



**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 #9, Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

March 18, 2003

Note: The last situation report was dated January 24, 2003.

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 2001/2002 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, surplus food stocks from the previous year and the intra-regional trade of surplus commodities help to offset production shortfalls. However, regional stocks were drawn down to fill the previous year's food shortages, and surplus commodities within the region were limited. In FY 2003, Zimbabwe continues to face a serious humanitarian crisis, with over 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. In FY 2003, U.S. Ambassadors in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe redeclared disasters in response to the ongoing food security crisis. Since the onset of the crisis in February 2002, the U.S. Government (USG) has provided or pledged more than \$293 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: DECEMBER 2002 TO MARCH 2003

<i>Country</i>	<i>Maximum Number of Population in Need¹</i>	<i>Maximum Percentage of Total (Country/Region) Population in Need¹</i>
Zimbabwe	7,180,000	52%
Malawi	3,590,000	31%
Zambia	2,770,000	28%
Lesotho	760,000	34%
Mozambique	650,000	3%
Swaziland	300,000	28%
Total	15,250,000	28%

¹ Anticipated populations in need are based on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Vulnerability Assessment Committee's (VAC) Regional Emergency Food Security Assessment Report released on January 30, 2003. (Numbers are rounded and should be viewed as only approximate figures.)

Total USG Humanitarian Assistance provided* \$293,017,972
Total USG Food Assistance provided in Metric Tons (MT)* 504,493

CURRENT SITUATION

Latest Shipment of U.S. Food Assistance to the Region.
 To date, the USG has delivered approximately 500,000 MT of food assistance to the region. The balance of approximately 5,000 MT will arrive in the region over the next several months. The distribution of the major portion

of these commodities has been planned to take place prior to the upcoming harvest. Further contributions of USG food assistance are planned for those countries that will require food assistance until the following harvest in 2004.

* This total reflects the total USG humanitarian assistance provided in response to the Southern Africa Complex Food Security Crisis since February 2002.

Update on the WFP Emergency Operation (EMOP).

The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) has sourced approximately 90 percent of the food resources or 77 percent of cash contributions required for its EMOP, with 33 percent of those resources coming from the USG. Current USG assistance represents approximately 40 percent of WFP's total humanitarian requirements. WFP recently extended its EMOP through June 2003.

On February 14, the U.N. launched a mid-term review of the 2002/2003 Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for the humanitarian crisis in the six affected countries. The revised appeal placed special emphasis on the need for non-food items, such as water, sanitation, agricultural inputs, medicines, and educational supplies.

South Africa's Regional Assistance. According to the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Food Security Network Ministerial Brief, South Africa should experience similar corn production levels as last year. In addition to its current corn stocks of more than 2.4 million MT, the country will have significant export capacity this year, which could exceed three million metric tons. These factors allowed the Government of the Republic of South Africa (GRSA) to make a recent contribution to WFP that will fund the purchase of 100,000 MT of South African corn to help feed people in the region before the harvest. The GRSA's donation makes it the fifth largest contributor to WFP's EMOP. In addition to this contribution, the GRSA had already been assisting WFP's regional operations by milling corn in South Africa for distribution in Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

COUNTRY UPDATES

Zimbabwe. The SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Vulnerability Assessment Committee's (VAC) December 2002 assessment concluded that the number of Zimbabweans in need of food assistance through March 2003 rose to nearly 7.2 million people, an additional 480,000 people since the last assessment conducted in August 2002. The report, which was issued on January 30, indicated that of all of the Southern African countries Zimbabwe faces the greatest challenge in covering its cereal gap. Even if all planned imports are received by March, the country would still face a gap of 322,000 MT, representing more than one month's worth of national cereal requirements. The assessment also revealed that there is a marked discrepancy between national import levels and availability of cereals at the community level.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network's (FEWS NET) February 24 Food Security Emergency report on Zimbabwe stated that food insecurity is expected to worsen since the 2002/2003 grain harvest could be as much as 20 percent below last year's poor performance. In addition, deteriorating economic conditions, cattle deaths in Matebeleland South Province, and the outbreak

of armyworms in parts of the country, which poses a threat to the late-planted cereal crop and grazing lands, have further exacerbated conditions in Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans in more than two-thirds of the districts are expected to experience either moderate or extreme food insecurity during the 2003/2004 marketing year that begins in April.

During the week of January 22, staff from USAID/OFDA, USAID/FFP, USAID's Africa Bureau (USAID/AFR), USAID/Global Health, and USAID/Zimbabwe participated in a strategic planning exercise in Harare to develop a contingency plan to address the humanitarian and recovery needs in Zimbabwe. In addition, USAID/OFDA staff met with non-governmental organization (NGO) partners and determined that nutrition, water, and health are the primary non-food humanitarian concerns. Preliminary results from a country-wide nutrition survey sponsored by WFP, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization, the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ), and NGOs is expected to be released shortly and should provide a more complete understanding of the nutrition situation.

In an effort to support information and coordination efforts in Zimbabwe, USAID/OFDA has provided the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) with \$250,000 to support the efforts of the U.N. Relief and Recovery Unit's (RRU) Relief and Information Verification Office (RIVO), which aims to provide regular, unbiased reports on food distributions by both donors and the GOZ. The first of four monitoring sites was opened on February 26 in Mutare in Manicaland Province, and the RRU plans on opening the other regional offices by mid-April. USAID/OFDA has also provided UN OCHA with \$300,000 to support the Southern Africa Humanitarian Information System.

Malawi. According to the latest VAC report, the food gap in Malawi has decreased due to informal cross-border cereal flows, and it is likely that grain supplies from all sources could be enough to fill the national cereal gap. Overall, corn prices have either stayed the same or fallen since last year and availability has improved. FEWS NET's February update on Malawi reported that crop production is expected to improve this year by 31 percent. Even despite localized effects of flooding from the heavy rains in January in southern and central parts of the country, the rains should help produce a healthy harvest. However, despite the improved situation, the VAC assessment concluded that the number of people in need of food assistance through March has expanded to nearly 3.6 million since many poor households cannot afford to purchase corn from local markets or are not being reached by free distributions as the peak hunger season approaches. The districts with the highest number in need are Lilongwe, Mangochi, Dedza, Kasungu, and Thyolo.

Due to an unexpected surplus of Government of Malawi (GOM) corn stocks and at the urging of donors, the GOM has decided to sell 50,000 MT of corn through open tender to raise cash. This will likely depress prices in the short-term but may avert a dramatic fall in prices, which would reduce producer incentives to plant for next year's harvest if the corn was sold later in the year. The international community is currently exploring options to reduce the amount of corn stocks held by the GOM through regional redistribution and/or local purchases.

Zambia. As a result of the VAC assessment conducted in December, the Committee revised the number of people in need to 2.7 million from 2.9 million, but the drop was largely attributed to a revision in the Zambian census and does not reflect a drop in the number of vulnerable since the maximum percentage of the total population in need rose by two percent. The assessment concluded that the relief pipeline has remained weak since the beginning of the disaster and the food situation remains unstable in some areas, particularly in Southern, Western, and Lusaka Provinces. However, the VAC estimates that grain availability from all sources, including cassava, should be adequate to cover Zambia's cereal requirements through the end of March as long as informal trade continues and food aid imports are received as planned.

There has been some concern over the validity of the VAC assessment in Zambia since only 14 food economy zones in 23 of the hardest hit districts were surveyed, which may be too small of a sampling to make credible country-wide generalizations. As a result, USAID/Zambia has recommended that instead of focusing on any potential weaknesses of the last VAC assessment, it will focus on enhancing general food distributions in the short-term while encouraging an orderly termination of the relief pipeline at harvest time to reduce negative effects on the market.

Mozambique. FEWS NET recently issued a food security warning for Mozambique, advising that certain populations are or will become highly food insecure since this year's drought is more severe than last year. Some experts have also compared the severity of this year's conditions to the 1991/1992 drought. The interior of Gaza and Inhambane Provinces and southern Tete are in the greatest need of assistance due to serious crop failures and a lack of access to food and income. Malnutrition rates in this area are already higher than those in the rest of the country and are expected to increase significantly after households have used all of their existing coping mechanisms. In contrast, above normal rainfall in the northern region is expected to yield surplus harvests.

The VAC December 2002 assessment revised upward the number of Mozambicans in need to 650,000 from its 590,000 estimate in August 2002. However, this latest number may need to be revised again since

Mozambique's National Disasters Management Institute on March 6 announced that 1.5 million people are in need of food assistance due to worsening conditions. However, despite requests from NGOs to address the situation, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique appears unwilling to request international assistance, which has restricted response efforts.

Lesotho. The latest VAC assessment concluded that the number of people in need in Lesotho rose by nearly 14 percent since August, largely due to higher than anticipated reductions in purchasing power from smaller incomes and the highest corn prices in the region. According to WFP/Lesotho, the domestic cereal production will meet less than 20 percent of the 2002/2003 consumption requirements. WFP targeted 440,000 beneficiaries in eight districts between September 2002 and January 2003 and plans to expand emergency food distributions through March 2003 to meet the needs of beneficiaries in ten districts.

A USAID/OFDA assessment team visit to Lesotho between January 29 and January 30 confirmed that the prospects for the 2003 harvest look bleak in many areas of the country. Since only 10 percent of the land is arable, Lesotho's subsistence agricultural capacity has been further limited by the drought, poor land management practices, and the effects of HIV/AIDS.

Swaziland. According to the December 2002 VAC assessment report, 300,000 people will be in need of food assistance through the end of March in Swaziland, an additional four percent of the population as compared to the last assessment conducted in August. The assessment determined that corn prices were 70 to 80 percent higher in December as compared to the year before and represented the greatest shock to livelihoods.

WFP and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization recently conducted a pre-harvest assessment in Swaziland and found that the production outlook is poor for this year's harvest, especially in the Lowveld area. Erratic rainfall followed by a severe heat wave in late January and early February has led to widespread crop failures.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

From the beginning of 2002 to the present, the USG has provided or pledged more than \$293 million in emergency humanitarian assistance in response to the food security crisis.

In FY 2003, USAID/OFDA has provided \$2 million to Africare to support supplementary therapeutic feeding in Malawi (CoGuard). In Zimbabwe, USAID/OFDA has provided \$650,000 to support various supplementary feeding and information and coordination efforts. USAID/OFDA has also provided \$100,000 to WFP to support their rapid assessments in the region. In addition,

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/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.

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

<i>Country*</i>	<i>USG Food Assistance FY 2002 – FY 2003 (From USAID/FFP and USDA)</i>
Lesotho	27,760 MT
Malawi	151,495 MT
Mozambique	19,790 MT
Swaziland	15,542 MT
Zambia	74,500 MT
Zimbabwe	215,406 MT
Total	504,493 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	\$650,000
WFP Regional Support	\$100,000
Total	\$2,750,000

<i>SUMMARY OF FY 2002 – FY 2003 USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE</i>	
USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	\$13,125,211
USAID/Office of Food For Peace (FFP)*	\$266,597,973
USAID Total	\$279,723,184
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Total	\$13,294,788
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	\$293,017,972

* Note: USAID/FFP value is an estimate. Commodities may be 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.