

HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian agencies are planning their responses to the food security crisis in the region according to the Regional Humanitarian Strategic Framework for Southern Africa. Several initiatives developed under this framework need urgent financial support to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations for the upcoming planting season and hunger period.

- In Zimbabwe, although the food security situation has been severely compromised by a poor harvest, the government has resisted declaring a state of emergency and appealing for international assistance. Concerns exist over the capacity of the government to mobilise sufficient resources. This situation may be further challenged by the fact that the number of vulnerable people in the country may be higher than originally estimated.

- In Malawi, in view of the magnitude of the food crisis, UN Agencies have prepared a Flash Appeal to request international support for the Government of Malawi's plans to addressing immediate humanitarian needs as well as help the Government to minimise the likelihood of another food crisis next year.

- In Mozambique, following the activation of the national contingency plan by the Government and the appeal made to external partners, the UN system has developed an inter-agency strategy, which complements the authorities' interventions to address transitory food insecurity.



Southern African Humanitarian Crisis Update

Monthly update, August 2005



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Millions will need help to survive the lean season

The recent SADC Vulnerability Assessments and FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAM) have confirmed that the region is entering another acute phase of a chronic emergency, as more than ten million people in the region are at risk of food insecurity through to April 2006. In view of the recurrent character of the crisis, stakeholders have acknowledged the need for the region to move away from short-term emergency responses and engage in longer-term development interventions under the framework of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Dar-Es-Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security. This approach was endorsed by the regional stakeholder meeting convened on 7-8 July 2005 by SADC and the UN. It is considered more appropriate to address chronic conditions of poverty, erratic weather and HIV/AIDS, which are among the main driving forces behind increasing levels of vulnerability in the region. Consistent with this approach, the humanitarian community reiterated its plan to address the current crisis through the Inter-Agency Regional Humanitarian Strategic Framework for Southern Africa, which presents a unified understanding of how short term needs can best be addressed to serve the longer-term needs in the region, and provides a guide for shaping individual agencies' initiatives and nationally led efforts to address the crisis within a longer term perspective.

¹ RIACSO is a partnership comprising of the UN Agencies that fall under the Regional Directors Team for southern Africa and key NGOs in the region. RIACSO supports the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa, Mr. James Morris, in his mandate to raise awareness of the situation in the region and provide recommendations regarding the response.



HIGHLIGHTS

- In Zambia, intervention plans to assist the vulnerable population, as estimated by the national VAC, are yet to be finalised. The Disaster Management Committee is still awaiting Cabinet feedback on the submitted interventions but has already commenced coordination meetings with implementing partners.

Agencies' Initiatives

WFP is meeting increased food needs resulting from crop failure through an expansion of the ongoing Regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO). The agency plans to distribute about 516,000 tonnes of food aid between October 2005 and March 2006, with the number of beneficiaries of WFP food aid interventions rising to approximately 8.5 million people during the peak period in January - March 2006. Despite a recent USD 48.6 million aid package from the US for the region, USD 9.7 million from the Netherlands, USD 0.5 million from the Government of Japan, and USD 4.8 million from the EC, WFP still requires USD 187 million to run its programs through to the end of the next lean season in March/April 2006. Although moving beyond short-term responses to hunger and developing alternative interventions to food aid are increasingly recognised as essential to addressing the crisis effectively, immediate donations are needed if WFP is to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people during the upcoming hunger period.

Within FAO's Programme Framework for Emergency and Rehabilitation, a number of proposals have been developed to support small-scale farmers in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The main focus of these activities is to ensure that vulnerable farmers have access to adequate quantities of livelihood and agricultural inputs in time for the next rainy season, which should start in October 2005. They also look at developing small-scale irrigation, promoting conservation agriculture, supporting livestock production, establishing gardens at nutritional rehabilitation units, and supporting livelihood opportunities for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). FAO is still short of USD 16 million to meet the financial requirements of these activities.

In order to support resource mobilisation efforts for WFP in the region, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan sent a letter to 27 Heads of State as well as the EC, and the African Development Bank in early August to raise alarm at the serious humanitarian situation in southern Africa.

National Efforts

In each country, the international humanitarian community is tailoring interventions to country-specific needs, in line with the Regional Humanitarian Strategic Framework. For example, in Mozambique, the UN Country Team is implementing an inter-agency plan to complement the government's interventions to mitigate food insecurity. The strategy, which draws from the annual Inter-Agency Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, is multi-sectoral and includes activities, which are rolled into and consistent with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and National Development Plan. In Malawi, the UN Country Team has prepared a funding document outlining a two-pronged strategy to address the unprecedented levels of food insecurity. The first prong of the strategy aims to address the immediate consequences of the food crisis, while the second prong complements the government's plan to ensure small-scale farmers have access to agricultural inputs for the upcoming planting season and avert another food crisis next year.

COUNTRY SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS

■ **Zimbabwe:** Although the food security situation in Zimbabwe has been severely compromised by a poor harvest, the government has resisted declaring a state of emergency and appealing for international assistance. Rather, it has committed to mobilising resources to import 1.2 million tonnes of cereals. Information from the South African Grain Information Services indicate that the government's average rate of importation is approximately 80,000 tonnes per month.



Although ZIMVAC figures have not been officially published, a number of humanitarian organisations have expressed concern that the estimate of 2.9 million vulnerable people in Zimbabwe may be understated. Market prices already show signs of exceeding those assumed by the ZIMVAC, thereby increasing the number of people who lack access to basic food and who will need support.

The July report from the UN Special Envoy Tibajjuka indicated that 700,000 people had lost homes and/or livelihoods and another 2.4 million were indirectly affected. It further stated that the priority needs for the affected people were shelter, food, health services and non food items. In considering the government's capacity to respond, the Envoy expressed concern over: i) the lack of foreign exchange in the country to import the planned 1.2 million tonnes to address the food deficit; ii) the fact that the USD 300 million planned to address the clean up operation was not foreseen in the 2005 budget; iii) the limited capacity of local government to provide necessary infrastructure; iv) the lack of readily available building material; and v) the government's plan of providing 5,000 plots within a few months considering their track record of managing to provide only 5,000 plots per year.

The government provided a preliminary response to the report at the end of July, which was followed by a more substantive response in August. The response refutes many of the Report's findings and argues that the number of people affected has been 'grossly exaggerated' by inaccurate mathematical extrapolation. However, the government has expressed that it is not averse to outside assistance and welcomes partnership efforts, without conditionalities, to raise resources to address food security, shelter and HIV/AIDS.

The IFRC launched an emergency appeal on 26 July of USD 1.9 million to assist 3,000 families affected by the clean up operations. The operation will focus on immediate delivery of humanitarian assistance in the areas of shelter and non-food, health and hygiene promotion, water and sanitation and livelihoods to the most vulnerable within the vulnerable, such as the elderly, people living with HIV/AIDS, home based care patients, orphans and vulnerable children, the disabled and refugees.

The UN has developed a comprehensive response plan and appeal which was expected to be launched in support and collaboration with the government. However, the lack of government agreement on the wording of the appeal has delayed its launch. Despite this, UN agencies and NGO partners are providing vigorous support to the most vulnerable and continue to advocate to international donors locally for funding to expand assistance efforts.

■ **Malawi:** In June 2005, the Malawi VAC indicated that an estimated 4.2 million people would be unable to meet their minimum food requirements until the next harvest in March 2006. This situation could be further challenged by the fact that a majority of markets, especially in the southern region, registered significant maize price increases in July, a development likely to further affect food insecurity of the poorest in the country. WFP has revised its plans upwards and now plans to provide food for 2 million Malawians in the central and southern areas of the country.

In order to address anticipated food insecurity, the government has committed budgetary resources for purchasing commodities and supporting the cost of distribution of food aid. The President has also established a 'Feed the Nation Fund' through which contributions can be made on the grounds that "when there is a national disaster, Malawians must first look into their own pockets". Further, the government has announced an export ban on maize and fertilizer in order to address the food shortage and clamp down on the thriving unregulated trade to Zambia and Tanzania. In order to ensure that small-scale farmers have access to agricultural inputs for the upcoming planting season and minimise the prospects of



another food crisis next year, the Government of Malawi is purchasing maize fertiliser for targeted distribution at subsidised rates.

To complement the government's initiative, the UN system has prepared a Flash Appeal, which requests international support for addressing immediate humanitarian needs and helping the government minimise the likelihood of another food crisis next year. The first prong of the Appeal seeks support for a multi-sectoral intervention, including food aid, nutrition, health, basic education, protection against sexual and economic exploitation, and HIV/AIDS interventions for the critical period from October 05 to March 06. The second prong aims to bolster the Government's plan to sell fertiliser at a subsidised rate and ensure access to agricultural inputs (hybrid maize seed and fertilizer) for poor small holder farming households.

The proposed interventions to address the crisis are consistent with the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, which was recently approved and aims to establish an institutional arrangement to address food and nutrition security in the medium to long term. They also provide an opportunity for the international community to make reality of the G8's Gleneagles Declaration and of the renewed determination to support responsible national approaches by African countries to escape the poverty trap.

■ **Mozambique:** Following the activation of the national contingency plan by the Government and the appeal made to external partners in May, the UN system has developed an inter-agency strategy, which complements the authorities' interventions to address transitory food insecurity. The strategy is multi-sectoral, with activities in the sectors of food security and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, social protection, and advocacy and coordination, which are rolled into and consistent with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and National Development Plan. Although a significant part of these activities are funded from regular programme budgets, additional resources are required in order to ensure that interventions address the needs of food insecure populations for the next months.

For instance, WFP has reported a break in the food aid pipeline and is currently only able to meet 40% of needs. Further, FAO's proposed budget of USD 458,700 still needs funding. The proposed activities aim to support drought-affected smallholding farming production through agricultural input trade fairs.

The country has revised its official HIV infection rate from 14% to 16.2% of the adult population. HIV prevalence has increased in Maputo and in the Gaza Province, which is home to many migrant workers from South Africa. The total number of people receiving anti-AIDS medication from the national health system is estimated at 12,600 people. However, this falls short of the country's goal of having 29,000 people on ARVs by the end of 2005 and is only a small percentage of the estimated 200,000 people in need of treatment.

On a recent field visit, the WFP Regional Director noted that the Tete City Government hospital, with support from MSF, had in place a robust system of testing, counselling and treatment for its HIV patients. The Supervisor of the programme described how once people began a course of ARV treatment, their health dramatically improved. Noting the important contribution of food to ARV treatment and improved health, doctors stated that they were not willing to start ARV treatment for poor people unless minimum access to food was guaranteed. WFP has been providing some food resources, but suffers from a shortage of contributions. Further, the availability of food aid has been seen as a limiting factor on the number of people who can be admitted to ARV treatment programmes in



Tete. WFP appeals for further resources for its PRRO 10310 to help save and prolong healthy lives in Tete and many other areas in southern Africa.

■ **Zambia:** Intervention plans to assist the vulnerable population, as estimated by the national VAC, are yet to be finalised. The Disaster Management Committee is still awaiting Cabinet feedback on the submitted interventions but has already commenced coordination meetings with implementing partners.

Several challenges have already been noted in attempting to address the food deficit. Firstly, the Food Reserve Agency had by the end of July only managed to purchase 24,000 tonnes of maize out of a target of 120,000 tonnes. Their stock position stands at 98,000 MT which is below two months of the country's requirement. Secondly, WFP has only enough stocks on hand to feed its 550,000 beneficiaries until mid-August. The organisation has announced that it will need USD 20 million from the donor community to cater for food rations for the rest of the year or be forced to reduce rations and the number of beneficiaries. Thirdly, the FAO requirement of USD 6.4 million to support the agricultural recovery of over 60,000 households via the provision of seed and planting material, small scale irrigation, conservation agriculture and animal disease control, still remains to be funded.

The government has announced that it will maintain its 50% fertilizer and seed subsidy to small scale farmers for the 2005/06 farming season. At least 125,000 small-scale farmers will be targeted. However, it is important that this is done before the start of the rainy season which commences in October/November 2005.

On the health front, the government has released Operational Guidelines to facilitate the distribution of the government's proposed free Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) in public health institutions. Although the existing monthly costs for patients will be abolished, the usual registration fees will still be applicable. Refugees will also be entitled to access. The guidelines further set out the roles and responsibilities of government bodies in administering, coordinating and monitoring and evaluating the policy.

■ **Lesotho:** Some humanitarian organisations have expressed concern over the reduction of food aid levels for Lesotho, following the relatively better performance of the 2004-2005 agricultural season. It is argued that analysis of nutritional data demonstrates a progressive deterioration of the nutrition situation over the recent years, and that evidence exists that food aid contributed to reducing malnutrition rates during previous years. These concerns are in contrast with indications from the government at the 7-8 July regional stakeholder meeting that too much food aid was being provided. This situation supports the recommendation from the Lesotho VAC vulnerability assessment report to develop better assessment tools and establish broader partnerships to better understand chronic vulnerability and the impact of food security on people's lives and livelihoods. Further work is required to test the hypothesis that Lesotho could be a candidate to receive a significant proportion of assistance to the most vulnerable in cash as opposed to food. This reflects the ready access of Lesotho to the well-supplied markets of neighbouring South Africa.

■ **Swaziland:** Preparations for establishing a Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) programme have been underway since April 2005. A core team, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, FAO, UNICEF, WFP and the National Emergency Response Committee on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA) has been established and has engaged in consultations with communities and national stakeholders. The programme aims to transfer agricultural knowledge and life skills to orphans and vulnerable children who have lost their parents and attempts to address the long term decline of productivity due to HIV/AIDS. The four JFFLS pilots are expected to commence in October 2005.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Date	Event
22-26 Aug	Fifty-fifth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa, Maputo, Mozambique
19-21 Sept	Workshop to review Vulnerability Assessment Methodologies in the SADC Region, Johannesburg, South Africa
12-14 Oct	Zambia UNDAF Strategic Planning Workshop, Lusaka, Zambia

For most events participation is on the basis of invitations only



■ **Angola:** Although estimates from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) indicate that the 2004-2005 overall crop production is higher in relation to last year, there are still concerns that high vulnerability persists in the central Planalto and the south-eastern province of Kuando-Kubango. Preliminary results from a WFP VAM baseline study of the Planalto indicate high levels of food insecurity in a number of areas in the central region. In the Kuando Kubango Province, reports indicate that vulnerable populations are moving to the municipal centres of Mavinga and Rivungu in search of food. This corroborates previous warnings over a likelihood of deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the province due to cereal crop failure caused by the same dry conditions as has been experienced in other parts of southern Africa. In response, WFP has requested USD 3.2 million to keep the Mavinga sub-office, which supports operations in the south-eastern part of the province, open until 31 December 2005 in order to provide food assistance to 50,000 people.

FAO is supporting IOM and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in the Kuando-Kubango province with the distribution of vegetable seed packs for the most vulnerable populations. A total of 6,000 kits in Menongue and 7,500 kits in Rivungu are planned to be distributed.

■ **Namibia:** The Namibian government is drafting its first national policy on HIV/AIDS and hopes to complete it by World AIDS Day on 1 December. The draft policy deals with prevention and the treatment, care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS, creating an enabling environment, impact mitigation, managing and monitoring the disease. The government has planned to allocate at least 2% of the national budget for HIV/AIDS related activities and has requested that local authorities allocate 2% of their annual budget for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS activities in their core business and services.

COORDINATION

SADC Programme on Strengthening Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis

Recognising that chronic conditions of poverty across the region are one of the main driving forces behind increasing levels of vulnerability, the VAC system is taking steps forward to help determine appropriate interventions and move beyond short-term responses to hunger. Based on the outcomes of the three-step VAC consultation process that was carried out during 2004, a five-year regional programme on Strengthening Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis in the SADC Region was prepared and eventually endorsed by the SADC Integrated Committee of Ministers Meeting, which took place in Maseru in June 2005. It is expected that this programme will enable the VAC system to provide more comprehensive analysis and better informed policy and decision making regarding options of response, such as food aid, cash transfers, social protection programmes and other livelihood interventions.

Reflecting the commitments laid out in the RISDP and the Dar-Es-Salaam Declaration of Food Security and Agriculture, the overall goal of the programme is to contribute to poverty reduction in the SADC region and increase household food security by reducing livelihood vulnerability. This will be achieved by simultaneously operating at three levels, namely:

- a. *SADC Member States* - Enhancing national policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions through strengthening vulnerability assessment and analysis systems;

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- b. *SADC Secretariat* - Strengthening the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation function of SADC's RISDP and business plans through strengthening vulnerability assessment and analysis systems; and
- c. *International Cooperating Partners* - Supporting them to make informed decisions in allocation of resources for short term and long term interventions in the region.

The programme includes a broad range of activities that address institutional, technical and policy considerations related to strengthening the capacity of vulnerability assessment and analysis systems. A key activity will be the establishment of a Programme Management Unit (PMU) under the SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR) that will coordinate the overall implementation of the programme.

In August 2005, Madagascar became a full member of SADC and efforts have already begun to extend the VAC system to the country.

Further information on the five year programme can be found on www.sahims.net/VAC

Mapping of food security interventions

WFP, FAO and OCHA have commenced a mapping exercise of food and non-food interventions in the southern African region. The demand for this exercise arose from the discussions at the 7-8 July VAC/CFSAM stakeholder meeting, which questioned the appropriateness of food aid as a major response to the crisis. The main objective of the exercise is to provide information on ongoing and planned interventions to address acute and chronic food insecurity in the region. The specific objectives are: i) identify ongoing food and non-food responses that address the needs of food insecure populations, by geographical area; ii) determine the scale of operation of these responses in terms of number of people assisted and the planned period of assistance; and iii) identify areas of duplication and gaps in assistance in relation to food and non-food needs. The exercise will be conducted in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe through the WFP VAM officers and FAO Emergency Officers. Its main output will be an inventory and map of food and non-food interventions in Southern Africa, which will help coordination and collaboration between agencies in responding to food insecurity. The exercise is expected to be completed by late September.

UN Strategic Alliance on building livelihoods for OVCs

FAO, UNICEF and WFP are finalising a concept paper on a UN Strategic Alliance on Building Livelihoods for OVCs in Southern and Eastern Africa, which aims to coordinate UN support and strengthen the livelihoods component of National Plans of Action (NPAs) for OVCs. Plans for creating such strategic alliance arose from a consultation, which took place in May 2005 to consider ways to examine experiences in supporting livelihoods of children and families affected by HIV/AIDS and identify potential for closer cooperation to expand effective approaches.

In this respect, UNICEF and UNDP have already joined forces to assist parliamentarians to find a role in implementing the NPAs. Workshops have been conducted in Lesotho, Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland and Namibia, with the objectives of i) familiarising parliamentarians with the National Plan of Action for OVCs and ii) helping them to identify a role in participating in the implementation of the Plan. Further workshops are planned for Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe in September 2005; eastern African countries in November 2005 and Portuguese speaking countries in March 2006.

