



**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 #6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

December 20, 2002

Note: the last situation report was dated December 6, 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). From the beginning of 2002 to present, in response to the food security crisis, the U.S. Government (USG) has provided or pledged more than \$278 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..... \$278,529,550
Total USG Food Aid provided, to date, in Metric Tons (MT)..... 499,493

CURRENT SITUATION

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

To date, the USG has delivered over 350,000 MT of food assistance to the region. The balance of approximately 149,000 MT will arrive in the region by the end of February. The Golden Bay, with 7,000 MT of bulk corn,

docked this week in Durban. This is the first shipment of commodities for the NGO consortium, C-SAFE.

Update on the WFP Emergency Operation (EMOP).

WFP has sourced approximately 67 percent of its EMOP, with approximately 50 percent of those resources coming from the USG. USG aid represents approximately 50 percent of the total humanitarian requirements for 2002.

WFP has distributed more than 220,000 MT of commodities in the southern Africa region during this crisis.

Status of Biotech-Derived Food Aid. The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) has maintained its policy of not accepting biotech-derived food assistance, even if milled. 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.

The Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) had agreed to accept U.S.-donated corn under the condition that all whole kernel grain be milled prior to entering the country to prevent it from being planted. However, the GOZ has recently shown some leniency by allowing WFP to mill an additional 17,500 MT of USG maize in-country and approving the use of an additional mill.

SADC FANR National Vulnerability Assessments. The Southern Africa Development Community's Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Development Unit (SADC FANR) Vulnerability Assessment Committees are currently conducting the second round of rolling assessments in each of the six countries covered by WFP's EMOP. The teams will conclude their assessments shortly, which will provide an indication of the latest number of beneficiaries in need.

COUNTRY UPDATES

Zimbabwe. Following on an assessment conducted in August 2002, the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) conducted another assessment of food security throughout the country between December 2 and December 6. Preliminary results of the assessment show a deteriorating food security situation and increasingly stretched coping mechanisms, such as selling livestock at reduced prices and consuming wild fruits and roots, often resulting in illness from poisonous or improperly prepared foods. Many villagers are also reportedly turning to stealing and prostitution to survive. Food security in most rural areas remains critical as supplies from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) remain erratic, inadequate to meet consumption requirements, and too expensive for many people. In urban areas, inflation rates are currently estimated at 144 percent and rising.

Although the rains have started in most parts of the country, the disruption of commercial farms, insufficient seed distribution, and the delayed rainfall have resulted in a small percentage of arable land being planted. Government maize seed distribution has been insufficient to meet demand and more people are relying on food

distributions. Maize available on the black market costs more than 10 times the official price and therefore out of the reach of 90 percent of village populations. There are also allegations of corruption in the government's distributions, including officials selling the maize on the black market.

Despite the increased reliance on food aid among vulnerable populations in Zimbabwe, WFP has only 7,000 MT of cereals to meet the monthly requirement of 48,476 MT for Zimbabwe. As a result, WFP has responded by providing full rations only to beneficiaries who have not received any other rations during the previous month. Beneficiaries who have already received rations will be given a half ration. The low cereal stocks are partly due to delayed government decisions regarding the milling of biotech-derived maize grain in the country. Additionally, according to FEWS NET, Zimbabwe could run out of wheat by the end of February without the import of 240,000 MT. Analysts are warning that wheat shortages may be exacerbated by the tendency of households to use wheat as a substitute for maize.

A national strike called on December 10 to protest food and fuel shortages was largely unsuccessful. Less than 30 percent of workers participated in the strike by staying at home. According to observers, poor organization and fear of losing jobs were the cause of the strike's failure.

Malawi. Low purchasing power has kept the demand for maize low in Malawi. However, maize milling, jointly coordinated by WFP and the GOM, is expected to begin in mid-December. Approximately 40,000 MT are scheduled to be processed in eight mills. WFP plans to target 2.3 million beneficiaries in December and 2.8 million in January under its EMOP.

Zambia. In response to an anticipated shortfall of 20,000 MT of food commodities in December, the GRZ has agreed to provide at least 23,000 MT of grain to WFP for distribution, although some reports state that the GRZ's pledge could be closer to 53,000 MT by the end of March. The U.K.'s Department for International Development (DfID) has agreed to cover the costs of transporting the grain. As a result of the GRZ's contribution, WFP predicts that grain distribution targets for December will be met. Severe shortages of complementary commodities such as oil, beans, and corn soya blend exist. WFP's ability to reach all targeted beneficiaries was threatened by the GRZ's rejection of biotech food aid, and the removal of all biotech food commodities currently in Zambia is underway. WFP is working to ensure the availability of storage space for the replacement maize coming into the country.

The food security situation is still dire in many parts of the country, and many Zambians are reportedly consuming seeds intended for planting. The Zambian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) has responded by encouraging farmers to replant failed crops despite the

lack of rain. Severe conditions are also reported in Chama District, where granaries stand empty and the mango season has ended. According to WFP, Zambia needs 224,000 MT of grain to meet needs until March. Despite WFP's pledge of 82,000 MT, plus the GRZ's pledge of more than 20,000 MT, the country will continue to face a grain deficit of 120,000 MT.

In response to the country's critical dependence on maize, civil society groups, including 90 churches and NGOs, in Zambia are attempting to raise \$60 million to buy 300,000 MT of surplus cassava in the northern region for distribution to areas experiencing severe food shortages. According to a representative of the National Association of Peasants and Small Scale Farmers in Zambia, cassava is drought resistant and easier to grow than maize.

Mozambique. November plantings have been negatively impacted by a lack of rain in the southern and central regions of Mozambique. Without rain in the upcoming weeks, most of the early planting may be lost, and, according to WFP, malnutrition is already increasing in Tete province. The Government of Mozambique estimated that 60,000 hectares produced less than 10 percent of their normal output this year as a result of the drought. However, the transport of food aid continued by locomotive between Nacala and Malawi. Since November 22, approximately 4,000 MT of maize was moved along the Nacala corridor.

Lesotho. Lesotho's Ministry of Agriculture reported that crops were planted in an additional 33,975 acres, bringing the total area planted to 248,796 acres. This represents only 34 percent of the country's total arable land (726,000 acres). Planting in land that has already been ploughed is also very low. According to WFP, less than 50 percent of the ploughed land in Lesotho has been planted as a result of the limited availability of machinery and poor soil conditions, despite a commitment by the Government of Lesotho to leave no land unplanted. Local district officers have also complained of slow deliveries of required seeds and fertilizers. Compounding the country's agricultural situation, unseasonable frost has damaged new plantings.

Swaziland. According to a senior officer in the Early Warning Unit in Swaziland's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), this year's maize crop is expected to fail as a result of poor rains and reduced purchasing power for seeds due to last year's crop failure and inflation. The MOA estimates that less than 30 percent (20,000 hectares) of the land normally used for maize production has been planted.

The water situation in Swaziland is also increasingly bleak. The Swaziland Water Service Corporation (SWSC) has reported that without rains, water rationing will be required beginning in January. According to a representative from the National Meteorology

Department, El Nino will likely continue to suppress rainfall in the coming months. However, even with improved rainfall, the fact that only 40 percent of the land has been ploughed combined with the shortage of tractors would result in further delays while the land is prepared for planting.

The outlook for Swaziland's bean crop is more promising. With improved rainfall in December and January, beans could be planted in February, according to the MOA. However, reduced purchasing power would still pose a major problem, as beans are more expensive than maize.

The MOA plans to improve the country's food security by promoting the cultivation of drought resistant crops and building an irrigation infrastructure. While the Ministry doubts that farmers and consumers in Swaziland would accept cassava as an alternative to maize, sweet potatoes may be a potential alternative.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

From the beginning of 2002 to present, the USG has provided or pledged more than \$278 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. As part of this assistance, USAID/OFDA provided \$1 million to WFP to assist with its regional management and logistics coordination.

In FY 2003, USAID/OFDA provided \$2 million to support the NGO Consortium Cooperatively Guarding Women's, Infants', and Children's Nutrition Status Supplementary Feeding in Malawi (CoGuard). USAID/OFDA also provided \$250,000 to support farm surveys and supplementary feeding programs for orphans and vulnerable populations in Zimbabwe.

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 2002-2003 U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
SOUTHERN AFRICA FOOD SECURITY CRISIS**

<i>Country*</i>	<i>USG Food Assistance FY 2002 (From USAID/FFP and USDA)</i>
Lesotho	27,760 MT
Malawi	141,895 MT
Mozambique	19,790 MT
Swaziland	15,542 MT
Zambia	74,500 MT
Zimbabwe	217,006 MT
Region (Country allocation to be finalized)	3,000 MT
Total	499,493 MT

<i>Country</i>	<i>USG Non-Food Assistance FY 2002 (From USAID/OFDA)</i>
Lesotho	\$270,000
Malawi	\$4,640,990
Zambia	\$1,538,560
Zimbabwe	\$2,925,661
Regional Support	\$1,000,000
Total	\$10,375,211

<i>Country</i>	<i>USG Non-Food Assistance FY 2003 (From USAID/OFDA)</i>
Malawi	\$2,000,000
Zimbabwe	\$250,000
Total	\$2,250,000

<i>SUMMARY OF FY 2002 – FY 2003 USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE</i>	
USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	\$12,625,211
USAID/Office of Food For Peace (FFP)*	\$252,609,551
USAID Total	\$265,234,762
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Total	\$13,294,788
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	\$278,529,550

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



Bernd McConnell
Director, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

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