

Appendix 6. Timetable of reporting on events creating the 2001–02 food crisis

The timeframe of factors creating the 2001–02 emergency include:

- Late 2000 FAO/GIEWS food availability reporting indicating that regional crop production was near normal but that there would be higher than average import requirements to fill a 712,000 MT food gap in 8 countries in the region. WFP reported a 2001 food aid need of 500,000MT, mostly for Angola and the DRC and refugee populations in Tanzania, Namibia and Zambia.
- In February 2001 heavy rains and flooding occurred in some sub-regions and unseasonable low rainfall in others
- Early 2001: SADC and FAO forecast reduced cereal production as a result of drought in some areas, flooding in others. Prolonged dry spells in maize regions suggested likely poor crops.
- In July 2001, FAO reported the lowest maize production in the region in six years. Issue becomes the availability of carryover grain held in grain reserves. At that time there were 8 on-going food aid activities in 6 countries—protracted relief and recovery and emergency operations—primarily for refugees. The Zambian government requests relief for 2 million flood- or drought-affected people. Maize prices in South Africa are nearly 50% higher than a year earlier. Zimbabwe acknowledges a food import requirement of 544,000MT. Tanzania expresses concern over localized food shortages.
- In November 2001, SADC reports that all countries in the region had a cereals production deficit for the year caused by drought and flooding. Most governments in the region were increasing estimates of those requiring food assistance.
- As in the previous year, flooding in some areas and drought in others characterized the beginning of 2002. Nonetheless, some reporting suggested that overall rainfall was near normal.
- In April-May 2002, concerns were increased over growing estimates of food gap—especially in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. Much of the problem focuses on very low food stocks and carryover meaning that most of the anticipated gap of 3 million MT will have to be imported. Maize prices reported as abnormally high in all countries

- June-July 2002, country vulnerability assessments and other data show that Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi are moving from category of serious food shortages to category of humanitarian crisis. Pockets of vulnerability are recorded in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland meaning that very poor households are likely to require food assistance as their own coping mechanisms are being exhausted. WFP launches Southern Africa Crisis Response EMOP to cover all emergency operations in the region. FAO/WFP assessment puts the number of those in need at 12.8 million.
- October—November. Assessment of those in need put at 14 million and cereal requirement at 1 million MT. It was also noted that “...estimates of those requiring food assistance do NOT include those households those households that are food insecure due to supply side factors.” i.e., those with money who cannot find food to buy in the marketplace. Assessment data find a large number of people in this category. Reports that ordinary coping strategies (reducing intake, selling assets) are being exhausted. Vulnerability assessments in four countries show that the numbers of infants and small children demonstrating acute malnutrition (“wasting”) are not increasing. Imports of food are behind requirements and occurring very slowly.
- Dec 2002. Reports over lack of seeds and inputs for new planting season and over ability of farmers to purchase needed inputs. Concerns over ability of countries’ (e.g., Zimbabwe) ability to cover cost of needed commercial imports.
- February 2003 Early satellite data show continued dry conditions in maize growing areas experiencing low rains in previous year. On the other hand, there are reports that recent rains have been relatively good and that Zambia and Zimbabwe could increase maize production by 50 percent over 2001/2. To replenish grain reserves an estimated 1 million MT of maize will be required.
- April 2003 discussions initiated looking at ways to improve the ability of the countries in the Southern Africa region to improve trade integration as a means to confront food emergencies in the future.

Note: the reports are extracted from FEWSNET monthly reporting at www.fews.net.