



UN MALAWI HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

30 May 2006

Prepared by the UN Disaster Management Technical Working Group

HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

In the period 23-28 April 2006 the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) conducted its annual field assessments in the Districts of Nsanje, Chikwawa, Blantyre, Kasungu, Mzimba, Dowa, Ntchisi, Salima, Mangochi, Phalombe, Zomba, Rumphu, and Karonga. Initially, the MVAC planned to present their findings to decision makers and donors in the second week of May 2006, but due to floods in the Nkhata Bay area at the time of the field assessments the MVAC team had to postpone the assessment in the district until the area became accessible. The MVAC will meet this week to review the findings from Nkhata Bay and other locations with a view to determining this year's total missing food entitlements. With support from UNICEF and Bunda College (University of Malawi), Ministry of Health conducted a separate nutrition assessment parallel to the MVAC assessment in four livelihood zones in Kasungu-Lilongwe plain, Western Mzimba, Mzimba self-sufficient and Lake Chilwa-Phalombe plain. The results of the nutrition assessment, which focussed on anthropometric indicators, care practices, livelihoods, wealth, morbidity and mortality indicators, will be integrated into the final MVAC report, which is scheduled for release in June.

The market demand for maize has been decreasing in the last month, as households have begun harvesting their maize. In the Southern Region maize prices now fall in the range of 15-19 MK/kg. The food security situation in the Northern region has also improved significantly, although maize prices are reported at higher levels averaging MK 22/kg.

The admissions of severely malnourished children under five to 48 Nutrition Rehabilitation Units (NRUs) is declining as the food security situation improves. In April, 986 admissions were registered compared to 1,530 admissions the previous month (a 35 percent decrease). However, admission figures are still high compared to same time last year in April 2005, where admissions reached 705.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO FOOD SECURITY CRISIS

FOOD SECTOR

The targeted food distribution for the 2005/2006 food security crisis is now close to completion. This week the final food distributions will take place in Chitipa district. Some 43,000 people beneficiaries will receive a full ration of 50kg maize, 10kg pulses and 4 litres vegetable oil for the month of May.

HEALTH

Cholera

The cholera outbreak is continuing its downward trend since the Epi Curve peaked in mid-February. According to the Ministry of Health, a total number of **58** cases of cholera and **1** death were reported in the week of 1-21 May 2006, which represent a significant decline compared to last reporting period. The cholera cases are distributed across the districts as follows: Nsanje (27), Machinga (13), Lilongwe (8), Chikwawa (8) and Mangochi (2).

The total number of reported cholera cases since October 17, 2005 now stands at **4,717** and **58** deaths with an overall case fatality rate of 1.2% (which is higher than the recommended fatality rate by World Health Organisation (WHO) of less than 1 percent). Altogether 19 districts have been affected by Cholera this year with Blantyre being the worst hit at a total of 1,266 cases, followed by 792 cases from Mangochi.

UNICEF continues to monitor and provide support to the District Health Office (DHO) in responding to the many outbreaks of cholera in Nsanje (39 cases were reported for the period 17-30 April and another 27 cases were reported between 1-21 May). Temporary treatment centres in the affected villages have been established and social mobilisation campaigns in order to contain and avoid further outbreaks are ongoing. Chlorine has been dispatched to the district and chlorination of water sources continues in those areas/villages where cholera cases are reported from. While social mobilisation campaigns including hygiene education in general no longer take place effective from beginning of May, water quality testing will continue in all districts as an ongoing activity to identify communities that require immediate water chlorination.

Cholera post-mortem meetings have begun in Dowa district with more than 35 villages covered already. These meetings are conducted to review current situation against necessary actions to be undertaken in preparedness for next year's cholera season. They will continue over the coming months and will be extended to include all villages in all districts that have been affected by cholera this year.

UNICEF is also working with the District Assembly in Blantyre in an attempt to find long term solutions to the water contamination problems (*nearly 27 percent of all cholera outbreaks has been reported from Blantyre*). Over the weeks, in particular damaged water pipes have been identified near refuse places. UNICEF is plans to hold talks with Blantyre Water Board on possible assistance to repair of water pipes.

Avian Influenza

With outbreaks of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) confirmed in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Burkina Faso and latest in Djiboutie, the virus is now well established in the African Region. So far, Egypt is the only African country to report on human infections and deaths (5) as a result of the H5N1 virus. As the virus has started to spread across the African continent, Malawi has become more exposed and vulnerable to a possible pandemic.

The Government of Malawi with technical support from WHO and FAO has prepared an Avian Influenza Emergency Preparedness Plan and a 1-year Implementation Plan. The plans focus on animal health, wild life, and human health and include the following activities:

- 1) Risk assessment
- 2) Disease surveillance and investigation
- 3) Public awareness campaigns
- 4) Procurement of pharmaceuticals and equipment
- 5) Strengthening of local technical capacity

Presently, the Plan is under resourced, which is a concern as early detection and rapid containment of the virus is critical. With the already high levels of vulnerability in Malawi and the limited capacity to handle a pandemic, an Avian/Human Influenza outbreak could have serious humanitarian implications for the country.

An estimated MK 70,000,000 is required to undertake priority activities identified in the National Preparedness Plan. To date, USAID through FAO has contributed US\$100,000 towards the Plan, while Taiwan has donated Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and MK 1

Million. FAO has intimated that it can support the Plan by providing US\$60,000 for preparedness activities.

A national communication and social mobilization campaign to raise public awareness on Avian Flu has been developed by Government through the Ministry of Information and other relevant line ministries supported by UNICEF. The National Communication Plan (NCP) was finalised in January 2006, however, due to financial constraints and late commitment of funds from donors, no activities have been implemented to date (approximately US\$ 800,000 is required to implement the NCP). UNICEF has so far donated MK 1.6 million for development of the national communication strategies.

On 18 April, Population Services International (PSI) hosted a meeting aimed at bringing together key government, UN, and NGO stakeholders to develop key messages and select the best media channels for an Avian Influenza Awareness campaign. With funds from USAID, PSI has expressed willingness to support the implementation of the National Communication Plan by further refining and pre-testing Avian Flu messages. UNICEF will subsequently use these messages as part of the nationwide awareness campaigns that will be conducted through Television and Radio programmes as well as through production of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. As part of the awareness campaigns, 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 around September.

NUTRITION

Supplementary feeding

WFP is providing supplementary food to 42,845 moderately malnourished children (29,302) and women (13,543) under their regular Country Programme. WFP in collaboration with UNICEF is also implementing an Emergency Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) in 14 districts benefiting a total of 38,406 beneficiaries (25,133 moderately malnourished children and 13,273 pregnant and lactating women). In total 81,251 moderately malnourished children and women are benefiting from the Supplementary Feeding Programme, which will run to end of June 2006.

Therapeutic Feeding

UNICEF is currently supporting the Ministry of Health (MoH) in strengthening the supervision of NRUs to ensure improved quality of case management and reduction in case fatality (*which is presently in average above 17 percent on national level*). The reduction of case fatality in NRUs has been accepted as one of the milestones in the last review meeting of the health sector SWAP (sector-wide approach). Instead of Community Nutrition Workers, it has been recommended that clinicians onward should visit NRUs three times a week.

Micronutrient support

The first round of Child Health days is currently ongoing in all 28 districts and will run to June 2, 2006. UNICEF will distribute a total 1.5 million de-worming tablets for anaemia control to children under 5 years and 2.1 million Vitamin A capsules to children < 5 and post natal women (within two months after delivery). The coverage for Vitamin A and de-worming for children < 5 is expected to be more than 86 percent. The Vitamin A capsules have been received as an in-kind donation from the Canadian Government (CIDA). The second round of the Child Health days is planned to take place in September.

EDUCATION

School Feeding Programme

On Sunday May 2006, the event Walk the World took place in 13 districts in Malawi, including the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe. The Ministry of Education together with WFP organised the walk to raise awareness on child hunger, raise funds and also stimulate action to end child hunger through the school feeding programme. A total of 45, 050 people participated in the Walk, which raised approximately MK 3 million. WFP's School Feeding Programme is presently ongoing in 482 primary schools throughout the country benefiting a total of 410,000 primary school pupils.

EVALUATION OF 2005/2006 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The team of 5 consultants tasked with undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the 2005/2006 Emergency Response took up assignment on May 8, 2006. The consultants are presently reviewing the response covering the following four modules: 1) Humanitarian Assistance, 2) Maize Procurement, 3) Safety Net Activities, and 4) Subsidised Inputs. The consultants submitted their inception report on May 15, 2006, and are presently carrying out stakeholder interviews and visiting the field. It is anticipated that the Team of Consultants will present their findings in a workshop scheduled to be held on Friday, June 16 2006. The final report is due for completion on June 26, 2006. The European Commission is funding the evaluation exercise.

UPDATE ON UN FLASH APPEAL

On Tuesday 30 August 2005, the UN system in Malawi issued a Flash Appeal. The overall purpose of the Appeal was to alert the wider international community of the seriousness of the food insecurity in Malawi and raise funds for a Government led comprehensive approach to address the situation. Thus far, the UN system and Government of Malawi have received approximately **US\$ 58 million** against the originally required US\$88 million. The UN system in Malawi has since revised the requirements in some sectors of the Appeal to address the deteriorating situation especially in the health, nutrition and food security sectors. UNDP withdrew the agricultural inputs project, as the planting season had begun and the window of opportunity passed. Collectively, the UN revised requests now total approximately **US\$ 74 million**.

The below table indicates the current response to the UN Flash Appeal. Contribution in kind has also been received from Catholic Relief Services totaling 260.688 MT of Vegetable Oil and 369.75 MT of Pulses and 80 metric tonnes of BP-5s from the Norwegian Government for supplementary feeding purposes. It should be noted that a number of donors, notably the European Union and the United Kingdom have responded significantly to government's request for emergency assistance outside or prior to the appeal. Further information regarding the contributions given outside the appeal is available from Government, while information regarding pre-appeal contributions can be found at the UN Financial Tracking Service on www.reliefweb.int/fts.

RESPONSE TO UN FLASH APPEAL (updated 30 May 2006)

Sector	Requirements (US\$)	Revised Requirements (US\$)	Commitments & Contributions (US\$)	Source of Funding
AGRICULTURE	36,455,000	6,971,878 2,000,000	914,634 301,125 242,455 1,290,244 4,767,000 290,000	Ireland Ireland Luxembourg Sweden United Kingdom Spain
Sector Subtotal		8,971,878	7,805,458	
EDUCATION	450,000	500,000	400,000 17,310 158,730 146,489	Netherlands CIDA UK NC for Unicef US NC for Unicef
Sector Subtotal		500,000	722,529	
FOOD	48,805,869	48,805,869 150,000	361,882 996,016 608,973 1,785,714 168,823 339,213 13,013,892 1,184,133 292,401 100,000 4,000,000 14,239,521	Belgium France Ireland Japan Luxembourg Luxembourg Malawi Netherlands Spain Turkey United Kingdom United States
Sector Subtotal		48,955,869	37,090,568	
HEALTH & NUTRITION	1,750,000	10,500,000 2,900,000	427,350 525,766 764,343 592,415 121,065 3,200,000 387,517 750,000 644,330 101,503 169,856 545,455 258,175 361,010 400,000 200,000 485,000 51,219	Canada Denmark ECHO Ireland Luxembourg Netherlands Norway Norway Sweden Sweden NC for Unicef Switzerland UK UK (Scotland) UK NC for Unicef United States United States US NC for Unicef US NC for Unicef
Sector Subtotal		13,400,000	9,985,004	
PROTECTION, HUMAN RIGHTS, RULE OF LAW	300,000	300,000	400,000	Netherlands
Sector Subtotal		300,000	400,000	
WATER & SANITATION	-	1,700,000	427,350 411,569 800,000 51,816	Canada ECHO Netherlands UK NC for Unicef
Sector Subtotal		1,700,000	1,690,735	
SECTOR NOT YET SPECIFIED			54,062	US NC for Unicef
Sector Subtotal			54,062	
Grand Total	87,760,869	73,827,747	57,748,356	

The US\$ 4,767,000 provided by United Kingdom was given to Government of Malawi as direct budget support against the appeal and earmarked by Government for agricultural inputs.