



Republic of Malawi

# **FOOD SECURITY POLICY**

**Produced by**

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno- Deficiency Syndrome
DFID	Department for International Development
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FNSIS	Food and Nutrition Security Information System
FSP	Food Security Policy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIS	Health Information System
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICN	International Conference Nutrition
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MFI	Micro-Finance Institutions
MoAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
OPC	Office of President and Cabinet
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
WFSFYL	World Food Summit Five Years Later
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
MASEDA	Malawi Socio-Economic Database
NNP	National Nutrition Policy

## 1.1 PREAMBLE

- 1.1.1 The Constitution of Malawi recognises that access to and utilisation of nutritionally adequate and safe food in the right quantities is a right of each individual. This will enable them to lead an active and healthy life.
- 1.1.2 Improving the living standards of the people of the country has for a long time been an immediate need. Building on the Vision 2020, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) is centered on achieving strong and sustainable economic growth, building a healthy and educated human resource base, and protecting and empowering the vulnerable. It seeks to ensure economic growth, economic empowerment and food security so that Malawians are less vulnerable to economic shocks. The MGDS also aims at putting in place measures to protect those who temporarily fall into poverty through measures to increase assets for the poor<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.1.3 The Integrated Household Survey of 1997/98 indicates that approximately 65.3% of the population is poor and cannot meet their food requirements and basic non-food needs annually.
- 1.1.4 Many factors interact to create a food insecure situation in Malawi: chronic poverty, low agricultural productivity, poor infrastructure, ecological constraints, inappropriate economic policies, limited arable land other demographic and social factors. These are not discrete, independent factors, but related elements of the food security-malnutrition equation. However, it is widely accepted that the primary cause of food insecurity and malnutrition in Malawi is chronic poverty: the persistent lack of economic opportunity either to produce adequate safe and nutritious food or to exchange labour for the income to purchase adequate, safe and nutritious food.
- 1.1.5 Agriculture is the backbone of Malawi's economy, accounting for 36% of GDP, 87% of total employment and remains one of the most important sources of income as it accounts for 65.3% of total income of the rural poor. Promoting agricultural growth and diversity will contribute to national and household level food security.
- 1.1.6 Natural disasters, such as drought, floods and crop destruction by pests and diseases, have had adverse effects on the country's national food supply situation. Poor land use management and inadequate use of fertilisers exacerbate the effects of natural disasters. Experience with these types of problems has heightened the Government's commitment to ensure that the country has access to adequate supplies of food at all times to meet subsistence and commercial needs.
- 1.1.7 Food Utilization in Malawi is generally poor. Inadequate knowledge about food values, food choices, combinations of the Malawi Six Food Groups<sup>2</sup>, childcare and feeding practices, gender issues, and intra-household distribution of food affect the way households benefit nutritionally from the available foods. The current nutrition education primarily targets women and yet decision makers at household level are men.

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<sup>1</sup> MoEPD (January 2006): Specific Objective Malawi Growth and Development Strategy

<sup>2</sup> The six food groups are staples, animal products, legumes, vegetables, fruits, fats and oils

- 1.1.8 Inadequate appropriate skills and technologies for food preparation, preservation and storage lead to high food losses in terms of both quantity and quality. Food taboos resulting from cultural and religious beliefs limit consumption and/or use of certain foods hence reduces food diversity at household level.
- 1.1.9 Diseases affect the utilisation of the consumed food as they may cause malabsorption of nutrients, loss of appetite, nausea, and direct loss of nutrients. General ill health can result in loss of productivity.
- 1.1.10 There is inadequate coordination in collecting, analysing and disseminating agriculture and food security information resulting in irrational interventions, repetition and duplication.

## **1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1.2.1 The Malawi Growth Strategy and Development Strategy (MGDS) will be the major guiding framework for achieving food security.

### **1.2.2 Good Governance**

Good governance will be the major element for ensuring that public institutions and systems protect and benefit all people. This consists of the following elements:

#### **1.2.2.1 Political leadership and commitment**

Strong political leadership and commitment is necessary for development interventions to have an impact on wealth creation leading to poverty reduction.

#### **1.2.2.2 Rule of Law**

The “Rule of Law”, should set parameters through an established set of legal principles and norms within which government and society must function. It needs to involve the implementation by law enforcement and public observance of such laws. It also entails that organs of the State respect the verdicts of the courts.

#### **1.2.2.3 Economic Governance**

Sustained economic growth, appropriately shared by all members of society, will contribute to achieving improvement in food security. The primary purpose of economic governance should be to enhance economic well being, thereby reducing mortality, promoting greater opportunities for advancement, and engendering greater public confidence in democracy.

#### **1.2.2.4 Human rights**

Cognisant of the provisions for the protection of human rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Constitution of Malawi, the right to adequate food is fully accepted as a human right. The right for everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food shall be observed in accordance with the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights says, “the right to adequate food is fully realised when every individual, alone or in a community with others, has physical and economic access to adequate food or the means of its procurement.”

### 1.2.3 Multi-sectoral approach and partnerships

Food security has multi-sectoral ramifications. It is, therefore, imperative that this policy document should be jointly owned, implemented and monitored by all the sectoral ministries, civil society organisations and stakeholders involved in food security issues. Particularly, an institutional arrangement that is practical and maximises collaboration, harmonisation and coordination of food security and nutrition efforts will be put in place.

### 1.2.4 Capacity Development

Implementation of the food security policy will require a diversity of technical knowledge and skills among service providers and beneficiaries. As such, a comprehensive capacity development strategy shall be part and parcel of the implementation process of this policy.

### 1.2.5 Commitments to International Agreements

The Malawi Government has obligations to international agreements and commitments that have a bearing on food security. These include the following:

- (a) The World Declaration of the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition (ICN);
- (b) The United Nations Millennium Development Goals
- (c) The World Food Summit declaration of 1996 re-iterated in the African Union Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa (July 2003) and WFSFYL;
- (d) The Sirte declaration on the challenges of implementing integrated and Sustainable Development on Agriculture and Water in Africa, (February 2004); and
- (e) The Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agricultural and Food Security in the SADC region (May 2004).

Government will, therefore endeavour to comply with the obligations under these agreements or instruments.

### 1.2.7 Protecting the right to food

Government will be committed to ensuring that no government actions or those of private traders would reduce any Malawians access to safe nutritious food and that there is no discrimination in the buying and selling of food.

### 1.2.8 Social Protection

Every person has the right to food security and a standard of living adequate for health. Recognizing that there will always be a part of the society that will require social protection in order to meet their food requirements, government will provide distinctly targeted safety nets cautious of the need to avoid creating dependency and negative impacts. In line with the Government’s National Safety Nets Strategy, social protection programmes shall be designed, in such a way that they complement the broader pro-poor growth strategy and also help people prevent, manage and cope with risk to reduce vulnerability. They shall be designed to enable the vulnerable to gradually

build up their assets so as to escape the threat of poverty in a sustainable way and to increase their resilience to shocks.

#### 1.2.8.1 Food Aid

Food aid programmes shall be designed for desperately vulnerable people whose needs cannot be addressed through any meaningfully viable programmes other than being supported by special programmes like food aid. Efforts shall be made to ensure that food aid is not used for political purposes or as a means of forcing other concessions and bribes. Large scale distributions shall remain a last resort.

#### 1.2.8.2 Agricultural input subsidies

Government shall put in place distinctly targeted agricultural input subsidies to enhance growth and food diversification for the poor farmers that can still not afford agriculture inputs after exhausting all economic levers. Measures shall be put in place to ensure that such subsidies do not have negative impacts on the input market.

#### 1.2.6 The role of the market

Government shall endeavour to put in place legislation, practices and mechanisms aimed at removing activities that restrict free competition in the market of food, food products and agricultural inputs. Opportunities shall be created for the private sector to address the needs of the population that has purchasing power to meet their food and input requirements from the market.

#### 1.2.9 Cross-cutting issues

The food security policy operationalises the mainstreaming processes as guided by respective national policies and strategies in the following cross-cutting issues:

##### 1.2.9.1 HIV and AIDS

HIV and AIDS negatively affect productivity, economic growth, compromises the immune system and increases the susceptibility of those affected resulting in low food intake, mal-absorption and metabolic alterations. The policy will be implemented with full recognition of the national HIV and AIDS policy and strategic framework and the other sector policy documents.

##### 1.2.9.2 Environment

The policy recognizes the existence of the National Environmental Policy and advocates participation of all stakeholders in sound management, conservation and utilization of natural resources and the environment to achieve increased but sustainable productivity and development now and in the future.

##### 1.2.9.3 Gender equity and empowerment

The National Gender Policy and the National Gender Programme, stipulates that equality and equity must be promoted in all food security initiatives to ensure improved nutritional status and health for women, children and men. Efforts shall be devoted to improving women's social status relative to that of men in all aspects of food security.

#### 1.2.9.4 Science and Technology

The government recognizes the low content of science and technology in national economic development programmes as a barrier to economic growth and therefore exacerbates poverty. Priorities will be given to improving the capacity and capability of the national system for science and technology, intensified promotion and transfer of technologies to key livelihood systems and increased investment in research and development.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.0 POLICY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 2.1 Overall Goal

The long-term goal of this policy is to significantly improve food security of the population. The goal implies increasing agricultural productivity as well as diversity and sustainable agricultural growth and development.

#### 2.2 Specific Objective

The specific objective of Food Security, is to guarantee that all men, women, boys and girls, especially under-fives in Malawi have, at all times, physical and economic access to sufficient nutritious food required to lead a healthy and active life.

The concept of food security implies that:

- (a) All Malawians at all times have both physical and economic access to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life;
- (b) The ways in which food is produced and distributed should be environmentally friendly and sustainable;
- (c) Both the production and consumption of food are governed by social values that are just and equitable as well as moral and ethical;
- (d) The ability to acquire food is ensured;
- (e) The food is obtained in a manner that upholds human dignity.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.0 SUSTAINABLE FOOD AVAILABILITY

In this policy, food availability refers to food that is sufficient in appropriate quantities and qualities supplied through domestic production or imports (including food aid). Thus, factors determining **Food availability** include the following:

- Available food stocks of the Malawi six food groups<sup>3</sup> (farm level, commercial, and government stocks).
- The volume and stability of the production of foods based on the Malawi Six Food Groups (subsistence and market oriented production).
- Food imports (commercial and food aid).

### 3.1 To ensure availability of food in sufficient quantities, adequate quality and variety through production, purchase, trade and donations to meet demands of all Malawians at all times.

#### 3.1.1 Increase food availability in terms of quantity and quality that is accessible to all households at all times

##### **Strategies**

- 3.1.1.1 Promote contract farming for agricultural production development
- 3.1.1.2 Strengthen management and maintain adequate stocks of the Strategic Grain Reserves
- 3.1.1.3 Diversify the types of food stored in strategic food reserves at community and national level to include foods from all the six groups

#### 3.1.2 Promote irrigation development and integrated water resources management.

##### **Strategies**

- 3.1.2.1 Create conducive environment for the private sector investment and local community participation in irrigation development
- 3.1.2.2 Facilitate investments in rainwater harvesting and water management
- 3.1.2.3 Encourage use of lakes, rivers, and underground water resources for irrigation
- 3.1.2.4 Encourage sustainable utilization of wetlands for agricultural use

#### 3.1.3 Increase access to agricultural inputs.

##### **Strategies**

- 3.1.3.1 Ensure stability of fertiliser supply (e.g. maintain a fertilizer buffer stock as necessary)

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<sup>3</sup> The six food groups are staples, animal products, legumes, vegetables, fruits, fats and oils.

- 3.1.3.2 Encourage domestic production of high quality improved varieties
- 3.1.3.3 Promote establishment of community seed banks for easy access and sustainability

3.1.4 Promote crop protection

**Strategies**

- 3.1.4.1 Encourage farmers to follow appropriate cultural and management practices
- 3.1.4.2 Encourage Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for crop protection as a way of safeguarding farming systems and maintaining a productive economy
- 3.1.4.3 Facilitate storage pest management

3.1.5 Promote animal power and farm mechanization

**Strategies**

- 3.1.5.1 Increase access to drought animals and animal drawn implements
- 3.1.5.2 Expand training and utilization of animal power
- 3.1.5.3 Facilitate access to tractors and tractor-mounted implements especially for farmer organizations and groups

3.1.6 Increase access to credit by female and male farmers

**Strategies**

- 3.1.6.1 Support and empower micro-finance institutions (MFIs) to provide financial services to farmers
- 3.1.6.2 Encourage the formation of farmer club, associations and cooperatives to benefit from financial services
- 3.1.6.3 Develop a legal and regulatory framework for the financial services sector and micro-finance institutions

3.1.7 Promote environmental and land management for sustainable agriculture development

**Strategies**

- 3.1.7.1 Guarantee security in land tenure and transparency in land transfer system
- 3.1.7.2 Ensure implementation of the land re-distribution programme to relieve land pressure and encourage utilisation of arable land
- 3.1.7.3 Promote conservation of land and proper utilization based on applicable instruments such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), audits and land use plans
- 3.1.7.4 Enforce the regulation that requires tobacco estates to allocate a proportion of their land for afforestation
- 3.1.7.5 Develop appropriate technology and extension methods aimed at improving and maintaining soil fertility
- 3.1.7.6 Prevent water, soil and air pollution from agro-chemicals

3.1.8 Develop and promote adoption of appropriate technologies.

**Strategies**

- 3.1.8.1 Strengthen demand-driven research and research based extension system using participatory approaches
- 3.1.8.2 Facilitate capacity building in relevant fields to researchers, extension workers, farmers and other stakeholders
- 3.1.8.3 Strengthen farmer based organizations to improve extension service delivery
- 3.1.8.4 Encourage research, manufacturing of products and marketing of appropriate technologies

3.1.9 Promote Animal Health and Livestock Development.

**Strategies**

- 3.1.9.1 Develop capacity of livestock farmers and extension workers in production, pest and disease prevention, treatment and marketing
- 3.1.9.2 Develop mechanisms to ensure security of livestock in the country
- 3.1.9.3 Encourage the integration of livestock into smallholder farming systems
- 3.1.9.4 Expand animal health service delivery
- 3.1.9.5 Encourage adding value to produce meat and milk products

3.1.10 Promote fisheries and aquaculture development.

**Strategies**

- 3.1.10.1 Integrate fish farming/aquaculture into irrigation development programmes
- 3.1.10.2 Create a conducive investment climate for commercial fisheries and aquaculture
- 3.1.10.3 Empower local communities to manage fisheries resources

3.1.11 Promote sustainable harvesting of natural food resources

**Strategies**

- 3.1.11.1 Ensure sustainable harvesting of foods such as honey, mushrooms, caterpillars, mice, wild fruits and vegetables, etc in accordance with the existing Natural Resource and Wildlife Management policies
- 3.1.11.2 Promote the production of indigenous foods

3.1.12 Improve the coordination and management of food aid and imports.

**Strategies**

- 3.1.12.1 Promote a coordinated approach to planning and management of food aid and commercial import
- 3.1.12.2 Ensure that food aid conforms to the bio-safety and other related legislations

3.1.13 Improve access to domestic, regional and international markets.

**Strategies**

- 3.1.13.1 Strengthen private sector participation to ensure timely provision of inputs and purchase of sufficient produce
- 3.1.13.2 Regulate and facilitate agricultural markets of inputs and outputs at national, regional and international levels to ensure fairness, transparency and competitiveness
- 3.1.13.3 Expand and strengthen the development and rehabilitation of rural infrastructure
- 3.1.13.4 Establish an operational integrated market information system

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.0 SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO FOOD

Access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) to acquire appropriate food for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all those commodity bundles over which a person can establish a command given the legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community in which he/she lives including traditional rights, for example, access to common resources.

### 4.1 To guarantee physical, social and economic access to adequate food at all times

#### 4.1.1 Promote sustainable access to adequate nutritious food and other resources at household and national level

##### Strategies

4.1.1.1 Formalize trade in foods and other economic products in line with bilateral, regional and international trade agreements without compromising sanitary and phytosanitary issues

4.1.1.2 Promote traditional and cultural practices that improve food security for women and men, girls and boys

#### 4.1.2 Increase the purchasing power or the level of real income, for all those who depend on the market as their source of food supplies

##### Strategies

4.1.2.1 Improve market efficiencies to give the poor better prices for their products

4.1.2.2 Promote off-farm employment opportunities through economic empowerment programmes and other income-generating activities

4.1.2.3 Promote equitable distribution of income, especially for women through the improvement of their knowledge of the market functions

#### 4.1.3 Transform subsistence producers into commercial oriented producers

##### Strategies

4.1.3.1 Maximise the potential for earnings from assets of subsistence producers by helping the poor farmers to find for better markets

4.1.3.2 Promote equitable distribution of assets within the household through a clear ownership of the assets

4.1.2.3 Support producers to combat theft in rural area through expanding community policing system

4.1.4 Improve delivery of social support to the poor and socio - economically vulnerable individuals

**Strategies**

- 4.1.4.1 Ensure transparent and cost effective delivery of social economic support functions
- 4.1.4.2 Improve targeting mechanisms for the delivery of safety net programmes including cash based transfer
- 4.1.4.3 Put in place mechanisms to remove all transient obstacles to ensuring access for people cut off from the usual channels of accessing food

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.0 STABILITY IN FOOD

To be food secure, a population, household, or individual must have access to adequate food **at all times**. They should not be at risk of losing access to food as a consequence of an economic or climatic crisis or seasonal food variations. The concept of stability can therefore refer to both availability and access to food.

### 5.1 To guarantee that every individual has adequate and nutritious food that is accessible at the required time and in useable form.

#### 5.1.1 Improve the management of disasters

##### **Strategy**

5.1.1.1 Promote a coordinated approach to disaster preparedness and management

5.1.1.2 Ensure allocation of adequate resources to disaster management

5.1.1.3 Improve system of assessing possibilities of a shock

## CHAPTER 6

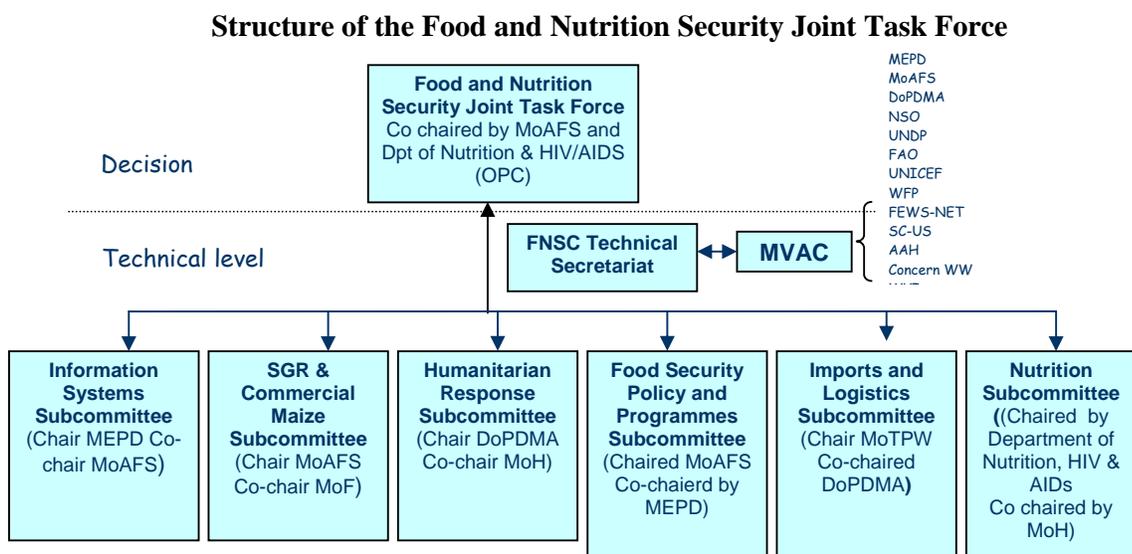
### 6.0 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

To effectively plan and implement the **Food Security Policy** as well as monitor and evaluate its progress a strong infrastructure within Government is required. If we are to guarantee the implementation of the policies and programmes of food security, it is necessary to guarantee the coordination, not only of government institutions, but also of all actors involved in the food economy. It is also imperative to ensure coordination with the National Nutrition Policy under Department of Nutrition HIV/AIDS (OPC).

The Food Security Joint Task Force will therefore be converted to a National Food and Nutrition Security Joint Task Force to bring together and coordinate the implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Security policies which are handled by different government institutions. FNSJTF will report to the Cabinet Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources on matters of food security and to the Cabinet committee on the Economy for nutrition issues.

Since, Food and Nutrition Security Policy Monitoring and Evaluation requires significant inter-ministerial co-operation and coordination, particularly between Department of Nutrition, HIV& AIDS (OPC) (especially the Department of Nutrition and HIV and AIDS) and the Ministries of Agriculture and Health it is necessary that an institutional arrangement that is practical and maximises collaboration, harmonisation and coordination of efforts is in place. FNSJTF will thus be co-chaired by MoAFS and Department of Nutrition HIV/AIDS (OPC).

At technical level there shall be subcommittees dealing with various aspects of food security and nutrition.



## CHAPTER 7

### 7.0 FOOD AND NUTRITION INFORMATION SYSTEMS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Food and nutrition security information is a necessary element of the national goal of reducing food insecurity and malnutrition since it helps in decision making, policy and program interventions. In Malawi, there are several food security and nutrition related information systems currently being used by sectoral ministries and other Non Governmental Organisations without any proper coordination. These information domains include the following:

- (a) Agricultural statistics (crop production estimates, gender based, livestock census, agriculture census input/output market prices, coping mechanisms);
- (b) Health and nutrition information (nutrition indicators, health statistics);
- (c) Population statistics;
- (d) Demographic and Health statistics;
- (e) Macro-economic information (national accounts, trade statistics, exchange rates, inflation);
- (f) Natural resources information (land, water, meteorology, environmental factors)
- (g) Market information systems; and
- (h) Other institutional arrangements for specific collection, analysis and dissemination of food and nutrition information such as the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC), Health Information System (HIS), Integrated Household Survey (IHS) and the Malawi Socio-Economic Database (MASEDA) need to be recognized and enhanced to support this integrated monitoring system.

The above domains are in different sectoral Ministries and are managed separately. This monitoring and evaluation system will coordinate the management of all the food and nutrition security data and information. It will also serve to provide all the relevant stakeholders with up to date information on the implementation status of the food and nutrition security policy based on the implementation plan to be developed as part of this policy.

For successful implementation of the two policies, there should be regular policy monitoring in order to keep track of the outcome. Further, there is a need to institutionalize the M&E of the policy within government structures to ensure its appropriation. Additionally, external monitoring and evaluation systems through the civil society, donor community and other stakeholders will be promoted and supported to complement the national system. Harmonising and improving Food Security Information Systems (FNSIS) for evidence based interventions is therefore crucial for the Food FSP and NNP.

The monitoring and evaluation system of the NNP and FSP will address the following:

- a) Updating the existing institutional structures and systems for food and nutrition security data collection, analysis and management
- b) Strengthening institutional set-up and capacities to produce, analyse and disseminate information

- c) Facilitating in-depth analysis on the quality and optimal quantity of information for decision-making
- d) Improving technical infrastructure and skills for data collection and management and stimulate demand for information
- e) Supporting creation of information products that are appropriate, timely and demand-driven
- f) Encouraging utilisation of properly and accurately analysed prevailing information for decision making by key stakeholders
- g) Facilitating development of appropriate linkages between decentralized decision-making at district and national levels
- h) Strengthening tracking and monitoring of food and nutrition surveillance systems
- i) Evaluating the impact of on going food and nutrition security programmes
- j) Establishing a communication strategy to ensure a shared vision and understanding of the policy