



Office of the Resident Coordinator

 Malawi • Food Insecurity
 Humanitarian Update • 30 August 2012

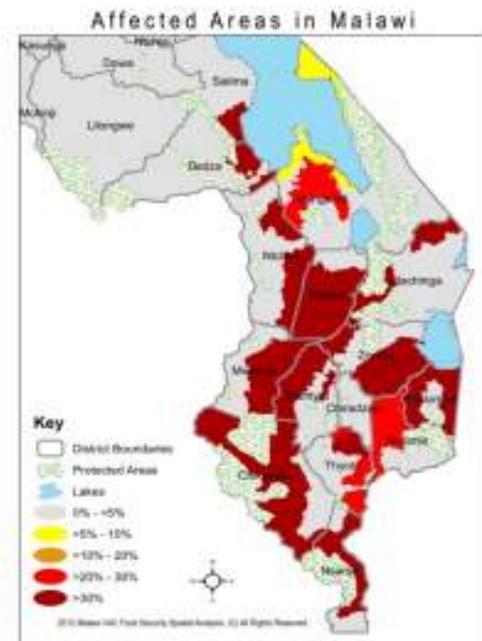
I. HIGHLIGHTS / KEY PRIORITIES

- Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) Report indicated that 1,6 million people may be at risk of food insecurity in the next 3 to 8 months. The MVAC will however be conducting its assessment in October whose purpose is to update the findings of the initial findings. It is expected that this assessment will take into account the production from winter production.
- The Government of Malawi presented an initial response plan which had a rural food insecurity component estimated in \$48 million, which has been already funded in a 36.9% through in-kind and financial support of Government of Malawi, USAID and UKAID,.
- The Flanders International Cooperation Agency has contributed a total of 200,000 Euros to the Malawi Humanitarian Fund. The Humanitarian fund was established to provide members with ready funds for responding to emergencies
- Partners are finalizing response plans following the cluster approach. This cooperation is taking into account the need to differentiate between urban and rural response and the need to build back resilience through early recovery measures
- Nutrition, Health, WASH and protection sectors should be supported by further analysis and fundraising activities.

II. Situation Overview

In June the Malawi Assessment Committee (MVAC) published the results of the 2012 annual assessments highlighting that 1,630,007 people may be at risk of food insecurity across the country within a range of three to eight months. The areas of concern are localised in the central and southern parts of the country including Balaka, Blantyre, Chikhwawa, Dedza, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Nsanje, Ntcheu, Phalombe, Salima, Thyolo, and Zomba. The depreciation of the Malawi Kwacha and subsequent floating of the currency continue to push prices up faster than normal. Prices of maize in most parts with populations at risk of food insecurity remain higher than historic averages, particularly due to increasing transportation costs.

Following the release of MVAC results, the Government of Malawi presented an initial Food Insecurity Response Plan for the season 2012/2013, appealing for international support on 25 July 2012 to the Office of the Resident Coordinator. The response plan included cluster response plans targeting 15 districts; and describes \$89 million of interventions in 4 key sectors: food assistance, agriculture, nutrition and education. At present, \$18 million has already been sourced (Government of Malawi, USAID/FFP and UKAID/DFID) for the food assistance activities.



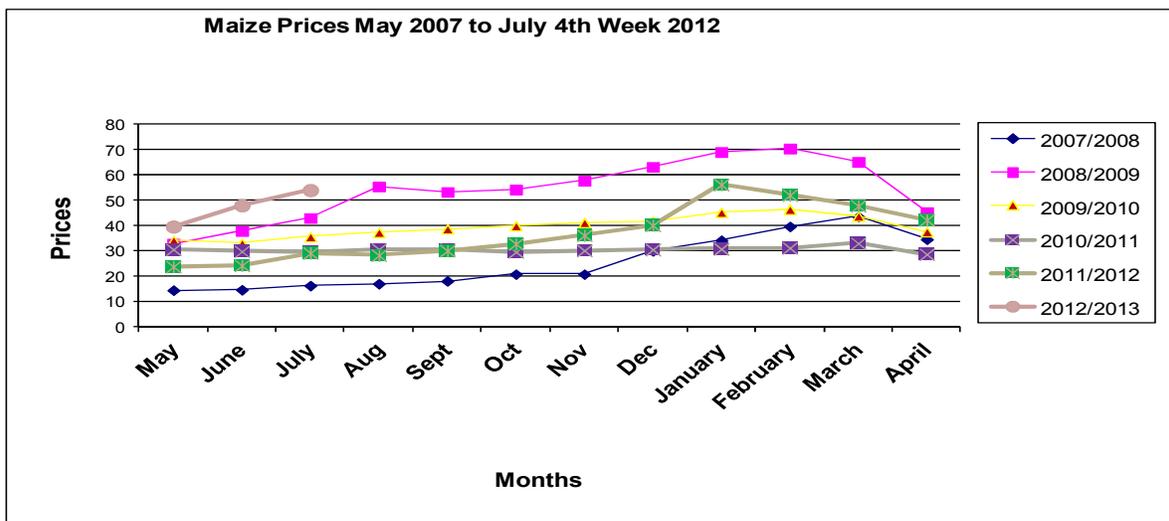
MVAC, in collaboration with WFP and Oxfam, conducted a Market Situation Analysis (funded by UKAID). The final report shared on 21 August 2012 identifies areas where it would be appropriate to implement cash transfers as opposed to areas where food assistance is ideal. In addition, an Urban Vulnerability Assessment funded by WFP is currently ongoing, and is expected to be finished the week of 27-31 August 2012.

Humanitarian partners are working in a complementary response component for urban areas, which will be defined after the release of the Food Security Urban Assessment by the end of August 2012. A third component for Early Recovery Response is also being discussed between the Government and partners. UNDP is supporting the Humanitarian Country Team in developing a Resilience Building Strategy. This follows recommendation of a UNDP/BCPR mission coming from Geneva and is being supported by staff from the UNDP Office in Mozambique. The objective is to identify a comprehensive resilience strategy including different sectors and breakdown activities by short-, mid- and long-term. This strategy will mainstream community resilience building in the final response plan.

III. Monitoring Data

Price of Food Commodities

The prices of maize continue to increase and the national average price doubled since December following the announcement of a 50% price increase by the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC). The devaluation of the country's currency coupled with other factors, including increasing transportation costs, has continued to push the prices up. Of the districts identified by MVAC as having populations with Missing Food Entitlements, Phalombe and Nsanje recorded the highest prices of K74 and K76 respectively. The national average maize price for July 2012 was MK 54.09 against MK 21.16 during same time last year, however compared to previous years this years prices are higher as demonstrated in the figure below (even when a net present value calculation is applied):



Points to note

- At National level, Nsanje has the highest average maize prices for July (MK 76.09) while Chitipa has the lowest average maize prices (MK40.07).
- Chicken prices across the districts have remained stable. Prices for goats have generally increased. It is yet to be established if this implies that the incidence of stress selling is low or whether affected population had already sold their livestock given the unusually early onset of the food security and income stress.

Nutrition Data

No data was available

IV. Humanitarian Needs and Response



EDUCATION

Needs: As the level of household food shortages increases during the lean season (from October to March), school attendance is directly affected. The School Health and Nutrition Baseline Survey (SHN), conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2006, already found that 70% of school-going children aged 8 to 10 in Malawi do not regularly eat breakfast before going to school. In addition, for poor households, there are considerable 'hidden cost' to parents of educating girls, so they are more likely to drop out of school.

Response: An initial sector response plan has been presented by the Government for school meals program, aiming at covering 700,000 learners between September 2012 and March 2013, for a total budget of \$9.4 million. The aim is to increase primary school enrolment and attendance, as well as reduce drop-out rates of children, particularly girls and orphans, in food insecure areas. A resilience community building component is also associated to this response.

Gaps & Constraints: No funds to cover identified needs.



FOOD SECURITY

Needs: According the MVAC Report, 1.6 million people may be at risk in the next 3 to 8 months, due to crop failure compounded by devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha, and the increase of prices of food and other commodities. This situation has resulted in changes in food consumption patterns among affected households, reducing meal frequency with possible serious impacts, particularly on pregnant and lactating women, children and elderly people.

Response: Distribution of food assistance commenced in three districts of Nsanje, Machinga and Chikwawa a total of 286,000 people would have received food by end of October. Food distributions will run from August to November, partners will be switching to cash transfers in areas that have been found to be appropriate according to findings of a market analysis conducted in July.

Gaps & Constraints: WFP, OXFAM, Save the Children are in talks with donors locally in an effort to raise funds for financing the cash transfers. The Food Security cluster is still carrying out an analysis to identify the gaps.



NUTRITION

Needs: Accurate information is not available. The Ministry of Health will release in the coming days information of the trends of cases of malnutrition. According to different partners, there would have an increase of 55% regarding the admission due to malnutrition diagnostics. A nutritional survey in the affected areas is urgently needed. The nutrition cluster also reported of a shortage of therapeutic and supplementary feeding milk.

Response: An initial sector response plan has been presented by the Government for responding to food shortage, aiming at covering 102,711 people in 15 districts: 34,344 severe acutely malnourished children, and 68,367 moderately acutely malnourished children and pregnant or lactating women), with a total budget of \$7 million. The objective is to prevent and treat acute malnutrition.

Gaps & Constraints: No funds have been released for the response. The HCT is considering funding the nutrition survey through the Malawi Humanitarian Fund, which already received a donation of €200,000 from the Flemish Government.

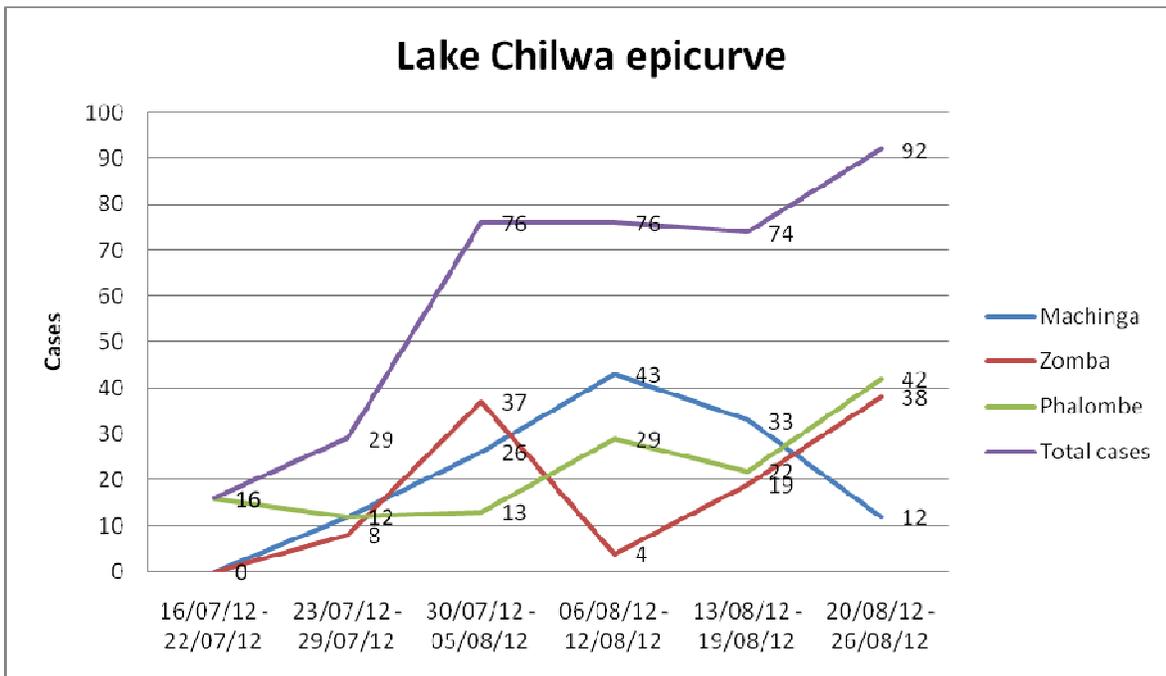


HEALTH

Needs: An increase of average cases of cholera has been registered in some areas affected by food security situation, linked to an absence of sanitation facilities and water purification system. This situation is affecting three districts bordering Lake Chilwa where more than 5000 fishermen stay in makeshift shacks on the lake. The districts are: Phalombe, Zomba and Machinga and the problem is arising from use of the unsafe water from the lake for drinking and other sanitary activities. Over 363 cases with 7 deaths have been registered so far since the outbreak started in July 2012. The main challenge is how to reach the fishermen living on the lake with health messages and water treatment materials (chlorine or water guard. It takes an average of 3 hours on motorized boat (hired) to reach them and 7 hours for them to get the shore by canoe enroute to the health facility hence high death rate. There is need to support the districts with motorized boat (none of the 3 has one), funds for fuel and cholera supplies.



Floating house “Chimbowera” for fishermen on Lake Chilwa- deep inside the lake, 3hrs by motorized boat to reach them.



Response: The health cluster will coordinate with the WASH cluster in order to identify a common response to the mentioned situation

Gaps & Constraints: The affected areas are very isolated, which difficult a traditional response to cholera through existing medical structures.



LOGISTICS

Needs: WFP has signaled the need to preposition food and relief supplies prior to the onset of rains, after which many parts of the affected districts will become hard to access..

Response: The transport and logistics associated to food distribution are being addressed.

Gaps & Constraints: An assessment on access to population in need should be conducted by the cluster.



PROTECTION

Needs: There are concerns that the food insecurity might result in negative coping mechanisms like child labor exploitation and sexual abuse. Much as it is appreciated that most partners currently implementing the response incorporate aspects of protection in their programming, it was felt that there is need for strong monitoring and awareness raising.

Response: DoDMA and UNRCO are organizing an orientation session for the protection cluster to mainstream protection issues in the current humanitarian response.

Gaps & Constraints: The protection cluster is expected to meet and identify needs and funding gaps to include in the response plan.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Needs: An increase of sanitation concerns has been identify by the WASH cluster partners, due to scarcity of water and reduced access to safe water for drinking and domestic use. As mentioned for the health cluster, the situation in three districts should be urgently addressed to contain the current cholera outbreak and prevent other water-borne diseases. There is a need for chlorine and water purification tablets, hygiene kits and awareness campaign to sensitize about 5000 fishermen stationed on the lake on sanitation and hygiene concerns. Some kind of non-food items should be provided to this population.

Response: The WASH cluster will coordinate with the health cluster in order to identify a common response to the mentioned situation

Gaps & Constraints: An estimation of funding gaps should be done by the WASH cluster. The difficult access by road to the affected population could be a challenge in terms of humanitarian assistance, so a support from logistics cluster should be provided.



EARLY RECOVERY

Needs: There are concerns over chronic vulnerability and hence potentially eroded resilience among populations in districts like Chikwawa, Nsanje, Balaka and to an extent Zomba, which faced food insecurity problems in the past 4 years. Early recovery activities should be mainstreamed in all the humanitarian clusters, following a holistic approach on resilience building. There is a need for identification of key early recovery activities in each cluster in order to ensure a better build back for the communities and ensure the basis of a sustainable development.

Response: An initial early recovery response plan to agriculture concerns has been presented by the Government, aiming at supporting agriculture livelihoods for vulnerable population affected by drought-related concerns. The proposal has a total budget of \$25.2 million, covering a period of 24 month (from August 2012 to July 2014). The objective is to build resilience of households affected by drought-related problems and prevent chronic food insecurity due to loss of agricultural productive assets in the affected areas. In that regard, a UNDP/BCPR team is working with partners in the development of a Resilience Building Strategy to be mainstreamed in all short-term humanitarian intervention and to be continued in mid- and long-term actions in this area.

Gaps & Constraints: A comprehensive early recovery program should be designed in the following weeks to be presented to the international community of donors for fundraising purposes.

IV. Coordination

Humanitarian actors have worked together to analyze the current situation and articulate needs through the different clusters. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) met on Wednesday 22 August 2012 to discuss the current response operations and highlights the current gaps.

The Department of Disaster Management Affairs of Malawi (DoDMA) will continue coordinating meetings with cluster leads and co-leads with the aim of having an update of the ongoing and planned response and complete a comprehensive analysis of the current situation, with the inputs coming for all the activated clusters.

On the other hand, the food security cluster convened a meeting on Friday 24 August 2012 to discuss about figure, needs, capacities and funding gaps in terms of cash transfer response to affected people, following the recommendations of the Market Assessment conducted from 23 to 27 July 2012, as per mandate of the Humanitarian Response Committee.

In addition, OCHA ROSA sent a HAO in surge capacity from 21 to 24 August 2012 to Lilongwe, Malawi, to support the Office of the UNRC to identify ongoing and planned humanitarian response and design with partners a comprehensive response plan in the following weeks.

V. Funding

Regarding the initial Food Insecurity Response Plan with an estimated budget of \$48 million, presented by the Government of Malawi with the support of the humanitarian partners, \$18 million has already been sourced (Government of Malawi, USAID/FFP and UKAID/DFID) for the food assistance activities. A more comprehensive response plan, including also response in urban areas and early recovery component, which is expected to be finished in the coming weeks, will give an update estimation of funding needs. In this regard, discussions on the need for Flash Appeal are being undertaken by the UNRC and HCT with the Government, to allow a better fundraising at international level, in complementation of in-country donors.

48 million
requested (US\$)

36.9%
funded

On other hand, the Flemish Government has already allocated €200,000 to the Malawi Humanitarian Fund, an in-country humanitarian funding mechanism managed by the UNRC and the HCT.

VI. Contact

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