



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
(DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

SOUTHERN AFRICA – Complex Food Security Crisis

Situation Report #4, Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

November 15, 2002

Note: the last situation report was dated November 1, 2002.

BACKGROUND

A number of Southern African countries are currently experiencing food security crises, due to a combination of adverse climate conditions for two consecutive growing seasons, mismanagement of grain reserves, and restrictive government policies that severely inhibit private sector commerce. During the past production season, unusually dry conditions extended across much of the region, from southern Zambia eastward to southern Mozambique, resulting in crop failures and limited production in many areas. Normally, food stocks carried over from the previous year and the intra-regional trade of surplus commodities help to offset production shortfalls. This year, however, regional stocks are exceptionally low, as they were drawn down to fill the previous year's food shortages, and surplus commodities within the region are limited. Zimbabwe is facing a serious humanitarian crisis, with nearly half the population at risk. Humanitarian food crises also exist in Malawi and Zambia. Poor and vulnerable households in Swaziland and Lesotho and some parts of Mozambique also require food assistance. The governments of several countries have declared national disasters due to actual and anticipated food shortages, including Malawi (February 27), Lesotho (April 22), Zimbabwe (April 30), and Zambia (May 28). In July, the United Nations (U.N.) issued a regional Consolidated Interagency Appeal (CAP) to meet the food and non-food emergency humanitarian needs in Southern Africa. The U.N. appealed for \$611 million from donors, including \$507 million for food aid through the U.N. World Food Program's (WFP) Emergency Operation (EMOP). Since the beginning of 2002, in response to the food security crisis, the U.S. Government (USG) has provided or pledged more than \$276 million in humanitarian assistance through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The majority of the USG humanitarian assistance has been emergency food relief provided by USAID/FFP.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE – POPULATIONS IN NEED: SEPTEMBER 1, 2002 TO MARCH 31, 2003

<i>Country</i>	<i>Maximum Number of Population in Need¹</i>	<i>Maximum Percentage of Total (Country/Region) Population in Need¹</i>
Zimbabwe	6,700,000	49%
Malawi	3,300,000	29%
Zambia	2,900,000	26%
Lesotho	650,000	30%
Mozambique	590,000	3%
Swaziland	270,000	24%
Total	14,400,000	25%

¹ *Anticipated populations and food aid needs are based on SADC FANR assessments released on September 16, 2002. (Numbers are rounded.)*

Total USG Humanitarian Assistance provided, to date..... \$276,029,550
Total USG Food Aid provided, to date, in Metric Tons (MT)..... 499,193

CURRENT SITUATION

Latest Shipment of U.S. Food Aid to the Region.

The USAID-chartered ship the *Liberty Sun* is expected to arrive in the region on November 15, with 58,250 MT of corn. Another ship, the *Golden Bay*, is scheduled to arrive

at the end of November. The commodities aboard these two ships will bring the total metric tonnage delivered to the region to approximately 352,000. The balance of

approximately 147,000 MT will arrive in the region between December, January, and February.

Update on the WFP Emergency Operation (EMOP).

On November 7, WFP reported that it still faces a \$254 million shortfall for its EMOP. The EMOP requirements through March call for 992,459 MT in food aid, which means that WFP has an un-resourced balance of 440,000 MT.

The U.N. Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office (RIACSO) announced that since it launched its \$611 million appeal in July, almost half of the pledges received have been for the food sector, but significantly less resources have been dedicated to non-food needs. Of the almost \$269 million in total pledges, only eight percent have been earmarked for water and sanitation, 15 percent for health, and 27 percent for agricultural support.

Status of Biotech-Derived Food Aid. The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) has announced that it would not accept biotech-derived food assistance, even if milled. The Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) has stated that it will accept biotech-derived food assistance, provided it is quarantined and milled before distribution. Mozambique and Malawi have expressed concerns over the environmental effects of biotech food, but are accepting such food aid as long as it is milled before distribution. However, the Government of Malawi (GOM) has publicly stated its intention not to disrupt the distribution of humanitarian corn if milling is not possible. Swaziland and Lesotho have continued to accept all relief food aid of biotech origin, but Lesotho requires milling.

WFP reiterated on November 12 that it relies on the judgment of the World Health Organization that biotech food is safe for consumption and has passed the necessary safety screening. WFP released its statement following comments by the U.N. Special Rapporteur of the Commission of Human Rights “on the right to food,” who questioned the safety of biotech food.

Cereal Prices Rising. On October 28, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) released a report on cereal price trends in Southern Africa, which indicated that nominal prices in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia are likely to remain high and expected to escalate until the next harvest. These higher prices will worsen the food access situation in those and neighboring countries in the region. According to FEWS NET, Zimbabwe and Malawi have the most-at-risk populations, and Zambia to a lesser extent.

HIV/AIDS Meeting. On November 6 and November 7, representatives from the U.N., non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) met in Johannesburg to discuss the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the food crisis in Southern Africa. The meeting focused on

ways food aid can be best used to assist those families affected by the disease.

COUNTRY UPDATES

Zimbabwe. A USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Response Advisor in Zimbabwe reported that Zimbabwe’s food security crisis is deteriorating into a potential humanitarian catastrophe. The advisor noted that conditions worsened in October since neither donors, the GOZ, nor the private sector were able to cover the national food deficit. Food is in extremely short supply, and the GOZ has impeded efforts to conduct an effective response. In addition, there have been anecdotal accounts of hunger-related deaths, growing numbers of displaced persons and refugees, and deteriorating public health conditions.

RIACSO warned on November 8 that Zimbabwe’s fragile economy could exacerbate the country’s humanitarian crisis. Already inflation, economic contraction, and a shortage of foreign currency are making it difficult for the GOZ to import basic foods, and the costs of agricultural inputs are rising. However, the GOZ has initiated discussions to end its monopoly on procuring fuel for the country, which could alleviate fuel shortages.

WFP reported on November 7 that the shortages of bread, corn, and sugar are increasing as price controls remain fixed on basic goods. In addition, WFP stocks of vegetable oil and pulses, necessary for maintaining the nutritional balance of the food basket, are in short supply.

At the Murambinda District Hospital there have been reports of an increasing number of cases of malnutrition and pellagra, according to WFP. In Mutasa District, families are reportedly going for more than two days without a proper meal, while there is a noticeable increase in the consumption and selling of wild fruits in Masvingo. In addition, recent USG assessments to rural areas reveal that the nutritional level of children has worsened over the last three to four months since the issuance of the September Zimbabwe Emergency Food Security Assessment report. The report stated that wasting (low weight for height measurement) among children under five was closest to the upper limit for non-drought Africa, and stunting (low height for age) was among the highest in the world. Now it appears that these figures may be approaching even more critical levels.

In mid-October the GOZ accredited three additional NGOs to act as WFP implementing partners. However, according to the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe, even though this is a welcomed action by the GOZ, it does not appear that it will be enough to reduce the increasing levels of malnutrition since the situation is so severe. In addition, the three organizations, GOAL, CONCERN, and Catholic Relief Services, are facing logistical

challenges that will likely prevent them from being operational for a number of weeks.

According to local press reports, an agreement has been reached that would allow for the resumption of food deliveries in Insiza District in Matabeleland South. WFP had suspended food distributions in Insiza after ruling party Zanu-PF activists and officials intimidated its implementing partner and distributed three MT of food commodities to its supporters. In addition, on November 6, the GOZ announced that it would allow Save the Children Federation (SCF/UK) to resume food distribution and supplementary feeding activities in Binga and Nyaminyami Districts. SCF/UK's food distributions had been halted for almost two months, following local government elections in August. Despite this resumption of distributions, on November 7, at the European Union (EU)-SADC Ministers meeting, the EU denounced the GOZ's politicization of food aid.

Malawi. During the month of October, WFP distributed food to approximately 2.3 million Malawians, representing more than a 100 percent increase from September. The GOM has approximately 220,000 MT in corn stocks, so coupled with the humanitarian food aid, the national food availability situation has improved significantly this last year. However, these figures mask a potentially serious food access problem in Malawi. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many rural residents lack the purchasing power to buy food on the market, even at the subsidized prices being offered by GOM outlets. So far, sales of corn from government stocks have been slow. As a result, since WFP targets only about 30 percent of the population with its food distributions, this leaves open the possibility that a significant segment of the population, who are not receiving food aid, will not have the resources to meet their household needs.

Zambia. The GRZ's decision to not accept biotech food is putting increasing pressures on WFP's pipeline. WFP is using recent cash contributions to purchase non-biotech commodities in the region, while removing and re-allocating biotech stocks that were already in country. Due to its resourcing constraints, WFP needs to target distributions in order to best meet recommendations from the SADC Vulnerability Assessment Committee.

During the first week of November, WFP distributed U.S.-donated biotech milled corn to refugees in Zambia since it did not have enough time to source non-biotech foods following the GRZ's ban on biotech food on October 29. However, WFP is now only distributing non-biotech food to all six refugee camps in Zambia, despite the existence of 3,000 MT of prepositioned biotech corn in the camps, which will be reallocated.

The acting head of the European Commission delegation in Zambia has again advised the GRZ to make an "informed decision" on biotech food, especially due to

the seriousness of the food crisis. On November 12, the Commission reiterated to the GRZ that it would not necessarily lose its export market in the EU if it raises biotech crops. The EU stated it has already approved five different varieties of biotech corn safe for human consumption.

Mozambique. WFP plans on continuing its pre-position of commodities in Inhambane and Tete provinces in November despite the heavy rains that have hampered road access in remote areas. In Manjacaze, in Gaza Province, where there have been local press reports of more than 30,000 people experiencing a severe hunger crisis, WFP is already reaching more than 2,800 families under Food for Work (FFW) programs, and there are plans for an additional response. However, in general, WFP is moving toward more direct distribution in Mozambique and less FFW programs as the traditional lean months begin.

Lesotho. During the week of November 7, WFP distributed 773 MT of corn meal, 14 MT of pulses, and 28 MT of vegetable oil to approximately 72,000 Lesothoans. WFP is encountering logistical challenges due to the onset of seasonal rains, which has also hindered beneficiaries from accessing distribution points. However, WFP and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies trucks, operating out of Mafeteng and Thaba Tseka, have helped ease distribution.

Swaziland. According to WFP's latest report, it has provided an additional 219 MT of food to its implementing partners for distribution in Swaziland. Also, WFP and its partners have reached consensus on the allocation of food to additional beneficiaries due to the increased food needs expected from December onward, as identified by the SADC Vulnerability Assessment. The NGOs are currently identifying beneficiaries to ensure the best targeting. The next rolling SADC assessment in Swaziland will be held in November and December.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Since the beginning of 2002, the USG has provided or pledged more than \$276 million in emergency humanitarian assistance in response to the food security crisis.

In FY 2002, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$10 million in non-food programs that are currently underway in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, and Lesotho. USAID/OFDA also provided \$1 million to WFP to assist with its regional management and logistics coordination. USAID/OFDA continues to address needs in water and sanitation, coordination, nutrition, and health, particularly preparing for outbreaks of endemic and opportunistic diseases.

In addition to emergency humanitarian efforts for the food security crisis in Southern Africa, USAID programs are designed to reduce the risk of future crises through the Agricultural Initiative to Cut Hunger in Africa. The objective of the Initiative is to promote a rapid and sustainable increase in agricultural growth and rural incomes in sub-Saharan Africa by advancing scientific and technological applications that will raise agricultural productivity, create agriculture-based enterprises, and improve the agricultural trade and market systems.

In response to the ongoing HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Southern Africa region, USAID's Africa Bureau (USAID/AFR) is supporting HIV/AIDS prevention, control, care, and support initiatives, as well as programs for HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children throughout the region. USAID/AFR also supports a regional HIV/AIDS program in Southern Africa that focuses on regional cross-border activities.

USAID is also sponsoring a SADC Regional Workshop on biotech and food insecurity in Gaborone, Botswana, in February 2003. Participants will include technical experts from around the world and policymakers from the affected countries. The meeting will address the technical and policy issues related to biotech food aid.

**FY 2002 U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
SOUTHERN AFRICA FOOD SECURITY CRISIS**

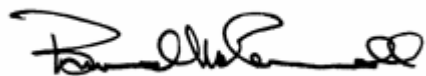
<i>Country*</i>	<i>USG Food Assistance (From USAID/FFP and USDA)</i>
Lesotho	27,760 MT
Malawi	100,645 MT
Mozambique	19,790 MT
Swaziland	15,242 MT
Zambia	39,100 MT
Zimbabwe	146,906 MT
Region (Country allocation to be finalized)	149,750 MT
Total	499,193 MT

<i>Country*</i>	<i>USG Non-Food Assistance (From USAID/OFDA)</i>
Lesotho	\$20,000
Malawi	\$4,640,990
Zambia	\$1,538,560
Zimbabwe	\$2,925,661
Regional Support	\$1,000,000
Total	\$10,125,211

<i>SUMMARY OF FY 2002 USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE</i>	
USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	\$10,125,211
USAID/Office of Food For Peace (FFP)**	\$252,609,551
USAID Total	\$262,734,762
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Total	\$13,294,788
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	\$276,029,550

* To see a breakdown in funding for each country, refer to the previous USAID/DCHA/OFDA Situation Report #3, FY 2003, dated November 1, 2002.

** Note: USAID/FFP value is an estimate. Commodities may have been reallocated to meet changing needs.



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*USAID/OFDA bulletins can be obtained from the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/ofda.