



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

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## Building more sustainable and resilient food system in the Lusaka city region

### Policy brief







*The Food for the Cities project in Lusaka aimed at identifying ways of making the food system of Lusaka more resilient and more sustainable by placing people at the center of the heart of this transformation. It was implemented by FAO and the University of Zambia in close consultation with the Lusaka City Council. This policy brief presents some proposals to address challenges the Lusaka city region food system (CRFS) is facing. It is the result of a two-pronged approach: 1) **a food system assessment** to better understand the strengths and challenges faced by the CRFS; and 2) **a multi-stakeholder dialogue** to discuss the assessment and build up strategies.*



## The Lusaka City Region Food System

In 2010, 1.7 million people in 2010 lived in the District of Lusaka. This number was estimated at 2.7 million in 2017, and is projected to double by 2035 to 5.4 million [CSO, 2013]. This extremely rapid population growth challenges the sustainability of the current Lusaka food system in many ways.



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Based on the origin and flows of the food commodities that represent the typical food basket of the city region dwellers, Lusaka food system stakeholders estimated that today **60% of the food** consumed in Lusaka is produced by 8 districts belonging to 2 provinces [Lusaka and Central Provinces]: Lusaka, Mumbwa, Chibombo, Chisamba, Shibuyunji, Chongwe, Kafue, and Chilanga. In other words, food demand outstrips food production and supply from within the city region. At the same time, the rural bias by the Government and other key stakeholders, in addressing food systems challenges, has led to clear food and nutrition policy and food governance gaps in the Cities and Towns of Zambia.

With this context in mind, the Lusaka CRFS stakeholders raised the following questions: with this population growth prospects, would it still be possible to increase an already insufficient local production to meet the food demand at affordable costs for all? How? What would be the consequences for the sustainability and resilience of the Lusaka food system?



## Lusaka City Region Food System

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In addition, the Lusaka CRFS assessment shows that most farmers [95%] in the Lusaka CRFS classified their type of production as low input small scale, in line with the 2013 CSO report. **Small scale farmers are therefore key for ensuring food security in the CRFS** – and more generally in Zambia – but their farming inputs remain basic and their production highly vulnerable to climate shocks. Efforts towards sustainable food production are not widespread and the CRFS is far from achieving a sustainable food production system, as conservation or organic farming tend to be low [less than 30%], confirming national studies showing low rate of adoption. Most farmers lack supplicated tools and skills to adapt their farming practices to changing environment and demands on food quality by rising middle income consumers.

Within 3 thematic areas – agricultural production, food processing and distribution, food security and nutrition – 7 main challenges have been identified by local stakeholders as priorities to make the Lusaka CRFS more sustainable. They need to be addressed concomitantly to actually improve the resilience and the sustainability of the food system. Under the responsibility of different actors, they require coordinated actions.



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## Supporting food production

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The Lusaka CRFS area covers 4.3 million hectares from both the Lusaka and Central Provinces. However, land use changes due to population growth, infrastructure needs and development, industrial and service expansion, lead to **agricultural land fragmentation and reduction**. This challenge goes beyond the agricultural or food sector. Policy integration among ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Local Government and Housing, and Lands and market access and marketing information are equally important issues to consider in order to improve City Region Food Systems for Lusaka.

## Key priority actions:

### 1. Securing land tenure as a response to competition for land

#### ***Rationale for intervention:***

CRFS stakeholders point out the insecurity of land tenure under the traditional system as the priority to address, since most farmers in the CRFS are small-scale holders. In the past, land acquired under customary or traditional land tenure system in Zambia, i.e. through traditional leaders (chiefs and headmen), had no provision to get legal title or ownership [Title Deed] for it. However, this has changed as any piece of land acquired through chiefs or headmen or other people owning traditional land, can now be converted to statutory tenure. But the process is lengthy and bureaucratic, and the system is centralized. Therefore, most customary land owners, especially smallholders, find it very challenging to obtain title deeds for their land – as the process is lengthy and bureaucratic, and the system centralized – resulting in insecurity of tenure. The fact that the country's larger portion of land is under customary tenure, exacerbates the problem of land insecurity.

#### ***Strategies:***

- i. Ensure finalization of the 2017 Draft Land Policy:
  - Follow-up on the progress and status of finalization and approval of the Land Policy
  - Conduct consultative meetings on finalization and approval of the Land Policy (in order to address any outstanding issues)
  - Conduct validation meeting of the Draft Land Policy
  - Launch the New and approved Land Policy
- ii. Encourage the adoption of the Traditional Land Holding Certificates under the customary land tenure system:
  - Undertake awareness campaigns for adoption of Traditional Land Holding Certificates under customary land tenure system

*Lead actor:* Ministry of Lands and Natural resources

*Actors to be involved:* Zambia Land Alliance (ZLA); Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU); National Union of Small-scale Farmers Association of Zambia (NUSFAZ); Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs; MLG; Local Councils

### 2. Building storage and processing capacity of horticultural products for small scale farmers

#### ***Rationale for intervention:***

Securing land tenure will only limit land use change and improve the sustainability of the CRFS level of production, if farmers are able to raise their income level. According to the CRFS stakeholders, this means diversifying their agricultural production. The CRFS assessment shows that the potential for further diversification is high: today, farm land is mostly dedicated to field crops,

while in areas where diversification exists, less **than 9% of the land** is dedicated to production of **fruits and vegetables, poultry, dairy, beef and piggery** production.

**Horticultural production** is a critical source of diversification with the triple benefit of increasing **value** of production, **reducing vulnerability** to shocks, and **improving nutrition** when accessible to consumers. It offers a great potential for the Lusaka CRFS since fresh produce (vegetables) is mostly sourced from within the city region – Chibombo, Chisamba and Chongwe as key sources of fresh produce – and widely consumed by households.

However, this also implies appropriate facilities, such as machinery and equipment, **proper storage and processing** of most horticultural products, including transportation means. The most affected category of processors and transporters by this challenge are the small and medium-scale entrepreneurs (SMEs). This challenge consequently leads to most horticultural products (fruits and vegetables) going to waste, especially during the seasons of plenty.

### **Strategies:**

- i. Revision of relevant legislation and inclusion of specification of actual facilities needed for transportation and storage of specific horticultural produce, especially Review and revise the Food and Drugs Act-Cap 303, of the laws of Zambia
  - undertake review and consultative meetings
  - draft the reviewed and revised final Act for enactment by Parliament
  - Publish and disseminate the revised Food and Drugs Act-Cap 303: conduct sensitization and awareness campaigns
- ii. Ensure and enhance reinforcement of existing but revised legislation (i.e. the “new version” Food and Drugs Act [Cap 303]): Build the capacity of Regulatory Bodies/Organizations (e.g. Local authorities/Councils, Ministry of Health)
  - provide appropriate and adequate transport and equipment (20 motor vehicles)
  - conduct In-Service Training Workshops for staff (i.e. manpower capacity-building)
  - conduct joint surveillance

*Lead actors:* Local Councils (Head-Public Health Dept.)

*Actors to be involved:* MoA- Department of Agriculture; MoH; UNZA- Dept. of Food Science; Rural Women's Assembly of Zambia (RWAZ); Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

## **Food supply, processing and distribution**

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Addressing the food production challenges previously stressed would solely be inclusive of small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs if market opportunities could be seized. There is no doubt that a strong potential exists since the **CRFS produces solely 60% of the local demand** and this demand is rapidly increasing pulled by population growth and a growing middle class. However, the operation of, and participation in, food systems has an impact on poverty in three ways: they

influence income available to agricultural producers, food costs for urban consumers and finally income opportunities for traders and enable access to nutritious foods. A right balance must be struck between the different players which is not the case today.

The Lusaka CRFS stakeholders have identified 3 main challenges related to food supply and distribution to be addressed as a matter of priority to facilitate access to markets to small-scale farmers and businesses: expanding market information systems, regulating middleman's activities, improving hygiene and food safety.

## Key priority actions:

### 1. Improving market information systems

#### ***Rationale for interventions:***

The CFRS stakeholders highlighted that the most important challenge is accessing market information for or by food traders (both sellers and buyers), especially rural traders. The lack or inadequate facilities for communicating market information and/or facilitating communication of market information, e.g. poor or no telephone, radio, television, electricity, road network, internet services and facilities etc. is the main hurdle. Therefore, information such as food prices, and high food demand and availability areas, needs to be made accessible.

#### ***Strategy:***

- i. Carry out various activities to raise awareness on existing and new market information systems, and enhance dissemination of market information, through:
  - TV Documentaries & Radio shows
  - Discussion Fora/ symposiums
  - Social media posts & SMS campaign
  - Market analyses and projections

*Lead actor:* MoA- Dept. of Agribusiness and Marketing

*Actors to be involved:* ZNFU; NUSFAZ; MCTI; MFL; Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS); MoA- National Agriculture Information Services (NAIS)

### 2. Regulating the role of middlemen at the markets

#### ***Rationale for interventions:***

Middlemen ["food brokers / market controllers"] in most markets, particularly in Lusaka City and in most busy markets, e.g. Soweto Market, often seen to be a





hindrance to smooth trading; and particularity so, on the part of the food sellers (mostly to small-scale rural farmers who bring their agricultural products to sell at large city markets). Farmers cannot sell their merchandise on their own at such markets, as they do not own stands and do not understand the market dynamics (do not have the right network, do not know who is responsible of what, etc.). In this way, the middlemen often benefit or are believed to benefit more than the food owners, while they could offer appreciated market and trading services through a well-formalized markets, including wholesale market.

**Strategy:**

- i. Ensure and enhance transparency, fair trade practices and accountability in market place operations (i.e. to enhance the enforcement of the Markets and Bus Stations Act of 2007).
  - “Establish [speedily] autonomous Management Boards to run the markets (as guided under the Markets and Bus Stations Act of 2007)”
  - “Enact appropriate by-laws to support and enhance the operations and/or functioning of Market Management Boards”

*Lead actor:* City Council

*Actors to be involved:* ZNFU, Zambia Police Service, Marketers association, Local Councils and MLGH, CCPC, MoJ, MCTI



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### 3. Improving sanitation and hygiene, in market places

**Rationale for interventions:**

Sanitation and hygiene facilities and services are poor or not even available in many trading places which remain an informal set-up. In addition there is no strict measure put in place to ensure safety and quality of the food that enters the market. This results in trading in unwholesome foods and the trading areas being health hazards to both sellers and buyers: disease outbreaks, e.g. cholera, are not uncommon in such market places, especially in high-density trading areas.

**Strategy:**

- i. Awareness raising on the importance of hygiene, sanitation and food safety: Carry out various activities to raise awareness on importance of hygiene, sanitation and food safety, and enforcement of sanitation laws, such as through:
  - Announcement in the markets targeting consumers, sellers, etc.
  - TV documentaries & Adverts
  - holding stakeholder discussion fora or platforms
  - holding cartoon and jingle performances,



- training of traders on sanitation, hygiene and food safety
- ii. Enhanced supervision of market sanitation service provision by the local authorities.
  - Put up adequate and appropriate water and sanitation facilities [e.g. Water taps, Toilets, Rubbish/Garbage bins, etc.] in market places.
  - Acquire appropriate and adequate garbage disposal equipment and machinery [e.g. motor vehicles and waste bins]
  - dispose market garbage in proper and safe places and facilities [e.g. waste bins]
  - regular supervision of garbage disposal and cleanliness at market places
- iii. Enforcement of sanitation laws [e.g. Public Health Act]
  - speedy prosecution and punishment of offenders, e.g. through fast-track courts
  - Rewarding good hygiene practices [e.g. tax breaks]

*Lead actors:* Local Councils [Head-Public Health Dept.]

*Actors to be involved:* MoH, MoA, Marketeers' Associations, Local Councils, ZANIS, MoJ

## Food security and nutrition

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Lusaka's citizens is generally considered to be food secure. However, some **seasonal food insecurity** is recorded, with the period of October to February being the most difficult – the hunger months – when the supply is low and prices high. However, this does not hide **nutrition challenges**. Low income groups face increased challenges in accessing adequate and nutritious food, with tremendous food safety concerns. The CRFS assessment, in line with past studies, highlight the **limited access** of poor households **to a diversified and nutritious food**. Buying vegetables and fruits or processed food is more difficult for low-income households, who source their food from mostly informal markets where prices can be negotiated, but where food safety is a challenge. At the same time, there is an increasing rate of fast food consumption in the city, especially among higher income level households, and obesity and over-weight is clearly on the rise.

### Key priority actions:

#### 1. Improving nutrition education and awareness, especially in urban areas

##### ***Rationale for interventions:***

There are increasing cases of malnutrition in the Lusaka metropolitan areas, not only among children but also among adults. The CRFS assessment shows a wide-ranging level of ignorance about **inadequate diets** (diets lacking essential food elements) and the impacts of this on human well-being was observed among research participants from all socio-economic groups. This signals the need for **sustained public campaigns** on the need to drift towards sustainable diets in the City. In addition, the National Food and Nutrition Consumption Act 1967, and the National Food and Nutrition strategic plan 2017-2021, do not consider any dietary guidelines which could become the basis for improved nutrition.



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### **Strategy:**

- i. Formulation of National Food-based Dietary Guidelines (NFB DGs)
  - Develop the NFB DGs
  - Print and disseminate the guidelines
  - Build the capacity of community service-providers and food retailers (in nutrition guidelines)
  - Lobby for inclusion of the First 1000 Most Critical Days child feeding plan/ program in the Cities
  - Support the fortification of food with essential nutrients to prevent micronutrient deficiencies
- ii. Review and strengthen nutrition in Primary school curriculum to include additional topics in nutrition education
- iii. Nutrition awareness creation
  - Develop Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on nutrition (for distribution to the public)
  - Conduct Nutrition awareness
  - Develop and conduct or present TV and Radio programmes and shows on nutrition

*Lead actors:* National Food and Nutrition Commission

*Actors to be involved:* Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Hivos, Oxfam, CSO-Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM), Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock (MFL), Nutrition-related Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Curriculum Development Centre (CDC); Ministry of General Education (MoE); Ministry of Health (MoH)

## **2. Strengthening Food Safety (quality and traceability)**

### **Rationale for interventions:**

The assessment shows that Lusaka City Region does not have adequate facilities, systems, personnel and institutions to test for **quality** and **trace** the sources of most foodstuffs, especially and particularly, which are traded in common, high-density areas and markets. Therefore, there is

no assurance of safety for foods bought or sold in most common market places found in the CRFS, especially in undesignated trading places, such as residential areas.

### **Strategy:**

- i. Promoting sustainable Organic Agriculture:
  - Government to encourage banks to lend towards supporting sustainable organic agriculture, e.g. through lower interest rates, favourable repayment conditions etc., to attract investment in organic agriculture
  - Increase training of small-scale farmers in organic agriculture/farming [capacity-building]

*Lead actors:* MoH, Lusaka City Council

*Actors to be involved:* NFNC, MoA, NGOs dealing with organic agriculture, MLG, MoH, Zambia Bureau of Standards [ZABS]

## **Policy implications**

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The CRFS assessment and stakeholder engagement led to the identification a seven (7) key interventions, belonging to three (3) thematic areas, among a much longer list of potential interventions in the Lusaka CRFS to make it more resilient and sustainable.

These interventions include changes in or revision to **policies and regulations** (on land, nutrition, etc.), awareness raising campaigns (on nutrition, market information systems, hygiene), **enforcement** of regulations and laws (concerning food safety, sanitation, etc.), **institutional changes** (local and wholesale markets' management), education, training and **capacity building** (on organic farming, food trading hygiene, food retailing, dietary guidelines, etc.), and concrete **investment** undertakings (e.g. in market facilities).

The proposed implementation partners are selected from the current or known existing, local and international institutions within the City Region. However, leadership and/or involvement in the implementation process may not be restricted to the named partners: other institutions not presently in existence or not known may therefore also be involved when implementation actually commences or during the implementation period.

Joint planning is essential in the implementation of the CRFS for Lusaka. **Joint planning between Lusaka and the surrounding districts** are proposed in the Urban and Regional Planning Act Number 3 of 2015, but guidelines and standards are not available yet. This would provide a policy and institutional framework to anchor implementation processes.

Finally, even though there was no targeted empirical evidence collected from the research study or survey conducted under the Food for the Cities Project in the Lusaka City Region, stakeholders felt strongly that the issue of “**women and youth engagement in agriculture**, as a business” should receive support from policy makers.





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