



ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF LANDS, AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, WATER AND RURAL RESETTLEMENT

YOUTH DESK MODEL

1.0. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Agriculture sector continues to be the back-bone of the Zimbabwean economy, contributing between 16-20 percent of the GDP and 40 percent to exports. It is worth noting that youth in agriculture play a significant role. The Agricultural sector is considered strategic in terms of high employment opportunities since most production systems are labour intensive. On the same note the use of technology in agriculture is another pull factor in as far as youth in agriculture are concerned. In addition it is also a significant foreign currency earner thereby improving the country's terms of trade. The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement has eight colleges of agriculture namely Chibero, Gwebi, Kushinga Phikelela, Esigodini, Rio-tinto, Mlezu and Shamva.

The agricultural industry has been on a free-fall for over a decade, by 2005 exports were down to about US\$72 million. In 2009, export value was further down to US\$40 million, and this negative trend continued and the industry was projected to export about US\$39 million worth in 2010. The downward trend has continued.

The sector is now dominated by many small-holder farmers usually youth with technical skills but lacking capital to finance production as the sector is capital intensive. These new players are now getting organized and there is now an enhanced coordination. The coming on board of Federation of Young Farmers Clubs and other Associations in agriculture such as Zimbabwe Agro-tourism Platform, Zimbabwe Young Agricultural Exporters Association among them has created huge opportunities for the youth to take agriculture as a noble profession. The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement has an active Youth in Agriculture Unit (Youth Desk) that coordinate activities done by the youth in the agricultural sector. Zimbabwe Young Agricultural Exporters Association is as well helping in addressing some

market challenges being experienced by youth in agricultural export sector such as subjection to unfair competition from imports from neighbouring countries.

The Ministry wants to ensure that agriculture retains its critical space in the economy. One way of doing this is through reviving the young farmers clubs and ensuring that all the agricultural graduates from colleges prioritise farming as a noble career rather than seeking employment as the situation used to be when they were absorbed by the Ministry and the private sector. This will as well help in improving the production levels. This requires the tenacity, courage, determination and foresight of all stakeholders in the agricultural value chains.

The starting point is an appreciation that young farmers and (including, men and women, urban and per-urban farmers) are key to the development and success of the agricultural industry.

The Ministry would be working with various stakeholders to encourage smallholder farmers and young farmers to be involved in horticulture, animal husbandry, agroforestry, value addition of all the agricultural produce and the use of technology and modern farming methods and develop viable agri-businesses. The information gathered will feed into Youth in Agriculture Strategy for Zimbabwe.

It is against this background that there is need for involvement of young farmers through sector strategy/policy and coordination to increase productivity and competitiveness of the sector.

Youth in Agriculture

In terms of Zimbabwe's Constitution Section 20 Youth refers to people between the ages of 15 and 35 years. However age Dynamics in agriculture has been a subject of scholarly debate. The argument being that those between 15 and 17 cannot be farmers given that the Ministry also in partnership with the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare is working to eradicate child labour in agriculture. Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, Zimbabwe Young Farmer's Trust and other farmer representatives have suggested that young farmers are those between 18 and 39 years. As an entity responsible for Youth in Agriculture we fully are in agreement with the young farmer groupings which are of the view that young farmers (Youth in Agriculture) should be between 18 and 39 years.

The Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement Ministry support industries with raw materials. Research has shown that 60 percent of the raw materials required by the industrial sector is provided by Agriculture. On the same note agriculture contributes 40 percent of total export earnings. The youths contribute to 65% of the population according to National Youth Policy.

Despite the high level of employment in the sector, it directly contributes only 15-19 percent to annual GDP, depending on the rainfall pattern (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995), and this is a statistic that understates the true importance and dominance of the agricultural industry. It is generally accepted that when agriculture performs poorly, the rest of the economy suffers.

Guided by President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Cde E.D Mnangagwa the Establishment of Youth in Agriculture Unit shortly called **Y.I.A.U** (Youth Desk in Agriculture is in line with his vision to ensure Zimbabwe is a middle income economy by the year 2030

□ In this regard, the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts, and Recreation and other Stakeholders are concerted exploiting strategies to enhance youth participation in the economy. Youth Desks were created in every Government Ministry and Departments to produce tangible and practical results for the improvement of standard of living of our young people and to also ensure that young generation claim their space in every sector of the economy. Going forward, my Government will now refocuses these Youth Desks to ensure that they are in line with the current thinking of the new dispensation and national aspirations embodied in our vision 2030 □ ED 2018, at the opening of the 26th Session of the Junior Parliament, City Sports Harare.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Correcting the poor branding of agriculture and correcting a perception of agriculture as an unattractive career option for the youth
- Promoting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, climate issues and water management.
- Promoting competitiveness of all types of agriculture and the viability of farms.
- Resetting, Preserving and enhancing ecosystems depend on agriculture, water and climate issues
- Facilitating the revitalising of agriculture at the primary, secondary and higher education levels and with special focus on agricultural colleges and agricultural training centres.
- Mentorship: To introduce mentorship programmes to guide the youth on ways of making a living from agriculture with a special focus on college graduates from agricultural institutions and school-leavers.
- To support country level efforts at developing an enabling environment for youth participation at all levels of the agriculture value chain
- To address compelling evidence of ageing farmer population in the country which must be addressed to facilitate sustainability in agriculture production? The average age of farmer in Zimbabwe is 55 years and life expectancy averages between 55 □ 60 years.
 - To help reduce Zimbabwe food import bill for maize, cooking oil, frozen chicken and meat and also help in reducing the continuous rising of food items. The Youth will help through relevant department in increasing the supply of food produce.
 - To address the poor image of persons involved in agriculture, especially in the rural communities needs to be changed and the youth are the ideal catalyst such change given their greater prosperity and wiliness to adapt new ideas, concept and technology which are all important to changing the way agriculture is practiced and perceived.
 - Increased employment particularly rural employment is required as youth unemployment is on the increase.

- The **Y.I.A.U** (Youth Desk) will provide productive alternatives for the engagement of the youth to reduce crime like stock theft and other social problems.
- Helping Youth through relevant departments to have diversified, modern farming practices.

Chief Programs Coordinator roles:

- Projects and entrepreneurial programs coordination in colleges and farming communities
- Updating the Ministry database on Youth in agriculture matters
- Coordinating National Young Farmer Awards and related programs
- Coordination and liaison with the Zimbabwe registered agricultural Youth Organisations or Associations.
- Mentorship for the youth at colleges and universities with the aim to drive them into agri-business
- Coordinating agricultural seminars and workshop on behalf of the Ministry and sharing relevant information with regards to policies and public opinion and as well as avenues youth in farming can get from the Ministry
- Organising and facilitating HIV and AIDS awareness programs for the Youth in the agricultural sector.
- Recommendations and proof of residence for young farmers
- Assisting farmers in preparing budgets, project proposals and cash flows.
- Reports to the Ministry through the Director Agricultural Education

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- ❖ Zimbabwe Youth Bill that call for the establishment of Youth Desks in all Government Ministries
- ❖ Section 15 of the Zimbabwean Constitution Involvement of all in Food Security
- ❖ Section 20 of the Constitution □Support for the Youth
- ❖ The National Youth Policy

- ❖ The African Youth Charter
- ❖ The Sustainable Development Goal number numbers 1 and 2 that aim to address poverty and total eradication of hunger
- ❖ Transitional Stabilisation Program and the Zimbabwe Vision 2030
- ❖ Treasury Concurrence as defined by the 2019 National Budget
- ❖ Agricultural Recovery Program
- ❖ National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1)

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