

4. Government Ability to Address the Impact of Operation Restore Order

4.1 Introduction

Operation Restore Order will have short and longer term effects on the capacity of the Government to address the basic needs of those affected and its population as a whole. The Operation has caused the destruction of livelihoods, homes, personal belongings and business premises, and the displacement of an estimated 570,000 people. Immediate needs include food, shelter, access to water and sanitation and health care. Longer term needs include the restoration of livelihoods, provision for affordable housing, education and other social services.

4.2 Food Security

Operation Restore Order took place at a time of acute food shortages in the country. The failure of the 2005 harvest due to drought has led to an officially acknowledged food deficit of 1.2 MT of maize for the 2005-2006 season. Meeting this deficit will require importing food at an estimated cost of USD 250 to 300 million⁸⁷ at a time of chronic shortage of foreign exchange and competing import demands, especially for fuel, energy and inputs required for agriculture and industry.⁸⁸ The Government has allocated to date Z\$ 100 billion (USD 10 million) to feed 2.4 million people in need of food aid.⁸⁹ The fact that Zimbabwe has no ready access to international credit, as well as a serious lack of foreign exchange implies that it is highly unlikely that Government will be able to fulfill basic food requirements without substantial external assistance.

A major concern is timely delivery of food and transport. Meeting the bulk of the deficit would imply the transport of about 120,000 to 140,000 metric tonnes per month. Such an amount is likely to require recourse to more expensive road transport as it exceeds the capacity of the rail system by an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 MT per month.⁹⁰

4.3 Shelter

Operation Garikai (Reconstruction/Resettlement) was officially launched during the mission as a reconstruction effort. This new operation involves an announced capital outlay of Z\$ 3 trillion (USD 300 million) with housing topping the priority list, followed by factory shells and market stalls⁹¹. A first installment of Z\$ 1 trillion (USD 100 million) is due for immediate disbursement and is scheduled for completion by August 2005. This expenditure was not foreseen and was not subject to a specific allocation in the 2005 budget.⁹² Its effective implementation would imply

⁸⁷ Including transport, clearing and forwarding and distribution

⁸⁸ Identifiable foreign exchange earnings are projected to be around USD 1.4 billion for 2005 while expenditures on fuel are projected to be around USD 900 million. Foreign currency reserves are estimated at 3 days.

⁸⁹ The Herald, 7 July 2005.

⁹⁰ Assuming that contracts are signed and payments are made by August for regular delivery starting from September 2005 through to the next harvesting period in April 2006, and that the rail system is properly maintained.

⁹¹ Sunday Mail, 26 June 2005, Presentation by Minister Chombo to the SESG at the Inter-Ministerial Task Force meeting, 30 June 2005

⁹² Statement by Herbert Murerwa, Minister of Finance, in parliament, reported by The Herald, 7 July 2005

reductions to the Statutory Liquidity Ratio resulting in an increase in money supply, budgetary reallocations, or a combination of the two. All three scenarios, within a context of chronic budget deficits, a strained fiscal base and hyperinflation, are potentially problematic and could affect efforts to curtail inflation and restore budgetary discipline. Many critical observers doubt that Operation Garikai will actually materialize.

4.3.1 A Questionable Strategy and Questionable Methods

Operation Garikai is based on the scenario that Government will provide stands (plots) upon which those rendered homeless will build their new homes. This assumption poses several questions. These include:

- q. The capacity of local authorities to provide the access roads, trunk infrastructure and basic services to enable displaced people to build new homes in compliance with the Government's Regional, Town and Country Planning Act;
- r. The need for interim solutions between the time of allocation of stands (plots) and the completion of homes by the affected people in compliance with building bylaws and standards. For the majority of displaced people, such interim arrangements would necessarily include temporary shelter/housing solutions that would resemble the structures and settlement patterns originally targeted by Operation Restore Order;
- s. The sourcing of readily available and affordable building materials previously supplied in part by the informal sector. As the informal sector was the initial target of and largely destroyed by Operation Restore Order, it will take some time before the supply chain can be restored. It can also be assumed that prices will rise as a result of the disruptions and inflationary pressure;
- t. The availability of credit facilities to ease the financial burden of the poor and limited income households to construct new homes. A number of civil society organizations that have provided such assistance in the past have not made much headway in terms of dialogue with Government to implement solutions outside the framework of government channels.

Another consideration and area of concern is the method envisaged by the Government. Senior government officials, on several occasions, announced that the preparation of stands and related infrastructure would be carried out by the military assisted by youth brigades. The mission was able to witness the early stages of capital-intensive preparations in several locations, which raise the following concerns:

- e. While the use of machine and capital-intensive site preparation and construction methods can speed up implementation, they involve a foreign currency component. Based on past experience of similar schemes, this component is estimated at 35% to 40%. The first phase of Operation Garikai would therefore involve USD 35 - 40 million in foreign exchange which would place a further strain on fuel shortages and foreign currency reserves;
- d. The use of the military and youth building brigades, while also effective in speeding up site preparation and construction, is inimical to ownership of the product and the process by the community and by local authorities. Again, according to past experience, such operations pose downstream issues of sustainability and maintenance;
- e. Government's track record of supplying serviced sites in recent years has been less than 5,000 stands (plots) per year, compared to the nation-wide objective of Operation Garikai to deliver 4,900 stands within a few months.

In summary, Operation Garikai gives the impression of being hastily put together. It does not appear to have accounted for the immediate shelter needs of people who have been rendered homeless at the onset of winter. The mission was able to witness thousands of people, including small children, pregnant women and the elderly, who were sleeping in the open without adequate protection from the elements either on the rubble of their destroyed homes, in rural areas or in official transit camps. The mission visited one of the transit camps known as Caledonia Farm on the outskirts of Harare where an estimated 5,000 people were being sustained by *ad hoc* humanitarian assistance at the time of the visit.⁹³ While this camp is intended to be a temporary facility pending relocation to other destinations, it was evident that Government capacity to provide basic needs and sustenance is severely limited. The conditions of those living in the camp clearly did not meet SPHERE standards and are worse than those found in refugee camps.

Mother, 25 years old, with infant born at Caledonia Farm.

I am from Mureywa. I was born in Harare. I was living in Hatcliffe Extension where we had been relocated from Churu Farm. Now my parents are also here [at Caledonia Farm]. We are waiting for the government to help us. My husband is a builder. He was born here but he is from Malawi. [We do not go back to my rural home because] it is not the custom for the man to move to the woman's home, the woman moves to the man's home.

In Hatcliffe at least we had our place. This is not our place and we are not aware of what will happen next. Most of our goods were left with relatives. We expect to be allocated a place to live. We welcome a stand [plot] but at the moment it is not easy for us to build a house, we couldn't afford it.



Man, 34 years old, evictee from Hatcliffe.

I am 34 years and I am in Caledonia camp with my wife Edelie and children Petronella, 10 years, Theofellas 7 years and Victoria 3 years old.

We were moved here from Hatcliffe Extension. The situation [at Hatcliffe] was rather better. We used to have decent shelter, facilities like clinics, shops, a bus shelter. Here the shelter is tattered and torn like that. If the rain comes everything will be wet and I don't know how I can prevent it. [It is] now three weeks since we came here. I am unable to feed my family. Relief is being given to ten people [at a time] and the first group who came here come first. As for us we haven't yet received any food because we came here last. I feel depressed, the way they drove us here was not safe.



⁹³ See also Chapter 5: Capacity of the Humanitarian Community to Respond

Man, 23 years old, newly arrived at Caledonia Farm.

I am from Mbare. I had little money or food, I was making Z\$100,000 a week. The other men from the street are given medicine to help them sleep, prescribed by a Doctor. I am originally from Madzira, it is just me here in the camp, my parents are in Madzira. I have been living in Harare for six years. At first I was at work, then I earned a living mending baskets. There was not hope. We were living like squatters. Now I work in the camp kitchen as a supervisor. In the future I want to have a job.



There is an urgent need for the Government to review its proposed strategy and methods for reconstruction and to use Operation Garikai as a means of restoring the livelihoods of those directly affected while addressing their longer-term shelter and housing needs. Lessons learned from over two decades of housing and urban reconstruction experience would indicate that a more effective and sustainable approach would be to distribute a major portion of the Z\$ 3 trillion in the following manner:

- a. One-time equity grants for those rendered homeless and the most needy to serve as compensation for loss of housing stock and as start-up funds for meeting their immediate shelter needs;
- b. Subsidized loans and guarantees to building societies, housing cooperatives and other community-based organizations to engage in incremental self-help housing for their respective members that have been affected;
- c. Interest-free start-up capital for the establishment of building materials depots and stores to be managed by non-for-profit organizations to provide a source of affordable building materials;
- d. Earmarked transfers to local authorities to employ labour-intensive public works to boost the supply of stands using more reasonable norms and standards such as footpaths rather than roads, on-site ventilated improved pit latrines and communal stand pipes. Site layout would provide for installation of standard infrastructure when funds eventually become available.