

SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

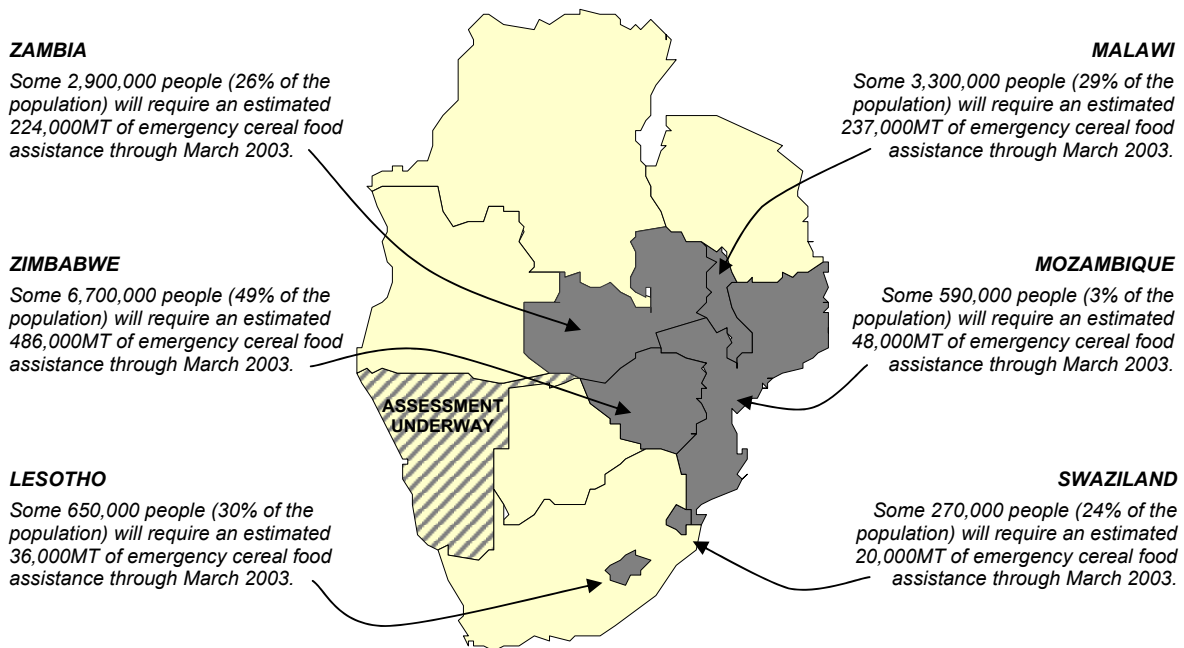


SADC FANR
Vulnerability
Assessment Committee

Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Vulnerability Assessment Committee

REGIONAL Emergency Food Security Assessment Report

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



16 September 2002
Harare

A collaborative report of the National Vulnerability Assessment Committees in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe; the SADC Regional Early Warning Unit; the SADC Regional Remote Sensing Unit, the SADC Regional Food Security Database Project; WFP; FEWS NET; SC(UK); CARE; FAO; UNICEF; IFRC; with financial support from National Governments, DFID, WFP, and USAID.

SADC REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The VAC emergency food security assessments confirm the severity of the regional food crisis and provide compelling evidence that urgent action--beyond that of current levels--is required from national governments, regional bodies and the international community to avert a humanitarian disaster in the next seven months before the main harvest in April/May 2003.

Country Overviews ...

- **Zimbabwe** is threatened with a major humanitarian crisis and possible famine due to serious food shortages caused by erratic rainfall, a declining economy, and recent policy trends.
- **Malawi** is suffering from structural food insecurity, exacerbated by two consecutive poor harvests. High levels of poverty leave many households with limited access to staple foods.
- In **Zambia**, poor households in areas affected by drought face both physical food shortages and constrained access to food due to chronic poverty. There is growing concern over the threat of urban food insecurity.
- While **Lesotho** is structurally dependent on food imports, declining productivity due to environmental degradation, coupled with low purchasing power due to reduced labour opportunities are exacerbating food security conditions.
- Although **Swaziland** is a lower-middle income country, consecutive poor harvests the past two years exceed the government and private sector capacities to fill the cereal gap.
- Despite good production in key cereal producing regions of northern **Mozambique**, drought conditions in some southern and central areas have led to pockets of food shortages, with access constrained by poor infrastructure and high market prices.

Other Key Findings ...

- Cereal **import progress**, representing efforts to fill the domestic food gap, is at about 25% in most countries, although Mozambique has imported 78% of requirements, while Zambia only 9%.
- The frequency and types of **coping strategies** currently being employed by households in all countries indicate increasing economic and nutritional distress.
- **Female-headed households** are typically poorer and more vulnerable to the effects of food shortages due to less income opportunities, less mobility, and high demands on their time as caregivers.
- High rates of **HIV/AIDS** infection exacerbate and are exacerbated by the current food shortages. Implications for longer-term livelihood and food security are grim.
- **Nutritional wasting** (weight-for-height), an indicator of extreme household food insecurity, is not severe as yet, but needs to be monitored closely in the coming months.
- **Agricultural inputs** are largely available at the national level (except Malawi). However, with only weeks remaining before the start of the planting season, most poor farmers are unsure where they will obtain their agricultural inputs, and how they will pay for them.
- Knowledge of **urban food needs** is lacking, and apart from Zambia were not looked at in the recent assessments. Food shortages and rising prices are adversely affecting poor urban residents. Their food aid needs must be assessed and addressed.

ASSESSMENT STATISTICS

- * Six SADC countries conducted emergency food security assessments (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe).
- * A similar assessment is underway in Namibia. The results will be available by the end of September.
- * Some 172 researchers participated in the field work, which lasted two to three weeks.
- * The teams visited 160 districts, 378 different communities, and interviewed 4,457 households.

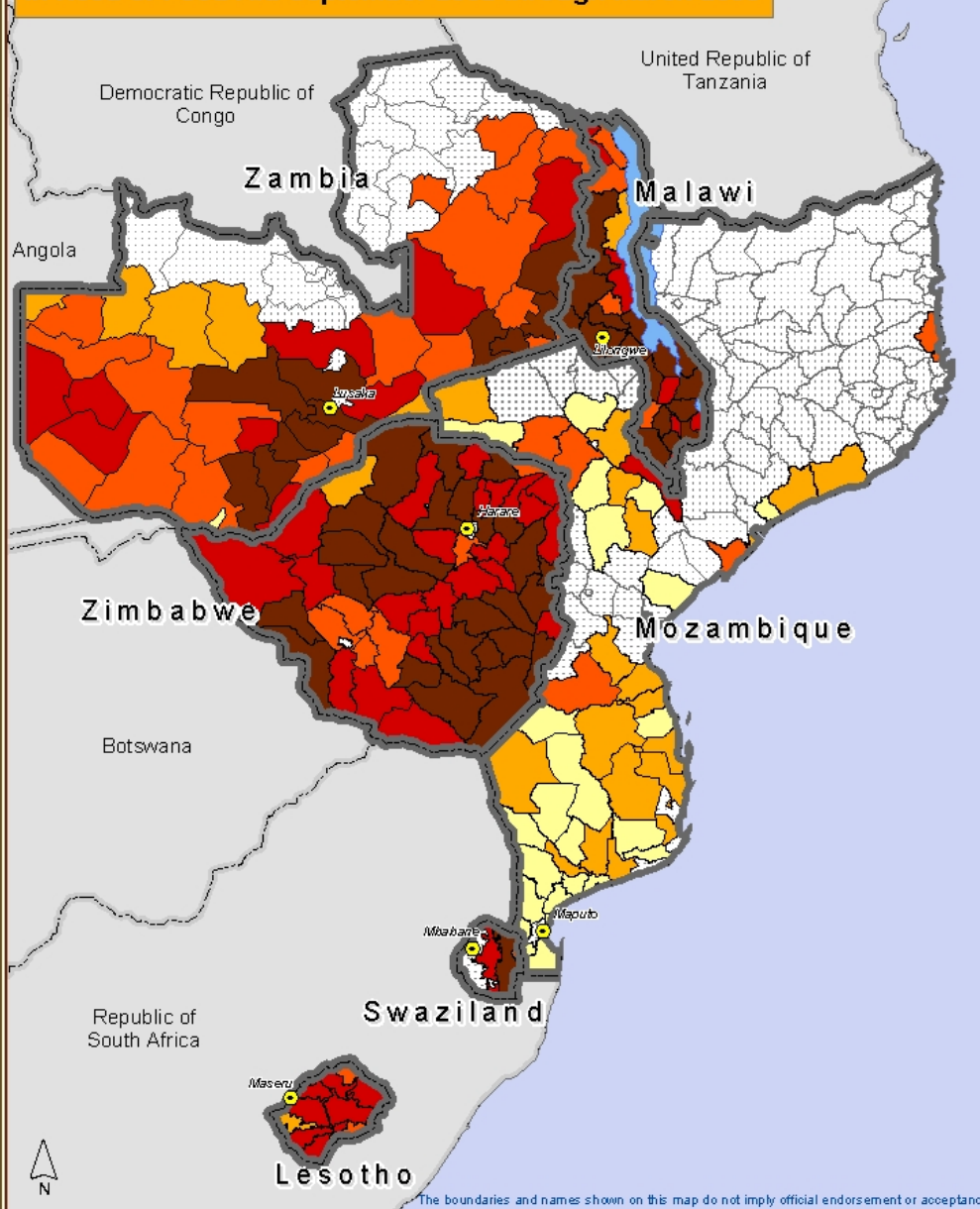
ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- * The overall assessment process and methodology was coordinated and backstopped by the SADC Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Vulnerability Assessment Committee.
- * National Vulnerability Assessment Committees led the assessments in each country with broad participation from key stakeholders.
- * The objective of the assessments was to generate timely and necessary information and analysis to guide critical decision-making.
- * The assessment methodology draws from a livelihood-based vulnerability assessment framework.
- * Different questionnaires were used at the district, community and household levels.
- * The assessment methodology linked nutritional surveys with household interviews in four of the six countries (Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe).
- * This is the first in a series of three rolling emergency food security assessments following the April/May FAO/ WFP CFSAM. A second assessment, with similar objectives, will be complete by mid-December. The final assessment will take place towards the end of the cropping season.
- * In between assessments, the SADC FANR will assist affected countries in monitoring food security conditions, and undertaking special studies on topics or areas of particular concern.

SADC FANR Vulnerability Assessment Committee August 2002 Emergency Food Needs Assessments



Estimated Maximum Number of Rural Population in Need of Food Aid September 2002 through March 2003



Map Legend

Number of People in Need



Figures based on results from the National VAC Assessment Missions, August 2002
Figures represent rural needs only
13/09/02

VAC Regional Partners

- SADC REWU
- SADC RRSU
- SADC DB Project
- WFP
- FEWS-NET
- SC(UK)
- FAO
- UNICEF
- IFRC

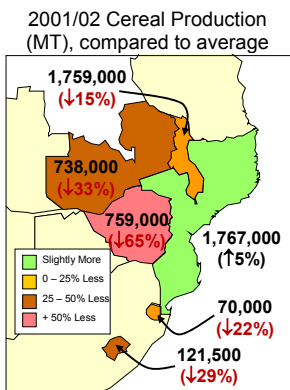
Spatial files from Global Discovery & ADDS

People in Need of General Emergency Food Aid and Cereal Requirements (MT)

Country	Peak Number of People in Need	Peak Percent of People in Need ²	Cumulative MT Cereal Food Aid Sept/02 thru Mar/03	% Aid over Domestic Requirement ³
Zimbabwe ¹	6,700,000	49%	486,000	19%
Malawi	3,300,000	29%	237,000	11%
Zambia ¹	2,900,000	26%	224,000	16%
Lesotho	650,000	30%	36,000	9%
Swaziland	270,000	24%	20,000	10%
Mozambique	590,000	3%	48,000	2%
Region	14,400,000	25%	1,000,000	11%

1. Figures for Zimbabwe and Zambia include urban needs. 2. Total people in need over total national population. 3. Excludes stock replenishment. Values rounded.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL?



SOURCE: REWU, September 2002

Adding stock reserves with 2001/02 production provides an estimate of national cereal availability at the beginning of the 2002/03 marketing year (April in most countries) (see table). Subtracting domestic cereal requirements (excluding desired closing stocks), provides an indication of the domestic cereal gap, which must be filled through a combination of commercial imports (including direct or subsidized imports by government) and food aid. Zimbabwe's domestic cereal gap this year of 1,654,000MT compares with the past five-year average of 156,000MT. The cereal gap in Zambia is 147% higher than average, Swaziland 88%, Malawi 71%, Mozambique 61% and Lesotho 40% higher. The table also shows import progress towards filling the cereal gap since the beginning of the marketing year. Mozambique has made the most progress, having imported nearly 78% if its requirements through a combination of commercial and food aid imports. Zambia has made the least progress, having so far filled less than 9% of its cereal gap. All other countries have filled between 22% and 27% of the gap.

Compared with the past five-year average, 2001/02 cereal production at the national level was down notably in the six countries included in the assessments, with the exception of Mozambique (see map). The most severe drop was in Zimbabwe, where cereal production was 65% less than the national average. At the national level in Mozambique, production was up 5% as a result of good rainfall and high production levels in key northern cereal producing areas. Production in southern and central drought affected areas of Mozambique was down by as much as 34%, leading to localized food shortages.

2002/03 Domestic Cereal Gap (MT) and Import Progress, September 2002

	2001/02 Cereal Production + Opening Stocks	Domestic Requirements ¹	Domestic Cereal Gap	Commercial Imports Received	Food Aid Imports Received	Remaining Cereal Gap/ Surplus
Lesotho	140,000	395,500	255,500	56,500	3,000	196,000
Malawi ²	1,847,000	2,124,000	277,000	42,000	24,000	211,000
Mozambique	1,876,000	2,256,000	380,000	233,000	63,000	84,000
Swaziland	72,500	193,500	121,000	28,000	5,000	88,000
Zambia	761,000	1,445,000	684,000	43,000	16,000	625,000
Zimbabwe	929,000	2,583,000	1,654,000	335,000	71,000	1,248,000

1. Excludes stock replenishment; 2. Includes cassava maize equivalent; SOURCE: National and Regional EWUs

For the six countries assessed, an estimated 14.4 million people are adversely affected by food shortages. These people risk losing their livelihood assets. If conditions deteriorate further there could be widespread nutritional decline and the threat of death. An estimated one million metric tonnes of emergency cereal food aid is required to assist the most vulnerable people until the next main harvest in April/May.

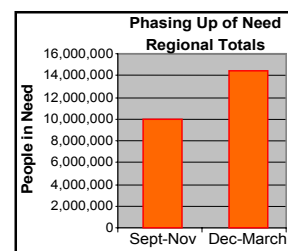
Zimbabwe stands out as having the greatest number of people in need of food assistance (6.7 million), representing 49% of the national population. Zimbabwe will require almost half of the overall metric tonnes of emergency cereal for the region (486,000 out of the 1 million MT total). Malawi and Zambia also have high overall numbers of people in need (3.3 and 2.9 million, respectively). While the absolute numbers of those requiring assistance in Lesotho and Swaziland are notably lower, the relatively high percentages of their population in need of food assistance (30% and 24%, respectively) are indicative of the crisis severity. In Mozambique, the overall percentage of the total population in need is low (3%), but that number obscures the level of need within the most seriously affected districts.

Within each country the assessments provide targeting information to assist in reaching the most vulnerable groups, including geographic, temporal, and socio-economic targeting. The map on the previous page illustrates variations of need at the district levels. Temporal targeting refers to the increasing levels of need up until the next main harvest in April/May. From September through November, there are an estimated 10 million people in need of food assistance, which

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

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

*Numbers are rounded



will increase to 14.4 million from December through March 2003. Rural households that are most vulnerable are typically characterized by being female headed, having orphans, having few to no livestock, and small land holdings.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL?

Cereal entitlement: At the household level, a short hand proxy for changing food aid needs over time is the concept of cereal entitlement. This is defined as current plus expected access to cereals—directly (through own production, food aid, food for work or gifts) and indirectly, through purchasing power. The emergency assessments used the concept of cereal entitlement to come up with a short-hand measure of household food aid needs. The table showing the number of households in need of food assistance on the previous page shows when entitlement is expected to be exhausted.

Availability of cereals in local market: percent of communities stating that cereal grains were NOT readily available

Lesotho	77%
Malawi	62%
Mozambique	No data
Swaziland	No data
Zambia	50%
Zimbabwe	99%

Cereal availability: It should be noted that the totals in the table do NOT include those households that are food insecure due to supply side factors, that is, those households that have purchasing power, but are unable to access cereals simply because they are not available on the market. Data from the assessments indicate that a high proportion of households are experiencing difficulty in accessing cereals due to supply side issues.

Coping strategies: Without substantial imports, food shortages will intensify, prices will continue to rise and households will be forced to intensify coping strategies. These can be categorised into income increasing strategies, expenditure reducing strategies, food consumption reducing strategies and migration strategies. Throughout the region, the majority of vulnerable people have already engaged in distress coping strategies—behaviours in response to the crisis that may meet immediate needs but can have detrimental effects on long-term livelihoods. For example, in each country children are being removed from school due to a shortage of cash for fees and/or the need to have the child's labour at home. In Zimbabwe, 18% of the households reported removing children from school within the past two months.

The most frequently cited type of coping strategy is a change in consumption patterns. Throughout the region, roughly 80% of the households report eating smaller portions, skipping meals in the day, or even skipping whole days without eating a substantial meal. Changes in consumption patterns, in terms of frequency of meals, are generally followed by reduction in expenditures (for example on health care and school fees), then sale of capital assets (such as farm equipment and livestock), and then migration strategies. Other commonly cited coping strategies include prostitution (putting women and young girls at high risk of HIV/AIDS), eating wild foods (while sometimes normal, some people are eating wild foods that are poisonous when not properly prepared), rural-urban migration (typically by men, leaving women and children at the village home) and gold panning in Zimbabwe (having detrimental effects on the environment). The direct and indirect impacts of these and other distress coping strategies could send vulnerable households into a downward spiral that could undermine their livelihoods for years to come.

HIV/AIDS and household food security: Although not directly measured by the emergency assessments, the impact of HIV/AIDS on household food security was highlighted as a major problem at the community level. In Lesotho for example, HIV/AIDS was cited as a major factor increasing vulnerability to the current crisis in about 30% of the communities visited. The potential “overlap” between HIV/AIDS affected households and households experiencing acute food shortage will vary by country and will be different in rural versus urban areas. However, the numbers *directly* and *indirectly* affected by the overlap will be very considerable indeed, especially in Zimbabwe because of the very high number of those in need of food assistance and the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate. Some idea of the likely “overlap” is illustrated by comparing the stark figures of HIV/AIDS rates to the proportion of the rural population in need of food aid. Known rates of sero-prevalence amongst adults range from a low of 13% in Mozambique to a high of 34% in Zimbabwe, the average for the six countries being 24% (UNAIDS, 2002). Emergency food distributions are necessary for an estimated 25% of the rural populations in the six countries. The assessments have confirmed that those most affected by the current crisis are poor, have few assets, few entitlements and are therefore highly vulnerable to livelihood failure. HIV/AIDS adds to this vulnerability.

Gender and household food security: The assessments found that female-headed households are being affected more adversely in the current crisis than male-headed households. In each country, there were higher proportions of female-headed households in the poor and very poor wealth categories than male-headed households. The average size of the cereal gap for female-headed households was larger than for male-headed, with particularly large variations in some countries.

Urban household food security: There is a lack of knowledge on how urban households are being affected by the current crisis. Apart from Zambia, urban food security was not covered in the emergency assessments. The Zambia study estimated a total of 97,000 orphaned and vulnerable children in urban areas in need of assistance. Recent studies in Zimbabwe indicate that 850,000 people in urban areas of the country are in need of food assistance. There is now an urgent need to conduct emergency food needs assessments in urban areas in the region, to determine the extent of the problem and the required response.

IS THE FOOD SITUATION GETTING BETTER OR WORSE?

In May 2002, the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAM) estimated the maximum number of people in need of food assistance in the six countries through March 2003 to be 12.8 million, requiring 880,000 MT of cereal food aid. The current VAC assessments estimate the number of people in need of assistance (14.4 million) to be 12.5% more than the CFSAM estimate, and the required quantity of cereal (1 million MT) to be 13.6% higher. This increase is partly due to: (1) the benefit of having the assessment conducted closer to the time period when the crisis is expected to be most severe; and (2) using a larger sample size and more in depth community and household level techniques. It also reflects final production levels, insufficient grain import levels, high and increasing prices, and the deteriorating effect of people engaging in negative, or distress, coping strategies.

As forecasted in May, and confirmed in the current assessments, the food crisis is progressively worsening as the consumption year advances. Household food stocks are largely depleted and households are depending on purchases of cereal, which may not be available and/or may be sold at prices far surpassing purchasing power. These trends are certain to worsen in the coming months before the next main harvest. In most of the countries, the months of January-March are typically "lean seasons", but this year, if government, commercial and humanitarian response is not adequate, this could be the season of catastrophe.

IS NUTRITIONAL STATUS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

The assessment methodology linked nutritional surveys with household interviews in four of the six countries (Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Findings are in line with larger studies that indicate stunting (height-for-age) rates in the 35 – 45% range. This is indicative of the high levels of chronic food insecurity and poverty in the region.

Wasting (weight-for-height) figures are below the 10% to 15% level expected in times of severe food shortages. Further deterioration in child nutritional status is feared as the food crisis worsens, as most of the households interviewed have already reduced the number of meals per day, reduced portion sizes and some are even skipping whole days without proper meals. For this reason, it will be very important to monitor changes in wasting levels amongst children under five years old as the crisis continues. Delayed food assistance in the region could result in a sharp rise in the number of malnourished children.

Malnutrition in children under-five		
	Wasting (<-2SD)	Stunting (<-2SD)
Lesotho	7.5%	34.7%
Malawi ¹	6.0%	49.0%
Mozambique ²	5.5%	43.8%
Swaziland	2.2%	40.0%
Zambia	4.4%	39.9%
Zimbabwe	7.3%	41.3%

SOURCES: 2002 Aug VAC; 1. 2000DHS; 2. QUIBB2001

WHAT IS THE FOOD SITUATION LIKELY TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

The food security situation in the months ahead depends on many inter-related factors: the actual level and timeliness of commercial imports, the donor's response to appeals for humanitarian assistance, the logistics of moving food into the region, across borders and within countries, price levels, and the ability of people to afford food, along with numerous country-specific factors. Looking further ahead, agricultural recovery during the upcoming 2002/03 cropping season will be critical to improve national and household food security in the countries already facing serious food shortages. Key factors for the season ahead include the availability and accessibility of agricultural inputs, especially by poor households, and rainfall performance.

Planned Imports: Determining food aid needs is in part based on assumptions on the level of commercial imports that will help offset domestic cereal shortages. In these analyses, "commercial imports" include those by both the private sector and by government. Deriving an accurate estimate of planned imports can be difficult, especially if the private sector will play an active role and there are many small and medium-scale traders. Furthermore, commercial import plans change over time, thus changing the potential magnitude of the unfilled import gap. If actual imports fall short of plans, either in absolute quantity or over time, the food situation could further deteriorate from the scenarios suggested by the current round of emergency food security assessments.

Policy Environment: The respective roles played by government and the private sector will also be a factor in determining whether food security conditions improve or deteriorate in the months ahead. Government policies are sometimes unclear, or even contradictory, in that they may call for a reduced role of government in trade and marketing systems, without providing an enabling environment for the private sector to operate efficiently, and profitably. In some cases, government policy aimed at ensuring the food security of all citizens, such as consumer subsidies, price controls, and direct government imports, may undermine the ability of the private sector to effectively participate and compete in trade and marketing activities, thus decreasing their potential contribution to filling the food gap.

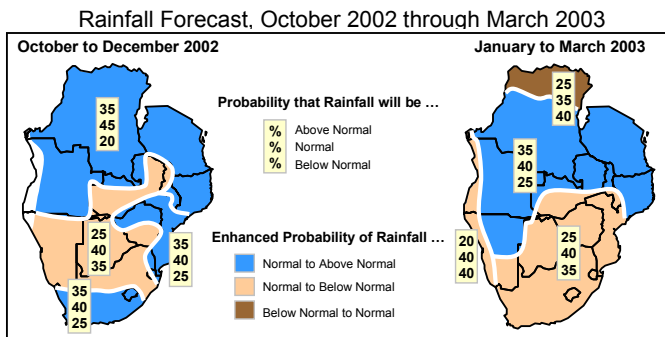
Market Prices: Until the next harvest, prices of staple foods will be a major determinant of household food security. Prices are already well above where they should normally be at this time of year and household purchasing power is extremely low, especially in areas suffering from a second consecutive poor season. When determining the potential role of the commercial sector in filling production shortfalls, it is assumed that if staple food is available in the marketplace, that a certain percentage of people will be able to buy it. As prices rise, however, so too does the proportion of people unable to afford basic staples, thus increasing the number of people who will require food assistance.

Recovery and Rehabilitation: A good harvest from the next cropping season, ending in April/May 2003, will greatly ease the immediate food crisis and the emergency response. However, even if the harvest is good, asset levels and coping capacity of households will have been weakened considerably by the crisis. This implies a need for recovery and rehabilitation interventions, such as livestock restocking, irrespective of the size of the 2002/03 harvest. If the harvest is poor, this could be the third consecutive year that the most seriously affected areas suffer from production shortfalls, with disastrous food security ramifications. The major factors that will determine the outcome of the production season include input availability and accessibility, and rainfall performance.

Agricultural Inputs: At the regional level, key inputs, particularly seed, are available. South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe have surplus supplies of maize seed. Mozambique has adequate national supplies of seed. Lesotho and Swaziland typically import their seed from South Africa, and no problems are expected there. In Malawi, there could be problems with national level availability, as they will need to import some 8,000MT of hybrid maize and 300MT of open pollinated varieties to meet the requirements of planned input supply programmes that will target almost 3 million farmers. While seed availability is unlikely to be a problem this season, accessing seed in a timely manner will be a problem, especially by poor farmers given their low levels of income, depleted food stocks and the high cost of staple foods. With only weeks remaining before the start of the planting season, most poor farmers are unsure where or how they will obtain their agricultural inputs. Well targeted and timely humanitarian assistance providing input supply will be essential to supplement government efforts to restore productive capacity within the region.

Climate Outlook: A weak to moderate El Niño event is expected to persist throughout most of the 2002/03 cropping season. While experts agree that a weak El Niño would probably have minimal effect on rainfall levels in the region, a moderate to strong El Niño would be more likely to lead to dry conditions that could adversely affect crop production. National, regional and international climate experts met in early-September to develop a consensus seasonal forecast¹. Because a weak El Niño event was assumed, most of the region is forecast to receive normal to above normal rainfall during the first half of the season, although some

parts of the countries currently facing exceptional food shortages have a slightly enhanced probability of receiving normal to below normal rains. For the second part of the season, January to March 2003, all of the affected countries are likely to receive normal or below normal rainfall, with the exception of northern parts of Zambia and Malawi, which have an enhanced probability of receiving normal to above normal rainfall. In December, when the strength of the El Niño is known, climate experts will meet again to update the forecast for the second half of the season.



SOURCE: 6th Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum, September 2002

¹ The forecast is based on probabilities derived from 30 years of historical rainfall data, and considers the state of the global oceanic-atmospheric system and its implications for the region. Climate experts caution that the forecast is relevant only for seasonal time scales and for relatively large areas, and that local and month-to-month variations should be expected.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DECISION-MAKING?

The VAC emergency food security assessments confirm the severity of the regional food crisis and provide compelling evidence that urgent action--beyond that of current levels--is required from national governments, regional bodies and the international community to avert a humanitarian disaster in the next seven months before the main harvest in April/May 2003.

National Governments: At national levels there are distinct actions, unique to each country, which governments can take to reduce the ultimate magnitude and impact of the impending crisis. While these are described in more detail in the country reports, in general these include creating policy environments that:

- enable large volumes of required food to enter the country through a combination of the private sector, government programmes and humanitarian relief agencies;
- enable unfettered transportation of cereals across international boundaries and within countries; and
- avoid government action in the market place that could reduce private sector participation, such as high subsidies, price controls, etc.

Governments must also put into place strong and appropriate recovery and rehabilitation initiatives, including removal of longer-term policy constraints in order to address the underlying factors exacerbating the current food crisis, including chronic poverty, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS and low productivity.

International Humanitarian Community: The international community has expressed deep concern about the crisis and has donated hundreds of millions of dollars of food and other assistance. The benefits of that assistance are clearly evident among the households that are receiving aid. This current round of assessments confirms both the urgency of needs as well as validates, indeed calls for increases in, the original appeals for food relief. For the six countries assessed, 1,000,000 MT of cereal food aid is required. To meet these needs, not only do the current humanitarian appeals need to be fully resourced (currently at around 25%), but they also need to be revised upward in line with the current levels of required assistance.

Targeting: Food assistance needs to be carefully targeted to the most vulnerable populations. The national VAC emergency food security assessment reports provide guidance to provide geographic targeting at the district level, specify temporal phases of need, and characterize the most vulnerable socio-economic groups. In the case that humanitarian appeals are not adequately resourced, the targeting criteria will allow for prioritisation of resources. The VAC assessments draw together the information required to make the most confident statements possible. That said, situations on the ground are complex and dynamic, requiring constant diligence and revision of targeting plans to reach those most in need.

Agricultural Inputs: For all of the countries, the main planting season is approaching, typically from late October to mid December. Although some programmes are in place, there is an urgent need for agricultural inputs, including seed and fertilizer. The national reports are more specific about the needs in each country. In contrast to food, which is in short supply at regional level, the critical seed issue is generally one of accessibility at the household level. Urgent consideration needs to be given to increasing farmer access to seed through both free input programmes and voucher schemes that allow farmers to access appropriate seed through private sector and government mechanisms.

Nutrition: Emergency food assistance should include a comprehensive food basket that combines cereals, pulses, oils, and other necessary commodities. Supplementary feeding is warranted for some of the most vulnerable groups. Vitamin A capsules should be considered to reduce child mortality and morbidity. Countries need to strengthen their capacity for screening, referral and management of severe malnutrition using the latest WHO guidelines.

Monitoring: Food security conditions at the community, national, and regional levels need to be closely monitored for the duration of the crisis. Complimenting the rolling assessments planned by the SADC VAC, key secondary data (such as market prices, rainfall and food imports) should be continuously analysed. At the community level, nutrition surveillance should be combined with data on dietary diversity, coping strategies, household purchasing power, and local availability of critical staple foods.

The Need to Act NOW

Urgent action is required to ensure that emergency food reaches those most in need and that emergency food stocks are in place within countries, especially for the severe months of December through March. Based on an understanding of current national and household food stocks, market prices, dietary intake, coping strategies, and other food security indicators, the assessment clearly indicates that if international assistance remains at its current levels, a humanitarian disaster may be unavoidable in months ahead. Implications of a disaster of this nature would be loss of livelihoods (having long term-negative effects), severe malnutrition, and potentially, death of those most at risk.