



FACT SHEET

Humanitarian Assistance

Although Zambia has vast agricultural potential it has progressively declined during the last three decades from a middle-income country to a nation afflicted by persistent food insecurity, poverty, recurrent shocks of drought, and HIV/AIDS. High rates of poverty and food insecurity translate into some of the highest rates of stunting and malnutrition in the world.

The main causes of food insecurity in Zambia are:

- lack of irrigation
- dependence on a single, non-drought tolerant crop - maize
- inadequate investment in basic services and infrastructure
- poor market integration
- lack of access to credit
- loss of livestock due to disease
- gender inequities
- HIV/AIDS
- frequent weather related shocks such as drought and floods

Zambia has a history of food insecurity. The most recent occasion was in 2005 when Zambia's Southern and Western provinces suffered droughts and crops failed. The Zambian President declared a sub-national disaster. Nearly a million people were affected, especially people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronically ill persons, orphaned and vulnerable children, and pregnant and lactating mothers. The U.S. Government provided emergency relief food aid where needed in response to requests by the Government of Zambia.

With the prior emergency abated in 2006, the U.S. Government continues to provide humanitarian assistance to Southern and Western provinces, which remain the most drought-affected. The assistance aims to transition the affected areas from dependence on food aid "relief" to development, through increasing agricultural production and marketing, and decreasing vulnerability to "food security shocks." However, new disasters are always possible. Severe flooding in parts of Zambia during the rainy season of 2007 have already destroyed crops and livestock and threaten the nutritional needs of many people living in these areas.

Over the next five years, the U.S. Government is funding a multi-year assistance program in Zambia's Southern and Western provinces through the Consortium for Food Security, Agriculture, AIDS, Resilience and Marketing. The program targets communities at risk of persistent food insecurity and complements efforts of the Government of Zambia and other donors, including the World Food Program..

USAID programs provide 148,345 people with nutrition, education and counseling, emergency feeding for vulnerable groups, conservation agriculture, crop diversification, dairy farming, business training, community resiliency building, and supplementary food rations to the most food insecure households.

Fast Facts-2006

1. 47% of children under 5 are stunted.
2. 49% of children under 5 suffer from malnutrition
3. 58% of the population are extremely poor
4. 63% are farm households
5. 95% of land is in the custody of traditional leaders



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

U.S. Government humanitarian assistance:

- improves child nutrition and prevents child stunting
- improves the nutrition of people affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS
- builds community capacity to detect and respond to “shocks” such as drought and flooding
- increases crop diversification and sustains agricultural livelihoods
- improves the access of small-holder farmers to local markets
- develops the communities’ capacity to respond to emergencies.

On matters of food security, USAID/Zambia works closely with other U.S. government agencies and departments, such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Defense, the Peace Corps, and the Department of State. This assistance complements other USAID/Zambia



Refugees at Mayukwayukwa Refugee Camp in Western Province receive food rations. Photo USAID/Zambia

efforts that provide antiretroviral therapy and home-based care for people living with HIV/AIDS, and support to orphans and vulnerable children. It also provides accurate and timely information on food insecurity to the Famine Early Warning System and the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance.

USAID is providing funds to the WFP for food aid to refugees, drought-affected people, orphans and vulnerable children, and people affected or infected with HIV/AIDS.

The Zambian Government has drafted a Social Protection Strategy which is supported by the US.

This strategy will provide the basis for future U.S. relief and food security support in Zambia and is incorporated in Zambia’s Fifth National Development Plan.

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