

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

10 June 2005

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. 2/2005) contains preliminary information and data with regards to the Food Insecurity situation in Southern Africa region. As a number of assessments and fact finding mission results will be published by the end of June 2005, a subsequent bulletin presenting final data will be issued by early July 2005.

The initial indications from the currently on-going vulnerability assessment committee (VAC) / FAO / WFP crop and food supply assessment missions (CFSAM) are that crop harvests will be significantly reduced this season. Crop yields are expected to be below last season's levels, and below the 5-year average, with maize production forecast to decline by between 10 – 30% in most countries. However, given the bumper maize harvest in South Africa, coupled with large carryover stocks from last season (for an estimated 3 million MT surplus), the surpluses are expected to boost regional maize availability to a level sufficient to meet the import requirements of maize deficit countries; [click here for details in Annex 1](#).

The WFP overall view is that the situation is comparable to 2002, and in some places is even worse. However, given the patchy production situation in all countries, the response will be complicated. WFP position is that the response will be much more measured than was the case in previous years in keeping with the more developmental response needed across the region to deal with the structural deficits. Countries likely to be severely affected are Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

In order to provide an effective safety net for some of the most vulnerable and food insecure people in the region, the Red Cross Societies in Southern Africa will operate through an integrated approach to their programming, focusing on existing HIV/AIDS programmes, as set out in the document *Not Business As Usual* (http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?anual05/logframes/africa/05AA018SA.pdf).

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The Situation

Southern Africa faces a number of food security challenges: ensuring adequate availability of food to all, now and in the future; ensuring access to sufficient food for all; ensuring that there is adequate safety nets and food emergency management systems to provide people that are unable to meet their food needs from their own efforts, and mitigate the extreme impact of natural or other disasters on people; empowering people to make best choices for safe and nutritious food; possessing adequate information to ensure monitoring and evaluation of the impact of food security programmes on the target population. The Southern Africa food insecurity situation, coupled with the impact of HIV and AIDS, requires an integrated response, aligned with the 1996 World Food Summit definition of food security: “attain universal physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food by all people at all times to meet their dietary and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.

Most countries in the Region [Lesotho, Malawi (southern part), Mozambique (southern and central parts), Swaziland, Zambia (the southern half) and Zimbabwe (southern and western districts)] experienced their fourth consecutive year of drought. Consequently, the food security situation remains worrisome in these countries; [click here to refer to details in Annex 2](#). National vulnerability assessments are currently underway in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, the governments of the above-mentioned countries, with the exception of Zimbabwe, have formally requested for FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAM), whose results will help verify and validate the information coming out of government-led crop forecast and food security assessments. The CFSAM results and reports of the VAC assessments are expected in May-June for all countries. The assessment results will form the basis for any subsequent appeals or plans that articulate appropriate interventions and other programming decisions by donors, governments and other humanitarian organizations. Details of the planned FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment missions to Southern Africa are given in Annex 3; [click here to refer to Annex 3](#).

The table below provides a preliminary indication of the food security situation in each country.

Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good rains and continued mitigation measures such as the provision of farm inputs to internally displaced persons have helped Angola to make a production recovery. • Reasonable yields are expected in about 60% of the production areas.
Botswana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor harvest caused by delayed and sporadic rains. • The Botswana Ministry of Agriculture predicted a total cereal production of 17,729 MT (46% less than the 2003/2004 harvests).
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The southern part of the country is worst affected by the drought. • Recent crop assessments conducted by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture projected total cereal production of 14% below the five-year average, but 19% above last year's harvest of only 102,900 MT.
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year's maize harvest will be the worst since 1997 because of a bad dry spell and shortages of key inputs. • The Malawian government is working with the IMF, international donors and the World Bank to identify resources to fill the expected food gap. • Production shortfall of 600,000 MT is expected; there is a grain reserve of 15,000 MT, while imports will amount to 104,000 MT. Overall cereal shortfall will be 482,000 MT. • Households in some areas already require assistance.
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current projections indicate that total cereal production would fall well below the 2003/2004 total of 1.95 million MT. • Government has appealed for food aid for 550.000 people in the Provinces of Gaza, Inhuhane, Manica, Maputo, Sofala, Tete and Zambezia.
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the erratic performance of rain in Namibia, the forecast pointed to a cereal harvest 28% above the five-year average. • In the Northern provinces, unfavourable growing conditions lowered projected cereal production by 34% in Caprivi and by 16 % in Kavango.

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<i>South Africa</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected to have excellent maize harvests (currently estimated at 11.79 million MT) because of good rains during the second half of the growing season. • It is estimated that South Africa has carryover stocks from last season (approximately 3 million MT). These are expected to boost regional maize availability to a level sufficient to meet the import requirements of maize deficit countries.
<i>Swaziland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production in the high-veldt is good although much worse in the low-veldt. Overall crop production in the country is better than last year. • Preliminary forecasts suggest a national maize crop of 67.000 MT, representing a 13% decrease over last year's production figures.
<i>Zambia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop losses of between 40 and 90 percent are expected across key maize production areas in the south and west. • Potential cereal shortfall of 300.000 MT • Maize prices are slowly rising.
<i>Zimbabwe</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey reports by the National Non-Governmental Organisation Food Security Network (FOSENET) indicate shortfalls in food supplies in all provinces, with the worst affected sites being in Matabeleland North, Masvingo and Midlands. • There is general agreement that Zimbabwe will face a large food deficit during the April 2005-March 2006 consumption year, but no consensus has been reached with regards to the size of the deficit and its geographic spread in the country; nor is there agreement on the numbers of people requiring food or current national food stocks. However, an estimated three to four million Zimbabweans are expected to need food aid over the next year, particularly in the lean season starting in December. • The Zimbabwean president said that he welcomed food assistance that comes with a humanitarian commitment.

Sources: FAO, FEWSNET, FOSENET, IRIN, VAC, National Red Cross Societies

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Ever since the 2001/2002 drought, it has become evident that while the recurrent droughts contributed to the food insecurity crisis in the region, there are longer-term underlying issues that need to be acknowledged. The Red Cross strategy to respond to this challenge is set out in the document *Not Business As Usual*. The Red Cross Societies in Southern Africa have taken an integrated approach to food security programming and the reduction of poverty in the region. In several countries in the region, the National Red Cross Societies are currently providing food packages to orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (OVC) and home based care (HBC) client as part of an integrated food security package that also includes water and sanitation component, support to agricultural production, and other livelihoods interventions. In partnership with WFP, the national societies of Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland and Zambia are also engaged in general food distributions. Given that a much more measured response to the crisis is anticipated, the Federation will take a developmental response that will focus on alternatives to food aid. The considerable food surpluses in South Africa, coupled with the relative low prices are significant factors in determining an appropriate response.

The following steps have been taken by the Federation regional delegation to address the food insecurity situation in the region:

- In March 2005, the regional delegation presented an update of the food security situation in the region to the senior national societies' leaders at their Southern Africa Partnership of Red Cross Societies (SAPRCS) meeting held in Johannesburg. The Delegation made them aware of the risk of food shortage for 2005/2006 and advocated for a coordinated action. It was thus agreed to develop a questionnaire and collect data's on current and planned food security initiatives by the 10 national societies. Results are compiled and will be published in July.
- Secretaries General, Programmes Coordinators and Disaster Management Officers from Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia have been invited to a consultative meeting on a new disaster reduction programme scheduled for 14-15 June 2005; this is supported by DFID. One of the meeting objectives is to maximise the vulnerability reduction capacities of the Federation by building effective disaster response mechanisms within its member national societies.

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- The Working Group of Southern Africa National Society's Disaster Management Coordinators will meet with the Regional Disaster Management team on 16-17 June in Johannesburg. At this meeting, food security issues will be discussed in detail, with the objective of making participants understand food security from the sustainable livelihood framework, taking into consideration the transition from relief to development. Furthermore, the Red Cross position, action plan and way forward will be discussed at great length and serve as a basis for regional approach.
- The Federation, with support from the Norwegian Red Cross, will complete their participation in the transport support package (TSP) operation in partnership with WFP at the end of June 2005. However, in order to support the WFP 'Protracted Relief and Recovery' food distribution operation, from July 2005 to March 2006 in Malawi and Mozambique, the Federation has donated 97 M621 trucks, four light support vehicles, and workshop equipment and spares to support the WFP in responding to any future food security emergency.
- The regional delegation is also requesting for a FACT mission in early July to review the findings of the VAC and CFSAM assessments in the region, analyse the Red Cross niche and capacities in each country, and recommend the way forward to national societies and the regional delegation taking into account the document *Not business as Usual*.

Coordination

In order to determine an appropriate response, the Federation is in regular contact with key food security players (WFP, FAO, OCHA and other United Nations Agencies) and donors (DFID, USAID, ECHO) in the region. As indicated in the minutes of the early June 2005 RIACSO (Regional Inter Agency Coordination Support Office) meeting, donors were said to be clearly expressing interest in alternatives to food aid.

The national societies will continue collaborating with the WFP and other United Nations agencies, the Government of the respective countries, the SADC Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) and partner national societies (PNS) in implementing integrated food security programming in the region. In order to provide a comprehensive and effective safety net for the most vulnerable households (HIV and AIDS affected households, chronically ill; elderly; widows/widowers; disabled), HBC clients and OVC, a number of programme implementation strategies have been developed and adopted, and are delivered directly by the national societies; the HBC and OVC programmes themselves and much of the water and sanitation programming fall into this category.

The Federation and WFP recently signed a letter of Agreement on deepening cooperation between the two organisations. One element of that agreement focuses on people affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic in line with the recommendations set by the document *Not Business As Usual*. 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. WFP is already initiating a holistic approach in tackling food insecurity in the region. For example, following four consecutive drought years in Swaziland, the WFP intends to address food insecurity by taking into consideration the major factors that contribute to food insecurity in the country (drought, poor farmers' knowledge on agronomic practices and appropriate crop varieties; the impact of HIV and AIDS, which is eliminating farmers).

For further information and details on food security in the Southern Africa Region, please consult the following websites:

www.fews.net www.fao.org www.sarpn.org.za www.reliefweb.com www.irinnews.org

Issuance of the next information bulletin is anticipated by end of June or early July.

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For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org/>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal for Southern Africa regional programmes, no. 05AA018 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA018.pdf.

[Click here to return to the title page or contact information.](#)

Annex 1: Maize domestic deficit/surplus: 2005/06 projections

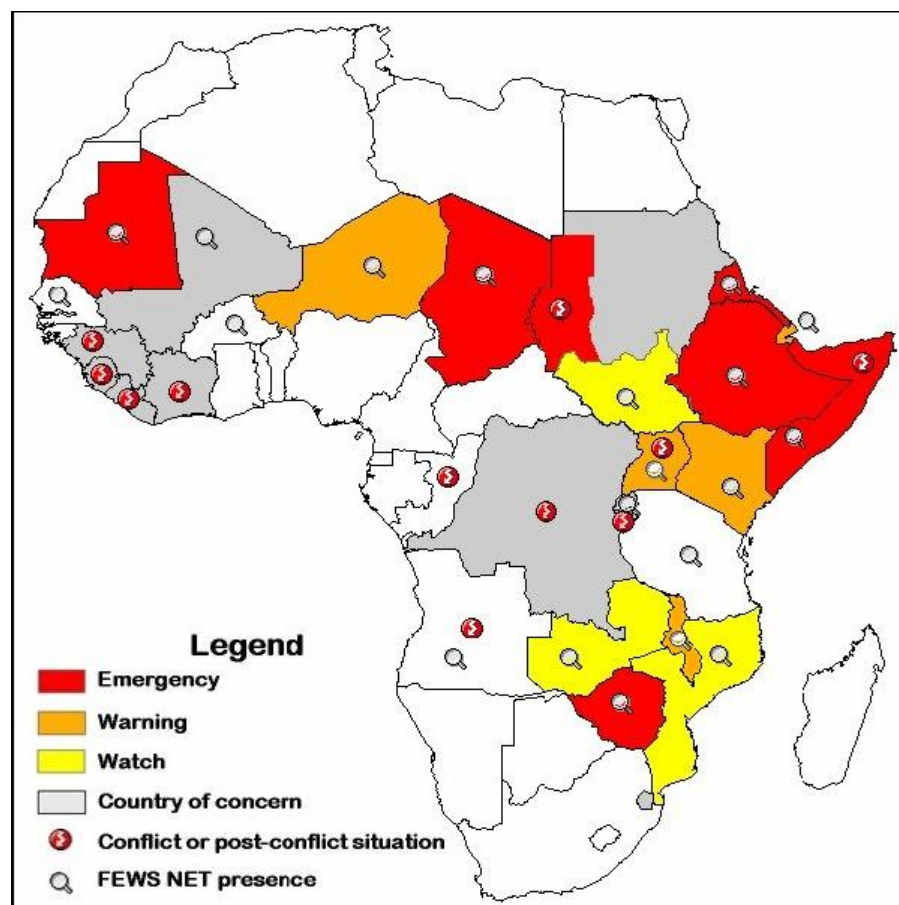
	SOUTH AFRICA			Other SADC*	All SADC 05/06	All SADC 04/05
	White	Yellow	Total	Total	Total	Total
Opening stocks	2 611	345	2 956	612	3 568	3 084
Gross production	7 058	4 729	11 787	7 793	19 580	19 508
Regional availability	9 669	5 074	14 743	8 402	23 148	22 592
Gross requirements	4 801	3 842	8 643	10 866	19 509	19 415
Desired stock requirements	554	441	995	549	1 544	1 597
Regional Demand	5 355	4 283	9 638	11 415	21 053	21 012
Deficit/Surplus	4 314	791	5 105	-3 010	2 095	1 580
Deficit/Surplus**	4 868	1 232	6 100	-2 461	3 639	3 177

Source: SADC FANR; NEWU and partners; Central Statistics Offices

*Excludes South Africa and DRC **Gap deficit/surplus calculated without stock replenishment

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Annex 2. Overview of Food Security Threats in Sub-Saharan Africa, 27 April 2005



Source: FEWS NET

Annex 3: FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment missions to Southern Africa.

Activity	Proposed End Dates				
	Malawi	Mozambique	Zambia	Swaziland	Lesotho
Fieldwork	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Report writing	20-May-05	20-May-05	27-May-05	27-May-05	27-May-05
Report availability	Not yet available				
<p>NB: Given that the government of Zimbabwe did not invite the joint FAO-WFP CFSAM to verify the size of the 2004/20J05 crop production, the ZimVAC may end up playing the role, like it did last year. This year ZimVAC plans to start data collection during the second half of May 2005 and to produce preliminary results for its rural food security assessment in July 2005.</p>					