



# ESWATINI ZERO HUNGER STRATEGIC REVIEW

December 2018



## Foreword

The Kingdom of Eswatini is repositioning itself to towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This follows the endorsement and localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in June 2016. Ending Hunger (SDG 2) is one of the prioritized goals that the country has considered in the medium term. This is enshrined in all national development frameworks, such as the National Development Strategy (NDS), the Strategy for Sustainable Development & Inclusive Growth (SSDIG), the National Development Plan 2019/2023, the Kingdom of Eswatini Strategic Roadmap 2019/2022 and other sectoral policies and programmes including the National Food Security Policy and Eswatini National Agricultural Investment Plan (ENAIP). Experience has shown that, with the right mix of policies, financial and human resources ending hunger and under-nutrition is possible.

The Eswatini Zero Hunger Strategic Review (EZHSR) was conducted as a first step towards achieving SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The link between hunger and poverty in the local context was evident. The Review analysed the current food and nutrition security situation in the country and identified opportunities to strengthen programmes and strategies towards the attainment of zero hunger.

The review confirms that the country is food insecure and cannot meet its national dietary requirements for grain or protein sources. Furthermore, tackling issues of hunger hinges on poverty, thus there are positive spill over effects on simultaneously achieving SDG 1 and 2. This report provides a renewed focus on how to respond to the food and nutrition insecurity challenge. It is envisaged that the response plan for ending hunger, once developed, will provide a mechanism that brings together the different sectors led by the Government working with civil society, the private sector, the development partners including the United Nations and communities for collective impact in the area of food and nutrition security, sustainable food systems and poverty reduction.

Sincere gratitude is extended to the Regional Administrators, Regional Secretaries and the Community Chiefs and Headman for their support during this exercise. Appreciation is also accorded to the United Nations Agencies (WFP, FAO and UNDP) for the technical and financial support. Together we will eliminate hunger and poverty in Eswatini by 2030.

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## Acknowledgements

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Special appreciation goes to the contribution of primary data collectors who collected data from the different chiefdoms that participated in this review. The Ministry is also grateful to the contributions of all people who may not have been cited here for their contribution in different capacities during the process of the Eswatini Zero Hunger Strategic Review through to the preparation of the report.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.0 Introduction

The Government of Eswatini has endorsed and domesticated the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and further prioritized SDG 2 in an effort to end hunger among its citizens in line with the Global Zero Hunger Challenge. This challenge calls for member states *to end hunger, achieve food security & improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*. In this regard the country working with key sectors undertook the Eswatini Zero Hunger Strategic Review (EZHSR) in an effort to inform implementation of SDGs 1 and 2. Achieving Zero Hunger is a priority that is articulated in national development frameworks, in particular the Strategy for Sustainable Development & Inclusive Growth (SSDIG) - and other sectoral policies and programmes including the Eswatini National Agricultural Investment Plan (ENAIIP).

The Review seeks to analyse the obtaining food and nutrition situation and its linkages to poverty in the country and identify opportunities to strengthen current and future programmes and strategies aimed towards the attainment of zero hunger and ending poverty by 2030. The specific objectives of the review are:

- ❖ Provide a comprehensive understanding of the poverty, food security and nutrition context for Eswatini, including strategies, policies, programmes, institutional capacities and resource flows;
- ❖ Highlight previous progress and identify challenges Eswatini must overcome to achieve zero hunger by 2030 in line with the targets of SDG 2;
- ❖ Identify and prioritise policy and programme actions that are necessary to accelerate progress towards zero hunger, and recommend how these actions may be implemented.

## Methodology

Both primary and secondary data sources were used during the consultative process of the Review. Primary data sources include Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with Chiefdom Leaders (Chiefs) Regional Development Teams (RDTs), Community Development Teams (CDTs) in all four regions of the country and a randomly selected 110 chiefdoms from the 55 Constituencies (Tinkhundla). Another level of key informant discussions were held with policy makers, officials from Government, private sector, civil society and development partners. A qualitative analysis was done, which resulted in a strategic review report and policy briefs.

## Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The country has policy, legislative and programmatic measures in place to reduce hunger. The National Development Strategy (Vision 2022) aims towards a high-income status for Eswatini as opposed to its current lower middle-class status. Eswatini endorsed the Strategy for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth (SSDIG) 2030 that aims to reach the targets of Vision 2022 and enhance inclusive socio-economic growth.

Some policies have remained draft versions while others require reviewing to align with latest developments at global and national levels.

The Comprehensive Agriculture Sector Policy (CASP) provides a clear guidance on policy options at sectoral level and portrays necessary measures to enhance sustainable development of the agriculture sector and its contribution to overall economic growth, poverty alleviation, food security and sustainable natural resource management.

### Findings regarding

#### **Pillar 1: Access to adequate food throughout the year:**

The country is food insecure and cannot meet its national dietary requirements for grain or protein sources. Maize, which is a key food security crop, remains inadequate in the country as approximately only 50 percent of the national grain requirement is produced due to low productivity of 1.5 tonnes/ha compared to the ideal of 4-6 tonnes/ha. Food import statistics also point towards low levels of food self-sufficiency in animal products, legumes and vegetables. With the wide spread of poverty levels and low household incomes, coupled with high food prices, it means access to food all year round is a challenge for the poorest groups, particularly rural dwellers.

#### **Pillar 2: Zero Stunted Children Less Than Two Years:**

The country has a high rate of stunting (23.6 percent) in children below 24 months and this increases the burden on public, social services and health cost incurred by the Government, communities and the affected families. For example, in 2009, about 3.1 percent of GDP was lost as a result of child undernutrition. Stunting compromises the overall child development and thus their contribution to socio-economic development of the country.

#### **Pillar 3: All Food Systems Are Sustainable:**

There is a decline in agricultural production levels and minimum utilisation of agricultural technologies. On the other hand, the country has limited legislation and policies framework for a sustainable food system. Over the last few decades,

climate change has negatively impacted the country's food systems, resulting in weakened capacity in food production, which compromises current production trends.

#### **Pillar 4: Increase in Smallholder Productivity and Incomes:**

There is low productivity for smallholder farmers in the country due to inadequate capacity and poor access to finance for venturing into commercial agricultural production. Productivity regarding crop and livestock in the communal areas is generally constrained by high frequency of droughts, low farming technologies, low investment in inputs and equipment, low off-take rates as well as structural exclusion from the formal markets that offer better pricing. Furthermore, the lack of value addition processes contributes to low income returns. The low productivity coupled with high cost of production and low producer prices reduces incomes of smallholder farmers.

#### **Pillar 5: Zero Food Loss and Food Waste**

The country experiences food losses averaging 30 percent for all the food produce combined and up to 50 percent for some value chains. The high food loss and wastage means that the country is not only losing the value of the food but also the extra incurred cost for moving it through the value chain. This situation points to the lack of facilities for pre- and post-harvest management (storage and processing) of food.

#### **Pillar 6: Proportion of People Living in Poverty in All its Dimensions Reduced by Half**

Eswatini is a lower middle-income country with GDP per capita of USD 3,791. However, high levels of poverty and inequality continue to exist with 58.9 percent of the population living below the poverty line and a high GINI coefficient of 0.61. Vulnerability assessments indicate increasing food insecurity since 2010 with a high of 26 percent of the population affected in 2018. The food insecurity prevalence is intrinsic to the high poverty levels in the country resulting in chronic vulnerability among the poorest.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Policy reforms**

There is a need to finalize policies that have remained drafts and review those that are out-dated and develop a comprehensive implementation framework to guide full integration and implementation of the food and nutrition security related policies.

## **2. Pillar-specific Recommendations**

**Pillar 1:** Create an enabling environment to increase food production and employment opportunities that will allow the private sector to visibly participate in food security. Improve technologies that can enhance diversification, sustainable production and productivity and intensify adherence to climate smart technologies and standards to strengthen resilience and expand social protection systems to sustain the growth of smallholder farmer-led food availability.

**Pillar 2:** Strengthen and improve maternal and child health with a special focus to prevention of stunting. Strengthen nutrition in health promotion strategies and service delivery capacities in primary health care systems and community-based care to prevent stunting and acute malnutrition.

**Pillar 3:** Provide enabling infrastructure with requisite capacities for the efficient functioning of the food systems. Ensure industry adherence to set quality market standards, technologies and practices for climate smart agriculture that will mitigate the effects of climate change for improved productivity.

**Pillar 4:** Strengthen capacity and export market-led production and processing for smallholder farmers including access to finance. Fast-track effective implementations of special economic zones to include agriculture.

**Pillar 5:** Strengthen pre- and post-harvest management throughout the value chain to prevent food losses. Improve storage and aggregation infrastructure to enable access to markets. Strengthen capacity of farmers on harvesting, storage, processing and preservation of food.

**Pillar 6:** Implement coordinated development initiatives or support targeting the multidimensional nature of poverty. Strengthen social protection programmes as it relates to food and nutrition security.

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