

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC): CONSIDERING INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PRACTICES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Following on the article by Müller entitled Sustainable Development: The Question of Integration and Coordination (*Journal of Public Administration*, September 2004: 398), this article explores the issues of integratedness and coordination within an SADC agricultural development context. It is clear from literature surveys that a plethora of approaches and theories exist pertaining to these issues. Since agriculture forms an important development arena in southern Africa, it may facilitate an exciting discourse on the way ahead as far as integrated development planning practices and possible institutional arrangements are concerned.

This article presents agriculture in the SADC as an important development sector, which could improve the food security situation in the whole region. If the SADC's agriculture development disposition could be improved, the result may be that other dilemmas such as poverty, wars, and disease could be curtailed to an extent. It is argued that an issue-driven approach for the SADC and its member states in development planning is needed, whilst focusing on integratedness and cooperativeness between all role players on all levels in order to achieve sustainability under NEPAD's agricultural strategies. In addition, certain options are presented on possible institutional levels upon which agricultural development should be located and from where such programmes and projects should be directed.

INTRODUCTION

Southern Africa's population is predominantly rural and marked by high levels under-development. According to the 2003 Official SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review, approximately 80% of the people within the SADC region rely on agriculture for subsistence, employment or income. Currently, an estimated 1,5% growth in the Agricultural Sector in the southern Africa-region does not support the product demand brought about by growth in population. In fact, the SADC has become a net importer of foods, most of which could be produced locally (Tralac, 19/08/2003). Since agriculture export is potentially a significant foreign exchange earner, SADC members should consider turn-around strategies that would deliver interventions to remedy the situation. The current challenges and opportunities for Africa's rural poor warrants renewed consideration of interventions to achieve sustainable development (From Action to Impact: the Africa Region's Rural Strategy, 2002: 1). As such, numerous promising development initiatives are under way. Most notable, are programmes and projects being run under the auspices of The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). According to Stevens (Tralac, 19/08/2003) proper recognition is now afforded through NEPAD to the important role that agriculture plays in the overall strategy to achieve sustainable development on the Continent. This is significant since NEPAD is regarded as an "enabler" of opportunities to Africa's citizens in that it is seen as a vehicle for economic development, implying that it should create the climate and conditions that are favourable to investment and economic growth. Much hope is placed on such initiatives to facilitate sustainable development in southern Africa. However, the level of integratedness of development planning and implementation, and cooperation among the different institutions and entities responsible for development could impact on the success thereof.

This article proposes an issue-driven approach for the SADC and its member states in development planning, whilst focusing on integratedness and cooperativeness among all role players on all levels in order to achieve sustainability under NEPAD's agricultural strategies. Finally, certain options are presented as regards institutional levels upon which agricultural development should be located and from where such programmes and projects should be directed.

POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTORS TO SUB-STANDARD AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN THE SADC

Generally, a close correlation exists between the level of agricultural development a country has achieved and its overall economic development standard. The reason for this phenomenon is that agriculture has, during the past century, formed the backbone industry within developing countries. Other industries tended to develop and operate as secondary industries even though such industries have eventually surpassed agriculture in terms of its contribution to gross national product. However, in many cases in the SADC, agriculture is still the bedrock of most economic activity in that it provides a livelihood to the majority of the people.

Some contributors to disappointing agricultural yield performance in the SADC are cited by the Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (Tralac). These include HIV/AIDS, adverse climatic conditions, unequal competitiveness between the agricultural sectors in developing and developed countries (due to e.g. subsidies and import tariffs), political instability and civil wars. These are well-documented contributors, however, other less-obvious reasons may include the following:

Firstly, the dumping of agricultural products in the SADC. With the exception of South Africa, no SADC country has effective anti-dumping policies and concomitant regulatory frameworks. Most SADC countries experience significant agri-dumping which detrimentally impacts on rural farming communities. It also impacts on agri-processing entities. However, to exacerbate the situation, some SADC countries' manufacturers and exporters themselves commit to dumping activities within their neighbouring countries.

Secondly, a lack of intra-SADC trade constitutes a constraint to regional economic development. In a sense, SADC states are too outward-looking, which results in negligence as far as regional markets are concerned.

Thirdly, criminal activities such as smuggling, circumvention of customs duties and associated fraudulent conduct result in constraints as far as agricultural production and trade in the SADC region is concerned (Tralac, 19/08/2003).

If the aforementioned reasons are considered, it may be postulated that improved integratedness and cooperation among SADC members in their planning processes, could contribute towards improving the state of agriculture in the Region. This however, implies that the SADC as an organization should reconsider its approach as far as sustainable agricultural development policies and strategies are concerned.

REFOCUSING THE SADC TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The SADC, as a supra-national or regional-coordinative institution, contains 14 member states, each with its own government, development strategies and supporting institutions and structures. Since its establishment, the SADC has evolved into an organization, which through its Programme of Action, runs development programmes and projects in 20 sectors of cooperation. Whilst the SADC recognizes the principle of sovereignty, it strives towards improving cooperation amongst its member states to address the challenges posed by the regional and global environment (Thornhill, Odendaal, Malan, Mathebula, van Dijk and Mello, 2002: 2). Of late, especially with the restructuring of the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union and with the establishment of NEPAD, the need to improve on the SADCs efficiency and effectiveness was reiterated. It currently seeks to align itself to the policies of, and accommodating strategies presented by NEPAD. As such the Organisation's development policy and strategy have been refocused from a sector-coordination approach to an integrated development approach. As a result the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) was developed.

The objective with the RISDP is to provide strategic direction for the efficient implementation and delivery of the SADC Programme of Action. The RISDP is set to align overarching integrated development goals and objectives with adequate policies and specified priority intervention areas. Currently, one priority intervention area of the SADC is the agri-sector (SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review, 2004).

This realignment process should occur whilst international linkages and synergies with continental and international entities are strengthened. Practically, the RISDP is supposed to re-set appropriate targets and to develop strategies to implement particular development programmes and projects and to integrate different development factors as well as different member countries' initiatives. This will be enhanced by a monitoring and evaluation system, which will inform on digression, successes and failures associated with all programmes and projects throughout the region. The RISDP, as a function of the SADC, is equally committed to adhering to the principles of good political, economic and corporate governance. It seeks to achieve the objectives of democracy, transparency and adherence to the rule of law (SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review, 2004).

To indicate the integratedness and cooperativeness that the SADC's objectives in terms of its mandate seeks to achieve, some of these objectives are presented:

- to achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration;
- to evolve common political values, systems and institutions;
- to achieve complementarities between national and regional strategies and programmes; and
- to promote and maximize productive employment and utilization of resources in the region (Thornhill *et al.*, 2002: 2).

An important part of the quest towards integratedness and cooperativeness is to ensure that policies and strategies set to change the current state of affairs are implemented effectively. A policy that may promote integratedness and cooperativeness is for instance the SADCs Charter for Sustainable Development. The Charter is set to ensure that sustainability is maintained in the management development-orientated decision-making activities of regional and sub-regional agencies within SADC. Following is the Charter for Sustainable Development (figure 1) for the SADC region:

Figure 1: The Charter for Sustainable Development

Institutional Priority:

To recognise environmental management as among the highest of institutional priorities and as a key determinant to sustainable development; to establish policies, programmes, and practices for conducting operations in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Integrated Management:

To fully integrate these policies, programmes and practices as an essential element of management into the execution of institutional functions.

Process of Improvement:

To strive towards continuously improving these policies, programmes and practices, taking into account technological developments, scientific understanding, customer needs, community expectations, with statutory requirements as a starting point.

Employee Education:

To educate, train and motivate employees to conduct their activities in an environmentally responsible manner.

Prior Assessment:

To assess environmental impacts before the start of an activity or project and before decommissioning a facility or leaving a site.

Products and Services:

To develop or provide products or services that have no undue environmental impacts and are safe in their intended use, that are efficient in their consumption of energy and natural resources and can be recycled re-used and disposed of safely.

Customer Advice:

To advise and educate the public and customers in the safe use, transportation, storage and disposal of products and to apply similar considerations to the provision of services.

Facilities and operations:

To develop, design and operate and conduct activities, taking into consideration the efficient use of energy and materials, the sustainable use of renewable resources, the minimisation of adverse environmental impact and waste generation, and the safe and responsible disposal of residual waste.

Research:

To conduct or support research on the environmental impacts of raw materials, products, processes, emissions and wastes associated with the execution of functions and on the minimisation of such adverse impacts.

Precautionary approach:

To modify the manufacture, marketing or use of products or services or the conduct of activities, consistent with scientific and technical understanding, to prevent serious and irreversible environmental degradation.

Contractors and Suppliers:

To promote the adoption of these principles by contractors acting on behalf of the institution, encouraging and where applicable, requesting improvements in their practices.

Emergency Preparedness:

To develop and maintain, where significant hazards exist, emergency preparedness plans in conjunction with the emergency services, relevant authorities and local communities.

Transfer of Technology:

To contribute to the transfer of environmentally sound technology and management techniques throughout the public and private sectors.

Contributing to the Common Effort:

To contribute to the development of public policy, business, intergovernmental programmes and educational initiatives that will enhance environmental awareness, conservation and preservation.

Openness to Concerns:

To foster openness and dialogue with employees, contractors and the public, anticipating and responding to their concerns about the potential hazards and impacts of operations, products, wastes, or services, including those of trans-boundary or global significance.

Compliance and Reporting:

To measure environmental performance; to conduct regular environmental audits and assessment of compliance with set requirements; and to periodically provide appropriate information to all stakeholders.

Source: (SADC policy and strategy for environment and sustainable development: Toward equity-led growth and sustainable development in Southern Africa, 1996).

Integrated development planning in an SADC context

An Integrated Development Planning-model, as applied in South Africa for instance, is focused towards integrating social, economic and natural environmental concerns across sector and disciplinary interests. Specifically, the integratedness aspect relates to (Local Pathway to Sustainable Development in South Africa, n.a.:12) :

- special integration of place of employment and place of residence;
- integration of multiple land uses;
- integration between adjacent geographic areas;
- eradication of spatial segregation and separation;
- integration of urban and rural areas;
- integration of ethnic groups;
- social and economic integration of different communities;
- integration and coordination of institutional activities;
- integration of various developmental processes such as planning, management and implementation; and
- integration of development information.

Ensuring that integration occurs (such as in the above exposition) is practically speaking, a daunting task. It implies that the various issues, sectors and dimensions of development need to be considered comprehensively when development planning is conducted. Contrary to conventional planning practice, integrated development planning requires a focus on issues, rather than merely development sectors. The notion of integration therefore, central to integrated development planning, implies that sectors are approached in the context of their contribution to addressing priorities for development. Thus, key priority issues are identified and forms the focus of the planning process.

In terms of the issue-driven approach, social, economic and natural environmental considerations are taken into account. This forms a cross-cutting “golden thread” (note: in the RISDP the cross-cutting aspect is termed Cross-Sectoral Intervention Areas) throughout the planning process. The RISDP has a number of Cross-Sectoral Intervention Areas including (SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review, 2004):

- poverty eradication;
- combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic;
- gender equality and development;
- science and technology;
- information and communications technology;
- environment and sustainable development; and
- private sector development.

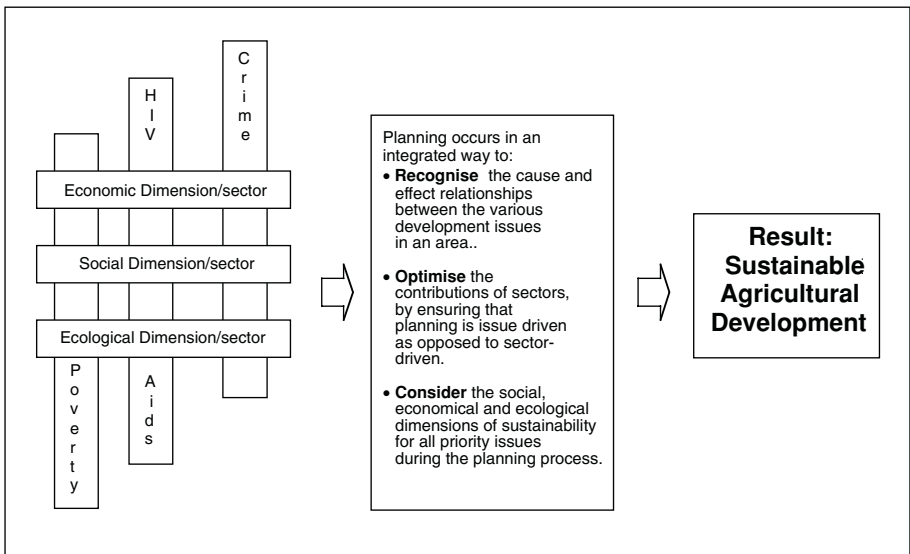
In addition, some integration intervention areas have been identified, being (SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review, 2004):

- trade/economic liberalisation and development;
- infrastructure support for regional integration and poverty eradication;

- sustainable food security; and
- human and social development.

In the context of scarce human, financial and other resources, elements of institutional and structural capacity should form part of the planning and implementation processes for sustainable development. In figure 2 an example is presented which serves to illustrate the issue-driven approach and integrated nature of integrated development planning and how taking account of the cross-cutting aspect may result in sustainability in development planning.

Figure 2: Issue-driven Approach and the Integrated Nature of Integrated Development Planning (example)



Source: (Adapted from *Local Pathway to Sustainable Development in South Africa*, n.a.: 16)

In view of the above, it could be stated that all developmental decision-making should occur by linking international, regional, national and sub-national development issues to one another. This is done in the RISDP by initially linking all its objectives and goals to that of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the AU and NEPAD. Thereafter, regions, sub-regions and local areas would have the opportunity to align their development strategies to the MDGs and to initiate and implement programmes and strategies in complement. The RISDP could therefore, significantly contribute towards integration on all of the above levels. In this regard the RISDP identifies a number of crucial sustainable development catalysts. These catalysts (note the alignment with the cross-sectoral and

issue driven approaches) should be implemented in such a way as to ensure integration. The catalysts include (SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review, 2004):

- intensifying the fight against HIV and AIDS;
- gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women;
- private sector development;
- rapid adoption and internationalization of information and communications technologies (ICTs);
- diversification of regional economies;
- trade liberalization and development;
- productivity and competitiveness improvements; and
- enabling institutional environment.

The challenge would be to find the most appropriate institutions in which to locate particular functions whereas structures need to be established to execute such functions. This approach is especially appropriate in the context of agriculture as sociological, economic and ecological factors, among others, all contribute to improve the success of development programmes and projects in Africa.

Integratedness and possible institutional arrangements for sustainable agricultural development initiatives

With the term institutions, reference is made to the structures that are established through which to administer and facilitate development. As far as the different institutions that are involved in sustainable development are concerned, it should be stated that different actors promote different approaches in this regard (Role of National and Provincial Government in Local Economic Development, 2001). The search for integratedness in development planning and implementation in Africa, with its heritage of inequitable growth and development, and its reality of countless demands and limited resources, is probably more complex and pronounced than anywhere else in the world. Since the agriculture sector is such an important contributor to the well being of Africans, the Continent cannot afford expensive development mistakes. Instead, it needs to achieve integration through integrated development planning with the view to harnessing the Continent's scarce resources in a coherent and purposeful manner. Integratedness could promote efficiency with effectiveness and the institutions mandated in this regard should be selected with circumspect.

NEPAD may play a leading role in this regard since its regional positioning enables it to coherently facilitate over-arching sustainable agricultural development. For instance, during a meeting of the African Ministers of Agriculture in 2002, the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme was established. Under this Programme, a number of principal considerations are mentioned (NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, July 2003: 81):

- All NEPAD activities should be carried out in an integrated manner and in full collaboration with individual countries as well as the existing regional and sub-regional institutions.
- The mainstay of the African economy is agriculture and it should be mainstreamed and linked to the development of other sectors and programmes associated with development.
- Political commitment should be elicited throughout Africa to address areas of potential conflict and development of mechanisms for the management of shared natural resources.

Furthermore, NEPAD has embarked on an extensive research programme to investigate what key actions are needed to achieve success in agricultural development in Africa. The provisional findings of the investigations yielded the following (NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, July 2003: 85):

- National governments should commit themselves towards improving their research capacity and efficiency, to effectively address current problems. Funding for agricultural research is significantly inadequate. Estimates are that the average US\$ 1 billion spent annually on agricultural research in Africa is inadequate and should at least be doubled. In addition, more agricultural scientists need to be trained.
- National governments should also promote collaborative efforts between public and private sector entities in the agriculture sector. Public-private partnerships should specifically be pursued in post-harvest processes. Functions such as storage, distribution, processing and marketing should be supported in this regard.
- Another area where public-private partnerships should be considered, is supporting smallholders in the adoption of current technologies within the scope of strategies focused towards improving food security, poverty reduction and debt relief.
- National governments should intervene by improving the efficiency and use of water resources for agriculture. This objective could be achieved by establishing appropriate irrigation facilities, reviewing local water management processes and by increasing the exchange of information and technical know-how with other countries in the region.
- Land reform is increasingly becoming a concern from a socio-, economic and political point of view. Proper land reform strategies are needed in Africa. Land reform quandaries occur throughout Africa, all of which have their own origin complexities.
- Finally, national governments are required to establish policy frameworks to address improved access to credit by small-scale farmers, start-up farming enterprises and women farmers.
- On regional and sub-regional level, a general audit of structures and programmes should receive consideration. Policies should be harmonized whilst regional synergies should be developed, especially under south-south co-operation initiatives.
- In terms of international level activities, the following should be established:

- develop new partnerships to address donor fatigue for high-profile agricultural projects;
- promote cooperation with developed countries carrying out and developing research and capabilities in agriculture;
- promote access to international markets by improving equality of African produce in relation to standards set by such markets;
- investment in research and technology transfer and sharing; and
- building national and regional capacity for multi-lateral trade negotiations.

The notable aspect within the context of this paper is the implied need for comprehensive integratedness as far as all NEPAD activities (planning, implementation and evaluation) are concerned. Such initiatives are launched with a view to establishing a truly sustainable African socio-economic regime that provides for regional peace and security, sector cooperation and an integrated regional economy. In addition, in the SADC Policy and Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development (1996), it is stated that to pursue the objectives of sustainable development, a number of transitions should occur, *inter alia* a social transition, an economic transition, a technological transition, a governance transition and a capacity development transition. These transitional objectives are underpinned by the philosophy that each transitional objective is interrelated to the others and that all are crucial in pursuing sustainable development. Thus, in the event of planning and implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects, their interrelated nature justifies an approach where integratedness is maintained. The common priority is to improve the health, lives and livelihoods (an issue-driven approach to achieve sustainable development) of the poor majority and that the pace and scale of the change as well as its success rate will be far greater with expanded regional cooperation and integration through sound intergovernmental relations.

Over and above international and regional institutions responsible for development facilitation, active discussion could be had as far as the appropriateness of sub-regional institutions are concerned: *Firstly* an approach could be followed where all development programmes are centrally located. In this case a national sphere of government could determine developmental objectives and create favourable conditions for its implementation whilst monitoring the operational activities of such programmes and projects.

A *second* approach could be to allow a provincial or some form of sub-national sphere of government to take the responsibility to identify possible initiatives that could promote development. This level of government would then take an active part in introducing all programmes and monitor the operational results.

A *third* approach could be to assign developmental programmes specifically to the local level i.e. to individual municipalities to induce urban and rural development.

Each of the aforementioned approaches has advantages and disadvantages, which could be summarized as follows (Role of National and Provincial Government in Local Economic Development, 2001):

• **Centralised approach**

The advantages are *inter alia*:

- co-ordination of all programmes countrywide or cross-nationally;
- availability of national or cross-national resources that could be distributed according to the needs and capacities of the different locations; and
- overall control of programmes.

The disadvantages include *inter alia*:

- the development of bureaucratic tendencies;
- lack of adaptability to meet the needs of the various beneficiaries;
- extended communication lines resulting in delays in utilizing opportunities timeously; and
- inhibiting a particular area's own potential to introduce initiatives.

• **Provincial or sub-national induced development**

Advantages include *inter alia*:

- utilization of provincial human and financial resources to promote development;
- coordination of programmes within the provinces or sub-national units, thus extending the boundaries within which projects could be developed by involving more than one local area (e.g. adjacent municipalities have a direct impact on other adjacent municipalities or even others further afield); and
- the ability to supervise the developments in different local areas and advising on best practices within a province or sub-national unit.

Disadvantages include *inter alia*

- development of bureaucratic structures to supervise projects within the various areas;
- some provinces or sub-national units lack the capacity to introduce and sustain development projects;
- inhibiting local areas from taking the initiative and consequently from taking responsibility for the programmes within their area of jurisdiction; and
- lengthening of communication lines and possible delays in authorizing different programmes.

• **Locally driven development projects**

The advantages include *inter alia*:

- the programmes are indeed locally driven and subsequently chances are improved that it may be aligned to local peoples' needs and aspirations;
- local communities develop a pride in witnessing their own initiatives succeeding;
- increasing variety in development programmes according to local capacity, local initiatives and local entrepreneurship;

- making communities fully aware of the need to accept responsibility for their own destinies; and
- ability to develop public/private partnerships to accept responsibility for development.

The disadvantages include *inter alia*:

- lack of capacity in some areas to identify sustainability of potential programmes;
- inability of entrepreneurs to maintain the input and the dynamic required in sustaining projects;
- inability of a municipal councils and/or local officials to create conditions conducive to promoting development within their respective areas; and
- physical and social conditions within some areas may inhibit the identification or implementation of viable development programmes, e.g. skills, organisational ability or infrastructure.

If South Africa (as an SADC-member) is used as a case example, it could be stated that development projects often tend to be ineffective due to inadequate local participation and lacking local capacity to implement. Therefore, if the conditionality of proper stakeholder participation and institutional capacities prevail, experience seems to suggest that locally driven development yield the best measure of success. Recent international experiences with regards to development practice indicate that a decentralised approach accompanied by the promotion in greater local autonomy in decision-making may improve success (Fox & Van Rooyen eds. 2004: 89).

However, although the location aspect of decentralized decision-making is regarded as important, higher or over-arching authorities continue to play a significant role within the development-planning context. In many cases, policy direction and facilitation should form part of the mandate of higher-level entities, given their ability to co-ordinate and disseminate appropriate resources. The local development process ultimately create the platform for putting development issues on the development agenda of the local municipality and therefore creates opportunities for establishing cooperation and partnerships in support of local urban and rural development, including for instance sustainable agricultural development.

COOPERATION THROUGH SOUND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Flowing forth from the above elucidation on integratedness and institutional location of developmental initiatives is the aspect of cooperation to ensure sound intergovernmental relations. Malan (Fox & Van Rooyen eds., 2004: 109) states that sustainable development is dependent upon government institutions, which are committed to promoting intergovernmental relations and cooperation by focusing on aspects relating to institutional capacity building. Similarly, sound intergovernmental relations are crucial when development projects and programmes are planned and implemented.

Sustained peaceful co-existence between countries and nations in Africa depends on issues such as equitable access to resources and markets, human resources development and good governance. The national governments and environment and resource management agencies in African countries cannot address these problems individually. Regional and sub-regional cooperation and proper intergovernmental relations are imperative for agricultural and general socio-economic development of the peoples of Africa. Natural resources such as rivers are utilised by communities across national boundaries; infrastructure development such as roads and hydro-electric generating plants serve different countries; droughts and floods are shared disasters; and illegal immigration, narcotics and arms smuggling into and in the region equally threaten peace, security and sustainable development. A common approach is therefore necessary to address the above-mentioned vast regional and sub-regional challenges. More reasons that necessitate intergovernmental relations and cooperation are as follows:

- the already large backlog of environmental damage and degradation caused by previous unsustainable development;
- the chronic and newly emerging problems which pose serious threats to the health of humans and ecosystems; and
- the assessment and addressing of future threats to human health and welfare which can only be avoided if action is taken in advance.

However, the nature of the intergovernmental relations between SADC-members and the extent of the of the cooperation (including the institutional arrangements) to achieve sustainability in agricultural development may depend on the role players involved, the dynamics of the system, the geographical and social diversity (Fox & Van Rooyen *eds.*, 2004: 100).

CONCLUSION

Sustainable agricultural development may provide a solution to the existent low economic growth and the poverty spiral, which prevail in southern Africa. The concept of sustainability in agricultural development should be understood to imply that the present as well as the future beneficiaries thereof, would enjoy a better quality of life as a whole. To achieve this vision in a southern African regional context, the affected communities should experience a social and economic improvement. Yet, at the same time care should be taken to limit environmental degradation often associated with some agricultural development programmes and projects. A possible way to achieving the aforementioned is to actively avoid contributing to sub-standard agricultural performance and to subscribe to the Charter for Sustainable Development by actively pursuing the objectives suggested therein.

Currently, significant resources are directed towards maintaining structures like the SADC and for instance, NEPAD programmes, which regard agricultural development as a paramount development objective. Such entities and programmes tend to pose the greatest opportunity to facilitate sustainability in development, specifically because of

their cross-national positioning and networking capabilities. In order to improve effectiveness and efficiency for agriculture development within SADC, the policy framework established by and through NEPAD, should be applied optimally. In order to do so, sustainable agricultural development is conditional to firstly, integrated development planning practices together with cooperativeness among all actors, and secondly, proper institutional arrangements to support the implementation of strategies through programmes and projects.

To elucidate, *firstly*, sustainable agricultural development impacts on *inter alia* aspects relating to poverty, HIV/AIDS and crime. It could also be stated that agriculture involves different dimensions or sectors: being economic, social and ecological. Therefore, it is proposed that the issue-driven planning approach (or cross-sectoral development approach) be followed where issues form the focus of objective setting (and strategy development) and where the respective sectors are heralded as different disciplines which collectively make unique contributions towards addressing the issues (in this case against an agricultural backdrop). This approach implies that integratedness and cooperativeness are ensured throughout the planning process.

The result of the issue driven planning approach should be that (a) certain cause and effect relationships within a particular geographic area are acknowledged; (b) the respective sectors' possible contributions are optimized collectively and (c) that due consideration is afforded to economic, social and ecological dimensions pertaining to the issues associated with planning for agricultural development.

Secondly, appropriate institutions should do successful implementation of development strategies by means of programmes and projects. The location of such institutions may differ depending on aspects relating to capacity, geography and proximity to the beneficiaries. Options for location may include centralised, provincial or sub-national or local levels. Such options should be negotiated with the beneficiaries whilst the probability of effective implementation should receive consideration.

In the event where the above suggestions are followed, it is believed that the new century may well belong to Africa. As such, NEPAD through the SADC could provide the impetus to facilitate sustainable agricultural development. However, it should be left to scholars of development practices to consider the above suggestions and to conduct longitudinal research to ascertain whether such aspects do yield the desired outcomes.

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