

AGRICULTURAL CAMPAIGN 2022-2023 LAUNCHED

Government without a concrete strategy to link small farmers in the Zambezi Valley to the market

- “We produce, but we don’t know where to sell”. These were the words that marked the launch of the 2022/23 agrarian campaign in Liaze, Milange district, Zambézia province. After displaying tons of products from the previous campaign, small commercial farmers in the Zambezi Valley asked the Governor of Zambézia province for help in creating solutions for their connection to markets, meeting “fair” buyers.



On the 14th of November, the Government of Mozambique launched the 2022 – 2023 agrarian campaign. This is an annual ceremony that represents the official opening of the period of agricultural activity. Under the motto “Sustainable agriculture 2022/23, transforming lives”, the central ceremonies were chaired by the President of the Republic, Filipe Nyusi, in the province of Cabo Delgado. An hour later, similar ceremonies were reproduced in the provinces, with the guidance of local governors.

Under the project “The Power of Voices Partnership – FAIR for All: Enabling pro-poor value chains in Zambézia”¹, implemented with the support of OXFAM Mozambique and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) and NANA participated in the ceremony in the district of Milange, locality of Liaze, led by the Governor of Zambezia, Pio Matos.

The 2021/22 campaign was characterized by several challenging phenomena. As early as the first quarter of 2022, two extreme weather events caused massive damage. First Tropical Storm Ana², which reached the mainland in central and northern Mozambique, affecting five provinces (Nampula, Zambézia, Tete, Niassa, Sofala and Manica). Two months later, specifically on March 11, 2022, tropical cyclone Gombe³ entered Mozambique with winds and gusts of 165 and 230 km/h, respec-

tively. The entry point was Mossuril, in the province of Nampula, impacting the provinces of Nampula, Zambézia and Sofala. These factors have a major impact on agriculture as it is the sector most exposed to the risk of destruction, affecting the availability of food.

Aware of these challenges, Pio Matos urged producers to adapt to sustainable agricultural practices that are suitable for soil conditions. He highlighted the role of extension agents in the success of agricultural activity. “The goal is to achieve Zero Hunger, but for that, it is necessary to produce a lot to sell. It is important that we transform subsistence agriculture to market-oriented commercial agriculture”.

However, the Governor of Zambézia did not mention how the problems with buyers of agricultural products, known as “Bangladesh”, will be resolved, which, in addition to stipulating very low prices, often use faulty scales to deceive producers. How will the information asymmetry between producer and buyer be resolved in the context of forced price liberalization? How will the weak bargaining power of producers, who often deliver their products at unfair prices due to lack of access to markets, be resolved? How will the challenge of the 578 extension workers in the province of Zambezia who are inactive in crucial periods of agricultural activity, due to the lack of fuel to supply the motorbikes, be overcome?

Difficulty in accessing “fair” buyers could derail the gains of small farmers in the 2021/22 campaign

The moment of the launch of the agrarian campaign also served for small farmers to present their perspectives and concerns to the Governor of Zambézia.

The first expressions are of joy from the farmers who, faced with the challenges posed by climate shocks and high production costs, managed to remain standing until the harvest. However, with no expectations of where to sell their products, producers were concerned about the next steps. “We

ask for help to bring our products to buyers”.

Market access is one of the crucial factors in leveraging smallholder farmers and enabling value chains that work for the poor. Products from the 2021/22 campaign are relatively more expensive due to climate shocks and high production costs, mainly caused by rising fuel prices. However, due to poor access to “fair” markets, many small farmers were unable to pass on the costs in their selling price.

<?> LAUNCHED AGRICULTURAL CAMPAIGN 2022-2023 initiative “We produce, but we don’t know where to sell” are the words that mark the launch of the 2022/23 agricultural campaign in the province of Zambézia, in the district of

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Without access to optional markets, and fearful of spoilage of their products, smallholders in the Zambezi Valley have no option but to sell their products to resellers known as “Bangladesh” - who impose unfair prices for their own benefits. These buyers dictate prices and ignore the costs incurred in production, generating huge losses for farmers, and compromising their growth.

Therefore, the CDD considers that, in addition to providing inputs and extension agents as referenced by the Governor of Zambézia, the Government must intervene at other levels that allow the challenges faced in specific provincial contexts to be overcome. These interventions could bring the country ever closer to achieving food security and food independence.



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