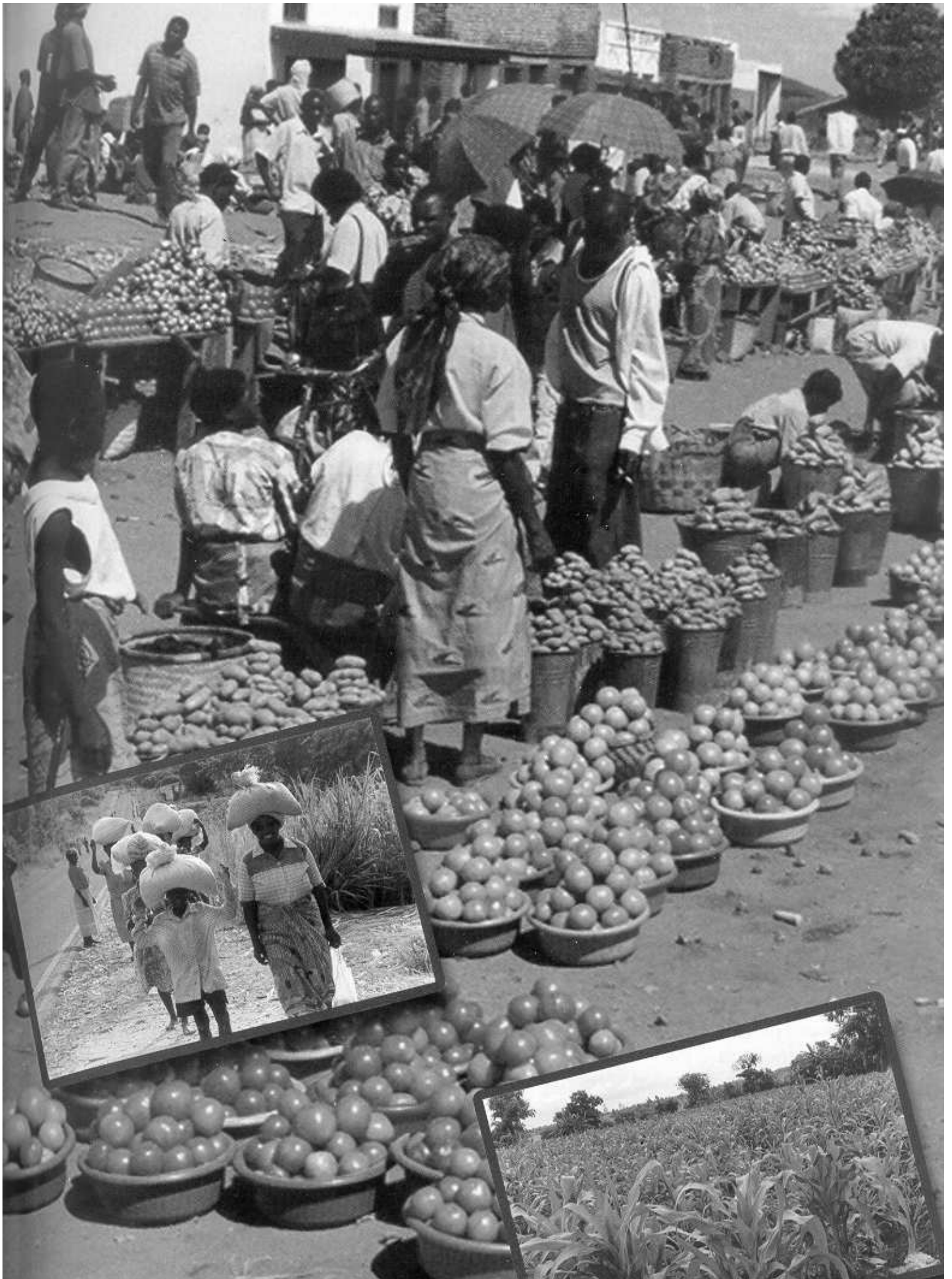




**GUARANTEERING
FOOD SECURITY**



2. Guaranteeing Food Security

OUR AIM

Food is a necessity for human existence. Yet 65 percent of all Malawians live below the poverty line. Many families do not have food from January to March of every year. The UDF government will not let people die out of starvation. It will continue distributing food to the needy including the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and those living in adjunct poverty. The UDF will provide more farm inputs to the poor in order to increase yields and guarantee food security.

For most Malawians, maize is the only staple food they have grown up consuming. The UDF wants to encourage dietary diversification to decrease over-reliance on maize. The UDF will continue to encourage people to grow and eat cassava, bananas, potatoes, rice, pumpkins, and vegetables. The UDF will also intensify efforts to increase food production through winter cropping and irrigation methods using low cost technologies. Farmers will be supplied with treadle pumps, sprinklers, and motorized pumps.

The UDF government also wants to expand the agro processing industry. By adding value to food products, farmers will get more money for their products. Additionally, wastage of perishable foods such as fruits, tomatoes, and vegetables will be avoided. To encourage private sector participation in food processing, a favourable tax policy will be introduced.

WHAT WE PLEDGED

In the 1994 and 1999 manifestoes, the UDF government pledged to increase access to farm inputs and improve the financial credit system for small holder farmers. The government promised to promote crop diversification for both consumption and export markets. UDF vowed to see an end to hunger and starvation and guaranteed food security for all Malawians.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

Food Security

- The UDF government implemented the Starter Pack Scheme in 1998/99 and an Extended Targeted Inputs Programme (ETIP) covering 3 million beneficiaries. As a result the production of maize has improved from 1.6 million metric tons in 2002 to 2.2 million metric tons in 2003.
- The UDF government diversified small holder agricultural production into drought resistant food staple which have contributed significantly to food security. Bean production levels and yields have increased substantially from 38,788 metric tons to 108,928 metric tons. Groundnut production has gained a 25 percent yield increase and cassava production has increased to 1.7 million metric tons. The country is producing 1.3 million metric tons of sweet potatoes and 88,184 metric tons of rice.
- The government promoted the establishment of three new big bird hatcheries at Choma, Mikolongwe, and Bwemba with a total capacity of 500,000 eggs and 31 new mini-hatcheries, each with a capacity setting of 900 eggs for distribution to district agricultural development offices.
- The UDF government encouraged NGOs, farmers and private drug



Providing Farm Inputs To All Rural Communities

distributors to participate in the delivery of livestock services such as artificial insemination, vaccinations, and farmer training.

- The government trained 20 farmer technicians and 30 livestock development committee members. The farmer technicians carry out artificial insemination in the milk shed areas in order to complement government efforts in livestock development.
- The government has established 15 pasture nurseries of Rhodes grass, Napier grass and Leucaena as a source of pasture planting materials for dairy and stall-feeding farmers in the country.
- The UDF facilitated the expansion of feed production of three commercial millers namely Meadows, Grain Tech and Lab Processors. Furthermore, Grain and Milling and Trans Globe resumed feed manufacturing. The efforts have resulted in improved feed supply and competitive prices.

Access to Inputs

- Farmer's access to inputs has substantially improved through the establishment of Malawi Rural Finance Company (MRFC) and Agricultural Production Investment Programme (APIP).
- The value of MRFC loans to farmers increased to K981.0 million by 2001/2002.
- The UDF government liberalized fertilizer and seed markets to promote private sector participation in importation and distribution. The competition created has helped to ensure availability of fertilizer.

Technology Development

Within the past five years under UDF, the following improved crop varieties to support crop diversification have been released:

- One macadamia clone with higher yields and better adaptability characteristics and six higher-yielding cassava and sweet potato

varieties.

- Three groundnut varieties, which are high yielding and possess tolerance to drought and diseases.
- Three rice varieties with better yields and consumer acceptability. From these new rice varieties farmers are able to obtain better monetary returns.
- One pigeon pea variety which meets the market demands for seed coat colour and ease of processing.

The UDF government has established tractor and farm mechanisation centers for small and medium farmers. Each ADD has a hiring center with 17 tractors and 16 ploughs.

Irrigation

- The UDF government has made strides in promoting small-scale irrigation through the supply of treadle pumps, motorized pumps sprinkler and gravity scheme and colonization.
- The government distributed free seeds to 50,000 families for winter cropping using treadle pumps. 50,000 metric tons of maize came from gardens in the 2003 season.
- The land area under irrigation has increased from 35,000 hectares in 1994 to 62,000 hectares by 2003. The UDF has earmarked 100,800 hectares for irrigation which will benefit 336,000 farmers.
- 1,835 hectares of existing irrigation schemes have already been rehabilitated and 1,374 hectares are being rehabilitated. 180,93 km of inland canals have been developed.
- 12,500 treadle pumps have been distributed. 46,000 treadle pumps are under procurement. A credit

system to enable farmers procure motorized and treadle pumps on loan payable in three years has been established.

- The UDF government has constructed three new irrigation schemes namely; Bwanje covering 800 hectares; Miyombo with 80 hectares; and Khwisa covering 40 hectares. A total of 12,000 farmers will benefit from these schemes. Further the government has rehabilitated the Domasi, Lufira, Wovwe, Hara, Chonanga, Bua, Kasitu, Likoma, and Lifidzi Irrigation Schemes.

Community Empowerment

- Over the past decade, about 300 farmer organizations have been established in form of cooperatives, associations, and trusts.
- A National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) has been formed.
- The UDF government promoted emergence of an Association for Smallholder Seed Multiplication Group (ASSMAG) with a total of 3600 growers, organized in 27 seed multiplication action groups and 8 associations throughout the country.

THE CHALLENGES

Food Security

- Approximately one third of Malawi's population is still food insecure and more than 65 per cent live below the poverty line.
- The levels of poverty continue to increase due to slow growth in agricultural production from which the livelihood of more than 85 per cent of the population depends.



- There are problems of limited access to inputs and capital, over-dependence on rain-fed agriculture, limited access to land, inadequate diversification of crops, low production technologies and, environmental degradation.
- Transport problems caused delay in the distribution of fertilizer. The government depended on the same transporters who were carrying maize into the country.
- The rains came late and as a result farmers planted late as well. Some crops were washed away by floods and the drought dried up most crops.

Livestock Production

- Livestock production has been declining over the past ten years. The dairy herd is now at 15 000 and has remained stagnant because of limited supply of dairy animals. The local poultry population is estimated at 10 million chickens and fluctuates yearly because of Newcastle disease. The number of cows is estimated at 8,948 which is way below the demand of meat in the country. Lack of improved breeding stock and inadequate nutrition are the major constraints to livestock production.

Extension Services

- The number of extension workers in the communities has dwindled over the past decade due to staff attrition caused by deaths from HIV/AIDS, retirements, and resignations. In response to this problem, 100 extension workers are undergoing a training course at the Natural Resources College (NRC) and 350 more will be undergoing a parallel training programme. Some extension staff are upgrading at Bunda College of Agriculture and

104 retired officers have been recruited to beef up the current number of front line staff.

OUR COMMITMENT

The UDF government is determined to reduce poverty and increase food security in Malawi. This commitment has been demonstrated in the government's efforts to import and distribute free maize and other food items to hunger stricken communities as part of an intensive drought recovery program.

The UDF wants to change people's mindset about maize as the main source of food and introduce new dietary foods such as cassava, potatoes, pumpkins, and sorghum as proper substitutes to maize.

The UDF government will continue with the Starter Pack program in order to guarantee access to agricultural inputs by vulnerable groups.

The UDF government is aware of the need to expand the production of livestock and livestock products and will continue to assist farmers with appropriate technology and adequate livestock starter packs.

The UDF government will continue to guarantee food security by keeping adequate levels of maize reserves and encouraging the cultivation of hybrid or open pollinated seed.

Land use and ownership will be rationalized through a peaceful transfer of underutilized estate and public land to subsistence farmers.

OUR PLEDGES

The next UDF government will:

Improve accessibility, availability and acceptability of agricultural inputs by:

- Expanding and strengthening access to agricultural inputs

especially among women and other vulnerable groups. The Starter Pack distribution will increase to 4.1 million farmers in 2003. Maize seed and fertilizer for the 2004 season have already been procured and the target is to increase maize production to 2.6 million tons.

- Facilitating formulation of credit co-operative organizations or village banks.
- Providing financial support for capitalization of village based credit schemes.
- Increasing access to agricultural inputs by vulnerable groups through the Public Works Programme.

Diversify food production through the expansion of food crops by :

- Continuing to develop drought resistant varieties of seeds.
- Conducting awareness campaigns on alternative food crops and the need to diversify dietary sources.
- Encouraging farmers to grow cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum, millet, and bananas for daily consumption.

Reduce over-dependence on rain-fed agriculture by:

- Strengthening irrigation programmes using low cost technologies.
- Promoting the development of a sustainable small scale irrigation by local communities.
- Promoting irrigation schemes based on manual lifting devices, sprinklers and motorized pumps.
- Promoting water harvesting.

- Rehabilitating and constructing community small earth dams.
- Draining and reclaiming wetlands for agricultural use.

Improve livestock production to reduce the prevalence of malnutrition resulting from low protein intake by:

- Establishing an anti-livestock theft unit.
- Strengthening advisory services in production of livestock and its products.
- Intensifying disease control measures and restrictions on unnecessary movement of animals from high risk areas.
- Continuing the supply of livestock starter packs to poor farmers.
- Ensuring that monogastric livestock (pigs and poultry) which are more amenable to commercialization should be subjected to intensive system of production as opposed to the less efficient extensive system widely practiced at the moment.
- Promoting policies which deliberately protect the interests of the local farmer.
- Initiating policies which deliberately protect the interests of the local farmer.
- Developing land policies which provide means of control on the use of communal land to insure that livestock which largely relies on forage availability is not unduly exposed to diseases and poor husbandry practices.
- Identifying cereals which are not popularly consumed by humans to



be used for livestock consumption.

Improve the availability of technology through adequate extension services by:

- Strengthening research in agricultural production and utilization of available technologies.
- Promoting sustainable investment and development of small scale irrigation by local communities.
- Improving extension delivery services by recruiting retired extension workers and retraining them.
- Improving supervision of local farmers.
- Facilitating the formation and development of product-specific farmer cooperatives and associations.
- Enhancing production and multimedia dissemination of agricultural technologies.

Improve farm and household mechanisation to reduce drudgery and household operations by:

- Increasing access to cows for ploughing under the HIPC program and access to tractors for hire.

INCREASING INCOMES THROUGH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

OUR AIM

Agriculture accounts for nearly 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings and 85 percent employment. Therefore, the UDF government will continue to strive to improve the profitability of agricultural crops in order to facilitate economic empowerment.

WHAT WE PLEDGED

The UDF government promised to liberalize agricultural markets and diversify small holder agricultural production and marketing. We pledged to liberalize fertilizer and seed markets to promote private sector participation in importation and distribution. We promised to establish a sustainable rural financing and credit system and increase tobacco and other cash crop production.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Following the liberalization of small holder burley tobacco growing and marketing 600,000 small holder farmers have benefited producing 90,000 metric tons in recent years.
- The establishment of a credit guarantee scheme has improved the participation of small holder farmers in tobacco production. The credit system has benefited over 1044 clubs. A total of 42.1 million kgs of burley tobacco amounting to K4.3 billion have been realized.
- Malawi has gained the reputation of being Africa's second largest producer of Tea. Under the Smallholder Tea Authority established by the UDF government, small holder farmers are contributing 15 percent of all tea yields. Output from tea has remained fairly consistent at an estimate of over 40,000 metric tons. Current production initiatives include the replacement of indigenous bushes with the renowned clonal varieties, and the establishment of the Tea Board.
- Under the UDF government, Malawi negotiated preferential market access for its sugar into the US and EU through several trade agreements. Extensive irrigation development on the lower shire river

has further stimulated smallholder production of sugar. Investment opportunities in sugar continue to expand.

- The UDF government has placed Malawi in the third position of least expensive producers of refined sugar.
- Annual coffee production amounts to about 4,000 metric tons. This is mainly arabica, grown by smallholder farmers organized as the Smallholder Coffee Authority. The bulk of the crop is exported to the European Union markets. The demand for the crop is good and the potential for expansion of production is there in some parts of the Northern Region and the South.
- Malawi is exporting raw hides and skins to neighbouring countries, such as Tanzania. The Liwonde Tannery is being revamped to promote leather processing.
- The UDF government produced a National Livestock Development Master Plan which runs until 2010. A key objective of the Plan is to integrate livestock production more closely with rain-fed and irrigated crop production both on smallholder farms and on estates. A livestock-monitoring programme has also been introduced. Meat inspection services are being strengthened, and the number of small private abattoirs has increased.
- The UDF government has increased the amount of loans to small holder farmers through the Malawi Rural Finance Company and other credit facilities.

THE CHALLENGES

- Since 1998 there has been an overall decline in agricultural productivity due to poor rains and unfavourable

trade terms. Sharp reductions in world prices have reduced the profitability of most crops affecting small holder farmer's earnings from farm products.

- The poultry industry has suffered severe contraction due to cheaper imports from South Africa and Zimbabwe. The UDF government recently imposed restrictions on imported livestock commodities, especially eggs and chicken meat, under the SADC Trade Protocol, provisions on "infant industries" to protect the livestock industry.
- The dairy industry is relatively small; about half of the production comes from smallholder farms, which are organized into milk buying groups. Malawi imports about 60% of the dairy products.
- The cotton industry has experienced production fluctuations. Besides the poor performance during the drought years of 1992, 1994 and 1997, the industry's production levels have staggered. In 1990/91 season, national production was estimated at 42,780 metric tons which increased to 83,591 metric tons in 1995/96 and then dropped to 37,622 metric tons in the 2000/2001 season.
- Malawi produces about 20,000 tons of beef, about half of its requirements.

OUR COMMITMENT

The UDF government believes that agriculture is pivotal to maintaining sustainable livelihoods and growth in the economy. The government is determined to increase maize yields of farmers while paying attention to profitable crops including tea, coffee, sugar, tobacco, cotton, rice, beans and groundnuts.

The UDF government wants to seriously

develop winter cropping through a large scale irrigation program to take advantage of Lake Malawi and other water sources in the country. UDF will improve the delivery of agricultural services and the availability of credit to medium and small holder farmers.

Through the development of the Nacala Corridor, UDF will ensure that transport costs for farm inputs are reduced so that fertilizer prices are in line with those prevailing in neighbouring countries.

OUR PLEDGES

The next UDF government is committed to achieve the following :

- Make sustainable investment in winter cropping by developing a large scale irrigation project along the shores of Lake Malawi and the Shire River.
- Assist Malawian farmers to secure big loans from financial institutions for the setting up of commercial farms.
- Increase the amount of loans and regulate interest rates for small holder farmers from the Malawi Rural Finance Company.
- Re-establish a viable credit scheme for tobacco producers.
- Improve essential infrastructure in high potential agricultural areas.
- Continue to promote the use of low cost soil fertility improving technologies such as manure, vetiver grass, legumes, and agro forestry species.
- Promote diversification into non-traditional high value crops for both the export and domestic markets.
- Improve private sector participation in the agriculture sector by creating

a favourable tax policy environment and providing clear information and policy on private investment.

- Promote agro-processing industries to add value to agricultural products and reduce post harvest losses.
- Establish tractor and mechanisation centers for hiring out equipment to medium and small holder farmers.
- Promote the establishment of hatcheries, livestock feed mills, and breeding farms to improve the livestock production.
- Ensure that agricultural research findings are fed in government policies to enhance production.
- Facilitate the promotion of the "One Village One Product" movement which will lead to empowerment of village farmers in the production and sale of their products.

