

Regional Issues E-discussion

The following set of questions is provided as an indicative list of issues that will structure the e discussion; it is not intended to be either exhaustive or prescriptive. Contributors should feel free to offer reflections on any topic, as well as comments on the theme paper, even if these comments fall outside the scope of the questions being discussed on any given day. However, the summaries of the e discussion will broadly follow the topics and sequencing set out below.

Discussion: Monday 23 June to Thursday 26 June: Regional trade, stocks and commodity markets

1. Questions on regional trade in staple foods, stocks and commodity markets

- To what extent can regional trade be used to solve problems of making available staple foods at moderate and stable prices?
- What needs to be done to facilitate increased intra-regional trade in staple foods?
- What are the dangers of adopting a more liberal trade regime in grains?
- Is it necessary to have public stocks of grains, or can stocking be left to private enterprise?
- If there are public stocks to be held, at what level: regional or national? Should these be in physical reserves, or in funds that can be used to buy in supplies off national, regional and international markets?
- If there are public stocks, who will manage them, to what rules, and how much will they publish details of operations?
- Is there scope for using futures and options on commodity exchanges such as Safex to insure against price risks?

Discussion: Friday 27 June to Monday 30 June: Regional cooperation in early warning systems and disaster preparedness

2. Questions on regional cooperation in early warning and disaster preparedness

- What indicators, methods and techniques should be used when collecting data for vulnerability assessments and early warnings?
- How should the information be analysed and results disseminated so as to contribute to public policy more effectively? How can the information and analysis be used to assist private actors in food systems?
- What else can or needs to be done regionally to warn of problems and prepare for emergencies?

Discussion: Tuesday 1 July to Thursday 3 July: Migration — and any other regional issues

3. Questions on migration

- Should migration be encouraged, tolerated or discouraged between countries Southern Africa? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such movements?
- Should more be done to make available information to potential migrants on the opportunities, advantages and drawbacks of migration?
- What should be done, and which is feasible, to protect the rights of those have migrated — rights to fair treatment at work, minimum wages, medical attention, and education for any accompanying dependants?
- How can remittances from migrants to households and relatives in areas in origin be facilitated? How can these funds be used wisely?

E discussion closes afternoon Thursday 3 July 2003