increase productivity. The viability of maize production for small farmers was queried.
- Both sectors are partners in the process and have a role to play.
- Improved dialogue and communication to increase trust between the parties and agree a way forward. The current lack of trust comes from a lack of dialogue and open mindedness. Meetings will need to be attended by people with the power to make decisions and take them forward.
- Policy inconsistency. There is a political will for increased trade, but it was recognised that the public sector sends mixed signals when it signs a regional trade treaty or agreement but later introduces an import or export ban.
- Better market information is crucial. The public, private and NGO sectors can all play a role in this.
- Improving infrastructure. Roads are in poor condition and border crossings are congested.
- Representation for small scale farmers, capacity to organise and communicate their issues and requirements for public support. An important challenge is how to link small scale farmers to the market.
- The need for an overarching agriculture policy and consideration of the most effective means of supporting agriculture.

Key suggestions from policy makers on specific steps forward included the following:

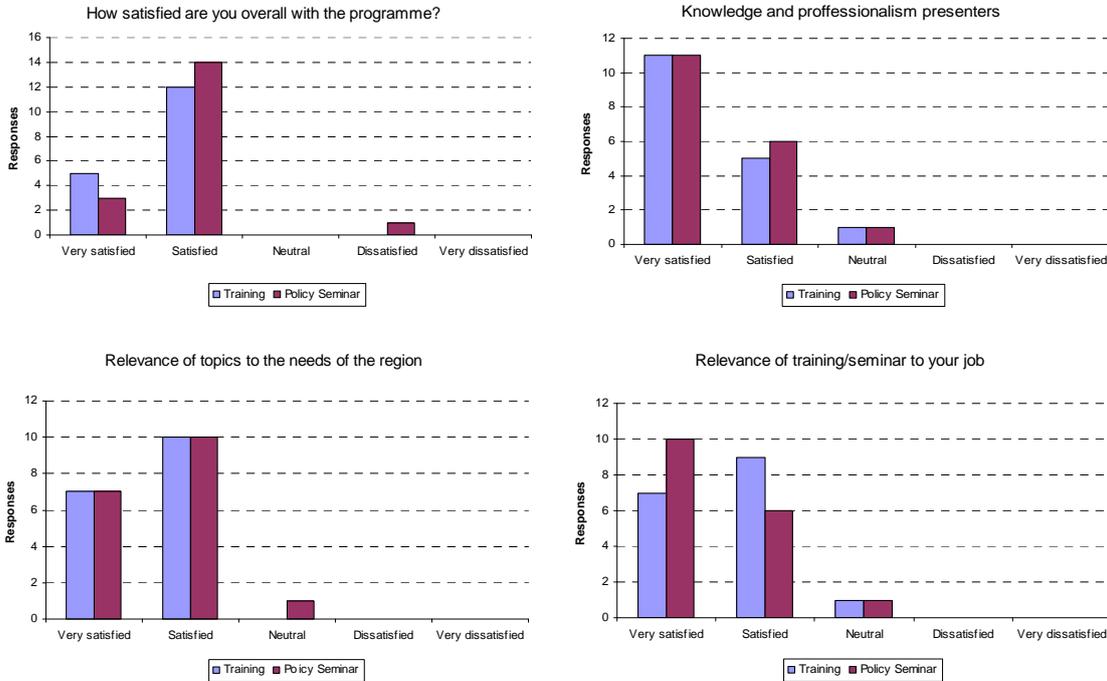
- Strong and forceful discussions should continue to take place between civil servants, parliamentarians and the private sector to breakdown stereotyping of private and public actors. The current lack of genuine information in the industry justifies the preconceptions and lack of flexibility in positions that parties take. Setting up commodity advisory boards which are all embracing provides an important platform for such dialogue. Such boards will ensure interventions have strong industry level support and it is through a consensus building approach that trust in the industry can re-emerge.
- In order to progress from talking to action, regional protocols and agreements should be domesticated at the national level. This can be done through legislative chambers of member countries. Parliaments have a role to create regulations and procedures that civil servants and the private sector should adhere to in support of implementation of these agreements.
- Most importantly, regional agreements will work best if there is a regional policy framework to guide member states. Currently member states are at liberty to implement policies that often work to defeat the principles of regional agreements. Pockets of distortions within the region have the ability to disadvantage members. A regional policy framework can give guidelines of tolerable levels or limits of what member states can or cannot do. This will bring some degree of uniformity in domestic policies and reduce unilateral, haphazard and high-handed approaches. In this regard, there is need to give high priority to concluding a region agricultural policy.

In the closing remarks, Josef Loening highlighted two important messages from the presentations and discussions: (1) for small holders, investment and policy are both important; and (2) export bans profoundly undermine the efforts to increase productivity. On the outcomes of the session, he observed that it had been helpful to have a broad range of sectors represented, that the conference had moved us towards further dialogue but there is potentially a gap between talking and action. The important question is what are the next steps. To this end, AAMP is happy to respond to country specific requests to continue progress.

Cris Muyunda responded that these issues will go forward to the policy organs of COMESA, such as the committee of Ministers of Agriculture, the Council of Ministers and ultimately to the COMESA Summit. These are some of the platforms for domesticating the regional protocols. He concluded the event with the comment that regional trade is just one battle ground in the fight for the agriculture sector but there are others, for example strengthening science and research. The CAADP is the overall strategy and underneath this platform the AAMP will continue to evolve and grow.

## Annex A: Evaluation

Evaluation forms were received from 17 participants in the training sessions and 18 participants in the policy seminar.



Overall the response has been positive. The knowledge and professionalism of the presenters was particularly appreciated. In future more time should be devoted to group discussion. Some selected comments are presented below.

### Which components of the training were most useful?

“Discussion on policy implication in the group. This was good because we were able to identify the actual problems and challenges from both private and public sector.”

“Group sessions. Exchange of issues among different countries”

“Price movements across markets. The quantitative analysis using actual data to inform policy options based on regional and international cases was particularly useful.”

**What can we do to strengthen/improve the training?**

“Reduce the number of modules to enable more discussion from the members”

“Have certificates for the training”

“More practical sessions will help to improve understanding”

**Which components of the policy seminar were most useful?**

“Discussion on the way forward: encouraged practical and frank discussion amongst participants on regional trade.”

“The overall information about trade in the COMESA countries. It shows what is happening exactly in each country. Particularly regarding grain production and trade within COMESA member countries, specially from the farms and traders”

**What can we do to strengthen/improve the policy seminar?**

“The discussions were not given adequate focus. The way forward and the role of COMESA should be given some prominence and details”

“Ensure that a broad spectrum of stakeholder participants. Few MPs attended and farmers were under-represented.”

“Time allocation to the seminar too short. 2 days maybe.”

**Annex B:**  
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### **OBSERVERS**

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## Annex C: Presentations and Reports on CD-Rom

All of the presentations and reports used in the event, plus the training exercises and a list of participants, will be provided to participants on a CD-Rom. The presentations and reports are listed below.

### **Background Research Reports to the Training and Policy Seminar were:**

AAMP Draft Policy Briefing December 2008: "Trade in Food Staples in Eastern and Southern Africa: The Role of Intra-Regional Trade in Price Stability and Food Security", COMESA.

"The 2008/09 Food Price and Food Security Situation in Eastern and Southern Africa: Implications for Immediate and Longer Run Responses." Jayne, T.S. et al. 2008. Michigan State University.

"Regional Trade in Food Staples: Prospects for Stimulating Agricultural Growth and Moderating Short-Term Food Security Crises in Eastern and Southern Africa." Haggblade, S. et al. 2008. Michigan State University.

"Responding to the Food Price Crisis in Eastern and Southern Africa: Policy Options for National and Regional Action." ReSAKKS, ASARECA, and CGIAR, 2008. Nairobi.

### **Presentations made to the Training workshop were:**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| AAMP Training 1.a, Trade Policy, Regional Trade Agreements | Kenani    |
| AAMP Training 2.a, Regional Trade, Spatial Dimensions      | Haggblade |
| AAMP Training 2.b, Regional Trade, Gains from Trade        | Minot     |
| AAMP Training 2.c, Regional Trade, Role of Parity Prices   | Haggblade |
| AAMP Training 3.a, Prices, Causes of Price Movements       | ReSAKKS   |
| AAMP Training 3.b, Prices, Measuring Price Movements       | Haggblade |
| AAMP Training 3.c, Prices, Winners and Losers              | Minot     |

### **Presentations made to the Policy Seminar were:**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Policy Seminar 1.a, Trade Policy, Regional Trade Agreements              | Kenani    |
| Policy Seminar 1.b, Trade Policy, Experience of the EAGC                 | Okumu     |
| Policy Seminar 2.a, Role of Trade, Food Prices and Food Security         | Jayne     |
| Policy Seminar 2.b, Role of Trade, Agricultural Growth and Food Security | Haggblade |