1. Introduction

Regional integration in SADC has not paid much attention to enhancing productivity for the smallholder agricultural sector and the absence of a coherent governance regime leaves the sector vulnerable. The discourse and practice of governance in the region has largely embraced concepts of constitutionalism, participation, the rule of law, accountability, transparency and equity. While this emphasis suggests uniformity of governance approaches, in reality the region remains diverse with varying extents of governance practices. As a result, the governance measures in the smallholder sector across the region remain fragmented and patchy.

In this paper ‘smallholder governance regime’ refers to the instruments, institutions, structures, processes and practices that are key for the sustenance of smallholder agriculture and for the achievement of food security in the Southern Africa region. Clearly articulated top-down and bottom-up processes and systems are essential for the development of regulatory frameworks that facilitate competitive smallholder agricultural production. Past failures of agricultural development in the region have been blamed on one way top-down policy making and implementation processes characterized with poor consultation of smallholder farmers (Eliasi, Aubin & Sunga 2009). Little has changed, there is still no coherent regional smallholder grouping to provide inputs to regional policy making processes and constitution of relevant institutions for implementing smallholder agricultural initiatives with a regional scope. Smallholder farmers are thus poorly equipped to access international markets and participate in freely moving their produce. An effective smallholder governance regime has, of necessity, to result from effective consultation of smallholder farmers and consist of instruments, institutions and the requisite infrastructure to link farmers and markets at a regional level.

One way would be to provide legal instruments for the joint governance of natural resources essential for enhancing smallholder agricultural productivity; the establishment of actual national and cross border institutional frameworks for joint and coordinated management of smallholder agriculture units and the requisite logistics for movement of goods, that is, for both inputs and harvests. Joint governance at a regional level is not only a matter of national level
cooperation but recognition that the entire region is connected through shared resources, especially water and wetlands, which are central to agricultural production. Two governance levels, with implications for smallholder production, are envisaged in this regard. They include instruments, institutions and processes to manage natural resources along national boundaries and linked to neighbouring countries. Further, they are normative in nature, structuring interactions among the countries at a regional level but also how at a national level the relations between national institutions and smallholder farmers are managed. Because of the history of a lack of consultation with smallholder farmers in policy making and implementation processes, the regional instruments are products of national level negotiations.

Box 1 Cases of joint regional governance instruments for transboundary resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protocol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SADC Treaty</strong> – sustainable utilization of natural resources and protection of the environment are central to the objectives of the SADC as spelt out in its treaty (see NFDS Africa 2006). Despite the centrality of smallholder agriculture (see section 7 below), there has not been targeted efforts for a regional protocol on this area. Sets of rules and strategies, however, regulate and facilitate the movement of smallholder farmers and their produce (for example the movement of livestock and agricultural produce across national boundaries) It, thus, cannot be conclusively said that the region is putting in place binding legal instruments for the governance of smallholder agriculture. That vision appears to be lacking. However, a number of relevant areas for smallholder agriculture include the legal instruments governing the utilization of natural resources:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SADC Protocol on Shared Water Courses</strong> – while this was one of the first protocols signed within the SADC, a number of governance challenges that are directly related to smallholder agriculture have emerged or since been observed. These mainly relate to the disjuncture between regional governance stipulations and national governance realities such as decentralization of responsibilities and not authority as many councils are unable to raise funds, lack of participation by local citizens and emergent of conflicts between rural water users and new institutions and major water users.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Protocol on Wildlife and Law Enforcement</strong> – Widely seen as the basis for trans-boundary natural resources management, the protocol has thus far failed to promote the adoption of harmonized policies and approaches to wildlife management in particular where community-based approaches are concerned. Additionally, prominent zones for transboundary natural resources management such as the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area are silent on how smallholder agriculture can facilitate transboundary livelihood strategies (Whande 2007).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Protocol on Fisheries</strong> – fisheries are an important component of livelihoods and income generation for many smallholder farmers. In some contexts, such as on Lake Kariba between Zambia and Zimbabwe, access to the best markets for fisheries is by default rather than provision in legal instruments and facilitation by institutions (Malasha 2005).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Protocol on Forestry</strong> – Community-Based Forestry initiatives are now widely implemented in the region and recognized as a means to support the livelihoods of smallholder farmers while also contributing to the integrity of forestry resources.</td>
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</table>

In the development of legal instruments to govern and manage smallholder productivity, different approaches can be used and these are largely dictated by the situation. Protocols (as is the case with other natural resources discussed in box 1. above), Memorandums of Understanding, Articles of Association and Constitutions are all approaches that can be used.
The important thing is that they are agreements that spell out the objectives, principles, institutions and mechanisms for guiding the concerned parties’ collaboration and jointly managing and developing the operations of an agricultural productive system. Another approach is to have in place the relevant and effective institutional arrangements to implement smallholder agricultural programmes. The SADC has constituted regional level institutions for this purpose, linked to national levels through a variety of institutions such as national committees (see Box 2 below). The regional institutions, however, appear disconnected from the local level where smallholder farmers operate, raising questions about the effectiveness of institutions that link the smallholder production conditions to the regional policy making environment.

**Box 2 Current governance arrangements in SADC**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>To understand the governance arrangements in SADC, an overview of the institutions in place is necessary. SADC policies and programmes are implemented according to four clusters:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- trade, industry, finance and investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <strong>food, agriculture and natural resources</strong>,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- infrastructure and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- social and human development and special projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The role of national committees, established to implement and monitor programmes and ensure broader consultation is unclear in the smallholder sector, suggesting a disconnect in the governance arrangements at regional and national levels. The coordination between national activities and regional clusters is further constrained by the fact that the clusters were collapsed from 21 focus areas. The rationalization of the 2 focus areas into 4 clusters, meant to improve delivery in the respective areas, has not been evident at national levels where competing mandates among different government departments often mean that the issue of smallholder agricultural development is fragmented. While the effectiveness of national committees is not clear, it should be noted that these arrangements provide the basis upon which governance of smallholder agriculture under the food, agriculture and natural resources cluster can be pursued.

Infrastructure in the region is currently being upgraded to ease the flow of goods and services. The upgrade of infrastructure is often based on consolidating sectors such as mining and tourism. Smallholder producers ought to organize for special concessions that widen their profit margins and improve access to essential resources for agricultural development such as water and energy. One way would be to mobilise that the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Plan takes into account the missing infrastructure requirements that benefit smallholder producers. Many of the smallholder producers are located far from major transport routes and this doesn’t augur well with regard to income generation.

**Approach to the study**

This desktop assessment follows on the ECA’s (2006) observation that the interface between governance and human development determines the organization and distribution of production inputs. Not only is governance related to distribution of production inputs, it is crucial to conditions under which populations are energized to achieve their productive potentials. An assessment of smallholder producers in southern Africa reveals key differences in
their governance regimes. They all have implications on how productive inputs are accessed and also the conditions under which individual smallholder farmers can meet their food needs.

This study raises critical questions: What is the ability of institutions and structures to carry out processes and practices for development that have implications for smallholder agriculture and food security? How does the current smallholder governance regime impact on food security in terms of the provision of production inputs to farmers distributed across predominantly rural areas with poor infrastructure? Secondly, how can the governance regime be designed to allow small holder agriculture and food security through the creation of conditions under which small scale farmers can participate as equal partners and make inputs that meet their own requirements? What sort of fora would create such opportunities?

It is important to note that southern Africa is not a homogenous grouping when it comes to governance conditions. This has implications for the exercise of smallholder and food security governance both in terms of provision of production inputs and creating conditions under which citizens can meet their food security requirements. The role of the regional grouping in promoting conducive conditions for agricultural production is similarly impacted on by these differences in capacity and resource conditions in the member states. Without a compliance mechanism and sanctions at the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) level for not following stipulated guidelines and conditions, any governance practices will not be very fruitful.

This discussion paper explores the link between small holder agriculture governance and food security in southern Africa. Firstly, it has outlined the possible governance typologies in the Southern Africa region. This is followed by a discussion of the importance of smallholder agriculture in food security in general and more specifically in southern Africa. Policy commitments and prospects for moving from commitments to implementation in the SADC region, and their relation to small scale agriculture and food security are explored in the context of governance typologies and the importance of small holder agriculture. A secondary objective of the paper is to map the food security and livelihood initiatives that different stakeholders – but particularly SADC - in Southern Africa are implementing to enhance small holder farming, food security and governance in the region. These are discussed concurrently under the section from commitments to implementation.

1.2 Political Governance Typologies in southern Africa and Implications for Small Holder Farming and Food Security

Smallholder agricultural development and food security require a governance regime that will be respected by all parties and that puts the interests and experiences of the most affected at the fore. In developmental terms, distinct governance institutions in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa have been found to be crucial for enhancing states’ performance in development processes (Alence 2004). The prolonged urban bias in development has been detrimental for the upliftment of rural food producers. While important, the overemphasis on the inputs with little attention being paid to the instruments, institutions and processes in the agricultural
process has done little to change the relations between government and smallholder farmers. The exclusion of the smallholder producers’ voice in the design of all these intervention efforts is partly to blame for the focus on one end of the process. This failure by technocrats to look into the wealth that is in the poor communities has led to a vicious cycle that starts with farming inputs and ends with farming inputs. The many assumptions about what poor farmers need have thus done more harm than good. However, a "new" political economy approach evaluates the role and interaction between various interest groups in society, and the state or government is considered a special interest group in its own right. As a result, there is no supposition that government necessarily always acts in the interest of the majority of its citizens. Different governance regimes currently characterize the SADC region and we evaluate them here in relation to the interests of the citizens.

The SADC states have different governance paradigms and their ability to support food security is impacted on by social and political stability. In the late 1980s and into the 1990s, small holder farmers in Zimbabwe accounted for more than 60% of the maize produced (Rohrbach 1989). While food imports between 1990 and 1999 progressively decreased, occasional lack of food has been blamed on a lack of vision and strict adherence to policies resulting in the export of food only to re-import in times of natural disasters (ZERO and Moyo undated). Though subsistence farming is a cultural practice in the country, many farmers were selling their produce to the Grain Marketing Board, which held strategic reserves for ensuring food availability during droughts. However, these support systems worked even though the beneficiaries did not have a voice in the design of the systems support. Unfortunately, complex situations such as the multiple layered crises in Zimbabwe due to its fast track land reform has led to a decline in agricultural production in some crops for instance tea and sugar cane but has also led to the boost in production of crops such as maize and cotton (Moyo 2009). The increase in production does not necessarily imply food security for the majority of the citizens as inputs and technical support was provided on partisan basis. Such ruptures to the production process are all too common in Africa. For instance, the 27 year civil conflict in Angola and the 12 year civil conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, led to the collapse of smallholder farming as most farmers fled their homes due to the intensification of the war, leading to a rise in the number of the food insecure (Lambrechts and Barry 2003). Angola and Zimbabwe serve as evidence of how smallholder governance regimes can collapse and affect food reserves of the nation.

Three political governance regimes can be identified in southern Africa: democratic, undemocratic systems and pseudo-democracies. Their impact on smallholder agriculture is linked to the strength of their institutions and structures and integrity of the processes and practices related to agriculture but somehow they all use the same top-down approach in managing small holder agriculture. Weak institutional capacity contributes to a lot of the

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1 For instance, the Luapula province officials in Zambia ordered donkey for the local community so they could use in ploughing but the community ignored the donkeys and no one touched them. When asked the community replied that they never said they wanted donkeys for ploughing and they should have been asked first. Donkeys are a sign of extreme poverty and there is stigma associated with owning and using them.
problems. Policy differences emanate resulting in policy inaction and arbitrary policy imposition by centralised institutions.

**Case of Zimbabwe**

The governance of smallholder agriculture in Zimbabwe has been somewhat overshadowed by the recent Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) since the year 2000. The performance of land reforms in the country, according to Marongwe ( ), have to be assessed on the basis that only one political party, ZANU PF, has shaped and carried out the initiatives over the last 30 years. Since 1980, the main focus has been to increase smallholder access to land and incomes but the land reform programme was pursued under the willing-seller willing-buyer basis. Changes to the land reform approach in 1997 heralded the radicalization of the approach, with accelerated land allocation. Smallholder productivity on newly settled lands has been difficult to assess, as Zikhali (2010) notes FTLRP receive preferential access to fertilizers. In terms of legal instruments, Zikhali notes, despite perceived tenure insecurities under FTLRP, that asset accumulation is a visible benefit.

Despite the prominence of the land reform approach in Zimbabwe over the last 11 years, the governance systems continue to be centralized, lack transparency and are characterized by low consultation (Matondi 2010). Low consultation has implications for crafting of appropriate policies to support sustainable smallholder agriculture. Smallholder governance might also be constrained by local institutional overlaps and competition. Matondi (2010) notes the multiplication of institutions that mediate access to and administration of land and other natural resources on newly resettled lands. He proceeds pointing out that while the land reform initiative was approached from the basis of social justice, no requisite institutional reforms have accompanied land reform to support the principle of social justice. This has implications for smallholder governance as farmers continue to operate under uncertain conditions.

The issues observed in Zimbabwe should not only be viewed in terms of inadequate smallholder governance regimes but the perpetuation of an undemocratic system. The role of traditional leaders as custodians of environmental knowledge and health has been undermined through what Matondi sees as adhoc committees that are mixing old and new institutions in dealing with land matters. While traditional leadership has historically been a matter of passing the leadership to clearly defined lineage, within resettlement areas the Minister responsible local government has to make the declaration, leaving room for partisan appointments. Similarly, land reform beneficiaries are at the discretion of their local leaders, with implications for governance of smallholder agriculture.

While *democratic regimes* have open political, economic and social spaces, the history of southern Africa and the unfinished land reform render their work difficult, threatening food security. The right to participate in public life is protected in the constitution. Functional institutions are designed in a clear non politicized environment and can be scrutinized by the public. South Africa provides the best example for this, yet it hardly has any small scale agriculture as its food security is heavily reliant on commercial agriculture.

**South Africa as a case for a democratic regime**

The extensive commercialization of agriculture in South Africa has resulted in the country being a net exporter of agricultural products. This is despite the fact that an estimated 14 million households are vulnerable to food insecurity. Like Zimbabwe and Namibia, South Africa is confronted with a huge challenge in achieving the objectives of land reform to improve access to productive land and the means for income generation. To date, however, the land reform process has been slow, with analysts pointing out the constraints of the willing seller willing buyer policy approach as key to this. The net export of agricultural products from South Africa should not, as a result, be seen as an indicator for the good fortunes of smallholder governance. Unlike land reform in
Finally, countries with so called democratic institutions, vibrant civil society and a questionable political space but however governance is highly centralized and controlled by a small minority preside over what can be termed pseudo-democracies. Policies are difficult to really examine as they are mainly structural; emanating from the governing perception of what the public problem, is.

**Pseudo-democracy – the case of Malawi**

This case draws largely from a country profile paper by USAID (2010). For much of the post-colonial phase under an undemocratic regime, Malawi smallholder agriculture governance restricted farmers to producing for local consumption (USAID 2010). While policy changes in the early 1990s meant smallholder farmers could grow export crops, access to land remained a key limiting factor. Adequate cultivable land has been a constraining factor for smallholder farmers, with USAID noting that more than 55% of smallholder farmers had access to cultivable hectare. Access to adequate land for cultivation has been subject of a Presidential Commission on Land Reform. A Community-Based Rural Land Development of 2004 has been heavily reliant on donor funds to increase acreage for land-short families through market mechanisms. Essentially this is a willing-seller willing-buyer scheme where smallholder farmers purchase land under state authority and administration. The applicability of this is questionable, given that only 1% of the population secures land rights through purchase (USAID 2010). The majority secure land rights through inheritance and marriage. The lack of security of tenure under customary land means the meager 1% rights obtained through purchase potentially contributes little to families and people with secure land rights. USAID notes insecure land rights are threatened by potential land conversion to public or private categories, with implications for smallholder governance. Such uncertainties are a key feature of smallholder governance in Malawi, the other being the registration of land for which the process is cumbersome and lack of institutional support and funding are key constraints. A key uncertainty in Malawi is the lack of a land law to enable the implementation of land reform strategies. This leaves a vacuum in the legal instruments to realize rights for smallholder farmers.

As well as land shortage and access issues, smallholder production of maize has been the subject of subsidies through the provision of fertilizers. This is in line with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy which aims to increase smallholder productivity under a 5 year period. The four pillar agricultural development strategy aims to bolster both the productivity of food crops and promotion of cash crops such as tobacco. Much of the writings on the agricultural revolution in Malawi points to the increased production under this scheme but key questions remain as to whether this is adequate to deal with the land shortage.
SADC is making arrangements to harmonise the agricultural policy environment at regional and national levels. The Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) aims to support regional integration as well as contribute to attaining the SADC Customs Union and Common Market (SADC 2010). It seeks to promote actions at regional and national levels in the agricultural sector. The RAP is premised on 3 key issues: production; productivity and competitiveness, financing and investments, and trade and markets. An additional 3 cross-cutting issues have been identified: social factors, environmental/ecological factors and institutional factors. While this appears to be the basis for future agricultural policies in the region, other approaches are also in place.

### Regional agricultural institutions, policies and strategies

| - Regional Agricultural Policy – governance aspects considered under institutional factors |
| - Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan aims to ensure food availability and access, strengthen institutional framework and capacity building and ensure equitable and sustainable use of the natural resources |
| - SADC Common Agenda |
| - SADC FANR – responsible for the portfolio of food, agriculture and natural resources, coordinates regional policy responses. |

## 2. The importance of smallholder governance in ensuring food security

The number of hungry people worldwide is increasing. After dropping for much of the last decade, the ranks of the hungry rose again in 2009. Hunger and malnutrition are often explained in terms of inadequate food production, with most recommendations emphasizing the need to increase production by smallholder farmers. Food security, as a result, is as much a function of effective and efficient distribution of food as it is of ensuring smallholder farmers produce enough for their consumption. This is the context from which an assessment of the importance of smallholder agriculture in ensuring food security should be approached, that global food production has increased yet the numbers of the hungry have also increased.

An assessment of the composition of the poor and hungry indicates that they are mainly smallholder farmers, including livestock keepers, crop farmers and those dependent on natural resources such as forests and fisheries for their livelihoods. Roughly half of the 1 billion hungry in 2009 were smallholder farmers, 22% are rural landless, 20% are the urban poor, and 8% are populations that depend mainly on natural resources, such as fishers, herders, and forest dwellers (Scherr, Wallace and Buck 2010). However questions remain on whether these groups can organize to have to express their needs in improving production so they can have secure livelihoods. These clusters imply the eventual emergence of different interest groups around agricultural production but without adequate mobilisation and support structures for these communities to make an input into the policies designed to improve their lives, chances are that they will remain locked in a dependence cycle that leaves them vulnerable to all kinds of shocks- natural and economic. The sheer numbers of households dependent on smallholder
agriculture for their livelihoods makes this an important aspect of food security in the developing world, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Asia.

Despite constituting 60-80% of farmers in SSA, until recently with the CAADP, smallholder farmers received little policy and governance support from their governments, are often constrained by events such as climate change and conflicts. Smallholder farmers face both natural and institutional constraints in achieving food self sufficiency. They depend on rain-fed agriculture, itself highly vulnerable to climate change and variability risks. Direct funding to agricultural development has dropped over the last few years, with international support geared towards privatization of agricultural development, reaching a minor 10-15% of smallholder (Pasteur 2009). While African countries committed to increasing agricultural development through increased funding to up to 10% of national budgetary allocation, there is little evidence that this is being met. To achieve food security, the entire policy and governance regime, including provision of adequate financing for agricultural development, need to be supportive of smallholder farmers who feed about 70% of the regional population, innovative in enabling climate resilient crops.

The challenges facing southern Africa in ensuring food security are many. They include, but are not limited to: insecure tenure arrangements over land for rural smallholder farmers, poorly coordinated sub-national, national and regional governance policies and institutions. Mushita and Munzara (2008) note that in addition to climatic factors, HIV/AIDS, reduced investments in agriculture, stagnant national economies and unfavourable policy environments have contributed to food insecurity. Already, food production per person remains stagnant at early 1990s levels (de Wit 2010) while, inversely, food imports are playing a bigger role in the region. Real incomes and jobs in the cities have also dwindled, raising questions on the potential of food imports, let alone purchase, as a strategy for food security. With the projected changes in climate in the region, these problems are set to worsen if responses are not clearly articulated and implemented.

2.1 Challenges and contexts of smallholder faring

Key social, environmental, economic and political changes have occurred in southern Africa over the last two decades. At the centre of small scale agriculture debate in southern Africa is the strategic relevance of rain fed agriculture in ensuring food security.

- The SSA region is expected to be one of the most impacted from climate change and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is particularly high. Predictions are that the western parts of the region will experience increased drying while the east will be subjected to flooding (Davies and Midgley 2010).

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2 2 billion small scale farmers are rural dwellers, 230 million of them are in SSA (Pasteur, 2009). The majority lives in abject poverty and is undernourished, with limited options for livelihood diversification. It is in these rural areas that the need to improve food security is most critical, which in part can be attained through improved small scale agriculture.
In the face of dwindling salaries and job opportunities in the urban areas, rural land and other natural resources continue to play a critical role in small holder capability for production.

A growing world population and increased affluence leads to demand for more and higher quality foods, and given environmental problems such as soil degradation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss and climate change, new and innovative solutions are required to improve food security.

The increased levels of urban poverty, coupled with a changing global economic system pose a challenge for understanding the long-term implications of small holder agriculture for food security.

3. Southern Africa Policy Commitments to Agriculture and Food Security

In the past food security debates focused on issues of secure land tenure for small scale farmers (ECA 2004). While this remains a critical area of research and policy dialogue, other areas of concern have emerged or appear more urgent. Increasingly, concerns include whether small holder farmers will cope with a changing climate which threatens the less suitable staple crops such as maize. It is in this background that there is renewed commitment to addressing food security in Africa, in particular through improved governance of small scale agriculture and provision of farm inputs and resilient crops to climate change.

Within SADC and for its member states, three distinct levels of policy commitments can be discerned. These are commitments to policy formulation at a continental level, regional SADC level and national levels. These are elaborated on below.

At a continental level, the African heads of State and Government, through the Maputo Declaration of 2003, committed to agricultural development on the continent. This is through increasing funding for agricultural development to 10% of national budget allocations to enable acceleration of growth to 6% per year. Despite this commitment, by the end of 2010, 22 countries had signed the CAADP Compacts, required to start programmes of work and enabling assessments of the commitments and uniform governance parameters. Of these, only one SADC member country, Tanzania, had signed the compact (Bissi 2010). Without the Compacts, it is difficult to assess whether member states are investing in food security or other areas of agriculture such as privatization. Irrespective of the slow pace of signing onto compacts and committing the stipulated 10% budget requirements, the CAADP presents an opportunity for regional countries to set targets for agricultural development. Links to governance issues have to be looked at in combination with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), whose areas of focus include inclusive governance practices.

The southern Africa heads of state and government further committed to strengthening agricultural development through the SADC’s Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (SADC-RISDP) (SADC 2003). The RISDP, however, does not necessarily link the issue of
agriculture to broader inclusive governance questions. It spells out the need to achieve food security through improved food availability, improving access to food and improved nutrition but does not directly address smallholder agricultural problems. Of particular importance in governance terms is how these programme objectives are going to be met at the lower national government levels [districts and provinces] where different governance regimes are in place and driven by varying state interests in relation to their populations. Poor policy implementation is recognized as a key challenge to supporting small scale agriculture (Chibonga 2010), and it is likely to be affected by the different smallholder governance systems in place at a national level irrespective of the goals and objectives contained in the RISDP.

While national CAADP Compact agreements have been slow in the SADC, it is important to note of efforts, largely through the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to develop regional compacts that will incorporate both SADC and the East African Community (EAC). Such an approach can contribute to the harmonization of agricultural investment plans in the region.

SADC has moved from a historical approach of apportioning responsibility for food security to individual countries to exploring options for ensuring food security through coordinated responses, in particular with the movement to clusters such as Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources. The secretariat is central to the coordination efforts first among the different units dealing in one way or the other with food security issues and among member countries. The Heads of State and Government meeting in Tanzania in 2004 committed member states to ‘promote agriculture as a pillar in national and regional development strategies and programme’ (SADC Today, 2 June 2004). Further coordination and harmonisation within SADC is being approached from an issues perspective, discussed in the table below. However, this harmonization seems to be limited at smallholder producer levels, instead emphasis is on national level committees whose relations with farming groups is not clearly articulated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SADC Land Reform Support Facility, Crop Development and Food Reserve Facility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The last ten years have highlighted the importance to tackle land reform proactively to avoid disruptive invasions as has been the case in Zimbabwe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- On the premise that land reforms can disrupt economic development and food security situation beyond national boundaries, SADC has established a Regional Land Reform Support Facility tasked with the mobilization of technical and financial resources to develop and implement pro-poor land reform policies and programmes (SADC FANR information leaflet). It is not as yet clear how this will target smallholder farmers as the structures and institutions are not yet articulated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Responsible for coordinating, monitoring and facilitation crop development, the Crop Development Unit can contribute to regional food security. A key aspect of food security is the provision of seed. With the threat of climate change, in particular disasters such as floods and droughts that hamper household and small scale farmers’ seed banks, the establishment of a regional Seed Security Network to improve access and availability of seed can provide alternative options (SADC Crop Development Unit). However, the free movement of seed with the region has been hampered by national regulations and policies. A key requirement for the successful functioning of the seed network, and its contribution to food security, is harmonization of policies and regulations yet still addressing the concerns of other countries unwilling to shift to genetically modified food crops.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SADC has prioritized the setting up of a disaster preparedness strategy based on three components. These include an early warning component, systems for monitoring vulnerabilities and the food reserve facility itself. Important as such efforts might be, a regional food reserve facility might still not ensure food security for the majority of rural dwellers due to poor infrastructure for distribution and potential pilfering of the reserves by corrupt elites. Like the other initiatives above, there is a lack of clarity how national governance dynamics will be included in the regional facility. In countries where food, particularly in times of disasters is politicized, its not clear how a regional food reserve facility will be used to reach the most vulnerable irrespective of political affiliation.

At a national level, investments in agriculture have been patchy. A 2007 survey found that 50% of the countries contributed less than 5% of their national budgets to agriculture (Mwape 2009). Very few countries, as a result, were near the funding requirement of 10%. They include Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is, of course, a surprise inclusion in this list but further interrogation of the agriculture production governance system indicates a potentially skewed input provision on a party affiliation basis (SW Radio 2010; Zimbabwe Peace Project 2006). While the country might have contributed to agricultural investment, it does not appear this was uniformly distributed.

3.1 Governance challenges and prospects for moving from policy commitment to implementation

A number of both challenges and prospects affect the movement from policy commitment to implementation. They range from the policy making approaches and regimes in place in the respective countries, political governance system in place and the ability of a state to provide resources for small scale agriculture. These points are elaborated on below.

3.1.1 Smallholder governance implications for agricultural policy making process

Policy making is here understood as the purposive course of action that an actor adopts in order to deal with specific or complex problems (Anderson 2010). The different agricultural support systems in SADC are marked by policy prescriptions that are mainly a combination of different policy and decision-making models. A weighting of the pros and cons of a decision guide how the final approach is arrived at. In the SADC, the complexity of land and governance issues were the agenda setting issues, considered together with investment demands. This has allowed SADC governments to craft policies that are meant to deal with historical, colonial and economic factors that dominate the policy and legislative making processes. Contradictory as some of the policies might be, a mixed scanning policy making approach in the SADC region has been used to create favorable policy environments that do not hurt agricultural production, encouraging large scale commercial farming particularly in Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and previously in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, this has since changed as the country embarked on policies to redress historical injustices. Not only has this impacted on large scale farming, in some cases it has negatively impacted on smallholder agriculture.
Policy-making Case Studies

3.1.2 Policy radicalization

Radical policy making emerged in Zimbabwe during the land reform 2000-2008 coupled with presidential centralism led to large transfers of land to some smallholder farmers creating an opportunity of livelihood enhancement and the goal of producing and feeding the nation. However, the envisaged smallholder productivity is yet to materialize since the land transfers were done haphazardly without any institutional support processes in place. Land reforms were also carried out without the necessary legislative instruments, which were retrospectively promulgated. Fragmentation of the larger former commercial white farms required a sophisticated system to keep productivity up. This demonstrates a clear failure to design a support system with the direct consultation of the so called land reform beneficiaries. Since war veterans were leading the land seizures, this was an opportunity that could have been used to test a people oriented agricultural support system. Zimbabwe’s situation is further aggravated by the fact that it’s the only country in the SADC region whose constitution does not guarantee the right to food (see Mushita and Munzara 2008).

3.1.3 Catching up With Global Governance Trends

Catching onto international policy trends appears to offer more benefits for developing countries that ought to subsidise their smallholder farmers in the same way the western world does. Encouraging the formation of sub sector specific interest groups too is a key trend that ought to be encouraged. Unfortunately for a region beset with land tenure problems, unequal distribution of land and generally exclusionary governance practices, the countries in the region seem to be ignoring the smallholder group as a whole. A good case is South Africa which is acquiring land within the region in Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania in order to boost its bio fuel production and food security capacity (Makura- Paradza 2010). Smallholder farmers are losing their right to land, livelihoods and food security since they are not part of the negotiating team as policies and laws are made by the ruling elite, excluding the rural dwellers (Matondi and Mutopo 2011). The governments lack effective policy paradigms that can lead to the smallholder farmers benefiting. On the positive side, a good example is in Zimbabwe in Chisumbanje, where the bio fuel company that is currently developing the area, has also invested irrigation equipment for the surrounding smallholder framers creating a win-win policy environment meant to enhance smallholder framing and improve rural livelihoods.

However, the current biofuel frenzy in Southern Africa - Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe - has seen the ceding of large tracts of land to foreign investors in a bid to secure foreign direct investment creating complex policy and legislative scenarios since benefits of such foreign land
acquisitions for local populations are questionable. This competition between biofuels and food, as an end-use of the same crop (e.g. maize, sugarcane) or as alternative land uses (e.g. oil palm versus food crops), may increase pressures over world food prices over the next few years. In Tanzania the Swedish company SEKAB has been criticized for displacing small holder farmers to the impoverished lands that have seen their livelihoods deteriorate (Sulle and Nelson 2009).

Biotechnology and food security both call for for the establishment of participatory and inclusive governance systems in SADC. The Zimbabwe government repeatedly refused agricultural seed from donors because it cited concerns about genetically modified organisms as affecting soil properties and not suitable for most communal areas. This politicisation of smallholder farming and maintaining indigenous seed bank policies, have led to the creation and maintenance of a political base as peasants are the driving wheel of most SADC voters hence the resisting of agrotechnology policies that could benefit smallholders farmers in some countries in SADC. The small holder farmers thus feel part of the process as they only participate in resisting the alteration of their agricultural inputs-seeds.

3.1.4 Private versus Public Investments in Agriculture policy-making processes

The voices of smallholder farmers compared to private commercial farmers are different owing to the differences in available resources. Governance, as a result, can be a response to external conditions or is affected by individual political players or actors. Even if well crafted policies are in place, discretionary decisions by politicians and policy makers can translate into contradictory policies. Three examples discussed below best illustrate this contention.

Over the years, resources earmarked to build infrastructure and support agricultural markets in remote areas have dwindled. Where national governments have put in place infrastructure to address food security issues, this is often affected by the governance system in place. For instance, in Malawi and Zimbabwe, the national strategic grain reserves have been mismanaged as evidenced by the food shortages in Zimbabwe in 2007 until 2008. Reports suggest this was largely as a failure of the institutions mandated with overseeing food reserves as political elites in both countries looted grain reserves to the detriment of food security for the majority (Marchione 2009).

In line with a political governance system premised on provisioning productive resources and creating conducive conditions for citizens to meet their own food security needs, public investments fall far short of private inputs. This has implications for smallholder agriculture as it is most reliant on public funding. Evidence from South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique indicates that large-scale commercial farmers have the political and financial resources to fund their own research, extension, credit and marketing activities. It is, therefore, important for the SADC region to dwell on empirical situations about the public sector agricultural institutions and their ability to generate rapid technical change for smallholder farmers.
A third key factor is when governance is not driven by national realities, and is instead responsive to external factors. For instance Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi are donor driven in terms of agriculture and that influences the crops that small holder farmers have to grow, which have to be mainly cash crops such as cotton and rice and not maize which is the national staple crops. Potential incomes from these cash crops are hampered by the reality that most rural areas are poorly serviced in terms of infrastructure, resulting in unbearable costs for reaching the markets. This leads to worsening vulnerability to hunger as farmers tend to priorities cash crops at the expense of food crops due. This is also due to grower `s contracts they enter with various nongovernmental organizations involved in small holder farming such as CARE International. An illustrative example of the implications of this are the value chains in southern Africa, discussed in the box below. Though the arena is dominated by big commercial farmers, the impact on smallholder farmers is clear as they too have shifted to grow crops prioritized by big business. This is despite the fact that they have no input into these decisions and cannot even make the point that they be prioritized as food growing communities that would have specific protective policies and support. Many smallholder farmers have been locked into dependency chains as they become producers for middle men who will find higher prices on the international markets. Though this gives them access to cash, it pushes them further into food dependency and the cycle will not stop anytime soon as long as the productive environment does not take their lifestyles and food needs into account.

Value Chain Development in Southern Africa and implications for food security

The commodity marketing chain in Southern Africa is a contested arena that has seen the interplay between economics, politics and trade policies. Since Southern African economies depend on agricultural trade in commodities they have seen the emergence of ‘political’ crops such as maize, tobacco and cotton particularly in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania. The commodity chain of these crops has largely been political and various interest group politics at play in determining the producer prices. Political governance has a strong influence on the value chain of the crops and this determines how prices are created on the national market e.g. cotton market in Zim suffers because most new farmers are concentrating on that and it fetches a low price on the market as compared to tobacco which is placed at high value because the remaining commercial farmers still dominate the value chain of the crop. For instance with regards to cotton, maize and tobacco most smallholder farmers groups eg (Zimbabwe Farmers Union) do not have a strong say in determining market prices but the commercial farmers determine the prices mostly of tobacco and the prices of maize and cotton will be so low because most commercial farmers prefer growing tobacco which fetches a higher market price. In Zimbabwe this has forced some communal farmers to move from maize farming and enter tobacco farming leading to quick depletion of national and local maize banks hence repeated hunger reports in Zimbabwe and reliance on food aid from donor organizations, as maize is the staple food, hence a threat on rural and urban livelihoods. Small holder farmers are also becoming a part of the non food crops that pay something that could lead to the dearth of food based agricultural commodities and could plunge the region in food importation in the coming years. In as much as much as policies on pricing of agricultural commodities exist on paper the policy implementation is complicated with high level political and governance issues that are difficult to discern.

The marketing chains have developed in the communal areas that are not codified some are underground e.g. beef markets in Zimbabwe during land reform, marketing of maize and farmers preferring private buyers than the government since the government offers low prices as compared to private buyers, (Scoones, Marongwe et al 2010). Cotton has led to farmers entering into out growers schemes with private companies who supply them with farming implements and transport and the smallholder farmers feel it is a better deal since they cotton is
collected from their homes and all they have to do is to work the land with all the support.

4. Challenges in SADC’s agricultural policies coordination capacity

Natural Resources in the SADC have long been the central aspect of regional dialogue. From the 1990s, regional dialogue on Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) resulted in many countries effecting governance changes aimed at devolving authority over land and natural resources to local communities (Arntzen, Setlhogile and Barnes 2007). While the initial focus of CBNRM initiatives were on wildlife resources, in recent years this has broadened, with analysts noting that the diversity of natural resources in rural areas is already subject to some form of local management and contributing to local livelihoods. Despite the potential to bring in revenues through a variety of natural resources, the regional CBNRM programmes through the SADC secretariat appear to have dropped the community focus. The governance dimension of devolving authority to local communities is also now impacted on by a wave of Transfrontier Conservation Initiatives which has seen considerable financial resources diverted from CBNRM.

Political turbulence and conflicts in the region do not leave room for coherent regional policy making as most of the productive time and resources are spent on policy actions to deal with preventive diplomacy and peace keeping initiatives. Creating conditions where agricultural policies can be harmonized at a regional level, units such as the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) need to constitute units that can deliberate on and bind member states to observe adopted agricultural policy positions. In essence, given the long periods of “relative stability”, why could Southern African governments not be more coherent from an implementation point of view? Is this something that could be explored and does this in part explain the poor policy agenda around small-scale farmers?

An unresolved historical legacy of racial inequalities continues to inform regional policy development and uncertainty in investments in agricultural development. South Africa and Namibia land reform initiatives remain unresolved while at a regional SADC level there remains no clear land reform policy. In Zimbabwe, while a chaotic land reform from 2000 purportedly led to the transfer of land to the Africans, land occupations remain an uncertain policy option that can result in food security as even small holder farmers become hesitant to invest their productive energy into land they may lose anytime. Land reform, as a result, remains one of the key policy issues related to food security that requires urgent attention if smallholder agriculture is to be consolidated. The importance of land for food security is crucial especially if viewed from the perspective that more than 60% of the population in the region resides in rural areas where their livelihoods are “attained through direct production from the land” (ZERO Regional Environment Organisation and Moyo, S. undated).
The marginalization of predominantly smallholder farmers to less than conducive agricultural land, as a result, remains a key issue on the political agenda of these states which is touched upon during election campaign times. Hence keeping the situation as it is serves the political elites’ intentions. Important questions of the daily realities of smallholders farmers, commodity chain development and livelihoods are not really put on the agenda setting process killing the creation of sound effective governance regimes in the region.

Policies relating to climate change and economic and political governance have not been effected by the SADC countries even though specialist units such as SADC Water, FANR and the SADC Parliamentary Forum have started incorporating climate change issues in their programmes of work. Lack of a coordinated or harmonized approach continues to replicate the “silo” syndrome of initiatives being approached from a sectoral perspective yet smallholders are not considered a ‘silo’ on the same issue. Recurrent droughts and floods have led to most smallholder farmers’ agricultural activities being affected as they rely on rain fed agriculture, and governments have not taken these physical threats as an important reason to formulating new policies and creating a new agenda setting paradigm to deal with these global changes.

5. Strategies and Innovations to reduce food insecurity in Southern Africa

The SADC policy commitments stand a chance to improve smallholder agriculture at national and regional levels. However, a key aspect currently not addressed is the governance modalities needed for this endeavour. Additionally, SADC does not seem to have the requisite sanctions in place to enforce non-compliance with guidelines and standards for most of its policies.

The embracing of concepts of governance is a commendable, but this has to be taken further if these concepts are to have any meaningful impact on the involvement of smallholder farmers in policy making and implementation. The concepts of consultation, participation, accountability and transparency have to be translated into practical strategies at national and regional policy making and implementation approaches.

A number of opportunities are available to take the regional agenda on the governance of smallholder agriculture. These include the fact that the region is currently developing a Regional Agricultural Policy. Given the constraints faced by smallholder farmers in terms of accessing and influencing policy platforms, consultation and participation of smallholder farmers in the articulation of agricultural policy development can be one area to be strengthened in the RAP.

Land is a key resource when it comes to governance of smallholder agriculture. Access to and use of productive land needs to be clearly articulated in any policy development to address smallholder governance.

Policies can often be ignored by corrupt and opportunistic officials and even countries. At a regional level, policies should not only be a matter of stipulation but clear sanctions for those who do not adhere to the guidelines should be part of the consolidation of regional policies.
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