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EVALUATION OF U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO 1991/92 SOUTHERN AFRICA DROUGHT

Country Report: SWAZILAND

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SOUTHERN AFRICA DROUGHT EVALUATION
Country Report: Swaziland

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SOUTHERN AFRICA DROUGHT EVALUATION
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HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ In April 1992, World Food Program estimated a food deficit for the coming year of 80,000 metric tons, half of which would be required for emergency food programs for some 250,000 to 300,000 people (Swaziland's population is an estimated 800,000). By May, the estimate had been refined to 44,350 MT of maize for 270,000 subsistence farm recipients for the twelve-month period from May-June 1992 to April-May 1993.

- ✓ As a member of the South Africa Customs Union, Swaziland received a guarantee that its maize import needs would be included in the import contracts of the Maize Board of South Africa.

- ✓ The government, with significant assistance from World Food Program, transported food relief to 16 zones designated as severely affected, but local distribution of food was carried out entirely by a group of 12 non-governmental organizations. Ultimately, the food distribution program served some 410,000 people, all residing in 16 designated needy zones and representing approximately 48 percent of Swaziland's population.

- ✓ Although nutrition status deteriorated, there were no deaths from famine.

- ✓ Arrivals of grain were not steady throughout the drought period; some had to be delayed because of lack of internal storage facilities; yet, no notable local shortages occurred.

- ✓ USAID provided over fifty percent of the 20,000 metric tons distributed in the food relief program.

- ✓ USAID was the only significant donor to respond to a government request for financing for inputs packages for small scale farmers for the growing season of 1992/93. Some US$ 1.87 million was provided to five NGOs to distribute packages of seed, fertilizer and pesticide to farmers in severely affected areas. The farmers were expected to repay some of the costs of production and were able to do so. The program was an outstanding success and resulted in expected production of 24,000 MT of maize, or close to 30 percent of the expected 1993 national harvest.

I. Background

A. Country Overview[1]

Swaziland is a small country of some 800,000 people residing mainly in three ecological areas, referred to in terms of their relative altitude as the high veld, middle veld and low veld. Rural residents engaged in subsistence farming depend heavily on family labor and traditional structures. At the same time, however, commerce and manufacturing have developed relatively rapidly in recent years as foreign, and South African, investors have located their businesses in Swaziland in order to distance themselves from association with the apartheid structures of the Republic of South Africa.

As much of the labor force of Swaziland is employed in South Africa, many households are dependent on absent male workers for remittances of income. The country relies upon South Africa for its import needs, and as a member of the South Africa Customs Union, gains a share of customs revenues to help finance its government functions.

The Swazi National Maize Corporation ordinarily buys from the Maize Board of South Africa. When the Maize Board, usually an exporter, realized that imports would be necessary because of the drought, it offered to import on behalf of Swaziland and other members of the South Africa Customs Union and to resell the imported maize to them at a specified price that was to remain fixed during the entire drought period.

B. History of Drought Emergencies

Like the other countries of the region, Swaziland must depend on an unreliable annual rainfall that can be expected to be plentiful in three or four of every ten years and to be in deficit in at least some parts of the country several times in a decade. A relatively severe drought occurred in 1982/83. Abnormal rainfalls were experienced in the last years of the 1980s, in terms of time of onset, total amounts and distribution. In 1990/91, however, the heavy rains of January to March that followed an unusually dry September to December season were beneficial; the crop year yielded 153,000 MT of maize. But the dry season of late 1991 terminated without subsequent rains.

The general security of maize supply from South Africa, together with the security of income from remittances, has been such that subsistence farmers have not seen the need to establish systems of on-farm grain storage and emergency reserves.

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[1] This evaluation was performed under contract to A.I.D.'s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (AEP-0085-I-00-3001-00, D.O. 9). A Statement of Work is attached as Annex D.

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C. The 1991/92 Emergency

The drought of 1991/92 began, following good heavy rains in November and December 1991, when temperatures rose and rain virtually stopped. It was unusual in several respects. First, the exceptionally low and poorly distributed rainfall, coupled with strong heat waves, reduced the rate of successful harvest severely, even to zero in some parts of the country; production of maize, the staple crop was less than a third of usual production. Second, the drought was part of a phenomenon shared by all the countries of the southern part of the continent. Thus, neither South Africa nor any other country could provide the estimated 119,000 MT of grain import requirements for the period from early 1992 to the first harvests of 1993. Furthermore, where there had been better rains and crops had survived, in southern parts of the country, hail storms destroyed the crops before they could be brought in, with the result that total production was under 46,000 metric tons.

Losses in grain harvests were exacerbated by losses in beans, and in cotton (only 23 percent of normal production) and sugar cane, both important cash crops for farmers. Because of the importance of extended family obligations in traditional society, and the strong interdependence between the traditional subsistence economy and the modern wage-earning economy, losses of jobs in South Africa stemming from economic turndown and agricultural failure had a particularly negative effect on the welfare of rural families.

Surveys indicated that up to one-third of the population might have inadequate access to water, but ultimately deaths resulting from scarcity of water were not significant.

The drought hit hardest in 23 localities, mostly in the low and middle veld regions as well as the Lubombo plateau region bordering Mozambique.

D. Ability to Withstand and Manage the Emergency

The Government of Swaziland received assurances that the Maize Board of South Africa would import sufficient grain to supply its commercial channels and would be available at a fixed subsidized price. The country's major need, as identified by World Food Program (WFP) staff, was to attract donations of food, not only for commercial channels but also for emergency distribution to food deficit areas. Experience in storage of food stocks and management of food distribution programs was very limited, as infant and child supplementary feeding programs had not been needed for a number of years. Additional public and private facilities suitable for grain storage had to be located, and internal transport to suffering regions to be obtained. These were new challenges, ones that were to be met by the National Disaster Task Force of ministries that benefited from strong leadership by WFP and the fundamental commitment of NGOs, each of which took responsibility for a certain geographic area.

Rural households were particularly vulnerable, especially if they were deprived of the usual remittance income, because their practice was to retain grain stocks sufficient only for annual food needs. They had no experience in the pest control management that is necessary for successful multi-year storage.

II. Design of the Response

A. Recognition of the Problem

As of January 1992, the National Early Warning Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives circulated a special bulletin to alert the government to irreversible signs of crop failure due to drought, particularly in the low veld regions of the country. By the end of February, the incidence of drought was confirmed to be severe nationwide. The first report triggered formation of a Drought Disaster Committee within the Ministry to assess the effects of drought and advise on appropriate strategies for the agricultural sector to redress the effects. Nevertheless, the report did not receive wide attention in government until officials were alerted to the general problem by press reports. It was not until April that a National Disaster Task Force was established.

Although the country could afford to import its commercial requirements, even in this year of drought (when those requirements surpassed 80,000 MT), it was faced with the need to provide free food to subsistence farmers who would not have the means to purchase their needs. In April 1992, World Food Program estimated a food deficit for the coming year of 80,000 metric tons, half of which would be required for emergency food programs for some 250,000 to 300,000 people. By May, the estimate had been refined to 44,350 MT of maize for 270,000 subsistence farm recipients for the twelve-month period from May-June 1992 to April-May 1993. Recommendations also included beans as a supplementary source of protein and other essential nutrients, and CSM for supplementary feeding programs for children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Beyond identifying subsistence farming families with no outside income as the most vulnerable in the near term, the assessment of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of April 1992 recognized the vital importance, for recovery from the drought, of the provision of seeds and tools for the next growing season.

Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives officials are critical of an assessment by an FAO team from Rome that was superficial, was not coordinated with the FAO-supported National Early Warning Unit in the Ministry (and differed from the Unit's estimates by a factor of ten percent), and was not reported to headquarters for two months.

B. The Response

The most important response to the emergency in Swaziland was the food distribution program organized by World Food Program and coordinated at various levels with government bodies and NGOs. The 44,350 MT estimated by WFP to be needed was not fully pledged, nor were pledges totally fulfilled. The final total of some 20,000 MT of maize was provided in donations by the United States, European Community, and Germany and by government purchases.

USAID, relying on the requirements analysis of WFP, determined that the most effective U.S. response to the immediate emergency would be a direct contribution of 20,000 MT of maize,

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or about 40 percent of the need, to the WFP International Emergency Food Reserve. Ultimately, 10,500 MT of U.S. grain was provided under the Section 416 program during the drought period. The second 10,000 MT was not needed until mid-1993, as parts of the country continued to suffer drought.

The supplementary feeding program for children and mothers was supported by WFP, Israel, a number of Swazi food producers and processors, and the government. Foods included fruit, dried bread, milk, a corn-soya-milk supplement, and other nutritive food blends.

No legislative authority for financing a response to disaster was available, but a budget contingency provision permitted transfer of the equivalent of almost two million U.S. dollars to the National Disaster Task Force. That fund was expanded to a total of US$ 2.84 million by contributions from China and private donations.

UN agencies, mainly WHO, and local firms and individuals financed the distribution of 380,000 liters of water per day by tanker to about 160,000 people at 124 distribution points. Other assistance covered digging of boreholes and provision of water tanks and hand pumps.

USAID offered the principal support for the program to provide agricultural inputs to enable close to 14,000 farmers in seriously drought-affected areas to resume agricultural production. Some US$ 1.87 million was provided to five NGOs to distribute packages of seed, fertilizer and pesticide to farmers who had been receiving food relief. The areas selected for the program were those in which NGOs had demonstrated their ability to screen recipients and deliver assistance in accordance with established criteria, and in which agricultural extension agents were available to help advise on the use of fertilizers and pesticides. The farmers were expected to repay the some part of the costs of production, and were able to do so. Seeds were also provided by Lutheran World Federation. The targeting of this program was based only on the geographic criteria; no discrimination was made among households.

C. Size of Food Ration

World Food Program initially proposed to provide a ration of 450 grams per person per day, following current recommendations from WFP headquarters in Rome. Considering, however, that other programs in the region had established drought relief maize rations at the lower level of 300 to 350 grams per person per day, USAID raised the issue whether WFP should not start the program at the lower level. Although little was known about the ability of local Swazi residents to tap alternative sources of income and find means of coping with food shortages, it was possible that the higher ration might be excessive in terms of an effective free distribution program. World Food Program did, in fact, maintain the lower ration of 300 grams in late 1992 because it calculated that a higher ration would exhaust anticipated supplies before the beginning of a harvest in April 1993.

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III. Implementation of the Response

A. Roles and Responsibilities

As early as January 1992, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives appointed a Drought Disaster Committee to formulate a long term drought policy for the agricultural sector, assess the current crop and livestock conditions and the availability of services for land preparation, irrigation and household water, and determine the state of resources for programs. It was this Committee that appealed for recovery assistance for the agriculture sector. The National Early Warning Unit, supported by FAO, served as secretariat to the Committee, reported the Swaziland situation to the Regional Early Warning Unit in Harare, Zimbabwe, and maintained liaison with the office of World Food Program in Mbabane.

Although it did not declare a national disaster until 8 May 1993, by April the government had established a National Disaster Task Force, consisting of representatives of 12 government institutions, 12 NGOs, two private sector organizations and World Food Program. The Task Force reported to a Cabinet Select Committee of Ministers comprising ministers of education, agriculture, natural resources and home affairs, and chaired by the latter. The responsibilities of the Task Force included coordinating the work and response to the needs of participants and donors, managing the transport of food to beneficiaries, monitoring food distribution, keeping records of donations, and maintaining records of food stocks throughout the country. Government was not to be responsible for the costs or management of food distribution at the local level.

In each of the four administrative regions of the country, an inter-ministerial disaster team was established and a Regional Disaster Officer assigned to assist in implementation of drought relief.

The Resident Representative of UNDP and Chairman of the National Disaster Task Force co-chaired regular meetings of the donor community with NGOs and government representatives to review drought relief and rehabilitation strategies.

External donor-provided food relief was channeled through World Food Program. Donations, services and financial assistance from local firms and donors were handled by the National Disaster Task Force. For storage of the grain imports, initial arrangements made to lease silos in South Africa were later dropped because of the cost. When arrivals of commercial and donor imports bunched up from December 1992 through February 1993, temporary storage facilities had to be improvised. Some quantities of maize were left in Durban for a period of time, not only because of inadequate storage but also because it was not possible to mobilize sufficient labor to unload the rail wagons or sufficient transport from the rail head to storage depots.

The localities designated to receive free food were organized into 16 distribution zones, in each of which the distribution of food was to be handled by a designated NGO using ten internal distribution centers.

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The NGOs were to be responsible for involving local government officials, registering beneficiaries in accordance with predetermined criteria, raising funds for all costs beyond transport and storage, arranging local storage and managing stocks, seeing to the actual physical distribution of food, and reporting on utilization of foods provided (to both government ministries and donors as appropriate). Although they were not to be responsible for the costs of transport, they were expected to locate and hire the road transport needed to move the food from warehouses in South Africa to distribution zone headquarters, and from there to the local distribution centers.

At the local level the existing leadership structures of chiefs and inner circles, and other local leaders and active members of the community, were used to identify storage facilities, mobilize help to unload food commodities, and help register community members for relief assistance.

B. Coordination

The principles to be applied in identifying households that should be eligible for food relief were mutually agreed by government, WFP and the NGOs.

In general, the local NGOs of Swaziland had little or no experience in emergency programs. The relatively weak national NGO coordinating body was not able to offer help in planning or organizing a national effort. Yet a total of thirteen NGOs were identified by WFP as having sufficient capacity to help implement the program, and 12 took on distribution responsibilities. Operating guidance to the NGOs was offered by a distribution subcommittee consisting of Lutheran World Federation, Save the Children, and World Food Program.

It was World Food Program that maintained steady pressure on donors to pledge and deliver needed food relief channels.

C. Commodity Distribution

The government, with assistance from World Food Program, was responsible for distribution of emergency maize to each of the 16 designated recipient zones. Within the zones, the responsible NGOs employed various systems for transport and storage.

Government transport was not available to the extent planned, and not always reliable. A total of 360 tons of truck capacity was mobilized, as against 550 tons anticipated; therefore, deliveries to certain destinations were canceled or delayed. Furthermore, government vehicles were pulled off drought duty without consultation, and government drivers were not always as responsible or available for overtime as expected. The difficulties of the situation were recognized in changes made in 1993 to give responsibility to the NGOs for transport from central storage to drought zones on a reimbursable basis.

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D. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Swaziland Nutrition Council conducted two rapid assessments of health and nutrition status, both of which verified the size of beneficiary households, the lack of household food reserves, the economic vulnerability of subsistence farming families, and the threat to health status if emergency food was not supplied. The second survey, in 1993, also indicated that emergency food was reaching needy families, and that extended family coping mechanisms were providing supplemental foods to some families.

The grant provided by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to WFP for the provision of agricultural inputs for drought recovery included funds for an evaluation of the program. The evaluation concluded that the drought recovery program was effective din terms of economic return, in helping families recover from the effects of the drought, and in obviating the need for a second year of food distributions for the households that participated. Although the grant was not available until December 1992, well into the planting season, the farmers produced a significant quantity of maize, and paid a portion of program costs in the form of bags of maize. Because they had been unfamiliar with the use of chemicals, they also returned unused fertilizers and pesticides to the program. The project yielded a benefit of 2 to 1 in terms of project cost versus cost of providing free food, and 5 to 1 in terms of value of crop yield versus project cost. Furthermore, the total recovery in repayments by farmers was anticipated to be some US$ 630,000, as against a project cost of US$ 1,800,000.

The study found that direct distribution by the NGOs was more effective than a system of vouchers for purchase from branches of the Central Cooperative Union, as the Union was not able to mobilize and supply the inputs on a timely basis. The study also pointed out the opportunities for private sector seed companies to develop and market input packages that include seeds, fertilizers and pesticides and recommended an enhanced program of extension to introduce the uses of fertilizers and pesticides to subsistence farmers, who had generally been unfamiliar with the technology.

IV. Outcomes

A. Timeliness and Effectiveness

Considering that the rains of 1991/92 did not cease until December 1991, the early warning by the National Early Warning Unit in January was as timely as could be expected. Government response was slow, however, as it was not until April 1992 that the National Disaster Task Force was established. By that time, World Food Program had analyzed national requirements and had begun to seek donor pledges of food for domestic sales and the necessary emergency feeding program.

The effectiveness of the Task Force was limited by its lack of authority to enforce inter-ministerial cooperation and translate deliberations into action, and by the fact that senior members were not relieved of their normal duties. Despite the availability of special disaster funds for operations of the Task Force, allocations for personnel and office expenses were inadequate. When a chairman of the Task Force was appointed from outside the Ministry of

Home Affairs, he provided dynamic leadership in mobilizing health and nutrition surveys, private sector donations of goods and transport, and the drought coordination subcommittee. The relaxation of normal tendering procedures for purposes of the drought response speeded procurement of food, water and transport.

The first donor deliveries of food for the emergency program in Swaziland through the port of Durban occurred in October and November 1992. Although the size and reliability of donor pledges and deliveries were a matter of constant concern, and the amounts ultimately made available for the emergency food program were only about half of the projected need, the WFP-led, NGO-implemented program appears to have been effective in preventing starvation or widespread malnutrition. It may be that household coping mechanisms were under-recognized, and overall needs overestimated.

The dedicated work of the 12 NGOs responsible for local food distribution was a key element in the emergency program. NGO staff worked so quickly and assiduously to organize registration, storage and handling of food at the local level. In some localities, where their conclusions regarding need conflicted with the views of traditional authorities, adjustments had to be made. In general, however, overall, their efforts were well appreciated and exceptionally effective.

B. Direct Impact on Beneficiaries

Ultimately, the food distribution program expanded from 63,000 to some 410,000 people, all residing in 16 designated needy zones and representing approximately 48 percent of the total population of Swaziland. Although the implementing NGOs used varying methods of distributing available rations, the quantities were generally sufficient, and the distribution effective enough, to prevent deaths from famine. A 1993 rapid assessment of health and nutrition indicated that in one of the most severely affected regions, 91 percent of the people had received food aid. Some families were receiving food packages from relatives as well. Nonetheless, the diets of many recipients consisted primarily of maize, and were therefore deficient in proteins and other nutrients.

The subsistence-level farm families of the areas targeted for assistance with agricultural inputs were identified by NGOs which were active in those areas, in collaboration with agricultural extension staff. Assuming an average family size of eight to nine persons, an estimated 122,000 people benefited from the program. Production supported by the program was anticipated at 24,000 MT of maize, or close to 30 percent of the expected national harvest. The program reached beneficiaries in only a portion of the drought-stricken areas, however, as it covered only five of the 16 affected zones.

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C. Organization for Future Preparedness

The country has no legislation referring to disaster preparedness. An Act has existed in draft form for some time, but government has not formally proposed its enactment.

Certain officials and observers are aware that, with or without special legislation, the country should face the challenge to develop drought contingency plans for the future, taking into consideration the lessons of the 1991/92 drought. They have identified the following as potential issues to be addressed:

- linkages between a national task force and regional organizations engaged in similar work;
- effective communication among national and traditional structures;
- the need for government structure for distribution of food aid, with due consideration for the existing agricultural extension system and private sector activities;
- the potential role of Food for Work in targeted drought-prone areas;
- alternatives for dealing with stress on livestock (maintain the herd as a potential source of livelihood, reduce the herd in order to dedicate all grains to human consumption, or devise feeding projects using by-products of estate agriculture); and
- alternatives for establishment of budget contingency provisions or a permanent disaster fund.

V. Special Issues

A. Targeting of Food Relief

In principle, the targeting of beneficiaries was established on the basis of geographic criteria (that is, location in one of the 16 zones identified as severely affected) and of socio-economic criteria. Families within the target zones were to be selected in terms of status of household food stocks, loss of crops and livestock, depletion of water sources, absence of income sources, and numbers of dependent household members.

In practice, the responsible NGOs are reported not to have applied the socio-economic criteria consistently, except in instances where the available food was in short supply and the need was relatively acute. Moreover, in retrospect, half the food estimated to have been required for 270,000 persons was apparently sufficient for a recipient list of 410,000. The increase in registered eligible recipients seems to have stemmed from several factors in addition to objective assessment of greater numbers of needy people. Those factors included the difficulty in gleaning objective responses to questionnaires referring to income and assets such as livestock, the possibility of double counting mobile members of the population, pressure

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from community leaders (especially if they had not been involved in the initial screening), resistance by local leaders to discrimination among households, and the views of local residents themselves that strict registration criteria were unfair and discriminatory. Those NGOs which succeeded most successfully in targeting were the ones working most closely with the chiefs and local leaders in the first instance.

B. Effect of Drought on Country's Development and Vulnerability

The recovery period experience with the U.S.-funded agricultural inputs program, in conjunction with a retrospective evaluation of a successful Chinese Agricultural Mission project to provide input packages on credit to farmers has stimulated officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to consider an expanded program to equip farmers effectively with the resources necessary to increase food production in the country.

It would be useful if the drought experience also stimulated thought on the value of extension of technology for pest-free on-farm storage of crops.

The private sector of the country is sufficiently developed to be susceptible to the stimulus of demand from informed farmers.

VI. Recommendations

A. USAID should confer with other donors and NGOs experienced in delivery of food relief to study the issue of targeting to recipient households: whether it should be based on geographic criteria alone or whether and how it might be further refined on the basis of household or individual need.

B. Swaziland should request donor assistance to establish a statistical base of household income, nutritional status and agricultural production data for reference in case of future disaster. Such a database would enhance the ability of the National Early Warning Unit to understand food security status and would also be useful for development planning.

C. Swaziland should enact legislation to establish clear assignments of responsibility for disaster relief, give adequate authority to a coordinating unit to mobilize resources to implement a response, and identify personnel and other resources that are to be mobilized to launch and manage the response.

D. Donors should include non-food needs in their planned responses.

E. If NGOs are to continue their leadership and organization role in response to disaster, they will require further development of their capacities.

F. Development programs to reduce vulnerability to drought should address diversification of crop production to introduce drought tolerant crops, intensification of research into shorter season crops, management of livestock to sustain grazing lands, and management of water resources to cover human and agricultural needs.

VII. Lessons Learned

A. Donor shipments of food to Swaziland did not arrive until October 1992 (Swaziland formed a Disaster Drought Committee in January 1992 and WFP conducted a needs assessment in March 1992). Considering the time required to assess needs, commit funds and ship commodities, a country cannot rely on donors to provide food to meet initial needs in response to a drought of sudden onset and disastrous proportion. It must mobilize donor interest as quickly as possible but will also have to use its own resources to purchase early requirements, and should be prepared to reimburse NGOs which must draw on their own resources in the early phases of the response.

B. A country that has not had recent experience with emergency or supplemental feeding programs requires special assistance from experienced donor agencies to organize and manage a relief program.

C. Needs assessments conducted by headquarters staff of UN agencies may duplicate (though not totally corroborate) local assessments available from trained and experienced technical staff. Although such duplicative assessments may have a role in lending credibility to a UN appeal, they tend to be less reliable than the local work.

D. Following a drought emergency, recovery can be significantly accelerated by provision of agricultural inputs for the next growing season.

Annex A: Swaziland Chronology

Dec 1991	First evidence that a unprecedented drought was looming: cessation of rains and heat wave
31 Jan 92	Establishment of Disaster Drought Committee by Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
Mar 1992	World Food Program assessment of food import needs
	Commitment of food donations by the European Community
08 May 92	National declaration of drought by Prime Minister
05 May 92	USAID proposal for a U.S. contribution of 20,000 MT of maize under PL480 Title II through World Food Program's International Emergency Food Reserve
May 1992	Establishment of National Disaster Task Force, under coordination of Ministry of Home Affairs
Sep 1992	Government request for assistance in supplying inputs to small scale maize and cotton farmers for the coming planting season
Nov 1992	Arrival in Durban of 10,500 MT of maize from the United States

Annex B: U.S. Assistance to Swaziland
January 1992 to April 1993

Section 416(b) maize, through WFP	10,500 MT	FY 1992
Support for WFP project to provide agricultural inputs to small scale farmers	US$1,866,090	FY 1993

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Annex C: Sources Consulted on Swaziland

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Annex D: Statement of Work

II. Objectives

1. To provide data on the overall international relief effort including the validity of the initial assessments, the appropriateness of the response measures employed, the U.S. role in the international effort and, to the extent possible, a comparative analysis of this effort with past relief efforts of similar magnitude.

2. To assess the timeliness, appropriateness and impact of emergency food and non-food assistance to the Southern Africa Drought Emergency (SADE) and suggest means of improvement.

3. To assist USAID Missions, AID/Washington, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), host governments and other donors in programming future emergency, rehabilitation and disaster prevention activities and in improving Washington/field donor coordination by providing A.I.D. (and the donor community) with lessons learned regarding the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of emergency food and non-food relief programs.

4. To Identify conditions under which import mobilization and internal food distribution were both efficient and cost-effective in meeting drought response objectives.

III. Scope of Work

The following questions are illustrative of the kinds of issues that should be examined in depth by the team in carrying out the objectives of this evaluation. Emphasis, of course, will vary from country to country and will depend on the particular type of intervention being examined and the degree of severity of the emergency situation. Priority should be given to information gathering and analysis leading to improved programming, design and exploration of new options for the formulation of emergency food and non-food relief programs.

A. Causes of the Emergency

- Food deficit due to the drought emergency in southern Africa.

- To what extent was the country's food problem related to agricultural and macroeconomic policies that may discourage local agricultural production and marketing rather than the drought? Has the drought caused any tangible change in agricultural policies?

B. Host Country Preparedness and Contingency Planning

- Do national procedures exist in the affected countries for responding to emergencies? Are they followed when an actual emergency occurs?

- How did the internal and external coordination of the drought response affect the overall efficiency, impact and cost-effectiveness of each country's drought emergency response?

- Identify what combination of public and private sector roles led to appropriate, timely, efficient and cost-effective responses by both host country governments and donors.

- Describe the types and levels of public and private sector security stocks, distribution mechanisms and how they were used, if they were used, in the disaster situation.

- What planning activities could be undertaken to strengthen the capacity of the affected country's government to respond more effectively to structural and emergency food deficit situations?

- Review drought prevention/mitigation actions: farming practices, crop diversification, soil/water conservation measures, food security stocks, storage/transport losses, seed production, etc.

- How does the local population normally deal with food shortages and how can this traditional coping behavior be reinforced?

- How effective were the early warning systems/weather forecasting services (FEWS project, etc.)? Will these systems remain in place for the future? Will SADC install an early warning system as part of its activities?

- What was/is the impact of pests (army worms/locusts) and plant disease?

C. Donor Coordination

- How effective were the USG early warning systems and coordination?

- Were adequate mechanisms (including telecommunications systems) in existence or were they established to coordinate assessments of donor requirements and implementation efforts?

- How successful was the U.N. World Food Programme and the U.N. Department of Humanitarian Assistance in coordinating assistance, delivering assistance, etc. and how did they interact with each other and other groups responding to the drought?

- What was the role and responsibilities of international, U.S. and/or local non-governmental organizations/private voluntary organizations?

- How do donors' methodologies for calculating food and non-food needs and their system for reporting on food deliveries, donor pledges, etc. relate to those of the UN? Are they adequate?

- What were the successes and failures of donor coordination and the role of donor meetings and appeals.

- What was the role of SADC and was it effective in responding to the drought needs of the member countries?

- What was the role of South Africa? How well did cooperation among regional transport authorities work, and what factor influenced the success of those efforts? Did early estimates of South African port and rail capacity overestimate the difficulties of handling projected food imports? If so, why?

- What role did WFP play in transport coordination?

D. Needs Assessment

- What were the types of information collection system (e.g., rainfall analysis, nutrition surveillance), analysis procedures and use of data for early warning, assessment of requirements, declaration of disaster, design of programs, estimation of food input, etc. used by A.I.D., the UN, host governments?

- Was the logistical capacity of the government, USAID and the private sector adequately taken into account in determining food aid levels?

- Evaluate the accuracy, rapidity, integrity and appropriateness of A.I.D.'s needs assessment process?

- Was there any effort to monitor prices in the local market as a measure of determining food shortages?

E. Project Design

- How were the target areas and groups of beneficiaries selected?

- Describe the demographics of the beneficiary population. Did the majority of food and/or non-food assistance go to a specific group (e.g., farmers, urban poor, displaced persons, refugees)?

- Were local food preferences and food consumption patterns of the target population as well as local market prices adequately considered in the choice of commodities and the selection of distribution systems?

- Which mechanism was the most effective in providing food aid to the beneficiary (WFP, host government, PVO, etc.) Did this vary based on the type of beneficiary; e.g., getting food to markets versus targeted feeding?

- By the type of recipient (malnourished children, adults, etc.) which type of food aid implementation was the most effective (FFW, general distribution, targeted feeding, etc.)

- Were necessary complementary inputs (i.e., seeds, vaccines, materials, technical assistance, environmental impacts assessments) incorporated into the food emergency program?

- To what extent had participation of beneficiaries and utilization of already existing organizational structures/resources, particularly local non-governmental organizations, been built into responses?

- How can the basic food problem best be addressed with emergency food aid? With commercial?

- How were costs a factor in the design of the emergency response program? What budget limits, if any, were established by the respective host government(s)?

- Were provisions for termination of emergency food aid and/or transition to rehabilitation and longer term development foreseen during the planning stages?

- Were linkages with regular food and non-food aid programs and other complementary resources explored?

- Were disincentives introduced by the provision of massive quantities of PL 480 food?

F. Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Did the host governments, UN, USAID Missions, AID/W, PVOs and local community groups effectively organize themselves to manage the emergency? How vigilant were these groups inprotecting themselves from becoming overextended? What emphasis was placed on institution-building and the enhancement of local resourcefulness? Did they utilize guidelines for assessing environmental impacts? Were these guidelines effective? What was the role of the Peace Corps and other USG agencies? How did the different Bureaus within A.I.D. interact? What was the role and utility of the Southern Africa Drought Task Force? Discuss in terms of relief planning, organization, resource allocation (the Africa Disaster Assistance Account), postcrisis rehabilitation and longer term sustainability.

- What are the policies/practices of local governments and donors in the management, monitoring and evaluation of emergency programs and what was their varying impacts on large commercial farmers and small, subsistence farmers?

- How can management, monitoring, oversight and evaluation be improved?

G. Timeliness of Emergency Response

- Discuss the effectiveness and quantify the exact time frames for the following:

  -- Needs assessment

  -- Approval process for food and non-food projects considered

  -- Procurement of commodities

  -- Delivery of commodities to the country

  -- Internal distribution of food and non-food aid to the target population

  -- Arrival of technical assistance

- Describe constraints, i.e. logistical/organizational /political bottlenecks, and how and if they were overcome. Was the WFP regional logistical unit in Harare and its subset in Johannesburg effective? Suggest ways of expediting these procedures in the future. Was private sector transport, handling and storage used effectively in

the response to the drought and, if not, how can it be improved?

- If food commodities arrived late, were appropriate actions taken to avoid disincentive effects on local production and marketing?

H. Program Results

To the extent possible and, taking into account the constraints inherent in disaster situations, the evaluation team will present evidence of the effectiveness/impact of emergency interventions in terms of the following:

- Targeting: extent to which areas and/or victims with greatest need are being reached. Was better targeting achieved as the drought progressed?

- Appropriateness and adequacy of USG food and non-food intervention. Were resources allocated appropriately for maximum effectiveness?

- Coverage: percentage of the affected population being assisted (by the United States, by other donors)

- Increased availability of food in target areas and consumption by vulnerable groups

- Incentive/disincentive effects on agricultural production/prices/incomes

- Improved nutritional and health status of target groups

- Decreased infant and child mortality

- Demographic effects: population movements to centers and urban areas, age/sex distribution, etc.

- Dependency/self-reliance: Have the relief programs weakened the self-help capacity of individuals and community groups? How can programs be organized better to reempower individuals and strengthen local decision-making and resource generation/productivity?

- Policy and institutional reform: How has the emergency affected ongoing food strategy plans and price restructuring efforts? How has the emergency intervention strengthened the capacity of the national and local governments as well as local NGOs to respond more effectively to future emergencies?

I. Policy Issues

The following issues are complex and deserve separate studies in themselves. They are extremely important in thinking about programming options and will provide a useful backdrop for discussions and future interventions. As appropriate, the team should address these concerns in the context of recommendations for program improvement/redesign and lessons learned:

- Relative effectiveness (impact and costs) of various distribution modes (e.g., general free distribution, maternal and child health, supplementary feeding programs, food for work, monetization, triangular transactions, rehabilitation activities), consideration of alternative distribution mechanisms and the extent of the relief effort's decentralization/regionalization.

- Comparative advantage and cost-effectiveness of different food distribution channels (WFP, PVOs, host governments) and criteria for selecting among them.

- Linkages with regular food aid program and other development assistance activities, how to use them to prepare better for future emergencies as well as to assess the effect a disaster has on them in the short term. This includes the following:

    a. What effect do emergency activities have on the Mission's regular program and their strategic objectives? Should we consider these "on hold" while an emergency takes place? Should funding for them be decreased and moved toward the emergency?

    b. How should disasters affect the composition of the Mission program? Should the Strategic Objectives in their regular development program take this into account and, if not, why?

    c. Can ongoing activities be redirected to assist the drought? To what extent should they?

- The capacity and ability of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to act independently of political constraints.

- How food emergency programs can be planned to support sector and macroeconomic policy reforms and strengthen food self-reliance, disaster prevention and longer term development initiatives.

- Criteria for determining when and how emergency programs should be phased in and out.

- The role that donor coordination (food and non-food needs assessments, standardized methodologies, centralized assistance/pledge information) does/should play in maximizing the effectiveness of emergency responses.

IV. Evaluation Approach and Duration

During the first week of the assessment, the Contractor will draft scopes of work for team participants. All team members then will meet in Washington, D.C., to review and clarify the scopes of work, develop field protocols for site visits and for interviews with local officials and program participants, as well as to hold discussions with key A.I.D., USDA, State Department and PVO officials in Washington.

After this prefield analysis is completed, the teams will proceed to the southern Africa region, as coordinated by the Contract's Chief of Party, to carry out field investigations: review additional documentation, interview key U.S. Mission personnel, host government, PVO and other donor officials and inspect appropriate field sites. Specific attention should be devoted to capturing the perceptions of program participants, either through structured interviews or informal conversations in their own language. The field work will be carried out in approximately 36 working days per team member. For Mozambique the field work will be carried out in approximately 20 working days per team member.

While in the field all logisitical support costs will provided by the contractor and not by the Missions. This includes travel and transportation (surface and air), lodging, office space, office equipment and supplies, etc.

The teams will inform the Mission of the countries visited of areas that will be considered.

Upon return from the field, each team will review its findings and will prepare a draft country report. When all the country studies have been completed, Mission comments received and the final reports prepared, the Contractor's core technical staff will prepare a synthesis of findings and recommendations, drawing out lessons learned about what works, what does not work and why, from both the operational and policy perspectives.

AID/Washington and USAID Missions would be expected to collect all existing data and reports and other relevant records for the team before their arrival to the countries being identified. To the extent possible, USAID Missions should provide logistical support for the team while in-country.

Total duration of the evaluation will be approximately three months with a target completion date of September 21, 1993.

V. Country Selection

All drought-affected countries in the southern Africa region, including South Africa and excluding Angola, which received USG food and/or non-food assistance will be assessed. The region will be broken into four areas, each of which will be visited by one team, as follows: 1) Zimbabwe and South Africa, 2) Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia, 3) Zambia and Malawi, and 4) Mozambique.

VI. Team Composition and Level of Effort

In conducting these country assessments, the contractor will provide at least four teams of specialists; one team for each of the areas specified above. Given the range of skills required to carry out this scope of work and the short time frame, the background of these specialists will vary, but all of the following areas of expertise must be represented:

- Language skills and country-specific experience
- Agricultural economics
- Public health/nutrition
- Rural Water
- Social Anthropology
- Food Logistics
- PL 480 Program Regulations and WFP Procedures
- Policy analysis/program design/evaluation
- UN System
- Disaster Management

The team leaders will be on the contractor's core technical staff. While continuity in the evaluation team is assumed, it is not essential for the same consultants to go to all the countries.

VII. Reports

The team will submit a report on each country as well as a synthesis containing an analysis of those factors that appear to determine program effectiveness, recommendations on how A.I.D. can improve its programming of emergency food aid and non-food aid and lessons learned. Before departure from each country, the team will have engaged the USAID in a dialogue concerning their findings and recommendations. The draft country reports are due to AID/Washington no later than two weeks after each team has returned to the United States. Fifty copies will be delivered. The Missions will be asked to complete their reviews and respond with comments by cable within two weeks of receiving the draft. The Contractor will conduct a debriefing in Washington for AID and all interested parties within one month of the return of all teams. The final report (including an executive summary and synthesis of findings, recommendations and lessons learned) will be completed by the Contractor within two weeks of receiving all Mission comments. Fifty copies of this report will be delivered to FHA/OFDA, who will distribute them to all interested parties including FHA/FFP, AFR/SA, SADTF, LEG, CDIE and InterAction.