



# UN MALAWI

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

Prepared by the UN Disaster Management Technical Working Group

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### HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

#### FLOODS

In the past two weeks heavy rains and floods have caused problems in various parts of the country. Minor flooding incidences have occurred in Mwanza, Rumphu, Mzimba, Salima, Machinga and Zomba. The Department of Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs (DoPDMA) have provided the relevant relief and food items to the flood affected families. In addition, two tents occupying 45 people have been provided by Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) to flood victims in Salima District.

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, heavy downpour caused flooding in a number of Traditional Authorities's (TA) in Mangochi District. The DC's Office in collaboration with Malawi Red Cross Society, Emmanuel International and WFP carried out an initial assessment, which reported that more than 1,000 people have been rendered homeless. Presently, Namalaka village which is under Sub-Traditional Authority Namabvi appears to be the worst affected area with a total of 283 houses collapsed leaving 1,401 people homeless. People have sought shelter in classrooms or are residing with relatives. Other TA's affected in Mangochi include Chowe, Mponda, Chimwala. Initial reports estimate some 52, 70 and 22 houses were destroyed in the respective TA's leaving some 563 people without homes.

The DoPDMA immediately responded to the floods by sending a consignment of relief items for 500 persons to the District. More detailed assessments are presently being undertaken and further assistance is being provided.

Meanwhile, response activities continue in the two districts of Nsanje and Chikwawa following the large scale flooding in early January. Malawi Red Cross Society has distributed 1,206 tarpaulins in Chikwawa and 1,794 tarpaulins in Nsanje District. Distribution of non food items (NFI) for families whose houses were destroyed by floods is still ongoing. UNICEF in collaboration with partners in Chikwawa (World Vision) and Nsanje (Goal Malawi) have so far distributed 500 NFI survival kits. 300 survival kits were distributed in 3 TAs in Chikwawa (Maseya, Ngabu and Mankhwira) and 200 in 3 TAs in Nsanje (Nyachikadza, Ngabu and Malemia). Specific assessments and beneficiary screening are still ongoing in the two districts. UNICEF recently received an OCHA Emergency Cash Grant of 50,000US\$ for the purchase of additional relief items for flood affected households.

In total 15 schools and 7,796 school children were affected by the floods in Chikwawa (9 schools and 5508 pupils) and Nsanje (6 schools and 2288 pupils). UNICEF has distributed 98 "school-in-box" kits to Chikwawa (70) and Nsanje (28), containing school materials for a total of 7,840 school children. Two large tents of 72 m<sup>2</sup> each have been erected at Kaombe primary school in Nsanje district. Two additional large tents will soon be

erected at Nyamithuthu primary school in Nsanje district.

## FOOD SECURITY

A total of 833,000 people are in need of food assistance until end of March 2007 according to the estimates of the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC).

In January, WFP distributed a total of 5,998 MT of food commodities reaching 99% of MVAC requirements. The under deliveries were mainly due to a shortage of cereals and vegetable oil and inaccessible roads in flood affected Chikwawa. WFP has secured the food pipeline for February and March 2007. With the recent 1 million pounds contribution from DFID, sufficient resources are now available to meet the remaining MVAC requirements.

In December 2006, Concern Worldwide began implementing a cash transfer project funded by DFID in Dowa District. The project, which uses Smart Cards for electronic cash transfers, is carried out in the two Traditional Authorities of Chikasa and Nbowe. **17 million MK** was disbursed in the month of January targeting some 10,000 households.

## STRATEGIC GRAIN RESERVES AND MAIZE MARKET

The process of replenishing the Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR) continues following last seasons draw down of 60,000 MT of maize during the food security crisis. In the period August and December 2006, DFID and Government repaid in full their pledge of 22,000 MT and 40,000 MT respectively. Outstanding is now only the EU pledge of 15,000 MT, which with the current low maize prices has

since been increased to 16,000 MT. This week EU plans to finalise agreements with a supplier after which delivery to the SGR will begin. The Strategic Grain Reserves will be replenished by a total of **78,000 MT**.

In November 2006, **10,000 MT** of maize was released from the Strategic Grain Reserves to WFP as Government's contribution to the food aid response. WFP has borrowed a further 5,600 MT to address cereal shortfalls. The maize will be collected starting from mid-February. Tentative repayment of loan is scheduled for May 2007.

In recent months ADMARC has been purchasing maize from Smallholder Farmers at the price of 20 MK/KG. As of February 9<sup>th</sup> 2007, ADMARC had a stock balance of **56,171 MT** of maize. ADMARC's selling price is presently set at 30 MK/KG, which is well above the low local market prices for maize. Average maize prices are currently reported to be ranging between 6-20 MK per kg.

In total ADMARC has purchased around **77,720 MT of maize** of which 20,000 MT has been sold to the National Food Reserve Agency. It is estimated that the Private Sector has an additional **76,600 MT** of maize in stock.

The low market demand for maize is not only affecting ADMARC sales adversely but also private traders, who have maintained grain stocks to sell during the lean season when prices are normally high. With the current export ban on maize the traders is finding it increasingly difficult to find a market for their maize and have asked the Government to consider a lifting of the ban.

Presently, there is indication that Malawi might experience another bumper harvest, which could well lead

to maize prices dropping even further. According to a joint FEWSNET/FAO/WFP field report, prospects for crop production for the coming consumption period are promising if the rain continues up to mid-March. While the first round crop estimates have yet to be officially released, an estimated maize production of **3.1 million MT** is being mentioned, which is higher than last year's record breaking harvest. Maize crop is presently at tasseling to cob formation stage in most areas.

## NUTRITION

According to the December 2006 Malawi Integrated Nutrition and Food Security Surveillance System Data Report, a slight increase in malnutrition rates was recorded in December 2006 compared to the previous month. However, malnutrition levels are better than a year ago in December 2005.

Wasting rates were 6.8% in December 2006, which is slightly higher than the 5.5% November wasting rates, but an improvement to the wasting rates of 7.3% of December 2005. Similarly, the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate for children under 5 years of age was registered at 7.0 per cent in December 2006 compared to 5.6 % in November 2006.

The Southern region continues to have the worst nutrition situation but the differences between regions are quite insignificant at present. Balaka is the district with the highest malnutrition levels.

## COMMUNITY THERAPEUTIC CARE (CTC)

UNICEF and partners from the Targeted Nutrition Programme have finalised national guidelines for

outpatient treatment of severely malnourished children without additional medical complications. The CTC guidelines will be printed in second quarter of 2007 and the current version is currently being implemented in 199 centres. Currently CTC is taking place in 13 districts through the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the following NGOs: Concern World Wide, MSH, Save US, Valid International, MSF-Belgium and St Louis Project.

## SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING

Supplementary feeding is being carried out in 11 out of 17 MVAC identified districts through WFP Country Programme funds. A total of 29,666 moderately malnourished children under 5 years, pregnant and lactating women are reached through the Supplementary Feeding Programme (SPF) in the districts of Kasungu, Ntchisi, Blantyre, Mzimba, Chikwawa, Dowa, Nsanje, Phalombe, Mwanza/Lilongwe and Mulanje.

Initially, the plan was to expand the SFP to Rumphu, Mangochi, Balaka, Salima, Nkata Bay and Machinga in January 2007. However, this plan was abandoned after MVAC nutrition surveys of December 2006 indicated improvements in malnutrition rates in the three livelihood zones of Phalombe Lake Chilwa Plain, Kasungu-Lilongwe Plain and Rumphu-Mzimba Plain.

## CHOLERA

The cholera situation remains stable with only a limited number of cases reported weekly compared to the same time last year. In the week beginning 12/02/07 to 18/02/07 7 cases were reported from Nsanje District. Since the current cholera outbreak began on

7<sup>th</sup> August 2006, a total of 149 cases of suspected cholera have been reported. In comparison 1,649 cases were reported same time last year. Phalompe and Machinga are the worst affected districts with 51 and 48 cases respectively. Other districts with reported cases of cholera are Mulanje (16), Nsanje (22), Ntcheu (5) Balaka (2), Chikwawa (2), Blantyre (1) and Chiradzulu (1).

Following the floods in Chikwawa and Nsanje in early January, a joint team composed of four government members of the National Cholera Task Force, WHO and UNICEF visited the districts from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2007. The purpose of the visit was to assess how the last floods impacted on the cholera situation and to follow up on relief activities. Various items such as Ringer Lactate, Chlorine, Doxycycline tablets and ORS sachets were donated to the District Health Officials of Chikwawa and Nsanje during the visit.

As part of its cholera prevention activities UNICEF has provided more than 13,000 households with water chlorination products in the period January to mid-February 2007. UNICEF is also constructing a total of 260 latrines in 26 primary schools in Machinga and Chiradzulu.

## **AVIAN INFLUENZA**

According to the latest ECTAD HPAI Situation Update of February 14<sup>th</sup> 2007, 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 late January 2007, Nigeria confirmed its first human case fatality. As of February 14<sup>th</sup> 2007, a total of 22 human cases have been reported and 13 deaths (Djibouti 1/0, Egypt 20/12, and Nigeria 1/1).

On 8-9<sup>th</sup> February, a Conference was held on the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) organised by Government in collaboration with FAO. The Conference provided a forum to review 2006 HPAI activities, including communication strategies, the Rapid Response Team Manual, and preparatory activities in the health sector. Also, discussed at the Conference were visions for HPAI activities in 2007.

Wetlands International have now completed their surveillance and 4 ducks near Lake Chilwa have been tagged with satellite transponders

With USAID support during 2006 Malawi has managed to create: a National Avian Influenza management structure; vaccination of chickens for Newcastle Disease in high risk areas; HPAI documentation; three Rapid Response Teams; communications strategies, information and education. These efforts, though significant, need further and sustained support to maintain a vigilant and well resourced response capacity. This is verified by a recent World Bank review, clearly highlighting strengths, weaknesses and resources required by the livestock / veterinary sector.

FAO is seeking funding to strengthen national capacity to address and respond to disease outbreaks, especially avian influenza, in both animals and humans. The project also aims to strengthen public-private livestock sector linkages through various activities such as a mandatory national Newcastle Disease vaccination campaigns. Initial budget estimates indicate a need for US\$ 2,5 million to carry out activities outlined in the draft project project. This proposal is currently in a peer review process.