

Talking points for George D. Kembo, Director of Food and Nutrition Council, Zimbabwe

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Theme: Development of a Multi-Sectoral Food and Nutrition Security Policy

As Director of the Food and Nutrition Council in Zimbabwe, it is my pleasure and a privilege to represent the Government of Zimbabwe at this important event. **I would like to acknowledge my colleagues Miss Muleya from the Office of the President and Cabinet, Mr. Mishi from Ministry of Labour and Social Services, as well as Mrs Chigumira from Ministry of Health and Child Welfare** who are here with me as part of the multi-sectoral delegation from the Government of Zimbabwe. We are very pleased to have been invited to this meeting marking the first anniversary of SUN.

While Zimbabwe has long prioritized nutrition through a multi-sector and multi-disciplinary approach, Zimbabwe only recently formerly joined the SUN, in June of this year. However, over the past year, prior to joining SUN, significant progress has been achieved towards ensuring that food and nutrition security is a high priority in Zimbabwe. **In my presentation, I would like to briefly present some of these developments with particular reference to the development of Zimbabwe's Food and Nutrition Security Policy.**

Over the past ten months, (November 2010 to present), the Food and Nutrition Council led the development of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy. **First, I would like to make a few comments on the process that embraced a multi-sectoral approach and that has ensured national ownership.** From the outset a "road map" defined the nationally driven and owned process which was overseen by a Government-mandated multi-sectoral Task Force. This process reinforced Ministry and sector collaboration at all levels and stages of its development. A number of core Ministries systematically engaged equally and provided leadership throughout the process; these were the Ministries responsible for Labour and Social Services, Agriculture, Health (through the Nutrition Department) and Local Government (for implementation). The development of the policy also provided an important opportunity to ensure that food and nutrition security issue become broader on the economic agenda within

Zimbabwe. The concept of food and nutrition security and the justification to work collaboratively across Ministries and political parties remained robust. A multi-sectoral National Steering Committee was established to oversee and lead the three significant outputs that informed the drafting of the Policy. These were: participatory consultations at Provincial and District levels, national-level sector technical consultations with multiple stakeholders and a background paper with a multi-sectoral situational analysis. Investment in substantive advocacy with the highest level of authorities in each of the Ministries has also been a priority. The Policy will shortly be presented to Cabinet.

Now, I would like to say a few words on the content of the Policy:

The Policy has a clearly defined rationale, goal, policy framework and underpinning principles. It explicitly refers to the existing legal and national commitments that Zimbabwe has committed to and is presented as a practical way forward for achieving these. There are seven clearly defined Commitments in **Policy Analysis and Advice, Food Security, Social Assistance/Social Transfers, Food Safety and Standards, Nutrition security and a Food and Nutrition Security Information System**. For each of these seven Commitments, a number of strategic objectives have been defined, Furthermore, a lead Ministry and supporting Ministries accountable for implementing the relevant Commitment is also stated. Finally, the Policy defines institutional structures and accountabilities for implementing and monitoring the Policy.

The development of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy marks a very important milestone and foundation for ensuring that Zimbabwe strengths and scales up its multi-sectoral efforts for food and nutrition security. This policy work however has not been conducted in isolation of other equally important work that has simultaneously focused on strengthening multi-sectoral structures and mechanisms to support its implementation. **First**, significant efforts have been made to strengthen the capacity of the Food and Nutrition Council's convening and leadership role as a multi-sectoral platform. This has included the development of a FNC strategy which is being used to secure resources against a strategic plan, build accountability and facilitate UN coherence around a common platform. **Second**, emphasis has been placed on ensuring there is a more coherent food and nutrition security information system that engages multiple sectors, Ministries and agencies in a transparent and credible manner. Assessment and analysis is one of the most important entry points for ensuring a multi-sectoral approach and for developing a shared understanding of the multiple causes and required strategies. **Third**, the Food and Nutrition Council recognizes that these multi-sectoral platforms must be relevant at sub-national levels and investment in building strong capacities at Provincial, District and sub-District levels must be a priority. **Fourth**, the role of the multi-sectoral platforms, such as the Food and Nutrition Council must ensure that there is both collective accountability as well as individual accountabilities of the different Ministries and

sectors. Furthermore, a multi-sectoral platform such as the FNC, is obliged and has an important role to ensure there are systems, mechanisms and guidance, in place that allow important partners such as the different UN agencies and NGOs to work coherently towards a common goal of food and nutrition security.

In conclusion: From our experience in Zimbabwe, we would like to share two positive lessons learned from the policy development process. These are: the importance of investing and engaging in sectors beyond health to ensure that a multi-sectoral approach ensued and the importance of consultation, which the process itself can build important relationships around nutrition.

Over the past year, Zimbabwe has already made substantive progress in building a strong foundation for driving a multi-sectoral approach to food and nutrition security. It is truly exciting to be a part of this global effort to ensure that food and nutrition security is increasingly recognized as a critical priority.