

SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY



Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Vulnerability Assessment Committee

HIGHLIGHTS

of the

Regional Emergency Food Security Assessments

Covering ... Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Populations in Need of Emergency Food Aid and Cereal Requirements (MT) September 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003*

Country	Max No. of People in Need	Max % of Total Population	Cumulative MT of Cereal from September 1-March 31
Zimbabwe	6,700,000	49%	486,000
Malawi	3,300,000	29%	237,000
Zambia	2,900,000	26%	224,000
Lesotho	650,000	30%	36,000
Swaziland	270,000	24%	20,000
Mozambique	590,000	3%	48,000
TOTAL	14,400,000	25%	1,000,000

**Numbers are rounded*

16 September 2002
Harare

LESOTHO EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Government estimates 2001/02 cereal production at 121,500MT, which is 29 percent below the five year average. This compares with preliminary FAO/WFP cereal production estimates of 54,000MT in April. Agricultural production has been in decline for the past decade, but this last season has been particularly dismal, even in comparison to the poor year that preceded it.
- Declining food access and availability shortfalls are already affecting vulnerable rural households. Approximately 160,000 people, or eight percent of the rural population, will require emergency food assistance from September through November 2002. As stocks become depleted, this figure will jump to approximately 600,000 people, or 31% of population in December and January, and to approximately 650,000 people, or 34% of the population by February and March 2003 prior to next year's harvest.
- Total emergency cereal needs for Lesotho for the period September 1st – March 31st is 35,760MT.
- The districts most in need of assistance include Mokhotlong, Qacha's Nek, Quthing, and Thaba Tseka. The largest food cereal gaps are found in the mountains, followed by the foothills and the Senqu River Valley. Lowland villages are less vulnerable to acute food insecurity.
- For the whole rural population, 7.5 percent of children under five were found to be either moderately or severely wasted. Wasting results available in Lesotho suggest that malnutrition trends are up, but would generally not be considered a serious famine problem according to international standards.

MALAWI EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 2001-2002 maize production (1.6 million MT) was 28% lower than the five-year average and 6% less than the previous year.
- Food balance analysis based on final crop estimates shows that Malawi faces a deficit of 572,000 MT maize equivalent. The government is planning to import 250,000 MT of maize to be sold at a general subsidized price of MK17/kg.
- From June 2001 local maize prices rose dramatically. In the last two months, prices have dropped and begun to stabilize between MK10-MK15/kg, which is 50% higher than last year at this time. Prices are highest in the Central Region and lowest in the Northern Region.
- Twenty-one percent of the population, or 2,200,000 people, are in need of food assistance between September and November. This is expected to rise to twenty-nine percent, or 3,250,000 people, between December 2002 and March 2003.
- According to information gathered at the household level, the most seriously affected areas in terms of the largest number of people in need are found in the Central Region (50%), followed closely by the Southern Region (41%), while the Northern Region is least affected (10%).
- Key factors affecting household food security in the coming months include winter crop production, availability of casual labour (*ganyu*) for cash or food, and availability and price of food in local markets.
- Many households overstretched their coping mechanisms last year, reducing their resilience and increasing their vulnerability in the face of the continued food shortages.

MOZAMBIQUE EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The current estimate for the total number of people in need of food assistance is approximately 590,000 people in 48 Districts. This represents approximately 3% of the total population. Cereal requirements for emergency food aid are estimated at 48,000MT.
- Since the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) in April/May, there have been no major changes to the cereal production figures for the 2002 main season, except for millet in Sofala Province, where production was less than forecast in April/May. Overall cereal production in 2002 was approximately 5% higher than in 2001.
- However, cereal production was more than 34% less than last year in some areas, particularly in southern Mozambique. Districts highlighted for assistance are those that were hard hit by drought. Cassava production has been affected by "brown streak virus" in Nampula province.

- Poor road infrastructure makes it un-economical to move surplus food production in the north to deficit areas in the south.
- Emergency provision of seeds and tools are urgently required in the affected areas.
- Markets need to be monitored closely as current trends indicate that food prices could increase to levels that would be beyond the reach of the poorer households. Current food prices are higher in Nampula, Beira and Maputo than the same period last year.
- HIV/AIDS prevalence is reaching an alarming stage, with estimates that by the year 2010, some 1.2 million Mozambicans will have died of AIDS. This will seriously affect food security.
- Cereal imports are currently ahead of plans and the winter cropping is progressing well in areas that have not been affected by poor production in the main season.

SWAZILAND EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 2001/02 crop production was 33% lower than the five-year average resulting in a domestic food gap of 138,000MT which is 71% of the total domestic requirement. Due to the mid-season dry spell, crop production was particularly reduced in the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau.
- Even with a higher than normal level of planned commercial imports, and accounting for contributions from food aid until end of July, Swaziland still faces an uncovered gap of 27,500MT.
- Maize prices are approximately double compared to the same time last year increasing the vulnerability of the poorer wealth groups who depend on purchases to meet their food requirements. Prices are reported to be higher in the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau compared to the other zones.
- Compared to the April FAO/WFP assessment, the number of people in need of food assistance has increased from 144,000 to 153,000 for the September – November period and from 231,000 to 265,000 from December to March. The total cereal requirement has increased from 13,500 to 19,500MT.
- According to information gathered at the household level, the most seriously affected areas are in the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau and the dry parts of the Middleveld. Within these areas the poor and very poor families are in need of assistance now.
- A significant number (29%) of households have either no adults or only one adult in the 19 – 60 year old age bracket. This could be attributed to the HIV/AIDS epidemic as well as to absent males seeking work elsewhere. Forty one percent of households are headed by females. This results in less income from employment and less labour for productive activities.
- Nutritionally, 40% of children under-five years of age show signs of chronic malnutrition. The worst affected areas are the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau.

ZAMBIA EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The assessment confirms aggregate cereal production of 738,000 MT and a domestic cereal gap of 711,000 MT. Against a downward revision of commercial imports from 300,000 to 150,000 MT and a disrupted food aid pipeline, Zambia is likely to face an uncovered cereal gap of at least 439,000 MT.
- It is estimated that some 2.4 million people, including 87,000 orphans and vulnerable children in urban households will require food assistance for the period September to November 2002. This figure will swell to almost 2.9 million people by March 2003. The cumulative cereal food aid requirements for the period September to March 2003 are 224,200 MT.
- The worst affected areas are Southern Province and the valley districts where 90-100 percent of households have run out of food stocks. In addition, cereal prices are high and income earning opportunities are declining.
- Households with chronically ill people, less than four head of cattle, and female headed households have the largest per capita cereal gap, low food consumption levels and the highest proportion of people requiring food assistance.
- Coping strategies among female headed households frequently include reduction in food consumption, labour or asset sales.
- Market prices have increased rapidly and earlier than normal.

- More than 70 percent of households have no seeds. Emergency supply of seed is needed, particularly for small-scale farmers in the worst affected areas.
- The government of Zambia has banned the distribution and importation of GMO foods. This has disrupted the food aid pipeline for Zambia, and is likely to negatively affect the entire food aid response.

ZIMBABWE EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The VAC assessment affirms the severity of the Zimbabwe food crisis, and provides compelling evidence that urgent action--beyond that of current levels--is required from the Government of Zimbabwe and the international community to avert a humanitarian disaster in the next seven months before the main harvest in March/April 2003.
- Cereal availability is a critical factor in the current food crisis. With an initial cereal deficit of 1.65 million MT for the marketing year April 2002 to March 2003, to date the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) has imported only 335,000 MT, and humanitarian food relief 70,600 MT. Reports indicate potential future plans for GMB imports of 650,000 MT, which would significantly alleviate the crisis. Outstanding committed humanitarian food aid is 218,380 MT. Private sector commercial imports are negligible. Considering the initial deficit minus received and committed imports, there remains an outstanding unmet gap of 379,020 MT, excluding replenishment of the strategic grain reserve.
- Based on the household vulnerability analysis, the overall metric tonnage of required cereal food aid from September through March is 486,000 MT. This is 14% more than forecasted for the same time period by the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) in May, and highlights the need for a significant phase-up in temporal targeting.
- From September through November 4.5 million people (33% of the national population) will require emergency food assistance, rising to 6.7 million people (49% of the population) during the most critical months from December through March. That said, over 90% of households will rely on purchases this year, and thus be susceptible to supply shortfalls should they occur.
- During the peak period of need, of the 6.7 million requiring assistance, 5.9 million are rural and 850,000 are urban populations. The rural populations in need include 489,000 (ex)-commercial farm workers who have not been allocated land under the current land reform process and/or who have not been employed by the new land owners.
- 75% of the households currently have less than ½ bag (50kg) of maize in stock. 70% of households are currently dependent on purchases of cereal, and yet 64% of the communities stated that cereal is not, or seldom, available.
- The household vulnerability analysis confirms the impact of the crisis on peoples' lives and livelihoods. 68% of the households are employing multiple distress coping strategies at the same time. 18% of the households have taken their children out of school in the past 2 months.
- Nutritional anthropometry was linked to the household vulnerability analysis, and confirms the relationship between households with unmet food gaps and high malnutrition. In the day prior to the household interview, 34% of adults and 20% of children had eaten only one meal.
- Currently 94% of farmers do not have seed for their cereal crop for the upcoming season. 60% of those expect to source the seed from the government and/or do not know where they will get it.
- Alarming rates of HIV/AIDS of over 30% among people aged 15-44 not only contributes to the current crisis, but will have severe long term negative effects on food security for many years to come.