

Logistics Corridors for Southern Africa

Several operational and policy issues must be dealt with in order to ensure smooth delivery of assistance. Coordination and information sharing are crucial to ensure the effective use of the transportation system. Infrastructure repairs in some areas may be necessary. Road tolls, varying importation/customs procedures, and third party transport arrangements that would allow trucks from one country to operate in another are all issues that need to be taken up with SADC to find satisfactory solutions.

WFP is planning a food pipeline that would ideally place two months of stock in country, one month at port, and one month of food on the high seas. With a two-month buffer of stock, logistics arrangements can become more cost-effective, as less expensive but slower corridors can be employed. To achieve this, WFP would need to receive immediate indication from donors concerning pledges to the region, as it normally takes 3-5 months from the time that a contribution is confirmed to delivery food to beneficiaries.

4. REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

The aim of the UN and its partners, relative to the prevailing humanitarian crisis in southern Africa, is to deliver humanitarian assistance in a timely manner to those who need it most and to prevent further hunger, destitution and permanent losses in livelihoods and well being to an estimated 12.8 million people affected in the six countries of most concern.

The UN is guided by humanitarian principles laid out in the UN Charter and expanded in universal declarations, conventions, and other documents and based on humanity, neutrality, and impartiality. They are adapted for the complex political, economic and social environment of the region and humanitarian assistance operations that will be delivered by the UN system and its partners. Key principles shaping the assistance programmes in the region are as follows:

- Assistance activities will not undermine the longer-term economic and social protection strategy in each of the respective countries;
- The time frame for the regional programme is one year although it is recognised that this programme will either expand or contract in response to further assessments and as a result of the monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of the interventions;
- Transparency will be a key component. In each country, the programme will ensure that adequate financial management arrangements are in place to ensure full accountability and optimum use of resources for targeted beneficiaries;
- Safety of personnel and commodities. All possible measures, including the establishment of adequate communications and logistics support will be put in place in order to ensure the safety of UN and the implementing partners' staff and the movement of commodities. Efforts will be made to ensure that women and children at food and other humanitarian distribution sites are not placed at increased risk of violence or sexual exploitation;

Principle Objectives of humanitarian assistance in the affected countries will be to:

- *Ensure that the urgent humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations in the region are met in order to save lives and livelihoods;*
- *Assist in preventing marginal populations from falling into a downward spiral that, if not prevented, could lead to prolonged dependency in the future;*
- *Maintain foundations for recovery programming in food self-sufficiency, education, health services etc.;*
- *Ensure that the humanitarian response addresses the needs of the people living with HIV/AIDS and seek to prevent new infection;*
- *Prevent, contain and address the outbreak of disease through enhanced health and nutritional surveillance;*

- *Assist vulnerable populations to improve their coping mechanisms to make them more resilient to economic and natural crises;*
- *Ensure that there is an adequate and timely provision of agricultural inputs for the next planting season as well as emergency veterinary inputs;*
- *Ensures that the humanitarian response addresses the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS;*

A longer-term goal of the programme is to phase out humanitarian programming and return to a development agenda focusing on poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS prevention and control and agriculture. In the field of agriculture this would centre on supporting food security through increased food production and to strengthen foreign exchange earnings. It is recognised that recovery is an ongoing process and which should focus on:

- *Dialogue and debate of policies that will increase agricultural production, food supply and economic viability;*
- *Policies and programmes which address the growing crisis in human resources, including the 'brain drain', skills, training and HIV/AIDS;*
- *Provision of means to vulnerable groups to extricate themselves from conditions of destitution and dependence on humanitarian assistance.*

4.1 REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

4.1.1 Coordination and Information Management

The current crisis evolving in Southern Africa requires a strong coordinated effort on the part of the UN and its partners. With the vast majority of the assistance being food, the WFP Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, at the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group (IASC-WG), will continue to oversee the coordination of assistance operations throughout the region. The broad intent is to keep coordination structures as light as possible.

At the national level the Resident Coordinators retain primary responsibility for coordination within their respective countries. The focus of most regional coordination activities will be centred in Johannesburg. Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will establish a Regional Support Office (RSO) there, housed within WFP's office in order to support the WFP Regional Director in her continuing functions related to regional humanitarian coordination. The RSO will continue to provide support and service to the Resident Coordinators, Country Teams and humanitarian partners, including NGOs and donors.

The focus of most regional activity will be established in and around Johannesburg. OCHA will establish a RSO in Johannesburg, housed within WFP's regional office in order to support the WFP Regional Director in her continued functions related to general regional coordination.

In addition, OCHA proposes the creation of the Southern Africa Humanitarian Information Management Service (SAHIMS), an inter-agency information and data-clearing house, be established alongside the RSO. Similar to other recently established entities such as Data Exchange Programme for the Horn of Africa (DEPHA) in Nairobi, SAHIMS will liaise with and support existing information systems such as Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) and those of SADC and other technical bodies in the region. UNICEF and WHO are deploying senior staff to the region to support this facility, as well as to support coordination and advocacy in their areas of expertise, specifically in health and nutrition surveillance. A WHO country team based in Harare will augment and support this work as well as that undertaken in the countries themselves. In addition, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has undertaken to appoint staff to work with Resident Coordinators on rehabilitation and transition issues and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has fielded an Emergency Coordinator for the crisis based in Harare.

Owing to the particular humanitarian situation facing Zimbabwe and Malawi, OCHA will provide a Humanitarian Affairs Officer (HAO) to provide support to the Resident Coordinators in both countries. These HAOs will assist the Resident Coordinator with the management and coordination of the UN response in collaboration with the Government, donors and NGO partners.

4.1.2 Logistics Operations

Coordination and information sharing among all stakeholders in this operation, i.e. state and commercial port and transport operators, SADC Governments, donors, aid agencies, traders, millers and others, is a must to maximise the throughput and ensure safe, efficient and cost effective port and overland transport services throughout the region. Also of great importance is the need to collate and disseminate timely and accurate operational information on pipeline, shipping, port and transport activities in the region to avoid congestion and give information on the movement of food on a regular basis to all stakeholders.

A regional logistics coordination structure (ReLogS) will be part of the central management and coordination structure housed with WFP's office in Johannesburg to monitor the food pipeline, gather information on all Government and commercial food purchases, maintain a database of food supplies in the region and disseminate this and other critical logistics-related information in a timely and effective manner. ReLogS will be responsible for contracting the overland and cross-border operations for WFP consignments and will liaise with SADC and commercial transport industry leaders to avoid unnecessary congestion on the transport infrastructure.

Initial pre-positioning of food will enable WFP to build its response to the expected peak period of the operation in December-March. The December-March period also corresponds to the rainy season and again pre-positioning is vital to pre-empt any transport constraints during this season. Furthermore, this strategy will enable a stable pipeline that will be less prone to gaps due to possible fluctuations in the confirmation of contributions and possible delays in shipping and procurement. Also, unforeseen needs will be easier catered for. UNICEF, WFP and partner agencies will coordinate the delivery of food and non- food assistance as well as nutritional support programs to ensure maximum effectiveness.

4.1.3 On-going Assessments

The increasing complexity of the situation, combined with the rapidly decreasing resilience of poor households to respond to shocks using their own diminishing resources, demands a heightened sophistication (breadth, depth, and time) in food security, nutritional and health assessment and monitoring if serious problems are to be recognised and addressed in time to avert a major humanitarian crisis with the southern Africa region.

A nationwide nutritional survey carried out according to WHO standards with a sampling of more than 20,000 children under five and more than 17,000 mothers has demonstrated an eightfold increase in acute malnutrition in 3-5 year old children and a doubling of malnutrition in mothers. Clearly pointing to a dramatic acceleration of a chronic nutritional problem.

To help ensure that appropriate, accurate and timely information and analysis is available to respond to and mitigate the impact of the cereal shortages in the most seriously affected countries in the region, in close collaboration with WFP and other partners, the SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) will facilitate and coordinate a series of vulnerability assessments and will establish appropriate food security monitoring systems alongside National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs). Assessment activities will be coordinated through the common consultative structure of the SADC FANR Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) based in Harare.

The periodic comprehensive assessments will occur at two critical periods in the coming year (July/August and December) and will produce jointly issued reports to the humanitarian community providing comprehensive assessment of the food security at the regional level. They will be timed to incorporate critical events such as final round crop assessments, winter harvesting, commercial import commitment and capacity levels, as well as 2002/03 production prospects. This information will be critical towards refinement of beneficiary targeting and rapid response to changing conditions.

WHO country team in Harare will support the ongoing collection of information related to epidemic prone diseases and will support any necessary response. WHO and UNICEF will collaborate to ensure ongoing nutritional surveillance in order to monitor the impact relief assistance. UNICEF will continue to assess current and projected needs in education, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and protection in affected communities throughout the region.

4.1.4 Development of a Sustainable Recovery Framework:

Factors contributing to the current crisis are numerous and vary from country. They include drought, floods, disruptions to commercial farming, depletion of strategic grain reserves, poor economic performance, foreign exchange shortages, delays in the timely importation of maize and the high, poor quality and coverage of basic social services and the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) of UNDP will assist UN Resident Coordinators in the region to strengthen their capacity to address the underlying factors contributing to the current crisis. Existing Country Programmes of UN Agencies in the region will be reviewed over the coming months to ensure they address these underlying trends. This will entail deeper analysis of the factors that have led to the high levels of poverty and vulnerability in each country of the region and to help identify measures to address these factors. Through this analysis it is intended that a regional sustainable recovery framework be developed which would be used to sharpen the focus of programmes designed to address poverty.

SUMMARY TABLE OF FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Sector/Activity	OCHA	WFP	UNDP	WHO	UNICEF	Total
Coordination	550,000	3,445,153	180,000	300,000	500,000	4,975,153
Drugs and vaccines				1,000,000		1,000,000
Information Management	430,000			100,000		530,000
Assessments				250,000		250,000
Total	980,000	3,445,153	180,000	1,650,000	500,000	6,755,153

5. COUNTRY SUMMARIES

5.1 LESOTHO

Close to half a million people out of Lesotho's total population of 2.2 million are facing a severe humanitarian crisis that require the immediate assistance of the international community.

It is estimated that some 444,800 people - 32.4% of the rural population or 21% of the total national population - will require targeted food aid in 2002/03. Of these, 62,500 are children under five. A total of 315,000 including those in the hardest hit districts of Qacha's Nek, Quthing and Mphahle's Hoek will require assistance within the coming three months after which the number rises to 444,800. Moreover, it is estimated that an additional 85,000 children under five are in need of emergency supplementary feeding and an additional 30,000 children are expected to need therapeutic feeding over the next 12 months. It is further estimated that 4,000 households and 40 schools are in urgent need of support to sanitary facilities and 2,000 households and 20 schools need support to water supplies, to stem the risk of outbreaks of water and sanitation related disease, which are already being experienced in districts like Mphahle's Hoek, Quthing, Berea, Mafeteng and Thaba Tseka.

Lesotho is one of the poorest countries in the world. With a per capita income in 1999 of US\$ 415 the country is grouped among the 49 Least Developed Countries and is ranked 120 out of 162 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index. The country continues to struggle with low levels of economic growth and an estimated 58% of the population is trapped below the income poverty line. Progress made in human development and poverty over the past decades is being rapidly reversed by one of the most severe HIV/AIDS pandemics in the world. National prevalence rates are estimated at 31% 23% and over 40% in the capital district of Maseru. The pandemic threatens to undermine the productive sectors of the economy, delivery of social services and indeed the entire social fabric.