

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

SOUTHERN AFRICA: FOOD INSECURITY

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 03/2005) is being issued for information only. While the Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time, a strategy is being developed to respond to the needs highlighted by the recently concluded National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) report and the Crop and Food Supply Assessment missions (CFSAM) jointly undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP) in Southern Africa. Based on these assessments, activities already underway with partner agencies, and discussions with national societies in the affected countries, an Emergency Appeal will be considered.

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The Situation

The southern Africa region continues to face food insecurity coupled with the effects of HIV and AIDS and weakened government capacity. The current food security situation in most countries in southern Africa is similar to that of the 2002/03 seasons. The national Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) assessments were conducted in **Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe** in collaboration with the respective Red Cross national societies. The reports concluded that the current food insecurity is the result of erratic rainfall pattern, but this was also aggravated by the combined effects of HIV and AIDS, recurrent disasters, weak health services and the limited capacity of community-based safety nets in all these countries. The FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAM) were also conducted in five countries. Although results from the Zimbabwe vulnerability assessments are still outstanding, serious food shortages are also expected in the country. Production estimates by the National Early Warning Units (NEWU) and Central Statistics Offices (CSO) reveal that while the region has produced enough food to meet approximately two-thirds of its needs, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe will need to import at least 3,01 million metric tons over the next 12 months.

The UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Humanitarian Needs in southern Africa, James Morris, recently made a call in Johannesburg on 25 May for the world to refocus its attention on the region as these countries experience four consecutive years of drought. In addition, they face a daunting array of challenges to long-term

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food insecurity, which can lead to chronic poverty, economic decline and, most significantly, negatively impact the growing HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Summary of the food security status in the food-insecure countries.

Sources: FAO, FEWSNET, IRIN, National Societies, VAC Reports

Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pockets of deepening vulnerability are emerging in Angola, particularly in the south, and parts of the central Planalto region. The food insecurity is caused by a poor harvest as a result of irregular rains, access problems caused by the danger of landmines, and poor road infrastructure. • WFP protracted relief and rehabilitation operation in Angola is reportedly under funded, needing about USD17 million, or 26,000 MT of food to meet requirements by end of 2005.
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic cereal production in 2004/05 is estimated at 119,000 MT, consisting of 92,129 MT of maize, 16,442 MT of sorghum and 10,339 MT of wheat. Overall, Lesotho's cereal production appears to be on a downward trend, especially in the main producing districts of Berea, Butha-Buthe, Leribe and Maseru. • The Lesotho VAC estimates that about 549,000 people will face significant food deficit between June 2005 and March 2006 and requires food or cash assistance amounting to approximately 20,200 MT of maize and/or equivalent. • WFP plans to undertake a beneficiary retargeting exercise with cooperating partners and key government stakeholders in three of the most food insecure districts. The exercise will primarily focus on identifying vulnerable populations such as people living with HIV and AIDS, orphans and vulnerable children, and the poor.
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malawi experienced the worst production in a decade of about 1.25 million MT, 26% below last year's "poor harvest". • Over four million people will require food assistance during the 2005/06-agriculture season. However, if the price of maize rises sharply as anticipated, the number in need of assistance could rise to 4.6 million people (see Appendix 1). • Total maize import requirements are estimated at 767,000 MT, of which 434,000 MT will not be covered by either formal or informal imports or food aid. • WFP is currently providing food assistance to more than 200,000 mothers and children, and intends on revising its requirements to cover those affected by the 2004/05 crop failure.
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereal production for 2005 is estimated at 1.9 million MT, 3% lower than last year's harvest. Reductions in cereal harvests are as high as 43% in the hardest hit areas in the southern regions of the country. • Food deficits are predicted in the semi-arid areas of Gaza and Inhambane, Manica and Tete provinces. • An estimated 70,000 MT of cereals will be required for approximately 588,000 food-insecure people between July 2005 and March 2006. Besides the 70,000 MT, an additional 44,000 MT is needed to support ongoing WFP development programmes and the protracted relief and rehabilitation operation during the 2005/06 seasons.
Swaziland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total maize production for the 2004/05 seasons is estimated at 82,240 MT, about 10% higher than last year's official post-harvest estimate, but 6% below the average of the previous five years. • The VAC estimates that approximately 27,020 MT of cereals (or income equivalent) will be needed to meet the deficit of the affected 226,640 people. • Cereal import requirements for 2005/06 marketing year are estimated at 110,600 MT, of which 69,700 MT are expected to be imported commercially. With about 6,200 MT of food aid in stock and pipeline at the beginning of the marketing year, there is an uncovered deficit of 34,700 MT to be met.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged dry spells during the last growing season reduced crop yields by 90% in key maize production areas in the South and West (see Appendix 2). • More than 1.2 million people will require food assistance until the next harvest. • The VAC estimates that approximately 118,335 MT of cereals will be needed to meet the deficit of the affected 1,232,666 people.
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maize harvests are estimated at 600,000 MT, leaving a shortfall of approximately 1.2 million MT. • The government of Zimbabwe indicates that food deficit would be 950,000 MT. The food reserves amount to 650,000 MT. Therefore the shortfall is 350,000 MT. The government has advised plans to import substantial quantities of food for distribution by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) through a public works programme and for a Strategic Food Reserve. • Although the government has indicated that they will not appeal for external assistance, they are welcoming any organization to help with food, through targeted feeding programmes. • WFP is appealing for 220,000 MT of food over and above current food stocks and pledges to assist up to 4.3 million people between July 2005 and June 2006. This includes up to 1.3 million people in an expanded support for orphans and other vulnerable children, school feeding for pre- and primary school children, supplementing feeding for children under-five and home based care for the chronically ill.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The triple effect of failed crops, increased unemployment, and poverty, and the high percentage of HIV and AIDS implies that a significant proportion of the population requires targeted food aid. As the recent Vulnerability Assessment Committees confirmed, southern Africa is again facing a period of reduced food security, and the Red Cross Movement is committed to providing food to PLWHA and OVC, as part of a more comprehensive and longer-term food security strategy. Red Cross national societies are currently providing food packages to OVC and home-based care (HBC) clients in a number of countries as part of an integrated food security approach. These activities might need to be scaled-up to ensure that food security for the most vulnerable households is maintained.

Following the evaluation of the 2002/03 regional operations, the Federation paved the way for new thinking on integrated programming with the publication of *Not Business As Usual*, which highlighted the need to integrate the consequences of HIV and AIDS pandemic in food security response. Consequently, the combination of short-term shocks and long-term challenges require the national societies in the region and the Federation to re-assess the situation in the vulnerable communities. A Red Cross Food Security Assessment will be carried in the six countries on 13 July to 5 August 2005, with reports and consequent plan of action published in early August. An Emergency Appeal will be issued at the same time based on the assessment recommendations.

In order to identify an appropriate regional approach to the current food crisis, the major objectives of the assessment will be to:

- determine categories of the most vulnerable to be reached by the Red Cross Movement in light of current situation;
- establish a map of government-donors-humanitarian organization assistance both planned and on-going in the areas affected in order to avoid duplication and promote partnerships;
- identify added value for national societies to intervene throughout the areas affected or to concentrate in specific zones of high vulnerability in providing long term holistic assistance packages starting from existing programmes in combination with short term responses;
- develop an effective monitoring and evaluation system with regional indicators for the proposed intervention,
- consolidate national societies good practice in the region into guidelines for National Societies implementation of programmes;
- determine level and type of support from the regional delegation required by the national societies;
- contribute to wider humanitarian community debate, with a position paper to be presented at the Inter-Agency Regional Humanitarian Strategic Framework for Southern Africa (consultative forum in between UN agencies, NGOs and donors);
- raise the international profile of silent emergency with its related specificities, with longer term advocacy positioning indications as well;
- identify role and specific recommendations about interaction in between national societies and governments to ensure that national policies and programmes adequately address the needs of vulnerable populations and that social services cope with changing needs;
- assess logistical and procurement implications of a proposed intervention and assess human resources at both national society and regional level in terms of supporting any response plan.

Coordination

In order to highlight the need for a coordinated response to the food crisis in the region, the Federation is part of a network comprised of key food security partners such as WFP, FAO, OCHA, other UN Agencies and donors such as DFID, USAID, ECHO. The national societies are working with their governments, the WFP and other UN agencies, the SADC Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), and Partner National Societies in food security interventions.

A number of Red Cross programming initiatives are already being implemented in partnership with UN agencies and other NGOs. Examples include food distribution with WFP, provision of agricultural inputs with FAO, and

other NGOs, and OVC support with UNICEF. Partnerships also exist with governments across a number of programme sectors. Recently, a new programme funded by Dfid has started in Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia and will address risk reduction and mitigation in these countries with a long-term approach.

The International Federation and WFP have signed (29 October 2004) a joint letter identifying areas for collaboration in needs assessments, emergencies and provision of food and non food items, emergency preparedness and contingency planning, logistics, capacity building, advocacy and HIV and AIDS, In particular, WFP and the Federation will pursue further special collaborative efforts to assist people affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the areas of HBC, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), linking nutritional support with antiretroviral treatment and operational research in the area of nutrition and antiretroviral treatment. Efforts are already underway to build on this global agreement and on national partnerships to develop a regional approach, in support of the regional HIV and AIDS programme.

The FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission Special Reports are available on the Internet at the following URL address: <http://www.fao.org/giews/>

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