

# FOOD SECURITY CRISIS IN AFRICA

February 2003

This paper takes up from the *Food Security Crisis in Africa* paper prepared by Concern in November 2002 and may be read in conjunction with that. It focuses attention primarily on two regions – East and Southern Africa, but there are growing concerns about some areas of West Africa and the Greater Horn.



**Numbers affected** for the period January to December 2003:

Country/Region	People in need of food aid	Food aid needs – MTs
Angola	2,000,000	500,000
Eritrea	2,300,000	400,000
Ethiopia	11,300,000 - 14,000,000	1,500,000 - 2,500,000
Southern Africa*	13,490,000	995,000
Sudan	2,000,000	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,090,000 - 33,790,000</b>	<b>3,695,000 - 4,695,000</b>

\* The *SADC Regional Food Security Assessment*, December 2002 – which does not cover Angola - estimated the following level of needs for the period between December 2002 and March 2003 in the four southern African countries in which Concern has a presence as follows:

Country	People requiring food aid	% of population	MTs of food aid needed
Malawi	3,300,000	29	237,000
Mozambique	590,000	3	48,000
Zambia	2,900,000	26	224,000
Zimbabwe	6,700,000	49	486,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,490,000</b>		<b>995,000</b>

Given the scale of the crisis in Africa, provisional estimates from the World Food Programme have raised concerns over being able to meet increased food aid needs in 2003. The total food aid figure required by WFP in 2003 is currently estimated to be in the region of between five and six million tonnes - an increase of 60% on the 4.4 million MTs needed in 2002.

While the WFP EMOP (Emergency Operation – the basic planning document used by WFP in planning a response to identified needs in a country) for the period up to the end of March 2003 have been substantially funded (estimates vary but are in the order of 75 to 80%), WFP have estimated that they will need \$2.4 billion in 2003 to meet projected needs – and this does not take into account ‘unforeseen emergencies’. They estimate that food requirements for Africa in 2003 will be \$1.8 billion - approximately what WFP received for the entire world in 2002.

These huge quantities will be required in the face of below average maize and wheat production in North America and Australia and rising global prices. US wheat prices are up 50% from September last year. The impact of high prices will be to reduce the buying power of emergency budgets, both by countries facing food insecurity and donors who purchase cereals for emergency distribution. Also, countries faced with import requirements may expect domestic food price rises, in turn reducing food access for low-income consumers and placing further pressure on emergency programmes.

Using the broadly indicative crop calendars generated by FAO, it is expected that harvests of the principle crops in the countries covered by this report will occur as follows:

Country	Crop	Harvest
Angola	Maize	March/April
Eritrea	Wheat	mid-November/December
	Maize	November/mid-December
Ethiopia*	Wheat	November/December
	Maize	October/mid-December
Malawi	Maize	mid-April/mid-June
South Sudan	Sorghum	August/September
Uganda (northern areas only)	Millet	September/October
	Maize	August/October
Zambia	Maize	mid-April/mid-June
Zimbabwe	Maize	May/June

\* The information for Ethiopia is based only on the *meher* harvest. The *belg* harvest, which meets the needs of approximately 20% of the population, occurs in May/June but is less reliable than the *meher*.

It is evident from this table that while Southern Africa will receive a harvest by the middle of the year, that for East Africa will not occur until towards the end of the year. It is important though to note that in terms of recovery, much depends on the quality of the next harvest and current indicators are not overly positive.

## **The impact of HIV/AIDS**

The causes of this crisis are varied, but include adverse climatic conditions, mismanagement of grain reserves, the impact of HIV/AIDS, the aftermath of conflict, and questionable government and international community policies. The impact of HIV/AIDS, and the extremely high rates of prevalence offer perhaps the greatest single threat – high rates suggest that the impact of the food insecurity will be greater and the capacity for recovery will be reduced.

In response to this, WFP and UNAIDS have signed an agreement to increase their co-operation in responding to HIV/AIDS, citing a figure of seven million farmers who have lost their lives due to AIDS in Africa - a level of mortality that is having a dramatic impact on food production. AIDS-affected households are often hungry, farmers are too weak to plant, families do not have the capacity to produce or purchase food, forcing people to adopt survival strategies that might endanger their lives. Some migrate, often to urban slums where they lack access to education and health services; women and children are forced to barter sex for food, jobs and other basic essentials; and children leave school to find work or forage for food.

HIV/AIDS infections are increasing at alarming rates in Sub Saharan Africa. According to UN figures, in the ten years between 1990 and 2000, the annual number of new infections has more than doubled: in 1990 there were 1.6 million annual new infections, as compared to 3.7 million in 2000.

The VAC (Vulnerability Assessment Committee) report for southern Africa makes a case for the link between food insecurity and susceptibility to HIV infection, citing the statistic that in Lesotho, 20% of households identified as food insecure were sending children away, compared to only 9% of food secure households, and reported that 30% of food insecure households had experienced recent temporary migration, compared to only 18% of food secure households.

In relation to the linkage between food insecurity and susceptibility to HIV infection, the SADC Regional Food Security Assessment for December 2002 made the following observations in support of its contention that “the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa are playing a fundamental role in dismantling the economic and social structure of rural society”:

- Pressure to seek alternative income makes people vulnerable to infections: With few income earning options, women in particular can be forced into prostitution. Prostitution is particularly high in border areas and those well served by major roads. Livingstone, a Zambian district bordering Zimbabwe, has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence for Zambia (31%), 50% more than the national average.
- HIV/AIDS depletes human capital and agricultural production: In Zambia, while 25% of rural households with chronically ill members did not harvest cereals during 2001/02, only 13% of households without chronically ill members did not harvest cereals. Further, the death of an adult (16 to 59 years) during 2002 is associated with a 16% reduction in the amount of land planted during this planting season as compared to last season.
- Households without adults have less income: Poor households typically have a high dependence on casual labour as an income source. Loss of a productive adult member reduces such income opportunities. In Malawi, poor households without adult members received less than half as much income from casual labour as those with adults. Indicative of this loss of income source, the sale of livestock by households without adults is 67% higher than for households with adults.
- HIV/AIDS increases expenditures on health and funerals: In Zambia, while 42% of households with chronically ill members had unusually high expenses in health care, this was the case for only 14% of households without chronically ill members. For households that had at least one member dying during 2002, 76% of them indicated that they incurred high unusual expenses in funeral costs.
- Presence of orphans decreases food security in already stressed households: In Zimbabwe, households with orphans had 42% less income per capita than households without orphans. Female-headed households – already identified by the VAC assessments as a particularly vulnerable group – are 48% more likely than male-headed households to take in orphans. Furthermore, elderly female-headed

### *Southern Africa*

The main countries for concern have been Angola, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, although the recent flooding which has affected Malawi has also had some impact on Mozambique.

There is a marked contrast in the level of need indicated by SADC for the period July 2002 to June 2003:

<b>Country</b>	<b>People requiring food aid</b>	<b>% of population</b>	<b>MTs of food aid needed</b>
Malawi	3,188,000	28	208,000
Mozambique	515,000	3	62,000
Zambia	2,329,000	21	174,000
Zimbabwe	6,075,000	46	705,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,783,000</b>		<b>1,211,000</b>

**Source:** *Regional Humanitarian Assistance Strategy*, SADC, July 2002

And the *SADC Regional Food Security Assessment*, of December 2002 which projects needs for the period between December 2002 and March 2003:

<b>Country</b>	<b>People requiring food aid</b>	<b>% of population</b>	<b>MTs of food aid needed</b>
Malawi	3,300,000	29	237,000
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While there has been an inevitable reduction in quantity of food aid that is needed, it is important to note that SADC is now suggesting that the number of people in need of food aid has increased.

While observing that acute malnutrition rates resulting from the food shortages appeared to have been kept in check throughout the region, the SADC report for December 2002 suggested that they required close monitoring and cautioned that the outlook for the 2003 harvest was poor, suggesting that “*early indications... are that next year’s cereal harvest will be well below normal in areas already affected by food shortages due to unfavourable rains, limited availability/accessibility of agricultural inputs, and certain government policies that inhibit agricultural production*”.

Given the impact of the 2002 food scarcity on people’s resources, it can be expected that the remaining coping strategies available to many people will be severely limited if there is a poor harvest in the region.

### *East Africa*

Although Eritrea and Ethiopia remain that countries of greatest concern, South Sudan is showing signs that warrant concern and areas of Uganda – particularly the north – need to be monitored, particularly in light of the nutritional survey conducted by the Ministry of Health and WFP in January in two of the largest IDPs camps in Gulu District which revealed global acute malnutrition rates of 24% and 16% among under fives in the two camps respectively.

## Angola



### Current situation

While the delivery of adequate quantities of food aid is seen as crucial to the consolidation of peace and recovery, a UN OCHA report from the end of December 2002 suggests that between 2.1 and 2.4 million Angolans will be food insecure until the next harvest in April 2003, with the highest concentrations of food insecure populations being Bié and Huambo Provinces. The report stated that 43% of the locations assessed, particularly in the northern and central regions of the country, were at 'moderate' or 'high' risk of food insecurity.

The report noted that while in early November, *acute levels of malnutrition were reported in at least fourteen locations in the provinces of Bié, Huambo, Kuanza Sul and Kuando Kubango*, the general view was one of an improving food security situation. However, it cautioned that at the end of December, *high levels of acute malnutrition were reported in at least twelve locations, including Chitembo (Bié Province), Bailundo, Chinhama, Galanga, Katchiungo, Kumbira, Londuimbali, Luvemba, Mungo and Tchindjenje (Huambo Province), Mavinga (Kuando Kubango Province) and Cacolo (Lunda Sul)*.

Additionally, a recent WFP report suggests that its operations in Angola were less than 50% funded for 2003, with a shortfall of 168,415 tonnes of commodities valued at \$124 million. Without urgent cash contributions WFP claim that there will be a partial but serious pipeline shortfalls for maize in May and June 2003, and no cereals from July, with WFP having to reduce rations to many beneficiaries at the height of the lean season. Given the current level of funding, it is anticipated that salt will last until June while pipeline break for pulses and sugar are expected in July.

### Concern's response

The Government message to UN so far this year has been that 2003 will be a year of transition, with the first six months focused on resettlement of ex-combatants and their families, as well as of IDPs, and the second half of the year focusing on re-integration. The UN is requested to assist with this.

The government has a new economic team that is considered to be reformist and this may indicate moves towards greater transparency.

A major deterrent to recovery from the thirty years of war, which ended just a year ago, is the presence of

be placed. The UN is completing its mapping exercise of which roads were 'cleared' of landmines, by whom and when. A report is due at the end of January and this will include maps with GPS references of key features (broken bridges, mined areas, suspected mined areas and so on).

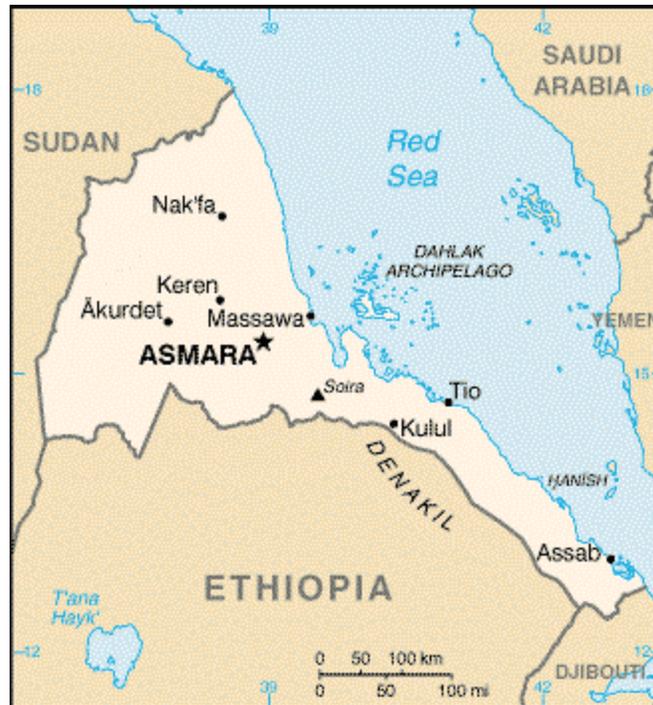
In its ten year history in Angola Concern has focussed on emergency nutrition, health and livelihood security. During this time, depending on the escalation of the war, many areas became inaccessible. Since March 2002, Concern has changed its focus from one of emergency to long term development and to developing agriculture and health programmes in rural areas outside Malange, Huambo and Kuito. Huambo and Kuito are currently among the key areas with food shortages in Angola. Concern has been an implementing partner of WFP distributing food to targeted populations.

The health programme being developed will focus in particular on addressing malaria and high maternal mortality rates. In addition, although prevalence rates are reportedly relatively low at present in Angola, it is feared because of the huge population movements over the last few decades that the HIV/AIDS rates are far higher than currently estimated. An HIV/AIDS advisor is being recruited and will initially address issues related to HIV/AIDS through the current programmes.

Seeds and tools distributions have been a key component of emergency programmes in recent years. In addition to continuing to provide seeds and tools, the agriculture programme has been developed to support the Ministry of Agriculture in the role out of their plans.

Emergency Nutrition programmes are planned until end of this year. As thousands return to their homes where resources are inadequate, the programme will continue to address children who are acutely malnourished, while also advocating for WFP food distributions.

## Eritrea



### Current situation

The food crisis in Eritrea continues to deepen. Following three years of drought, Eritrea registered the worst rainfall in 2002 of the past fifteen years, resulting in cereal production falling to 54,400 MT (as estimated by the WFP/FAO assessment), more than 70 percent below the recent ten year average (191,900 MT), and the lowest since independence in 1993.

Eritrea now faces a cereal deficit of up to 300,000 MT for 2003, with rural household access to food is likely to deteriorate sharply in the coming months. Cereals are already in short supply in some remote rural areas, compounded by the border closures with Ethiopia and, more recently, with Sudan that hamper informal imports.

It is anticipated that the current harvest will be exhausted early in 2003 while the value of livestock, weakened by shortage of water and fodder, is expected to fall further with increased distress sales. Supplies of drinking water for human consumption could reach critically low levels early this year.

Female-headed households, children and agro-pastoralists are seen as particularly vulnerable. According to the latest surveys, between fifteen and twenty percent of children under five (at least 88,000 children) are currently malnourished, 10,000 of those severely (*ICC Humanitarian Update*, 19th February, 2003). The Government's appeal and the UN's Consolidated Appeal released on November 19th estimated the drought-affected population at 1.4 million people of a total population of 3.34 million – although recent WFP reports have suggested that 2.3 million people have been “affected” by this food deficit. An additional 910,000 people are targeted for assistance, comprising internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, soldiers to be demobilized and vulnerable urban dwellers.

With the 2003 harvest not due until the end of the year, the Eritrean government has appealed for 477,000 MT of food aid for 2003, of which 290,000 MT is for the drought-affected population. Donor response to this appeal has to date been very limited and our field reports indicate an increased depletion of assets amongst the poorer groups.

It is worth repeating the paper headed *Briefing on Humanitarian Situation* released by ERPEC on 7th

The emergency food needs remain a very serious critical problem that requires urgent attention. In country food stock dropped to its lowest level ever, amounting only at 20,000 metric tons, of which cereals comprised 15,000 metric tons by the close of January.

A total of 15,834 metric tons arrived Massawa at the end of January, bringing the current stock level to 35,834 metric tons of combined cereals, pulses, oil, supplementary items and salt. The entire stock is equivalent to only one month's distribution requirement to 2.0 million people.

On the pipeline, there is 35,094 metric tons of food aid expected in February. The total food aid pledges and commitments, including what arrived in January and the expected shipments in February stands at 112,360 metric tons. This brings the total food aid commitments to 23.6% of the total humanitarian food aid requested (476,000 metric tons) for the year 2003.

However, due to the delayed arrival of the pledges and very low available stocks, it has not yet been possible to stretch food aid distributions beyond the 600,000 beneficiaries that existed since May 2002. Hence, the serious food problem has not been alleviated and the lives of millions are at risk.

In relation to the situation with regard to health and nutrition, the report goes on to state:

Out of the 2.3 million people affected by the drought and/or war who are in need of food assistance, over 400,000 are estimated children under 5 years and lactating or pregnant mothers. Their nutritional conditions are progressively deteriorating due to shortages of general rations as well as nutritional supplements.

The stock of supplementary food items has been depleted to a point that even the therapeutic services cannot be supplied. Global malnutrition rate (3-4 months back) was reported at 15-28%. By now this situation must be worsened by the food distress prevailing throughout the country.

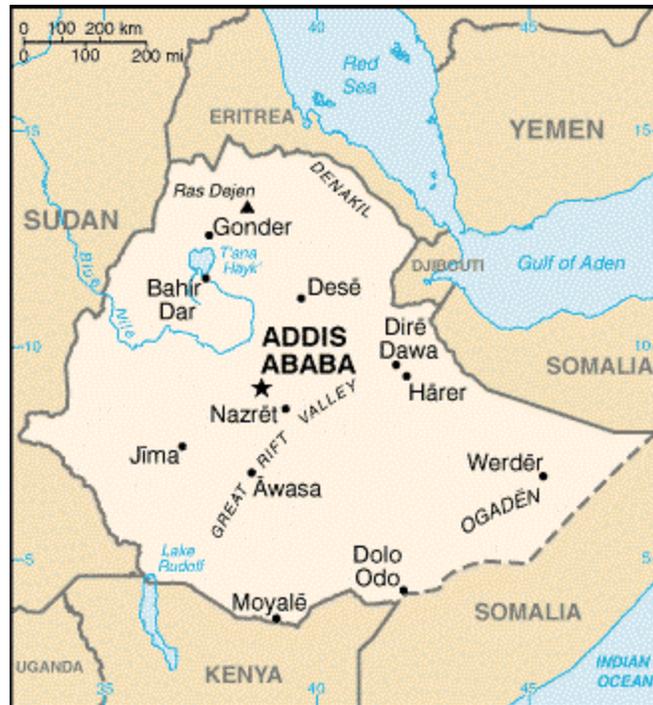
### **Concern's response**

In response to this crisis, Concern is continuing and expanding its programme in Anseba and Debub zones. In Anseba we are operating a growth monitoring and supplementary feeding programme in three subzones with the Ministry of Health through which we hope to reach more than 10,000 under fives and the pregnant and lactating women living in the area.

To ensure that we are adequately informed as to the changing nutritional status of people affected by this growing emergency situation, we will carry out quarterly nutrition surveys in Anseba in 2003. We are also building a Cash for Work element into our longer term programme to ensure that the poor have resources to access food available on the market.

Building and repairing water sources throughout the zoba is part of our emergency and longer term response.

## Ethiopia



### Current situation

According to the joint Government of Ethiopia-United Nations Appeal, launched on 7th December 2002, Ethiopia will need 1.44 million MTs of food aid to feed 11.3 million people facing severe food shortages in 2003 – of which nearly 411,000 MT is required during the first quarter of the year. The appeal identified a further three million people deemed to be at risk of significant food shortages and whose condition needs to be closely monitored.

In early February WFP reported that malnutrition rates in Ethiopia were gradually increasing despite the large food aid inputs and the fact that this is not normally a period of significant food deficit. Recognising that at this time of the year nutrition rates should be improving – rather than declining as they are currently – the report (*Focus on Ethiopia*) states that it is “essential that food is delivered on time and in sufficient quantity to avert a major crisis and loss of life in the coming two to three months”.

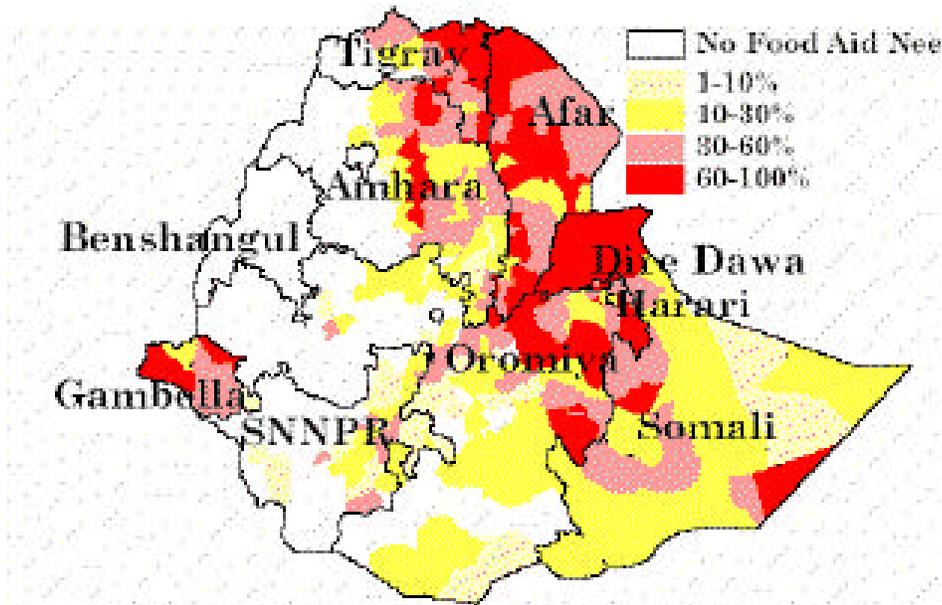
This latest report from the UN is perhaps not surprising given that the report of the FAO/WFP Crop And Food Supply Assessment Mission to Ethiopia, issued on 30th December 2002, confirmed the scale of the crop failure: the national cereal and pulse production is forecast at 9.27 million tonnes - 25% down from the 2001 harvest, and 21% down on the average for the previous five years.

Cereal import requirement in 2003 are estimated at 2.29 million tonnes of which it is hoped that 328,000 tonnes will be imported commercially. Confirmed food aid commitments in the pipeline stand at about 140,000 tonnes, leaving an uncovered gap of about 1.83 million tonnes. Donor pledges of relief food to Government, WFP and NGOs have reached around 770,000 tonnes, which will cover 54% of the 2003 requirements. Cereal requirements are 55% covered while blended food needs are only around 33 percent covered.

For cereals, the contributions will meet needs until mid-June, though at a reduced ration rate (12.5 kg instead of 15 kg per person per month). In January, dispatches of cereals to final distribution points reached over 90,000 tonnes for 7.4 million people; in February, distributions are expected to reach 100,000 tons for 8 million people.

For fortified blended food, only half of the requirements for January-June can be covered with current contributions; in January, around 5,000 tons have been distributed. In view of nutritional status concerns in many areas, agencies are stepping up efforts to resource more blended food.

*Figure 7: Food Aid Needs in 2003 by District – Percentage of Population in Need*



Source: Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC)

Significant livestock deaths, poor performance of cash crops, such as, coffee and chat and limited employment opportunities have exacerbated the food crisis in several areas. Coping strategies are stretched to their limit and there are already signs that they are failing: with high malnutrition rates, increased migration to urban areas in search of employment and begging on streets; and increased consumption of wild 'famine' foods.

Based on Concern's own assessments of the developing situation, there are already strong indicators of crisis: food prices have increased by 100% and are continuing to climb upwards; livestock prices have decreased significantly; there are signs of distress migration in our programme areas; families are reducing the number and type of meals; malnutrition levels, particularly in the north of the country, have reached crisis levels; there are serious water shortages and there are reports of the death of livestock due lack of fodder and water

Concern is focusing its work on three locations:

**Addis Ababa**, where we have long-term programmes working with street children, those affected/infected with HIV/AIDS, slum dwellers, and poor street vendors (predominately women). It is our intention that these programmes will be sustained with as little interference from the emergency response as is possible.

**Damot Weyde**, North Omo, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, in the south of Ethiopia, has a population of 218,000 and is an area in which we have established an emergency intervention and a health programme.

In response to the failure of the *belg* crop in June, Concern distributed pulse and cereal seeds to 17,000 farmers to plant for the *meher* season. However, due to a combination of insufficient rains and pest infestation, this crop largely failed to mature as well.

In November 2002, the global acute malnutrition rate in this woreda was 6.2% which, while not critical, occurred in tandem with an under 5 mortality rate of is quite high at 1.46%. The situation needs to be monitored closely over the next few months as it could deteriorate rapidly – as was the case in 2000.

**Kalu and Dessie Zuria** in South Wollo, Amhara region in the north of Ethiopia have populations of 219,400 and 230,000 respectively.

There was widespread failure of *meher* harvest, the main harvest for this area, which as well as resulting in shortages of crops for human consumption, has also resulted in fodder shortages for livestock.

Nutrition surveys conducted by Concern in November 2002 revealed serious levels of malnutrition: Kalu reported a global acute malnutrition rate of 16.6% (above the government's 'crisis' level of 15%), and Dessie Zuria reported a global acute malnutrition rate of 17.2%.

In Kalu, approximately 165,594 people are in need of food assistance - of whom 102,820 people at serious risk.

### **Concern's response**

#### *Addis Ababa*

While seeking to maintain and develop its on-going programmes in the areas of livelihood security, basic health, primary education and HIV/AIDS, Concern is mounting a large-scale response to the emergency situation in Ethiopia.

#### *Damot Weyde*

Concern has established a food security intervention including the delivery of general and supplementary rations, a therapeutic feeding intervention and the establishment of a nutritional surveillance programme under which nutrition surveys will be conducted at three-monthly intervals.

General ration: we are distributing grain to 45,000 *belg*-dependent people within forty eight kebeles in line with Government of Ethiopia's Employment Generation Scheme (EGS) guidelines. This food is being sourced for a six month period with funding from USAID and is being channelled through CARE.

Supplementary/complementary food distributions are being made to 10,800 people, including children under the age of five, and pregnant and lactating women. This programme will be linked to the EGS as it is targeted at the most vulnerable groups. 4.5kg per person per month of supplementary food will be provided to improve the adequacy of the grain ration. Emergency medical inputs and non-food inputs will also be made. This programme is being funded by Ireland Aid and Concern.

A therapeutic feeding intervention is addressing the food needs of severely malnourished children in sixteen kebeles.

Furthermore we are supporting the on-going development of capacity building for improved health interventions and have planned a seed and tools distribution to vulnerable farmers to enable them to plant for next harvest season.

#### *Kalu and Dessie Zuria*

Much advocacy has taken place at all levels of the government for revised beneficiary figures for general food distribution, and Concern is currently undertaking a general grain distribution through EGS to both Kalu and Dessie for approximately 350 000 people. The EU has been approached to

Supplementary food distributions are being undertaken targeting 100,000 people, including children under the age of five, and pregnant and lactating women. During these distributions women and children are medically screened and, where necessary, referred to a health clinic. The distribution of vitamin A, mebendazole and folic acid will also take place. Non-food items such as blankets will also be distributed on a needs basis.

Seeds and tools distributions will be undertaken to enable planting for the coming season.

Community Therapeutic Care programme is being established to treat the most malnourished in Wollo (Dessie Zuria and Kalu) and it is expected that approximately 3,000 severely malnourished children will be treated in their homes after an initial stabilisation phase. This programme is being conducted in conjunction with Valid International.

A long-term food security programme, started in 2002, is to continue but at reduced rate and as appropriate given the emergency situation and an integrated health and nutrition development programme is to be established.

Appended to this report is a summary produced by WFP of the issues related to the food crises of 1984/85, 199/2000 and 2002/2003.

## Malawi



### Current situation

Current indications are that the potential food gap has been reduced considerably through the importation of food aid by WFP and the Government of Malawi, and informal cross-border cereal flows. Maize prices are reported to be the same – and in some cases, lower than at the same time last year in most markets, and availability has improved compared to the same time last year.

Although reported imports to Malawi have so far filled 54% of estimated needs, recent VAC reports suggest that the cereal gap for 2003 is currently 262,000 MTs with current import plans, if achieved, to reduce the gap by 44%.

In addition to the problems caused by food scarcity, recent flooding has caused further damage, but this has been of a limited nature. A recent report on the flood assessments led by District Commissioners on behalf of the Department of Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs (DoPDMA) concluded that 81,600 households in fifteen districts were affected by crop losses, and that 6,800 houses were damaged. There are concerns that the floods – which primarily affected the provinces of Salima, Balaka, Dedza, Machinga, Ntcheu, Dowa, and Phalombe will negatively impact on agricultural production and transportation networks and may aggravate the ongoing food security crisis.

### Concern's response

Malawi has recently experienced a severe food crisis and the government declared a national

2002 in response to this declaration with a programme of food distributions with seventeen partners in Malawi, with funding support from Ireland Aid. These initial distributions were completed in May 2002 and Concern entered into its next phase of a more focused response to the food crisis with a remit also to develop a longer-term food security and nutrition intervention.

The causes of the current food shortage situation are multiple and complex. There is general agreement that in addition to reduced maize yields last year, there were elements of poor governance that led to a market failure and the present food crisis. The sharp decline in maize availability caused an extended food gap at the household level. While the problem has been somewhat alleviated by the last harvest (April to June 2002), the food gap in Malawi still stands at a shortfall after taking into consideration expected WFP imports (Malawi VAC Nov. 2002).

The most recent Emergency Food Security Assessment carried out by the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) in November 2002 estimates that 31.4% of the population of the country (approximately 3.6 million people) will require food assistance from January to March 2003. In the Central Region where Concern is working, is seen as the most affected area, the estimate stands at 34.6% of the population.

The food gap has been decreased from the initial 600,000 MTs required, with the Government of Malawi also planning to bring in and sell an estimated 250,000 MTs through ADMARC. About 226,801 MTs of the government's planned commercial maize imports had been received by 5th December 2002. The main issue of concern now is that of access because the government-imported maize is for sale, and although the maize will be sold at a subsidized price of MK17/kg - a price on par with last year's. It was clear last year, however, that maize was too expensive for many poor households to afford. The situation could only be worse this year considering that households have already stretched themselves to the limit to cope with last year, drawing down on any reserves and selling off available assets.

Following on from Concern's initial response, a Winter Cropping programme was implemented. This allowed land to be cultivated by approximately 10,000 families during the dry season which produced food that shortened the hunger gap which usually runs from March to April, but which had started in late 2002 for many families.

The total admissions to the supplementary feeding programme since the start of the programme, stand at 1,628 children under five, and 93 pregnant and lactating women. With the therapeutic feeding programme, 45 admissions were recorded in November (28th October to 24th November). Efforts are underway to address cholera prevention in Dowa.

Meetings were held with representatives of Madisi, Nambuma, Mthengawamthenga Missions to discuss their needs and capacity to address HIV/AIDS issues in their working areas. All expressed a need for support. The HIV/AIDS Adviser worked closely with the Nutrition Programme team to prepare for HIV/AIDS training for field staff. The Adviser also worked closely with the Food Aid Programme Manager to assist with the targeting of AIDS support organisations for food distributions. The Adviser also spent a significant part of the month providing detailed feedback to the Dublin Office on a discussion paper on a global policy on HIV/AIDS for Concern. Additionally, the Adviser provided input to the VAC on addressing HIV/AIDS issues in the VAC survey undertaken in November.

## South Sudan



The division between the northern and southern areas of Sudan is a contentious one, but the FAO suggests the following divide:



The issue as to what constitutes the north and south of Sudan is an important one – it is at the heart of negotiations for greater autonomy for the south, and it has a bearing on the figures for the projected needs for the coming year. The figures used in the table at the start of this paper – that of two million people requiring approximately 300,000 MTs of food aid in 2003 is derived from the *FEWS NET GHA Early Warning Bulletin* of 10th January 2003, but the *Special Report, FAO/WFP Crop and Food Assessment Mission to Sudan*, 24th December 2002 suggests that these figures should be 3,500,000 people requiring 230,000 MTs of food aid – essentially, more people requiring less food.

The discrepancy with regard to population may in part be due to the question of what exactly constitutes south Sudan, but it may also be due to other factors. The FEWS NET figures may be derived from an estimate of the number of people served by programmes operating in areas not controlled by the government, while the FAO/WFP report may include the people living in the government-held garrison towns - almost 1,300,000 of the total population of 6,400,000 estimated to be living in the south. Further, the FAO/WFP report probably includes the SPLM-controlled Nuba Mountains area while the FEWS NET report probably omits this.

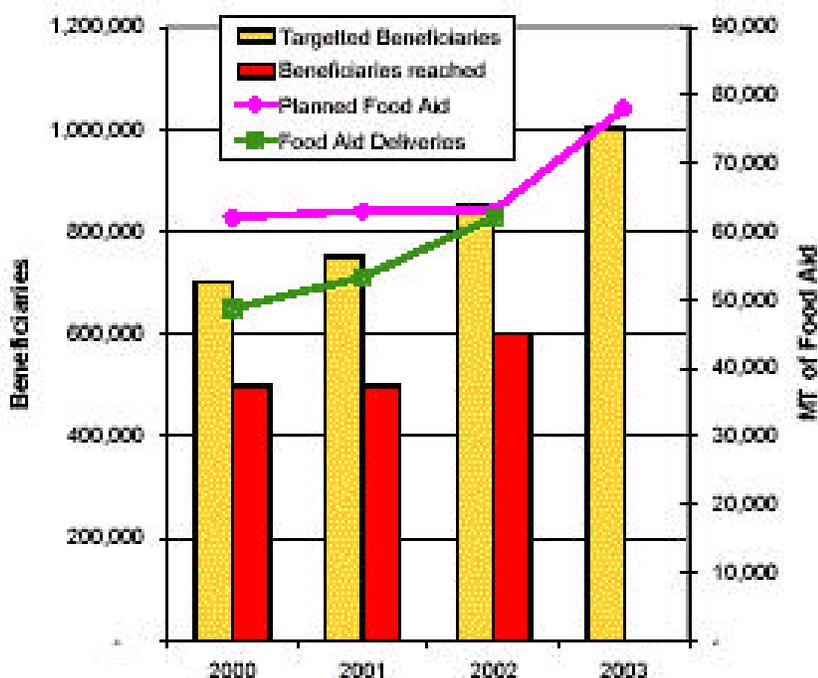
Sorghum is the principle crop for most of Sudan, but the evident signs of distress indicated in the assessments conducted in recent months reinforce the need for food aid and for nutritional surveillance of the developing food situation prior to the harvest expected to occur between August and September.

With the recent cessation of hostilities, there is better access to those in need and increased mobility among the population. WFP believe that if the cease-fire holds, the number of people requiring food aid and who are accessible will increase significantly.

The final Annual Needs Assessment (ANA) food security projections for 2003 estimate a requirement of 78,000 MT of food aid in southern Sudan. This is an increase of about 24% on the 63,000 MTs projected for 2002. Priority areas for food aid are the highly food insecure regions of Upper Nile and Jonglei (Bieh, Latjor, Liech, Pibor, and Ruweng), Bahr El Gazal (Aweil West and Gogrial) and pockets of East Equatorial (Torit) – all of which will require food aid until the next harvest in September.

This development is consistent with a pattern of increasing dependence on externally sourced food aid, and is illustrated in the table below:

*Figure 8: Food Aid Needs by Region in southern Sudan  
2000 to 2003, MT of Food*



*Source: WFP Technical Support Unit*

There has been a steady increase in the total population targeted with food aid between 1999 and 2003 with a similar but less pronounced increase in quantities of total food aid required. While identifying the Upper Nile and Jonglei Regions as the areas in which the most significant increases have been seen, WFP suggests that this is primarily due to the impact of conflict, insecurity and several poor harvests affecting the whole region, but this is also an area that has been consistently poorly served by OLS and part of the increase might be due to the fact that the true level of need is only now being acknowledged.

In mid-December 2002, WFP anticipated that they had sufficient food stocks to respond to immediate post harvest food needs until end of March 2003 and that the target population is expected to increase in January when the harvest from these areas is completely exhausted.

In late January, the Concern team in southern Sudan completed a needs assessment in six payams from which they concluded: “the situation is alarming. Emergency is looming” – supporting the findings of the ANA for Aweil West which suggested a 40-60% reduction in food availability for all socio-economic groups.

A subsequent visit was made to the area in early February by the Country Director who confirmed that even in the less-affected lowland areas, food stocks in many households were very low and that it was only a matter of time before food stocks are exhausted by the poor and even middle socio-economic groups, and without food intervention in the coming four to six week period, the situation would become “alarming”.

The situation further away from the lowland areas is reported to be much worse, particularly in Aroyo Payam, Malwal East and Mariam (the latter two were not covered in the ANA as the railroad cuts through them and they are inaccessible from Marial Bai). WFP has begun airdropping food into these three payams, but WFP’s plan to deliver approximately 1,200 tonnes to the 173,000 people estimated to be in need of food aid by the SRRA would appear to fall well short of requirements.

Although the January assessment did not find evidence of deaths among people or animals, it did indicate increasing signs of under nutrition and identified children with kwashiorkor and oedema, and it is reported that the unseasonably heavy rains in September/October -233mm recorded in Marial Bai out of the total of 610mm for the year – did little to help the crops but significantly improved the pasture.

The report also suggested that there was an increasing incidence of people migrating to the North in search of food and that a lot of families have no food or seeds in the store and were becoming increasingly dependent on wild foods. Based on the findings of the Annual Needs Assessment, FAO has estimated that 117,000 households will require 1,800 MT of seeds in the 2003 planting season, with sorghum, maize and groundnuts being the priority, and Upper Nile and Bahr El Ghazal the areas of greatest need.

### **Concern’s response**

While there are many variables, the south Sudan programme team have developed contingency plans for a possible intervention in Aweil East and North:

#### *Food/Nutrition*

Although the base rates for the incidence of kwashiorkor and marasmus are high, the recent assessment report’s reference to them, combined with the underlying food insecurity of this area, is sufficient to indicate that Concern needs to undertake a nutritional survey as soon as possible to establish base rates and determine the severity/impact of the food shortages. Given the precarious nature of the food supply, we need to establish a process of nutritional surveillance, completing surveys on a two-three monthly basis thereafter. Based on these we can go to WFP who have also offered support to us for supplementary feeding should we be able to demonstrate the need for it.

We need to conduct a first nutritional survey in all accessible areas of the two payams as soon as possible – preferably late February/early March, which while paying particular attention to Aroyo payam, accessible areas of Mariam payam and Malwal West (west of the railway line), should also cover all of the other payams in these areas.

Our response in terms of advocating with WFP for general ration distribution - and with other agencies for their possible involvement - and in terms of Concern’s involvement in supplementary food distribution or therapeutic feeding should depend on the results of this nutrition survey. IRC have a health/medical programme in Aweil West so we should, to the extent possible (they currently have very limited funding), involve them in the nutritional survey.

Follow up nutritional surveys covering all accessible payams will be required on a regular basis up to the harvest in September irrespective of how soon WFP begin air drops as the quantities targeted to

date appear to be relatively low, and our Aweil staff have some concerns on the targeting of food aid in the counties.

The cost of two initial nutritional surveys have been budgeted (and secured) under OFDA funds for Aweil.

*Seeds inputs*

Given the likely need for seeds, particularly sorghum (FAO estimates a requirement of 196m tons sorghum seed (of the total seed requirement of 307mtons) we aim to provide up to 100 tonnes of relatively short maturing varieties to up to 20,000 households (5kg should be enough to plant up to circa 1\_ acres if the first planting succeeds). Distribution of this seed is to be targeted to the poorest households – IDPs, returnees, those displaced in the last few years, and other vulnerable households who do not have seeds.

In following a policy of local purchase, we will examine the availability of seeds in Aweil, but it is expected that there will be very limited availability. Attention is more likely to focus on Abyei (where they have two harvests a year of relatively short maturing sorghum varieties suitable for Aweil West/North conditions - compared to the Aweil's one - and for where there are reports of there having been a good harvest in December) and we will examine the possibility of purchasing there – assuming that the river and railway line can be crossed without undue risk to the trucks that would be needed to transport these seeds.

## Uganda



### Current situation

While most of Uganda remains stable and food secure, the Lord's Resistance Army's 'civil war' in the north of the country continued with incidents of terror occurring just about every day of the month and internal displacements are now estimated at 800,000 or more. IDPs continue to live in poor conditions with very limited assistance from the humanitarian community except in the main centres. Security within the towns of Kitgum and Gulu has been cast in doubt by recent attacks and looting, and access to the outlying areas has become worse, with road ambushes a very real threat. Further, an estimated 15,000 refugees are reportedly heading into Uganda due to the recent upsurge of fighting in Eastern DRC.

The most recent FEWS NET report for Uganda (10th January, 2003) states that "household stocks in Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit Districts are low and that WFP and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) estimate that current household stocks may not last through March 2003, implying significant food insecurity problems in the region in the coming months. The most affected areas are the eastern drier belt counties close to Kenya."

### Concern's response

In response to the evident needs in the north of the country, Concern instigated a new initiative in the last quarter of 2002, bringing together the Alliance 2015 members in Uganda (Concern, German Agro Action and CESVI), disbursing more than €40,000 to collaborating organisations in five of the six affected districts to buy much-needed medicines (and for the cost of their transport by air), seeds and tools as well as improve sanitation for displaced people. It is estimated that the total beneficiaries from this intervention numbered over 15,000.

### Joint interventions breakdown (incl. advocacy efforts):

1. Kalongo Mission Hospital, Pader District. Air transport for drugs from Kampala (€5,000).
2. Kitgum District Authorities and Oxfam. To provide sanitation for approx 1,500 IDPs and numerous nightstayers (€10,000) at four sites near the town.
3. Holy Rosary Clinic in Gulu. € 5,000 for 5 months' medical supplies.
4. €10,000 to enable 840 vulnerable, displaced families in Lira to get seeds and tools for the next planting season. This initiative is in collaboration with IRC.

5. €10,000 to Apac District Council and a local NGO for seeds and tools for 1,000 vulnerable, displaced families in Apac District.
6. Joint lobbying with 20+ INGOs in Uganda to speed up peace talks and improve humanitarian access.
7. Lobbying as part of Interaction in the states.
8. Funding an assessment of two affected Northern Districts (Apac and Lira) and develop a larger-scale proposal for 2003 interventions (preliminary results should be out next week).

## Zambia



### Current situation

The recent VAC report has suggested that the national cereal gap in Zambia was reduced by nearly 60% by including cassava in the food balance analysis using the maize equivalency. It is estimated that the current outstanding cereal gap (70,000 MT) will be partially covered through continued the informal and unchecked cross-border trade.

More broadly, food aid imports to Zambia have been slowed by the government ban on GM maize and according to available data, Zambia currently faces a cereal gap of 617,000MT. However, current commercial and food aid import plans, if fully met, would meet 63% of this gap, although, based on past import performance, there is some scepticism that these plans will be fully achieved.

However, a recent USAID report on Zambia suggested that WFP had estimated that nearly 90% of the food assistance pipeline requirement for Zambia through March 2003 has been met by contributions from donors and the GRZ, but that the capacity of the logistical network to transport the 90,000 MTs the GRZ plans to procure remained a concern.

The FEWS Zambia Food Security Update of 7th February, 2003 offered the following highlights:

- In all but the southern parts of the country, rainfall (both in quantity and distribution) improved significantly during the second part of December and continued to improve through January.
- So far, food aid imports have met only around 35% of the country's stated needs.
- The estimated number of people requiring food assistance rose from 26% of the total population (projected in August 2002) to 28%, or 2.77 million, estimated in January 2003. The most food insecure areas are in Southern, Western and Lusaka Province, where more than 75% of the population requires assistance.
- Strong links between HIV/AIDS and food security were found in a recent survey.
- High maize prices are pushing rural households out of the market, and with average monthly incomes, households are able to buy less than 40% of their food needs.
- Uncertainty remains high among farmers, millers and government, thereby creating market

- Maize prices will keep rising beyond December 2002, as the gap between roller and breakfast meal prices narrows.
- There is an urgent and immediate need for a crop forecasting exercise in order to establish appropriate plans for the coming year.

### **Concern's response**

Following assessments and recommendations by Paul Sherlock and Paul Harvey in August/September 2002, Concern became operational in Zambia in October 2002. In October 2002, Anne Callanan, Nutrition Adviser from PDED, visited Zambia and the main purpose of Anne's visit was to build on the assessment carried out in August and to further refine geographic areas where Concern could mount an emergency response to the food crisis.

### **Emergency Food Distribution**

Discussions were held with WFP and EFZ (a national NGO) in Gwembe in late December regarding possible areas where Concern could assist in capacity building EFZ, but this proposed collaboration did not go ahead.

### **Emergency Response in Lusaka**

Following an assessment of a temporary camp site in Lusaka in early February, we decided to become operational with approval of government within a matter of days of the assessment. The camp accommodates approximately 4,000 IDPs who were evicted from their homes in Lusaka in November 2002. The camp is temporary, with plastic sheeting supplied to only 150 of the 701 families. The sanitation is totally inadequate with fourteen pit latrines, all of which were full, to service the entire community.

The camp is supported by the Zambian Red Cross and Concern is now providing assistance through the Red Cross and in co-operation with the community. The objective of our intervention is to provide a minimum standard of shelter and sanitation in a temporary camp site. The project will be on a FFW basis and it is planned to involve all 701 families in some form or another so that everyone benefits from the food. Plastic sheeting will be supplied to 300 families who will construct the shelter themselves on a FFW basis. All 701 families will receive a ground sheet so as to provide protection in the current rainy season. In accordance with GRZ guidelines, twenty VIP latrines will be strategically placed in the camp site. In the meantime, all fourteen latrines are being emptied.

Provision is also being made to provide a playground area with appropriate facilities for the children. There is also a budget line for small CBO activities within the camp.

It is anticipated that the impact will be an improved healthy population and a healthier and safer environment.

### **Food Security and Nutrition Surveillance**

In December 2002 it was agreed that Concern and UNICEF, with funding from DfID, would assist in the establishment of a National Food Security and Surveillance System within the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) effective from 1st January, 2003. In early January the office of the Vice President authorised Concern's involvement in the programme, but there is currently some uncertainty as to whether responsibility for this lies with the DMMU or the Central Statistics Office (CSO), and clarification of responsibilities is being sought by Concern, UNICEF and DFID before any further decisions are taken in relation to this project.

### **Strategic planning**

As the food shortage needs are not as acute as initially anticipated and the fact that many of the current problems faced by Zambia are due to chronic poverty, Concern Zambia will now develop a strategic plan to address these longer-term needs. It is anticipated that the sector focus of strategic planning will be on Food Security/Livelihood support and HIV/AIDS. It is important to note that the impact of HIV/AIDS is a major contributory factor in food insecurity and higher mortality rates, and careful consideration will be needed in terms of an appropriate intervention

## Zimbabwe



### Current situation

Despite interventions completed to date, Zimbabwe still has a 907,000 tonne cereal gap and faces the greatest challenge of all the countries affected by food scarcity in southern Africa. The current food aid import plans, if realized, would reduce the gap to 500,000 MTs, but there are serious doubts as to the government's capacity to import 336,000 MTs of maize. Even if all planned imports are received, which is considered unlikely by many analysts, Zimbabwe would still face a sizeable cereal gap of 163,000MT.

RIASCO, the UN Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office has stated that field reports from Zimbabwe reflect an alarming situation in vulnerable communities, with instances of deaths, theft, children fainting in school, and adults collapsing on the rise, despite the fact that WFP has stepped up distributions and expected to deliver 47,000 MT of food in January - more than double the previous highest distribution level. Furthermore, the fertilizer shortage is expected to continue, as the shortage of foreign currency impedes ability to import inputs.

The latest WFP regional report (WFP Emergency Report number six, 7th February, 2003) states that "field reports indicate grim prospects for the coming harvest", with some households resorting to eating their seeds, despite the obvious impact of this on the future harvest. The report also states that "where some maize is doing well, households are consuming it green, meaning a lower harvest of dry grain. Livestock disease such as bovine anthrax and foot and mouth continue to decimate herds in the southern part of the country. To cope with the situation, communities in Buhera District (Manicaland Province) are reportedly illegally selling mopane trees, aggravating deforestation".

There is also a discrepancy between Zimbabwe's official tally of cereal food stocks - which indicated a national surplus - and the reality of on-going shortages on the ground. In its December report the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) - a consortium of government, NGOs and UN agencies - said: "Distribution of GMB imports at the community level is inconsistent with reported imports at the national level. For the time period 1st April 2002 to 1st December 2002, total maize available - from domestic availability, GMB imports, and food aid - was 1.3 million MT. The [national consumption]

The report was trying to draw attention to the fact that while the government's figures suggested that there had been adequate food imported and distributed, there was still an absolute deficit on the ground - at sub-national level, 40% of the communities visited reported that cereals were "not or rarely" available from the GMB and/or market. Other indicators such as coping strategies, food and livestock prices, and dietary intake also support the conclusion that cereal is extremely scarce at the community level, despite reported national numbers indicating a surplus.

The government's policies continue to contribute to the problem: government price controls on basic staple foods have led to serious shortages of maize and other commodities across the country since the middle of 2002. It has been claimed that some of those with access to maize supplies from the GMB purchase maize at the low controlled price, and then sell it on the black market at prices more than 100 times higher. Analysing staple maize prices is complicated by the side-by-side existence of controlled prices (Z\$12.50/kg) and local market prices (currently averaging Z\$130/kg), and the official exchange rate (set at Z\$56/ USD) and the parallel exchange rate (Z\$1,500/USD). Depending on the combination of rates, one kilo of maize could cost less than US\$0.01 (controlled price, parallel rate) or as high as US\$2.32 (local price, official rate). These price differentials offer clear opportunities for unscrupulous traders to make large profits by purchasing and reselling staple food commodities both within Zimbabwe and across borders where prices are notably higher. However for most Zimbabweans across the country, staple foods and other basic commodities remain largely unavailable.

#### Concern's response

Concern became operational in Zimbabwe in October '02 following an agreement with WFP/GOZ. WE are currently distributing food sourced by WFP as follows:

Province	District	Beneficiaries	Food groups – in MTs – per month for five months – Nov '02 to March '03				Total - Nov '02 to March '03
			<i>Cereals</i>	<i>Pulses</i>	<i>Oil</i>	<i>CSB</i>	
Midlands	Gokwe North	159,288	1,596	287	96	244	11,115
Midlands	Gokwe South	206,426	2,068	372	124	316	14,400
Midlands	Kwekwe	126,320	1,266	227	76	197	8,830
Manicaland	Nyanga	78,740	789	142	47	120	5,490
<b>Total</b>		<b>570,774</b>					<b>39,835</b>

In addition to acting as an implementing partner for WFP, Concern is providing support to groups delivering food aid to 8,000 families (40,000 individuals) who are identified as vulnerable by partner agencies and will, in the first instance allow for the delivery of 1,500 MTs of rice. It is intended that a further 300 MTs of beans and 180 MTs of oil will be delivered to supplement the diet of those most vulnerable households.