



Southern Africa Humanitarian Update

Monthly Bulletin - Johannesburg – July 2007

HIGHLIGHTS

Regional: The Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (rVAC) recently reported a regional cereal deficit of three million metric tonnes (MT) for this season. Regional deficits have in previous years been largely covered by South Africa's surplus maize production, but this year's harvest was drastically reduced. Countries that cannot meet their own needs will rely on commercial imports from Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, all of which have surpluses. However, these national surpluses may not be enough to cover the regional deficit, forcing them to seek commercial exports further abroad.

Lesotho: The international humanitarian community issued an appeal requesting US\$18.9 million to assist 550,000 people affected by drought. The funds will be used to cover programmes related to agriculture, food, health, nutrition, protection, and water and sanitation during the next six months. Lesotho appeal is 63 percent funded.

Swaziland: A flash appeal was launched on 25 July, to request US\$15.6 million, to address humanitarian concerns due to drought. So far the Swaziland appeal is only 17 percent funded. Also, fires have blazed through thousands of hectares of plantations, killing two people, livestock, destroying homes and crops. The Prime Minister declared an emergency on 1 August, and approved US\$20 million to respond to the drought and fire emergency.

South Africa: The country's total maize availability amounts to more than nine million MT. The country will import between 1.4 and 1.8 million MT of maize to meet domestic requirements (mainly for the feed industry).

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The regional food security situation is mixed. More than five million people in drought-stricken Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique are facing severe food shortages, which will peak in the first three months of 2008. The next main harvest is not expected until April.

Meanwhile countries in the region that have experienced more favourable weather, including northern Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Angola, have had relatively good harvests and are reporting overall satisfactory food security conditions, with some pockets of increased vulnerability in the latter three.

The Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (rVAC) recently reported a regional cereal deficit of three million metric tonnes (MT) for this season compared to 4.1 million MT last season. While regional deficits have in previous years been largely covered by South Africa's surplus maize production, this year, the country's harvest was drastically reduced, despite the great hectorage planted. According to the Grain South Africa (SAGIS) and the National Crop Estimate Committee (NCEC), South Africa will itself need to import between 1.4 and 1.8 million MT of yellow maize to meet its domestic requirements (mainly for the feed industry), making this the largest maize import since 1997. Countries that cannot meet their own needs will rely on commercial imports from Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, all of which have surpluses due to carryover stocks from last year and/or better harvests this year. However, these national surpluses may not be enough to cover the regional deficit, forcing them to seek commercial exports from further abroad to supplement national food requirements.

Two countries in the region have declared the situation an emergency and appealed for international assistance. In support of the Swaziland government, the international humanitarian community launched a flash appeal on 25 July 2007 to raise US\$15.6 million targeting more than 400,000 people. Similarly on 28th July, a US\$18.9 million flash appeal was issued for Lesotho to assist more than 550,000 people. So far the Swaziland appeal is only 17 percent funded, while the Lesotho appeal is 63 percent funded. Both figures represent received as well as confirmed pledges.

Fires have also blazed through parts of Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa destroying thousands of hectares of forest plantations and claiming the lives of more than 20 people, destroying homes, crops and killing livestock. On 1 August the Government of Swaziland declared the fires a national emergency and approved US\$20 million to respond to both the drought and fire disasters. In South Africa, some 37,000 hectares (ha) and 15,000 ha of grazing land have been destroyed, with total damages estimated at ZAR 10 million (US\$1.4 million).

COUNTRY COVERAGE

LESOTHO: Following the Kingdom of Lesotho's Declaration of a Food Security Emergency in July, the international humanitarian community issued a flash appeal requesting US\$18.9 million to assist up to 550,000 people out of a population of 1.8 million affected by the country's worst drought in 30 years. Prolonged drought conditions saw the country's harvest fall from 126,200 MT of cereals last year to 72,000 MT this year. The funds will be used to cover programmes related to agriculture, food, health, nutrition, protection, as well as water and sanitation during the next six months. The appeal is 63 percent funded and includes both received and confirmed pledges.



The regional food security situation is mixed with several countries having produced reduced harvests. Photo: WFP: Swaziland

HIGHLIGHTS

Zimbabwe: More than 4.1 million people will need food assistance at the height of the lean season in the first quarter of 2008. In response to the worsening food security situation, the World Food Programme (WFP) issued an appeal of US\$118 million on 1 August to provide food assistance for up to 3.3 million Zimbabweans. NGOs including the Consortium for the Southern Africa Emergency (C-Safe) will also support food interventions.

Mozambique: There is an immediate need to provide food assistance to roughly 500,000 people in Gaza, Maputo, Inhambane, Manica and Tete provinces. A mission will be led by the shortly to determine the exact needs and interventions required to assist the affected population. The World Food Programme (WFP) has food stocks available to feed 200,000 persons up until January 2008.

Zambia: The national food security situation is relatively stable with an adequate supply of staple maize on the market. However, pockets of food insecurity exist in those areas affected by floods and prolonged dry spells. Access to food remains problematic for vulnerable households beset by poverty and exacerbated by HIV/AIDS. Cases of anthrax, a contagious animal disease, were confirmed in Mulembe area on 17 July. Three cattle have been reported to have died from the disease, which is also fatal to humans. FAO is seeking funding for the emergency vaccination of cattle to assist the affected households.

Angola: Eight cases of polio were reported since the beginning of 2007. In response to this, about 58,102 children below the age of five were immunized against polio in the northern Zaire province.

The appeal aims to provide immediate food assistance to vulnerable groups such as children under five, orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), pregnant and lactating mothers as well as people living with HIV/AIDS. Another 55,000 households or 275,000 people who lost their crops will be assisted rebuild their livelihoods. Input Trade Fairs will provide farmers with vouchers to purchase drought tolerant seeds, fertilizer and other inputs.

Health is a pressing concern. Programmes will address diarrhoeal diseases, provide reproductive health services and support the procurement of other medical supplies. Treatment is needed for more than 20,000 malnourished children, which will be provided through 48 therapeutic feeding centres within 18 hospitals and 30 health centres. Protection, care and support will also be provided for 180,000 orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).

More than 30 percent of households and 50 percent of schools have no access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities. This situation is likely to worsen by August, increasing the risk of disease. To this end, the appeal aims to provide people with water by drilling boreholes, deepening wells and providing water containers and water purification supplies. To enable the country rebound as quickly as possible, early recovery programmes will aim to empower communities to become more resilient and withstand future natural disasters.

Lesotho is one of the most vulnerable developing countries with approximately 55 percent of its population living on less than US\$2 per day. About 82 percent of Lesotho's 1.8 million people live in rural areas and agriculture is the main source of income for 60 percent of the population. The appeal for Lesotho can be found at: <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts2/pagelader.aspx?page=emerg-emergencyDetails&emergID=15341>

SWAZILAND: The international humanitarian community launched a flash appeal on 25 July requesting US\$15.6 million to help the Government address the humanitarian situation resulting from the country's worst drought in 15 years. A drought disaster was declared by the Government in June, after the recent maize harvest fell to 26,000 MT from 67,000 MT last year. Over the past five years (2001/02 - 2005/06), cereal production has averaged 71,670 MT. The funds being sought by the the international community are as follows: US\$3.7 million for food assistance to vulnerable groups; US\$ 2.8 million for agricultural assistance; US\$ 905,000 for water, sanitation and hygiene to contain and prevent the spread of water-borne diseases; US\$955,000 for protection, care and support to OVCs; US\$612,000 for nutrition; US\$1.2 million for health and US\$5.2 million for early recovery efforts. At present, the Swaziland appeal is only 17 percent funded. Additional funding to cover the unmet requirements is urgently needed to continue operations over the coming months and avoid a further increase in needs. The Swaziland appeal can be found at: <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts2/pagelader.aspx?page=emerg-emergencyDetails&emergID=15332>

Fires fuelled by strong winds, blazed through thousands of hectares of forest plantations in Swaziland claiming the lives of two people, destroying homes, crops and commercial forests as well as killing livestock. The total number of people affected is not yet known. Due to the severity of the situation, the Prime Minister declared an emergency on 1 August. Paper producing companies Mondi and Sappi report extensive damage. Approximately, 80 percent of the Mondi Forests Plantations in Piggs Peak, which cover 19,500 hectares (ha) and 4,000 ha of the Sappi Forests in Bhunya and Mhlambanyatsi respectively, were destroyed. Water infrastructure systems that supply potable water to the housing estates and one of the Mondi mills also suffered damage. Mondi is facing challenges with providing potable water to the worker community inside the plantations. Many people will lose their jobs and it is estimated that it will take approximately ten years for the forestry industry to recover from this disaster.

The Government has recently approved a supplementary budget of US\$20 million to respond to the drought emergency. The funds will be used for emergency food and water and a portion will now be diverted to the fire emergency. The Baphalali Red Cross Society is distributing relief materials such as temporary shelter and food items. The

HIGHLIGHTS

Botswana: The Ministry of Trade has called for the commercialization of agriculture so that the country can achieve self-sufficiency in food production. The country is seeking technical advice on how the country's agricultural sector could be better harnessed to yield positive results and boost economic growth.

Malawi: The country has a cereal surplus of 1.2 million MT according to the national VAC (nVAC). It has sold some of its surplus to Zimbabwe under an export agreement that includes a US\$10 million line of credit.

Namibia: According to the national VAC, domestic cereal is estimated at 114,100 MT, a 40 percent decrease from last year. The country will commercially import 132,699 MT of which 89,400 MT has already been planned for, leaving an after-trade deficit of 43,200 tonnes which will be covered by additional commercial imports.

Madagascar: The emergency response to floods ended in the northwest and northeast districts. Consequently, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities are being implemented in these areas by UNICEF and WFP.

Comoros: The Regional Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for Southern Africa (OCHA ROSA) and the South African Human-development Information Management Systems (SAHIMS) facilitated a contingency planning workshop from 23 July to 4 August 2007 in support of the government. The workshop specifically looked at preparedness measures to respond to natural hazards, including an eruption of volcano Karthala. Additionally, it incorporated disaster preparedness and response activities with disaster risk reduction in ongoing UN agencies' and humanitarian partners' programmes.

international community is assessing the situation to determine appropriate interventions.

SOUTH AFRICA: According to Grain South Africa (SAGIS) and the National Crop Estimate Committee (NCEC), South Africa's total maize production is estimated at 7.11 million MT. With carryover stocks from last season of 2.07 million MT, total maize availability amounts to more than nine million MT. At this level, the 2006/07 maize production is below average, although slightly above last year's harvest of 6.6 million MT. In 2006/07 maize carryover stock amounted to 3.02 million MT raising total availability to 9.63 million MT. This year, South Africa will import between 1.4 and 1.8 million MT of yellow maize to meet domestic requirements (mainly for the feed industry). This will be the largest maize import since maize marketing was deregulated in 1997. For more information visit: www.grainsa.co.za.

South Africa has also battled raging bush fires which swept through the Mpumalanga province killing more than 20 people, including six fire-fighters, hundreds of livestock, and destroying thousands of hectares of plantations and conservation land. Property was also been destroyed. The cause of the fires is being investigated. About 250 fire-fighters worked to bring the fires under control in the affected areas. Air operations were also provided to assist.

Since July, more than 117,000 Zimbabweans have been deported from South Africa to Zimbabwe, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A number of international organizations are assessing the situation in cooperation with local authorities.

ZIMBABWE: According to the May crop and food supply assessment in Zimbabwe, more than 4.1 million people in both rural and urban areas will be in need of food assistance at the height of the lean season in the first quarter of 2008. The overall cereal deficit is above one million MT. According to Fews Net, the country is expected to commercially import maize from Malawi and Zambia. The government has contracted for 400,000 MT of maize from Malawi, of which 114,000 MT had been imported by the end of July, according to Fews Net.

A shortfall of 352,000 MT is expected. In response to the worsening food security situation, the World Food Programme (WFP) issued an appeal of US\$118million on 1 August to provide food assistance for up to 3.3 million Zimbabweans over the next eight months, and called on donors to urgently contribute towards the cost of its expanded aid operation. NGOs including the Consortium for the Southern Africa Emergency (C-Safe) will also support food interventions.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced that it is delivering an additional 47,400 MT of food assistance to Zimbabwe. This donation will be distributed through WFP and C-SAFE. This new contribution will be enough to feed more than 500,000 people for six months.

MOZAMBIQUE: The current drought in southern Mozambique follows heavy flooding and cyclones that struck the country earlier this year, which resulted in an 80 percent cereal loss in the affected areas. The 2006/07 cereal production is estimated at 2.15 million MT, which is below the country's national consumption requirement of 2.65 million MT. There is an immediate need to provide food assistance to roughly 500,000 persons, in Gaza, Maputo, Inhambane, Manica and Tete provinces. A mission will be led by the government (INGC, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Public works) to determine the exact needs and interventions required to assist the affected population. The World Food Programme (WFP) has food stocks available to feed 200,000 persons up until January 2008.

Relief and recovery operations continue for those people affected by the floods and cyclone emergency. Food assistance to flood-affected communities will continue through August reaching 155,000 people. Meanwhile, food assistance through food-for-work programmes to roughly 60,000 cyclone-affected people came to an end in Inhambane province last month. The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster partners are finalizing the rehabilitation and construction of water points in resettlement areas along the Zambezi River Basin. As of 16 July, 111 water points had

FEATURE PROJECT:

Input Trade Fairs: Improving Food Security



More than 2 000 Mozambican farmers affected by floods and dry spells have been assisted by FAO through Input Trade Fairs. (Photo: FAO/J. Koch)

Many food aid beneficiaries could produce food for themselves – if they had the money to buy inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and tools. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have implemented Input Trade Fairs across the region with great success.

Giving Farmers a Choice

Input Trade Fairs aim to assist the poorest rural farmers' by supplying basic agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and tools to improve agricultural production. Vouchers with a cash value are given to farmers requiring assistance. Farmers' are given a voucher, rather than cash, because there are usually no markets in isolated areas. By establishing these fairs, a guaranteed market exists that entices local retailers to remote areas and this also encourage farmers to diversify their crops. At these fairs, farmers' can 'purchase' agricultural inputs and seeds of their own choice, which meet their specific needs. In some cases machinery is hired for land cultivation.

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been rehabilitated and 54 new ones constructed, out of a total of 237 water points planned for rehabilitation and new construction. Assistance has also been provided for the construction of 549 household latrines. This initiative aims to improve household sanitation by building 8,400 new household level latrines through community involvement and ownership of the construction and maintenance process.

Also, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and National Disaster Management Institute, are monitoring and evaluating its second agricultural season Input Trade Fairs, which was conducted in April in the seven flood-affected provinces of the Zambezi basin. Approximately, 57,000 flood-affected households benefited from this intervention, which was aimed at restoring small-holder food production.

UNICEF, WFP and the Ministry of Health (MISAU) have carried out a monitoring mission to flood affected areas in Tete Province. The objective of the mission was to assess the impact of the Nutrition Rehabilitation Programme undertaken by the three partners to address malnutrition in children under five years old, through an integrated health approach. The mission also aimed to assess the VAC results for Tete Province, which found that malnutrition in the flood affected districts of the province were around 12 percent and that malnutrition rates in the area were not as high as suggested by the VAC assessment. The findings of the monitoring mission will serve as the basis for the renewal of the Nutrition Rehabilitation Programme Tripartite Agreement between MISAU, WFP and UNICEF, focusing on expanding the coverage of the programme and improving the quality of services offered.

The INGC is planning a disaster simulation exercise in October 2007; the simulation exercise will address flood and cyclone scenarios at local, regional and national levels.

ZAMBIA: According to recent national Vulnerability Assessment Committee (nVAC) results, the country has a total of 1.8 million MT of cereals available, which includes carry-over stocks. Consequently, the national food security situation is relatively stable with an adequate supply of staple maize on the market. However pockets of food insecurity exist in those areas affected by floods and prolonged dry spells. Also, access to food remains problematic for vulnerable households beset by high levels of poverty exacerbated by HIV/AIDS. The Zambian Government donated of 10,000 MT of maize to WFP. This donation will allow the agency to continue its food assistance programme for 370,000 vulnerable people until the end of the year. Funding constraints have forced WFP to reduce the number of beneficiaries in Zambia from 500,000 to 370,000 people.

Cases of anthrax, a contagious animal disease, were confirmed in Mulembe area at the border with Mpidi (Zambezi district) on 17 July. So far three cattle have been reported to have died from the disease, which is also fatal to humans. This follows an outbreak of bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP) that killed 43 cattle affecting 80,000 households reported last month. FAO is seeking funding for the emergency vaccination of cattle to assist the affected households.

A nationwide measles campaign supported by UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) targeting more than two million children aged between nine months to five years was carried out from 9 – 14 July. Vitamin A supplementation, de-worming Mebendazole tablets and insecticide treatment nets was also provided to all children aged one to five years.

Results from an inter-agency joint assessment of food and non-food needs in four settlements in Zambia were released this month. Overall, the results show that the number of refugees requiring food assistance dropped by nearly 7,500 as many have become self-reliant through viable livelihood activities ranging from small scale businesses to commercial activities. Of the total 118,109 refugees countrywide, approximately 64,500 are accommodated in camps/settlements and of these, 57,090 refugees received food assistance in May.

The Government of Denmark has provided a grant of US\$6.5 million to Zambia to assist common hosting refugees. Germany has also provided a grant of ZMK198 billion (about US\$54 million) to assist in poverty reduction and improve democratic

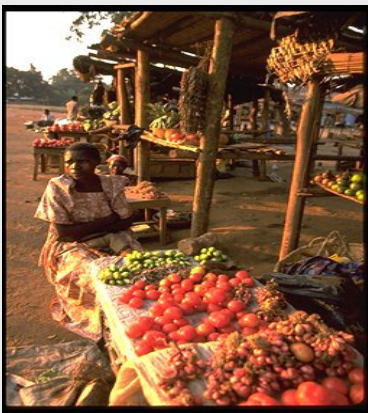
FEATURE PROJECT:

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Input Trade Fairs: Improving Food Security

This system is also more cost effective for farmers and boosts the local economy, bringing benefits for the community.

To improve nutrition and encourage farmers' to diversify their crops, FAO builds-in appropriate nutrition communication as part of the intervention. Farmers are advised on their options by extension agents in terms of suitable inputs to buy to diversify their crops.



Input trade fairs have increase production. Families can then sell their surplus as income generating activities. Photo: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Spin Off Benefits:

The Input Trade Fairs have spin-off benefits. In Mozambique, in particular, they tend to develop into a social event, bringing together a great concentration of people in remote areas. Other parallel events are often organized on fair days such as activities that aim to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

governance. The funds will be used to strengthen Zambia's protection capacity in addressing the needs of refugees.

ANGOLA: Eight cases of polio were reported since the beginning of 2007. In response to this, about 58,102 children below the age of five were immunized against polio in the northern Zaire province. The first phase of the national vaccination campaign against polio took place from 27 to 29 June countrywide. As part of the campaign, 43,712 kids under five years old also received vitamin A supplementation to prevent blindness. The above-mentioned data are still preliminary, as two of the six districts that make up the province are still to provide reports to the local public health department. Further immunization campaigns will be conducted later in the year.

From 10 – 11 July, the Regional Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for Southern Africa (OCHA ROSA) supported the Angola UN Disaster Management Team and UN agencies to begin the process of developing a Contingency Plan to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies. Participants included Government officials, UN agencies, NGO partners and the Red Cross. The initial process included topics such as humanitarian reform, management and coordination mechanisms and information sharing.

BOTSWANA: The Ministry of Trade has called for the commercialization of agriculture so that the country can achieve self-sufficiency in food production. The country is seeking technical advice on how the country's agricultural sector could be better harnessed to yield positive results and boost economic growth. Despite the abundance of agricultural resources in the country, Botswana has a huge import bill on food stuffs such as vegetables, milk and dairy products from neighbouring South Africa. Farmers have welcomed this call and urged the government to come up with a policy to support local producers and ensure that consumers buy local products.

MALAWI: The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security released new estimated crop figures, which put overall maize production at 3.44 million MT, representing a 34 percent increase from the 2006 harvest. This is an historic record, and is attributed to favourable weather conditions and increased use of the government's input subsidy programme. This year's bumper maize harvest has significantly improved household food security, and most households are now relying on their own production from the current harvest. This in turn has led to a significant drop in market demand for food and a drop in food prices, especially in the rural areas. The country is expected to have a cereal surplus of 1.2 million MT in the 2007/08 season according to national Vulnerability Assessment Committee (nVAC). Malawi sold some of its surplus maize to Zimbabwe under an export agreement that includes a US\$10 million line of credit.

Despite the positive picture at the national level, the nVAC cautions that people will still experience food insecurity in some localized areas. At present some 519,200 people could face missing entitlements in Central Karonga (62,600), Lower Shire: Njanje and Chikwawa (261,300) Mzimba district (120,000), Ntchisi district (11,200), Balaka district (16,100), Machinga and Mulanje districts (48,000) and are being closely monitored. Both in Machinga and Mulanje districts, some household food stocks are expected to be depleted in the third quarter resulting in increased vulnerability in the first two quarters of 2008.

NAMIBIA: Despite drought conditions, the country's food situation is generally stable with fewer areas of food insecurity. According to the nVAC, domestic cereal production of the 2006/07 cropping season is estimated at 114,100 MT, a 40 percent decrease from last year. There remains an uncovered deficit of 43,200 tonnes, which under normal circumstances is covered by additional commercial imports. The country is exploring options to source maize from Zambia or Malawi where surpluses exist.

The drought has also resulted in water shortages for humans and livestock especially in Kunene, Erongo, Omusati and Caprivi regions. The government has made NAD20 million (US\$2.8 million) available to meet the food and water needs of an expected 80,000 vulnerable people in the above-mentioned regions.

FEATURE PROJECT:

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Success Lies in Variety and Quantity

The key to a successful Input Trade Fair is having a sufficient supply of all the inputs needed on the day of the fair to match the value of the vouchers given to beneficiaries. The inputs are usually supplied by local traders or local agents of international seed and fertilizer companies, previously informed of the date and location of the fair. With this method, a higher percentage of external aid money is retained within the impacted area and local produce values increase, thus encouraging further production and trade.

MADAGASCAR: The emergency response to the floods in Madagascar ended in the northwest (Sofia region and Ambanja district) and in the northeast. In Sofia region, the Malagasy Red Cross supported by the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Programme (WFP) have finished the distribution of non-food and food items. Food support will continue in the southeast, including the distribution of seeds. Consequently, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities are being implemented in these areas by UNICEF and WFP. An internal evaluation of the emergency response is being planned and will form part of a contingency planning exercise arranged for September. Preliminary results of a recent Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) conducted in 82 villages in the flood-and-cyclone affected areas in the northwest and southeast are being analyzed at present and will be released shortly. WFP plans to meet agreed food aid needs either under its 'food-for-work' or 'food-for-cash' programmes.

COMOROS: The Regional Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for Southern Africa (OCHA ROSA) and the South African Human-development Information Management Systems (SAHIMS) supported UN agencies, NGOs and the government by facilitating a contingency planning workshop from 23 July to 4 August 2007. The workshop specifically looked at preparedness measures to respond to natural hazards, including an eruption of volcano Karthala. Additionally, it incorporated disaster preparedness and response activities with disaster risk reduction in ongoing UN agencies' and humanitarian partners' programmes.

LATEST NEWS FROM IASC PARTNERS

Social transfers: a series of Advocacy Briefs for national stakeholders

A fundamental re-appraisal is currently taking place about how best to tackle the chronic poverty and hunger which are prevalent and on the increase throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa. Typically, governments and donors have reacted to these problems only after they have become acute. Moreover, responses tend to be reactive and short-lived, focusing on humanitarian assistance. Then, once the crisis has been alleviated, attention drifts away and the problem is forgotten until another "emergency" once more pushes it into the headlines. In the face of growing evidence, governments and donors alike are recognizing that such treatment provides little more than a temporary dressing to a festering sore.

In the Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme's series of Advocacy Briefs, the case is presented for a different approach – an approach which not only provides for and protects the poor and hungry, but also seeks to promote them out of poverty. In situations where this approach has already been applied, it is becoming evident that individuals, previously victims of circumstance, can regain control over their lives, that national economies can benefit and that the dependency culture can be overturned. This approach is through predictable social transfers.

For further information visit: http://www.wahenga.net/index.php/views/in_focus_view

State of World Population 2007: Another Emergency?

In 2008, for the first time in history more than half of the

world's current 6.7 billion people will be living in urban areas. This number is expected to swell to almost 5 billion by 2030. The population of African and Asian cities will double, adding 1.7 billion people – more than the populations of China and the United States combined. Many of these new urbanites will be poor. This is according to a new report released by the United Nations Populations Fund Agency titled, *The State of World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*.

Humanity will have to undergo a "revolution in thinking" to deal with the doubling of urban populations in Africa and Asia by 2030. The report urges governments and policymakers to be proactive and prepare far-sighted action to fully exploit the opportunities that urbanization offers.

The report says that although most new urbanites will be poor, they must be part of the

solution. Assisting them to meet their needs – for housing, health care, education and employment – could also unleash the potential of urban-dwellers to power economic growth. The battle for the Millennium Development Goals to half extreme poverty by 2015 will be won or lost in the cities of the developing world. The response of national and municipal governments to urban growth has often been to try to discourage, prevent or even reverse migration. The report argues that this approach has not resolved the problem but has contributed to increased slum growth. Rather, city authorities and urban planners should make it a priority to provide for the shelter needs of the urban poor and ensure access to education and health care.

Policymakers and planners need to harness the potential of cities to improve the lives of all. Three initiatives stand out:

- Accept the right of poor people to the city,

abandoning attempts to discourage migration and prevent urban growth. City authorities should work closely with organizations of the urban poor, including women's organizations. • Adopt a broad and long-term vision of the use of urban space. This means, among other things, providing minimally	serviced land for housing and planning in advance to promote sustainable land use both within cities and in the surrounding areas. • Begin a concerted international effort to support strategies for the urban future.	Full report available at: http://www.unfpa.org/swp/swpmain.htm. Humanitarian Development Summit 17-19 October 2007, Nairobi, Kenya The summit will focus on the central theme of the vast capital resources being applied	to humanitarian relief and sustainable development from the private sector and global foundations, with the key issue being the most effective allocation and application of these resources. To register, go to: http://www.hdpsummit.org/hds/events/hdsn07/index.htm.
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event:	Event: RIACSO Meeting
Date:	23 August 2007
Venue:	Merafe House, 11 Naivasha Road, Sunninghill, Johannesburg, South Africa
Contact:	Ms Michelle Thulkanam. Email: thulkanam@un.org