



LAND REFORM

Presentation and Group Discussion

PRESENTATION

The presentation for the land reform thematic group was prepared by Professor Lloyd of the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Zimbabwe⁷.

The paper discussed the land reform process which occurred from February 2000-August 2002. He sought to articulate the outcome and objectives of the land reform process. The “agrarian crisis” has resulted from this process, and the paper proposed the way forward which could assist in solving not only the agrarian crisis, but the national crisis as well. In addition, the paper revealed a framework to assist agrarian recovery and reconstruction.



Professor Lloyd Sachikonye

Government objectives of the Land Reform Programme

- ◆ To achieve domestic food self-sufficiency,
- ◆ To attain a good balance between equity, productivity and sustainability,
- ◆ To expand employment opportunities,
- ◆ To promote emergent large-scale black commercial farmers,
- ◆ To reduce poverty among rural households and farm workers,
- ◆ To undertake reform of the land tenure system and
- ◆ To acquire 5 million ha for redistribution within 5 years (Zimbabwe Government, 1990, 1998).

Zanu PF abandoned this approach when it calculated that it faced the prospect of an electoral defeat in the 2000 election. In its place, a new radical, opportunistic and chaotic approach was adopted to pre-empt such a defeat. Scores of farm workers, farmers and opposition party supporters were killed, and hundreds injured in the violence that ensued between 2000 and 2002. The situation remains unsettled today as land invasions or threats of invasions continue. Dialogue with key stake-holders such as the Commercial Farmers Union, the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of

Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) and others have been scuttled as groups such as war veterans took centre stage in the *jambanja*⁸.

The outcomes of this programme have included:

- ◆ A massive amount of land transfer (from an originally projected 5 million ha over 5 years to about 11 million ha over 2 years),
- ◆ The promotion of the interests of new small and large black farmers,
- ◆ The eviction and decline in number of white commercial farmers from about 4 500 to between 600 and 900 remaining active farmers,
- ◆ A loss of jobs by about 200 000 farm workers (and livelihoods of over 1 million households) supported by this farm-worker population,

“The communal areas have largely been forgotten.”

- ◆ Intensified poverty and especially food insecurity due to income loss,
- ◆ Lower food output consistently since it began.

7 See Appendix 6 for an outline of Sachikonye’s presentation.

8 *Jambanja* is a recently developed Shona word meaning chaos or violence, specifically used to describe the recent political instability.

Communal Areas

Sachikonye noted that, while one major motivation of land reform was ostensibly to “de-congest” the communal areas, it would appear that apart from the beneficiaries of the A1 model, the communal areas have been largely forgotten. There seems to be no concrete programme to rehabilitate them from the depths of poverty (more than 80 per cent of Zimbabwe’s poor live in rural areas). There are no large-scale transfers of resources (credit and related inputs, infrastructure etc.) when compared with current preoccupation with the new A1 and A2 models. Moreover, the land reform programme is largely silent regarding the future of the communal areas and their potential for development.

Less than 5% of farm workers received land.

Farm workers

About 70 per cent of farm workers have lost jobs and regular incomes during the past two years. Less than 5 per cent received land; many are piece-workers while others drift into informal trade and gold panning. Their food security has diminished; many now depend on food assistance, their standard of living has deteriorated, and their vulnerability has significantly increased.

“The resolution of the land crisis will hinge on whether, and how, the broader economic and political crisis is resolved.”

Recommendations

The presentation stated that the land question has not been solved “once and for all” despite strident government rhetoric. Already criticisms of corruption, unfairness, opaque-ness and gross capacity under-utilization (of acquired land) have been levelled against the programme. Production has plummeted significantly, and there are endemic shortages of vital inputs (seed, fertilizer, chemicals etc.) owing to forex shortage and poor planning. The presentation therefore provided the following recommendations to build a sustained reform programme. Most of the recommended measures constitute pre-conditions for a turn-around in the reform process:

- ◆ Restoration of peace, stability and the rule of law in the agrarian sector and in the country as a whole.
- ◆ An Independent Audit of “who got what” from land reform, how much land was allocated, how much was not, how much is being utilized or not being utilized.
- ◆ Security of tenure and land rights need to be addressed in view of the massive investment and collateral required by the new farmers.
- ◆ A quick recovery of the agrarian sector, including incentives for “old” and “new” farmers to go into full production under conditions of stability, respect of law and property rights, and of confidence. This will require a massive credit and infrastructure programme.
- ◆ Creating suitable conditions for food security.
- ◆ Nurturing and strengthening the agriculture-industry production chain.
- ◆ Management and resolution of land-related conflicts.
- ◆ Building consensus between key stakeholders, including farmers (large and small), farm workers, government (central and local) and NGOs involved land-related work. A National Land Forum that consults widely

with stakeholders on these issues (as exists on economic issues) could be play a facilitative role in building consensus and confidence.

Conclusion

The resolution of the land crisis will hinge on whether, and how, the broader economic and political crisis is resolved. As long as the crisis persists, he advised, the prospects of success remain bleak. Therefore, to speak of the land question in “transition” is therefore to be optimistic that there will be change in the political and economic spheres. But, he urged, the change will not come about without a sustained struggle, mobilization, alliance-building and strategic planning.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Following the presentation by Prof Sachikonye, the small group on land reform, resettlement, and the agriculture sector discussed their concerns⁹.

The group made the following observations:

- The current land reform programme was launched in 2000 after the referendum. It was a political tool to win the rural folk.
- Due to the *jambanja* Zimbabwe has become a grain importer, importing from countries to whom it used to export.
- Farm workers and the people residing in the communal areas have been forgotten.
- The group agreed that conditions of peace and stability must be returned to in the sector. There is a need to return to the rule of law.
- Participants reiterated the need to examine issues of land rights and security, and the need to develop systems to better address land-related conflicts.
- Participants also insisted that land reform should be made sustainable. Problems of corruption and the shortage of basic inputs must be investigated and addressed.
- The idea of one person one farm must be honoured.
- The Land Reform Programme did not take into consideration gender issues in land ownership.
- The group supported the proposal for a National Land Forum, to include small, medium, and large-scale farmers, government, and relevant civil society actors to identify the stakeholders and the necessary beneficiaries in the land reform process.

The group also raised the following questions:

- Is this conversation being held with the view of seeking redress now, or is it to prepare for after the Mugabe regime is gone?
- What is happening on the land now will have serious implications for the future. Can the land issue be factored into the negotiations?
- Why does Prof. Sachikonye's paper not cover minorities' cases?

The group also answered the following questions:

1. What is the most appropriate system of land tenure? What should be the place of private property in Zimbabwe's system of land tenure?

In 1994 the Rukuni Commission was the starting point for identifying a programme for sustainable land utilisation. It was observed that 80% of the population is poor. It was noted that access to land enables the poor to lead a better life but its very critical that there be stability in land use and people have security of tenure. Cognisant of that, the Rukuni Commission recommended defending the rights to access to land in legislation, so that people could go to court and defend these rights.

“Land Reform did not consider gender issues.”

2. Who should be the beneficiaries of a land reform programme? Are they being targeted now?

The intended beneficiaries of the land reform programme should include women, but that they have been marginalised. Similarly, the farm-workers have been displaced instead of being empowered. The use of land for political rewards needed to be revisited, as the issue of one person one farm was merely rhetorical.

There has been a dramatic decline in agricultural productivity, and beneficiaries to the programme should include those who can help to increase productivity. In addition, minorities and the landless should be targeted, and the process should be inclusive. Students and experts should also be involved to ensure productivity.

3. How do we ensure productive and appropriate utilisation of the land?

In order to achieve productive utilisation, appropriate ground work must be done before people are resettled. This included ensuring the availability of financial support, identification of farming capacity, provision of equipment, the

9 This discussion was facilitated by Pastor Zivanayi Manyika and was minuted by Abel Chimoko of MMPZ.

identification of objectives, and targets for productivity and sustainability. There is a need to operate according to farming regimes, to ensure access to capital and loans for farmers, and to control disease and ensure management systems to ensure environmental sustainability.

4. What have been the socio-economic effects of the land reform programme?

The shortage of food, the loss of forex, reduced industrial productivity, the loss of infrastructure and investment, increased unemployment and international exclusion are some of the effects of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The land reform programme should have increased productivity, reduced poverty and benefited the whole nation. Instead, the programme has increased poverty for the majority of marginalised Zimbabweans and enabled an elite few to become extremely rich.

5. What should be done with the displaced farm workers and to rationalise plantation and farm workers' conditions of service under the new agricultural model? What should be done with the new/resettled farmers? What should be the position on compensation in the event of expropriation?

Marginalised populations, including the farm workers should be accommodated into whatever new system is developed. Special funds need to be created for the farm workers and for the new/resettled farmers.

6. What capital, human, and other investments need to be made in order to revive the waning agricultural sector?

Increase Zimbabwe's international credibility, create a land fund, which donors should be approached for contributions.

7. What should be done with the communal areas? How do we develop and rehabilitate these areas?

The partisan approach towards land utilisation should be abandoned, and an independent body, inclusive and made up of all stakeholders, answerable to the legislature and not the executive be established

8. Is the current land audit involving ALL stakeholders? How do we ensure that this process involves all the beneficiaries, and develops a way forward appropriate for all who depend on the land?

Research should be focussed on these needs, and technological developments should be exploited for this purpose.

“Marginalised populations should be accommodated into whatever new system is developed.”

RESOLUTIONS

In its presentation to the plenary, the group made the following recommendations:

- The Rukuni Commission should form the baseline for dialogue as it had come up with security of tenure systems that would protect the poor
- Need for an inclusive program to include all groups especially non-Zimbabwean farm workers
- Need to give financial support to farm workers
- There was need for a non-partisan Land Committee to report to Parliament
- Need for infrastructural development in the farming communities