United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries,
Water and Rural Development

Aide-Mémoire

NATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON

"APPLICATIONS OF JUNCAO TECHNOLOGY[1] AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN ZIMBABWE"

Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG/DESA) ▪ National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agricultur (FAFU) ▪ Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement, Zimbabwe

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I. BACKGROUND

With little more than a decade left to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the world is not on track to end poverty and hunger by 2030. While economic development has delivered enormous benefits across the globe, lifting more than 1.2 billion people out of extreme poverty since 1990, the world remains off-track toward eliminating poverty and hunger by 2030. The pace of global poverty reduction has been slowing down, with the share of the world's population living in extreme poverty declining to 8.2 per cent in 2019, from 10.0 per cent in 2015 and 15.7 per cent in 2010. The global prevalence of undernourishment has remained unchanged at slightly below 9 per cent since 2014. In absolute terms, about 690 million people were undernourished in 2019, up by nearly 60 million from 2014. Progress in attaining these goals has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to recent World Bank estimates, the global extreme poverty rose in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years as the COVID-19 pandemic pushed an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty.

More worringly, an estimated 71 million additional people will be living in extreme poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with sub-Saharan Africa expected to see an additional 26 million people living in poverty as a result of the pandemic.[2] Like many sub-Saharan African countries, Zimbabwe has not been sparred from these challenges. According the 2021 Zimbabwe Economic Update,[3] high prices and challenging economic conditions sharply increased poverty and inequality. Extreme poverty rose

[1] Juncao technology has been developed by the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China. The technology has a multi-faceted approach of cultivating mushroom and fungi for food and medicinal purposes while at the same time addressing soil erosion for maintaining the volume of arable land and also supporting livestock feed development.

[2] United Nations. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020. United Nations: New York

[3] The World Bank Group. Zimbabwe economic update: overcoming economic challenges, natural disasters, and the pandemic: social and economic impacts. June 2021, Issue 3

to 42 per cent in 2019, from 30 per cent in 2017, affecting 6.6 million people. In 2019, a devastating drought, and Cyclone Idai also led to a increase in food insecurity that affected nearly half of the population. Food insecurity was also exacerbated by inadequate reach/coverage of relevant social protection programmes. Less than a quarter of the increased number of extreme poor households received food aid in June 2020. Despite these challenges, economic recovery is underway and the economy is expected to expand by about 7.4 per cent in 2021, a significant improvement compared to 2020, led by a recovery in agriculture, improved electricity generation and sower than expected inflation.

To overcome these challenges, the agricultural sector is expected to spearhead Zimbabwe's recovery. In particular, the National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025) seeks to boost agriculture production and productivity, especially by smallholder farmers by addressing structural constraints to agriculture productivity, inadequate access to finance, inputs such as seeds and fertilizer, and appropriate science, technology. Tackling these constraints will ensure food and nutrition security, enhanced income, increased opportunities for value addition and the development of agro-business value chains. These challenges are complex and multidimensional, requiring innovative solutions that are home-grown, sustainable, replicable and scalable. Some of these solutions are also provided through South-South and Triangular cooperation as exemplified by the Juncao technology that was developed by FAFU and is being implemented in over 100 developing countries. Zimbabwe, a country where agriculture is the backbone of the economy, contributing about 24.1 percent of the gross domestic product has expressed interest to join this group of countries.

Although smallholder farmers play a critical role in food and nutrition security in Zimbabwe, with their production accounting for the bulk of the country's food, many smallholder farmers often struggle with poverty and food insecurity.

Smallholders and family farmers are increasingly struggling to make a living from their land and labour because of inadequate access to markets, low soil fertility and reliance on rain-fed systems. In addition, smallholder farmers and workers along the value chain have limited or no access to financial services. This constrains their ability to acquire productivity-enhancing inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and labour-saving technologies.4

These challenges have raised numerous questions as what needs to be done at the country, regional and global levels. While each country must take primary responsibility for its own development, increased effective national efforts should be complemented by concrete, effective and supportive international programmes, measures and policies aimed at expanding their development opportunities. To that end, in September 2015, Heads of State and Government adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. [5] Further, Member States committed themselves to promote sustainable agriculture to ensure sustainable development to lift

[4] http://www.fao.org/zimbabwe/en/

[5] UN, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, Doc. #A/Res/70/1, 21 October 2015.

millions out of poverty. They also committed themselves to support smallholder farmers, especially women farmers and herders in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries.

To help support global efforts to promote appropriate agricultural technologies and practices that contribute to the achievement of food security and the eradication of poverty, the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China developed the Juncao technology (jun meaning fungi, cao meaning grass). This technology, which is being transferred to developing countries through South-South cooperation and upon request, allows farmers in developing countries to grow several types of nutritious mushrooms from dried, chopped grasses, without cutting down trees and damaging the environment. Such an environmental-friendly technology can help small-scale farmers and farming communities to develop a low-cost, commercial-scale mushroom cultivation industry that can provide sustainable livelihood for thousands. In addition, the technology can also be used for producing cattle feed and methane gas. Planting Juncao grass in drought prone areas has also been shown to minimize soil erosion and to combat desertification. In the long run, depending on local demand and the scale of production, it may also provide opportunities for exporting the mushrooms cultivated using the technology.

Hence, the mobilization of capacity building and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries such as the Juncao technology contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs as well as regional development frameworks such as AU Agenda 2063 and national development plans such as NDS1.

DESA, in partnership with FAFU is partnering with the Government to support farmers, including smallholder farmers and family farmers, poor rural women and youth have sustainable livelihoods and decent employment through capacity-building efforts aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture. When successfully implemented, the Juncao technology will contribute to addressing poverty, employment and environmental concerns in rural areas.

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) that has the central role in overseeing follow up and review in implementing the Goals and targets at the global level has also underlined and reiterated the importance of supporting developing countries in their efforts to implement the SDGs and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 6

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

Recognizing the urgency to end poverty and hunger everywhere by implementing SDG 17 which calls for strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the Department of Economic and

[6] UN, Ministerial Declaration of the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council on the theme eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world, Doc. # E/2017/L.29–E/HLPF/2017/L.2, 14 July 2017.

Social Affairs, in collaboration with the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture, (FAFU) and Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement, Zimbabwe are organizing a hybrid national workshop on "Applications of Juncao technology and its contribution to the achievement of sustainable agriculture and the sustainable development goals and in Zimbabwe", to be held in Haraee, Zimbabwe, from 2 to 4 November 2021.

The purpose of the meeting is to bring together experts from the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement, National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture, the United Nations system, academia, smallholder farmers, entreprenurs, and development partners to (i) enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building to support the National Development Plan 1 (NDS1) to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, (ii) discuss key questions and opportunities related to the adoption and implementation of the Juncao technology in Zimbabwe, including the role that the United Nations system and other development partners can play to accelerate global actions for a world without poverty and hunger, (iii) enhance knowledge and strengthen national capacities to improve national policies and programmes supporting sustainable agriculture through the transfer of appropriate technology, including Juncao technology, (iv) and (v) come up with policy recommendations on how the transfer and adoption of the Juncao technology can contribute to eradicating poverty and hunger, improve livelihoods, benefit smallholder farmers, cooperatives, women and youth entrepreuners, and ensuring that no one is left behind.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the workshop will highlight the benefits of South-South, North-South and Triangular Cooperation as a means of enhancing access to science, technology and innovation, knowledge sharing as well as capacity building and to effectively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The meeting will be a three-day event that will allow a robust exchange of ideas that contribute to achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, AU Agenda 2063 and the National Development Plan 1 (2021-2025). Experts from the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China, policymakers, local experts, the UN system and development partners will set the stage for the meeting by making presentations on the Juncao technology and mushroom production in Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on gaps, challenges and opportunities along the agri-value chain. The interaction will foster the identification of actionable capacity building and programmatic needs as well as encourage greater inter-agency convergence and collaboration within the United Nations system in sharing knowledge, promoting policy dialogue, facilitating synergies, mobilizing funds, providing technical assistance in the key policy and programmatic areas underlying the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of the Capacity Building Workshop, it is anticipated that the participants will:

- Have acquired enhanced knoweledge and a better understanding of the requirements that are required for the successful adoption and implementation of Juncao technology, including its potential contribution to sustainable agriculture and the achievement of the SDGs.
- Be able to participate in ongoing and planned national capacity building initiatives to advance the Agenda and the SDGs' implementation.
- Be able to build and be part of the Juncao technology knowledge networks at the national, regional and global levels that is critical to the sharing of experiences and lessons learned implementing the Juncao technology in various national contexts.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

In addition to inviting experts from FAFU and the UN system, the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement, Ziexperts will closely work with the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of UNDESA to identify and invite about 30 national participants and local experts, taking into consideration gender balance. The Division will meet the costs related to the participation (travel and per diem) of all the invited local participants and experts from outside the United Nations system.

VI. CONTACTS

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