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

**SOUTHERN AFRICA – COMPLEX DROUGHT**

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2002

May 10, 2002

**Overview**

- Southern Africa is currently facing a food security crisis, resulting in part from adverse climate conditions for two consecutive growing seasons in parts of the region. The World Food Program (WFP) estimates that more than 2.6 million people are currently affected by the food security crisis. Some reports indicate that the crisis is similar in magnitude to the 1995-1996 drought, which affected approximately six million people. While the drought extends across much of the region, the worst affected countries include Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Lesotho, Mozambique, and Swaziland are also impacted. To date, the USG has provided more than \$49.6 million in humanitarian assistance in response to the food security crisis through the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP), the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The majority of the humanitarian assistance has been emergency food relief provided by USAID/FFP. In addition to these contributions, USAID/FFP, USAID/OFDA, and FEWS NET are actively monitoring the development of the food security crisis through regular USAID field assessments and participation in wider assessments conducted by the humanitarian community.

**Region**

- According to the Drought Monitoring Center in Harare, Zimbabwe, rainfall during the first three months of the rainy season, which lasts from October to April in Southern Africa, was within normal ranges and in accordance with predictions throughout much of the region. However, between January to March, dry spells extended across large sections of the region, particularly from southern Zimbabwe, eastwards into southern Mozambique.
- The regional drought, combined with political, economic, and social conditions specific to each country, has resulted in regional food shortages and a potential humanitarian crises in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia, and to a lesser extent in southern Mozambique. While production estimates are still being finalized, the region is expected to face a deficit of more than three million MT of maize for the April 2002 - March 2003 consumption year. Of this total, two million MT of maize may have to be provided through international food aid. The food security crisis is impacting local populations to varying degrees, depending on the coping mechanisms available to each population.
- Zimbabwe is traditionally a food exporter, supplying much of the food imported by other countries in the region. Shortfalls in agricultural production in Zimbabwe have a direct impact on the availability, price, and accessibility of food stocks throughout the region.
- WFP/U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions, working with Southern Africa Development Committee (SADC) Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Office and FEWS NET, are underway throughout the region. The results of these assessments are expected in early June and will provide an indication of the food availability situation during the current consumption year (April 2002 through March 2003).
- Most affected populations rely to some degree on livestock as a coping mechanism when food is either unavailable or inaccessible; therefore, the health of livestock is a key determinant for vulnerability.
- High prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS in much of the region leaves large segments of the population increasingly susceptible to health problems associated with food shortages, including malnutrition. In addition, those suffering from both malnutrition and HIV/AIDS are increasingly susceptible to endemic diseases, such as cholera and malaria.
- Minimal regional infrastructure and limited logistical capacity will be a major factor affecting the effectiveness of a large international response to the humanitarian crisis.

**Lesotho**

- According to an early May food security assessment by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the WFP, long-term food security issues were aggravated by a decrease in crop harvest of nearly 50% in the 2001-2002 season. Factors contributing to the drop in production included: 1) increased early rains that delayed the planting season and resulted in a 30-40% decrease in the total land area planted; 2) late rains during the planting season; 3) periods of frost that affected crop development; and 4) poor farming practices that reduce the availability of top soil and deplete nutrients from the soil.

- The FAO/WFP assessment reported that those with access to crops will have enough food stocks for the next three to four months. Similarly, those with access to livestock will have adequate coping mechanisms for the coming year.
- FAO/WFP indicated a poor outlook for the next harvest season, as the possibility of an El Niño may result in decreased rainfall. However, according to FEWS NET, Lesotho is unlikely to face a major food security crisis this year, as the country has the resources to import as much as half of their cereal requirements.
- WFP is currently completing a supplementary food distribution program that benefits 35,000 vulnerable people, primarily the elderly, child-headed households, and women-headed households.

### **Malawi**

- The President of Malawi declared a national disaster on February 27, as a result of drought-related food shortages. The most severely affected regions of Malawi include parts of the Central, Southern, and Lakeshore regions.
- According to the Government of Malawi (GOM), the total maize shortfall for this year will reach 700,000 MT.
- Despite media reports citing 70% of the population faces starvation, initial estimates from nongovernmental organizations NGOs, WFP, and the Government of Malawi (GOM), indicate that between 750,000 and 1,000,000 Malawians are currently vulnerable to the food security crisis. This population includes people who live in areas designated by WFP, USAID's Famine Early Warning System (FEWSNET), and the European Union (EU) as "at-risk," currently malnourished children under five, pregnant or lactating women, HIV/AIDS victims, the elderly, and orphans. An additional portion of the population will become vulnerable in three to six months, as their current food stocks and coping mechanisms are exhausted.
- A joint USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP assessment, conducted from March 12 to 18, reported that the early onset of seasonal food scarcity coupled with rising food prices has resulted in many subsistence farmers exhausting their traditional coping mechanisms and liquidating tangible assets, including livestock.
- The USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP field visit indicates that the overall humanitarian situation may develop into a large-scale food crisis as early as September or October 2002.
- In response to the food security crisis that resulted from the drought, U.S. Ambassador Roger A. Meece declared a disaster in Malawi on March 8. USAID/OFDA provided \$25,000 through USAID/Lilongwe, which was combined with \$37,000 in development funds, to enable Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to divert 630 MT of Title II development food stocks to support new supplemental feeding activities. Medicines Sans Frontières/Luxembourg (MSF/L), Save the Children/United States (SCF/US), and CADECOM (local CARITAS) are implementing the supplemental feeding activities.
- USAID/Lilongwe also redirected \$94,000 in development funds to address the humanitarian situation by facilitating the processing of fortified corn-soya blend (CSB) to meet the nutritional needs of 300,000 malnourished children.
- According to UN OCHA, the cholera crisis that continues to affect Malawi has been aggravated by malnutrition, resulting from the current food shortage. The current crisis has claimed 1,000 lives and peaked in February and March with 40,000 reported cases. In response to the cholera outbreak, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/Lilongwe to the Malawian Red Cross to address the medical needs of those affected by the outbreak.

### **Mozambique**

- The Government of the Republic of Mozambique (GRM) reported that 50,000-60,000 families, or 250,000-300,000 people, are severely affected and will require emergency food assistance and seeds for a period of six to seven months. An additional 70,000 families, or 350,000 people, are identified as moderately affected and will need two to four months of food assistance in late 2002.
- According to USAID/Maputo, the areas most affected by the drought include Inhambane, Gaza, Sofala, and Tete Provinces. The effects of the resulting food security situation expand into the southern provinces because the failure of the maize and sorghum crops in the rural, central provinces reduces the commercial inflows of food stocks to more urban areas.
- Livestock herds have been decimated by three consecutive years of natural disasters in Mozambique, leaving rural families who depend on subsistence agriculture without access to their primary traditional coping mechanism.

### **Zambia**

- WFP reported that nearly 400,000 people in 19 districts located in the Southern, Eastern, and Western provinces have been affected by drought-related food insecurity. This total represents 20% of the total population of two million.
- USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP conducted an initial assessment of the food security crisis in Zambia from April 7 to 13. The team reported that the number of people in need is expected to dramatically increase by September or October.
- The food security crisis in Zambia coincides with an ongoing livestock crisis that has decimated nearly 90% of the cattle herds in Kalomo district alone, since 1997. The livestock crisis is the result of several years of uncontrolled East Coast Fever, or Corridor Disease. The livestock crisis impacts subsistence farmers by reducing future planting

areas, as the livestock are used as ploughs and other productive assets, and limiting a primary household savings instrument and coping mechanism.

- In May, WFP plans to redirect its emergency food aid activities, which were originally a response to the flooding in 2001, to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations through free food distributions. WFP is assessing the situation in eight additional districts to determine if other needs exist.
- In response to the food security situation, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) contributed 15,000 MT of Section 416 (b) food commodities valued at approximately \$7,900,000.

### **Zimbabwe**

- The onset of the drought in January aggravated an already unstable food security situation, which results from the following: 1) decreases in production as a result of the government's land acquisition program; 2) rising prices of staple foods in the midst of a declining economy characterized by high inflation and unemployment; and 3) continued political uncertainty.
- President Mugabe declared a disaster in Zimbabwe effective April 30 and appealed for international assistance as a result of food insecurity affecting communal lands, resettlement areas, and urban centers. The GOM reports that 7.8 million people, 5 million of whom are children, will require humanitarian assistance for the next 18 months. According to FEWS NET, the vulnerable population requiring food assistance will reach three million by June 2002.
- In response to the food security situation, USAID/FFP provided 34,430 MT of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food commodities, valued at \$19,912,528, to support 633,000 beneficiaries. In addition, USDA contributed 10,000 MT of Section 416 (b) commodities valued at approximately \$5,300,000.

### **U.S. Government Response**

- USAID/FFP and USDA have provided 95,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II and section 416(b) emergency food commodities to the region, including 60,000 MT for use in Zambia and Zimbabwe. The remaining 33,000 MT, valued at \$16,373,000 million, will be pre-positioned in the region. Allocation of these food stocks has yet to be determined.
- USAID/FFP also plans to procure an additional 40,000 MT of food commodities, valued at approximately \$15,000,000, for use in the region.

### **Public Donation Information**

- In the interest of effective coordination of public response, USAID encourages the public to contact directly those private voluntary organizations (PVOs) currently working in the region in order to provide monetary donations. Cash donations are the preferred response to the emergency.
- For a list of non-governmental organizations providing disaster assistance in the region, please visit USAID's website at <http://www.usaid.gov>. Those interested in providing specific technical relief services or commodities can obtain guidelines for private voluntary organizations through Volunteers in Technical Assistance's (VITA's) Disaster Information Center at <http://www.vita.org>.
- USAID will not deviate from standard Denton Program procedures for transporting privately-donated relief supplies. USAID will prioritize delivery of essential relief commodities. For more information on the Denton Program, please refer to the USAID website at [http://www.usaid.gov/hum\\_response/pvc/denton.html](http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/pvc/denton.html).
- For additional information about the relief effort in Southern Africa, please refer to the Natural Disasters section of ReliefWeb at <http://www.reliefweb.int/>

## U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SOUTHERN AFRICA

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b><u>Malawi</u></b>				
USAID.....				<b>\$125,000</b>
USAID/OFDA .....				<b>\$125,000</b>
	USAID/Lilongwe	Supplementary Feeding		\$25,000
	Malawian Red Cross	Health		\$100,000
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MALAWI .....</b>				<b>\$125,000</b>
<b><u>Zambia</u></b>				
USDA .....				<b>\$7,900,000</b>
	WFP	416(b) Title II Food Assistance		\$7,900,000
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ZAMBIA.....</b>				<b>\$7,900,000</b>
<b><u>Zimbabwe</u></b>				
USAID.....				<b>\$19,912,528</b>
USAID/FFP.....				<b>\$19,912,528</b>
	WFP	P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance		\$11,657,300
	WVI	P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance		\$8,255,288
USDA .....				<b>\$5,300,000</b>
	WFP	416(b) Title II Food Assistance		\$5,300,000
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ZIMBABWE.....</b>				<b>\$25,212,528</b>
<b><u>Regional Assistance Summary</u></b>				
USAID.....				<b>\$36,410,528</b>
USAID/OFDA .....				<b>\$125,000</b>
USAID/FFP.....				<b>\$36,285,528</b>
		P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance – 35,000 MT prepositioned food commodities		\$16,373,000
USDA .....				<b>\$13,200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SOUTHERN AFRICA DROUGHT.....</b>				<b>\$49,610,528</b>

\*USAID/OFDA fact sheets can be obtained from the USAID web site at [http://www.usaid.gov/hum\\_response/ofda/situation.html](http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/ofda/situation.html)

