



UN MALAWI HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

31 JULY 2006

Prepared by the UN Disaster Management Technical Working Group

HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

Food Security

In mid-July, The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) released its latest vulnerability estimates based on field surveys carried out in the period 23-29 April 2006. This year's assessments took place in the following districts: Balaka, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Dowa, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Machinga, Mangochi, Mzimba, Nkhata Bay, Nsanje, Ntchisi, Ntcheu, Phalompe, Rumphu and Salima. While at national level, Malawi has had a good harvest this year with total production of maize estimated at 2.6¹ million MT, there are still localised hotspots in the country where the harvest failed due to dry spells and floods. MVAC estimates that **833,000 people will have little or no food at some point this year**. In addition, 147,800 people are at risk of not meeting their food entitlements, if the household economy deteriorates further for example as a result of high maize prices. Kasungu District and neighbouring Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) in Ntchisi, Dowa and Mzimba Districts are among the worst affected areas, along with parts of Nsanje and Chikwawa Districts. These areas and others identified by MVAC will require some form of emergency assistance in the current consumption period. Presently, it is estimated that MK 1,814 million will be required to cover the missing food entitlements or 57,300 MT in maize equivalent.

Given the national food surplus this season, Malawi may not need to import maize for emergency interventions. The maize production estimates of 2.6 million MT are 113% higher than last season's poor production of 1.3 million MT, and well above national consumption needs. The successful harvest, a historic record, is attributed to two main factors e.g. favourable weather conditions (with the exception of a few areas) and high uptake of fertiliser and improved maize seeds due to the government's fertiliser and seed subsidy program. ADMARC is currently buying maize from farmers at a minimum purchase price of 20.00 MK/Kg, while private traders reportedly buy at prices between 10.00-20.00 MK/Kg according to agricultural field staff. ADMARC has not yet started selling maize in its designated markets and the selling price is yet to be announced. Currently, maize selling prices in markets in 10 selected districts are reported to range between 12-24 MK/kg.

Nutrition

According to the latest Malawi Integrated Nutrition and Food Security Surveillance System Data Report² the proportion of children with Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) dropped from 8.9 percent in April to 7.6 percent in May 2006. Similarly, the number of children identified as wasted in the three Regions declined. With 7.6 percent the southern region continues to have the highest degree of wasting compared to the 5.3% in the north and 5.7% in the central region for the month of May.

¹ Third Round Agricultural Production Estimates, released 23rd June 2006, MoAFS

² May Report 2006. June Data report is due for release in the next two weeks.

Supplementary feeding

WFP continues to provide supplementary food to 42,845 moderately malnourished children (29,302) and women (13,543) under their regular Country Programme. The WFP/UNICEF Emergency Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP), which benefited an additional 38,406 beneficiaries in 14 districts came to an end in July 2006.

Cholera

No new cases of cholera have been reported since 23rd of July 2006 bringing the total number of cases for this year's cholera season to 4,774 cases and 58 deaths.

The National Cholera Taskforce plans to conduct a National Post-Mortem Cholera workshop in Mangochi between 13-17 August 2006 with participation of all districts. The purpose of the workshop is to review the past season's management of cholera outbreaks, identifying lessons learned with a view to improving response next cholera season.

Avian Influenza

According to the latest ECTAD HPAI Situation Update of July 21st 2006, the following countries in the African Region have confirmed outbreaks of HPAI: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Niger, Nigeria, and Sudan. In total 15 human cases have been reported and 6 deaths (Djibouti 1/0 and Egypt 14/6).

In the period June 26 to July 14, 2006, the World Bank fielded a Rapid Assessment mission to Malawi. The purpose of the mission was 1) to review the National Avian Influenza Emergency Preparedness Plans, 2) to assess Government's capacity to prepare for and respond to an avian influenza outbreak, and 3) to provide recommendations for strengthening the AI Plans and government's response capacity. The primary focus of the mission was on the areas of, animal health, human health, and communication.

The World Bank mission found that the National plans gave Malawi a good foundation to react in case there would have been an avian influenza outbreak. However, there was an urgent need to update the plans and speed up implementation of identified preparedness activities. The mission also recommended that the leadership of Avian influenza (AI) be placed in the Office of President and Cabinet to facilitate proper oversight of all Ministries involved (For a detailed report of the recommendations, please contact achirwa@worldbank.org).

The National Avian Influenza Technical Committee (NAITC) facilitated by FAO with financial resources from USAID has identified three groups of Rapid Response Teams (RRT) officials for the North, Central and Southern regions of Malawi. The RRTs comprise various staff categories such as veterinarians, health staff, laboratory technicians and administrative staff and have been formed to strengthen national disease surveillance and investigation capacity for avian influenza, as envisaged in the National Avian Influenza Emergency Preparedness Plan. Training of the RRT is planned to take place during the week of 14-18 August 2006. A draft manual and guideline will be finalised during this training and a simulation exercise is planned.

A National Communication Plan (NCP) was finalised in January 2006 with support from UNICEF. UNICEF and Population Services International (PSI) have developed radio, television and printed materials and are finalising a Communications Strategy with funding

provided by USAID. As part of the awareness campaign, Save the Children US has pledged to support community mobilisation through training of community leaders. The nationwide public awareness campaign, which is expected to take place over a period of three months, has been scheduled to begin in September.

HIV/AIDS

In the week 17-22 July, 2006, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with National AIDS Commission led an HIV Testing Week to support efforts to scale up HIV testing and facilitate change of sexual and health seeking behaviour. 500 testing sites were opened throughout the country and some 1000 counsellors were mobilized and deployed for the event. The event was a success with more than 90,000 (91,797) people tested in an open and public manner, attracting clients of all ages, sex, classes, faiths and cultural backgrounds.

EVALUATION OF 2005/2006 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The team of 5 consultants tasked with undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the 2005/2006 Emergency Response have completed their mission to Malawi and are presently preparing the final report. The draft Final Report was presented to key stakeholders in June for comments and the comments are now being reviewed and incorporated by the consultancy team before final release of the evaluation document. The Final report will consist of a Comprehensive Review Report and four separate reports covering the following modules: 1) Humanitarian Assistance, 2) Maize Procurement, 3) Safety Net Activities, and 4) Subsidized Inputs. The evaluation exercise is funded by EU.