

Annex 2. What is Save the Children UK doing in the region?

ANGOLA

The issues

- After so many years of war, a cease-fire between the ruling MPLA and opposition UNITA was signed on 4th April 2002.
- 4 million Angolans (one third of the population) were forced to flee their homes during the war in search of security and food. They have little, if anything, to return to: no houses, no crops, no jobs, no health services, no schools and often no family.
- Up to one million people were out of reach during the war and unable to receive assistance. Those who survived and are reachable now are in desperate need of help. This is in addition to the more than one million people who are already receiving aid.
- People need food, water and basic sanitation, basic household items (blankets, pots and pans, buckets to carry water) and health services. Thousands who have lost touch with their families need to be reunited.
- The war wreaked devastation on the most basic infrastructure: roads, bridges, hospitals and schools. This means people can't reach markets, work, humanitarian assistance and so on. Landmines will continue to prevent people from moving around safely.
- About 350,000 people – UNITA fighters and their families – came out of the bush since the cease-fire. Most had been struggling and on the run for much of the last two years. They have reported to quartering and family areas (QFAs), where they are completely dependent on external assistance to survive.
- This takes place against a backdrop of chronic poverty. Angola's social indicators are amongst the worst in the world:
 - One in three children dies before the age of five.
 - One mother in 50 dies whilst giving birth.
 - Less than half the children ever go to school; of those who do, relatively few study for more than two years.
 - Nation-wide, 50% of men and 70% of women cannot read and write.
 - 63% of families live below the poverty line; the percentage living in extreme poverty – 50 pence a day - has more than doubled in the last five years.
- An estimated 100,000 children have been separated from their families due to the war. Some have spent years without any word of their parents.
- A conservative estimate is that 10,000 boys have been used as child soldiers. A similar number of girls have been abducted or forced to leave their families. Many of them have been forced into sexual partnerships with soldiers.

What is SC UK doing in Angola?

- Comprehensive humanitarian package for 60,000 people in two QFAs and one displaced persons' camp. This includes food, essential household items, health and nutrition support and family tracing for child soldiers and other children separated from their families. In addition, 25,000 children under 10 years – many of them malnourished - are receiving a supplement to their diet.
- Nationwide support to the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reintegration in its national family tracing and reunification programme.
- Work with children affected by the war to help them reintegrate into communities.
- Supplementary feeding for 5,000 malnourished children under 12 years in Huambo and Caála towns.
- Work with communities and children in urban settings to understand poverty and design local solutions that focus on safe day care and access to more food, education and health services.

- Participatory work with displaced girls and women to facilitate their access to basic services.
- Using experience in the field to encourage the Government of Angola, the UN, international community and local communities to devise and implement appropriate policies and practices in the best interests of Angolan children.

LESOTHO

The Issues

- Lesotho has suffered severe weather variability over the last two years characterised by torrential rains, frosts, hailstorms and tornadoes, which have significantly reduced the 2002 cereal harvest. Cereal production in this year's harvest has declined by over a third since last year which was also a bad year. The World Food Programme crop assessment report estimates that 50,000 MT of food aid will be needed. Almost half a million people will require emergency food aid throughout the country.
- Most families in Lesotho live below the poverty line. Over the last 9 months, there has been serious inflation in both bread and maize prices; this has left the poorest sections of society struggling to access food despite the availability of food staples in the country.
- Assistance needs to be carefully targeted and phased so as to avoid disruption of domestic markets.
- The structural problems of the economy and agriculture in Lesotho are immense. There has been a consistent and long-term decline in cereal yields in Lesotho. There has been a 300% decline since the 1970s. Poor farming practices have reduced the availability of topsoil, depleted the nutrients from the soil and reduced the area planted.
- Unemployment has undoubtedly worsened over the last decade. Nearly half of all the Basotho miners working in South Africa have been retrenched. The drop in remittances has had a profound effect on rural livelihoods in Lesotho.
- The HIV/AIDS pandemic has further eroded livelihoods and the problem is worsening in the country. Lesotho has one of the highest HIV/AIDS infection rates in the world. Out of a population of 1,073,000 children, 27,00 are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS.
- The nutritional status of the country's children represents some of the worst indicators in Southern Africa. The national prevalence rates of malnutrition have increased over the last decade and stunting amongst the under 5s is estimated to be 45%.
- There is a weak response capacity to the crisis in both the government and non-government organisations (NGOs) sectors.

What is SC UK doing in Lesotho?

- SC UK has lobbied for extension of the School Feeding Programme. This is by far the most effective mechanism for getting food to the majority of children.
- SC UK is facilitating the FAO/WFP crop assessment. We are currently supporting a SADC-FANR evaluation of the food security situation in all districts in Lesotho. This will enable an accurate and credible evaluation of needs and ensure that Lesotho's needs are considered in any regional food aid response.
- SC UK has recommended that there is emergency provision of agricultural inputs such as seeds in order to enable disaster-affected farming families to restart agricultural production during the next main planting season starting in October 2002. The promotion of seed multiplication and horticultural production are recommended measures to further improve food security at household level.
- SC UK continues to monitor the food situation in the country and to provide regular food security information to support food aid programmes.

- SC UK is working to ensure that all food security work addresses explicitly the issues of child protection, HIV/AIDS, age and gender.

MALAWI

The issues

- SC UK assessments in Malawi completed in October 2001 alerted agencies, donors and governments to the present food crisis in Malawi.
- The food crisis is a result of a combination of factors. These are:
 - Two consecutive “failed” harvests due mainly to floods in 2001 and in 2002 due mainly to drought.
 - Rapidly increasing maize prices.
 - Increase in agricultural input prices.
 - Failure of government and commercial sector to import enough maize into the country over several months in the leanest food period.
 - People having “pre-harvested” a significant amount of their food produce (particularly maize).
- Malawi is a landlocked country. It will be extremely difficult to bring in 280,000MT of commercial food imports plus the 208,000MT of food aid through the available routes.
- There is serious regional competition for food imports, with Zimbabwe requiring the most. Failure to bring in the required 485,000 MT of food over the next nine months will have a negative impact on a population that have already exhausted most of their coping strategies and reserves
- If food aid and commercial imports fail, 3.2 million Malawians will continue to experience serious food shortages. Over the past two years people have sold off a significant amount of their assets. There is discussion of a recovery programme but details and strategy have not yet been finalised.
- The EU is part restocking the national food reserve with 40,000 MT which has been sourced locally. It is unclear what impact this will have on the local market.
- The audit of the National Food Reserve Agency and ADMARC is very negative, which has not inspired donor confidence. The report shows that the proceeds of the sale of the grain reserve did not service the loans for which it was sold. The anti-corruption investigation is yet to produce its report.
- The ruling party has failed in its bid for a third Presidential term largely as a result of civil society pressure. In the current crisis the country needs political stability to enable it to focus on important issues. For the first time in Malawi, civil society has set itself up to monitor government budgets and participate in national debates.
- There is more dialogue and co-ordination amongst different stakeholders including the United Nations, the government, NGOs, donors and civil society. A consolidated agenda for food aid has been agreed in line with the WFP figures. However, SC UK remains concerned that the total needs will not be met.

What is SC UK doing in Malawi?

- SC UK is undertaking a number of humanitarian food interventions to address the situation. In March 2002, SC UK distributed a one-month ration of white maize to approximately 45,000 households in Mchinji district. In Salima, it distributed a one-month ration of white maize and beans to 35,000 households in May 2002. A second distribution for Salima was underway as at the end of June 2002 with a similar ration.

- Alongside the distribution of white maize in Mchinji and Salima, a high protein unimix was distributed to all under-five children in the targeted households at the rate of 10Kg per under-five child, per month. A total of 80,000 children were assisted through this intervention.
- SC UK is working with WFP to distribute a one-month ration of white maize (50Kgs) to 3800 most affected households in Mchinji in the months of June, July and August 2002. In Salima, 5800 households will be targeted for distribution in July and August 2002. The number of households targeted is expected to be scaled up for the September to December 2002 period and yet again up to March as the situation worsens prior to the next harvest.
- SC UK is supporting Nutritional Rehabilitation Units (NRUs) and targeted supplementary feeding in the districts of Mchinji and Salima by supplying food provisions including the high protein unimix and cooking oil. SC UK has provided some basic tools such as blankets, measuring equipment and basic utensils for the NRUs to help them meet the increased demands. Training is being provided to the staff of NRUs and feeding centres as a way of ensuring that feeding protocols are adhered to.
- Regular nutritional surveys have been undertaken since December 2001 to constantly monitor the nutritional status of the under-fives. As at end June 2002 a nutritional survey in Mchinji and Salima districts is underway which is showing similar results to those of Dec 2001. This will be followed by another survey in September 2002. Mapping for nutritional surveys in Malawi has been undertaken in May to June 2002 in order to establish geographical gaps in nutritional surveys across the whole of Malawi.
- The Malawi Programme is playing a key role in advocating for food policy that will promote access of food to the majority of Malawians through its participation in national food security forums such as the Joint Task Force on Food Security coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and its sub-committees.

MOZAMBIQUE

The Issues

- During 2002/03 Mozambique will need approximately 62,000MT of food aid to support half a million affected families.
- The food situation remains serious in the southern and central regions of the country. The severe dry weather during the 2001/02 cropping season sharply reduced crop yields in these regions. The main factors of the current acute food insecurity conditions being experienced in the semi-arid districts of the southern and central regions include a combination of:
 - Structural economic deficiencies.
 - The cumulative effect of several recent natural shocks, especially floods, excessive rains and cyclones that hit the same areas during the last three seasons, plus the current dry spells which led to almost total harvest failure in these areas.
 - A sharply reduced ability of households in these areas to replace the lost production with other income and production until at least April 2003.
- HIV/AIDS has also contributed to low production due to lost or weakened agricultural labour and absence from the fields due to funerals. The central region has been hardest hit with rates of over 21% HIV/AIDS prevalence.
- In other regions the harvests this season have been reasonably good with a slight increase in overall production compared with the 2001 harvest. Production has not been homogenous over the country and there are clearly vulnerable pockets, principally in Gaza and Inhambane provinces. Increasing amounts of assistance will be needed throughout the later part of 2002 and in early 2003. Increased household level food security monitoring in these areas will be a priority.
- There are many non-government organisations (NGOs) working in Gaza province that are willing to support relief assistance to vulnerable communities, primarily through food for work. In Inhambane province there are fewer international NGOs and accessibility to

interior districts is problematic. In addition, the population is very dispersed making access particularly difficult and food for work problematic.

- High prices of maize in the local market are seriously undermining household food security for a significant section of the population in the centre and the south. Families that have lost all or most of their crops have exhausted their stocks and are already depending on distress sales of livestock.
- With the emergency situation in neighbouring countries, the focus on those populations may result in inadequate support for the WFP pipeline for Mozambique.
- In food surplus areas, harvested commodities are quickly being sold off in response to the high price market created from demand in neighbouring Zimbabwe and Malawi. There is some concern that farmers will sell off too much in their household reserves leaving Mozambique vulnerable later in the year.
- Overall the food security situation in Mozambique appears to be manageable. Co-ordination amongst the NGOs, donors and governments is working with regular meetings taking place.
- With food commodities moving across the border with Zimbabwe it will be important to monitor market prices and affordability for Mozambicans in vulnerable areas.

What is SC UK doing in Mozambique?

- SC UK will be observing closely the border areas with Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe for hunger induced population movements. We are concerned about migrant/refugee flows and we will monitor the situation of children with a view to monitor needs in terms of assistance and protection of unaccompanied minors in these areas.
- SC UK will be ready to assist other partners in the Zambezia province as necessary.
- SC UK will prepare to respond to the emergency through:
 - Partner support.
 - Collaboration on training on child protection with UNICEF and WFP.
 - Monitoring of the food security situation at national level.
 - Monitoring population movements between Zimbabwe and Mozambique, particularly movements of children.
 - Advocacy work for a timely and adequate food pipeline.

ZIMBABWE

The Issues

- Zimbabwe is now facing its worst humanitarian crisis since independence in 1980. The current food shortages are predicted to extend, and indeed worsen, well into 2003.
- The rapidly deteriorating situation has been compounded by a major drought, which has crippled agricultural production in many parts of the country. Current estimates indicate that Zimbabwe now has to import some 75% of its total annual maize requirement, amounting to approximately 150,000 tonnes per month until May 2003. This is at a time when the country is facing bankruptcy and international hostility arising from its controversial land reform programme.
- Compounded by the ravages of an HIV/AIDS epidemic that is amongst the worst in Africa, the country has witnessed the rapid erosion of previously functioning safety nets.
- Our research in vulnerable communities in informal mines, commercial farms, peri-urban settlements and remote rural areas has shown that children are increasingly experiencing a range of negative impacts. These include:
 - Heightened levels of malnutrition.
 - A decline in access to health cares.
 - A reduction in school enrolments

- Vulnerability to exploitation of labour.
- An escalation in physical and sexual abuse.
- The increased death and illness of parents and guardians which in turn exacerbates all of the above.
- Longer-term solutions to Zimbabwe's intractable political and economic problems need to be developed over time, however SC UK believes that the current short-term needs for food relief require immediate prioritisation by donors and international organisations. Conditionalities around policy reform should not undermine the humanitarian imperative to save lives.
- As malnutrition rates increase, as families increasingly divest themselves of their few remaining assets in order to meet their survival requirements, preparations need to commence now for a humanitarian intervention unprecedented in Zimbabwe's recent history. This should include a significant recovery component, if the country's farmers are to regain their ability to produce sufficient maize for the forthcoming season.
- The Government of Zimbabwe and all implementing organisations need to uphold the humanitarian principles of neutrality and safety of personnel as requisite preconditions for any successful food aid interventions. They should ensure that all emergency interventions promote and safeguard the interests of children, including their protection from exploitation and abuse that can often arise with increased vulnerability.

What is SC UK Zimbabwe doing?

- Over the last year SC UK has embarked on a major food aid programme in the Zambezi Valley region of western Zimbabwe. Some 50% of the population have received a monthly ration of maize meal, cooking oil and beans in Binga district, numbering around 60,000 people. Further north in Nyaminyami district the organisation has run a social welfare feeding programme, targeted at over 5,000 people who are acknowledged as the most vulnerable.
- SC UK has carried out considerable advocacy work around the vulnerability of farm workers in the current land reform programme. Our familiarity with these communities extends over twenty years, during which time the organisation supported programmes of work in nutrition, health care, education and community capacity building. Our strategic partnership with the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe, and the support we have provided to them in terms of capacity building in logistics, procurement, transport management and food targeting, has allowed us to embark on a joint food aid project for vulnerable farm workers. SC UK has also financially and technically supported a supplementary feeding programme for some 5,000 farm orphans, which has been running since January 2002.
- Our commitment to local capacity building remains firm, even with our emergency work. Over the past 18 months the organisation has supported a training programme for local and international non-government organisations (NGOs), as well as relevant Government departments, in emergency preparedness and response.
- Our food security team has produced a number of nutrition surveys and vulnerability assessments, looking at the situation of communities on commercial farms, peri-urban settlements, informal mines, and remote rural areas of the country. Much of this information has been instrumental in raising the profile of these communities in terms of donor assistance, as well as providing a more general measure of the increasingly desperate situation facing vulnerable populations in different parts of Zimbabwe.