



**World Food
Programme**

**OMJ Introductory Statement
Second Regular Session of the Executive Board
10 - 11 February 2014**

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
I will give you an update of the food security situation in southern Africa,
and brief you on our latest partnerships and innovative activities in the
region .

FOOD SECURITY

- I already informed you during the last EB in November on the alarming situation taking place in parts of our region, where a continuation of climatic shocks, armyworm and locust infestations have led to food production shortfalls and high food prices, causing particularly very difficult challenges during the lean season, which is currently at its peak in Southern Africa.
- Some 19 million people in Southern Africa are projected to be food insecure in the 2013/2014 marketing year.
- In **Malawi**, over 1.8 million people require assistance in 24 out of 28 districts nationwide. These are not only in the disaster-prone south,

but also in the traditional surplus areas of the central and northern regions which were hard hit by dry spells last year.

- Decreased contributions as a result of a scandal referred to as “cash-gate” is also likely to diminish the government’s capacity to deliver critical social services. The WFP relief response programme started last October and during the lean period of January – March 2014, WFP will target all of the affected 1.8 million people with food assistance, including 154,000 with cash transfers.
- In **Zimbabwe**, more than 2.2 million people are food insecure –25% of the rural population – a truly alarming and historical spike. To compound these challenges, reports in both public and private media indicate that the government is experiencing liquidity problems.
- WFP had planned to assist 1.8 million of the most vulnerable people during the current ‘hunger season’, but due to major funding shortfalls, we have been forced to reduce assistance to just over 1 million people in January– which includes ration cuts and a reduction in cash transfer values.
- The reduction is so severe that WFP has been forced to scale down activities by pulling out of 60 percent of affected areas altogether. This means leaving the most vulnerable with weak coping strategies .
- We are also faced with shortfalls for our monthly health and nutrition activities and the resilience-building operation which are due to start in May. WFP will strive to maintain life-saving assistance to the most

vulnerable groups, but will be unable to help all those in need due to these challenges.

- In **Madagascar**, some 4 million people are food insecure and the impacts of the current lean and cyclone season might further aggravate the situation. Looming cyclones in 2014 accompanied by abnormally high precipitation levels will likely increase the number of vulnerable people.
- WFP is working with partners to provide assistance to nearly 400,000 people through a school meals programme, assistance to orphans and vulnerable children, food-by-prescription to tuberculosis patients, food and cash-for-assets and a preventative supplementary feeding programme. Activities are implemented in the south, south-east and in peri-urban areas.
- After the recent election of the new President, the nomination of the new government is expected in mid-February. The recent explosion in Antananarivo raises concern of continued instability in the country despite expectations of a return to democratic order and political stability.
- While **Mozambique** has been experiencing generally stable food security in most parts of the country, heavy rains and strong winds since January have destroyed considerable portions of cultivated land and road access in some communities were impaired, and there is a

high risk for flooding in northern parts of the country between February and March. According to national forecasts, floods this season may affect as many as 300,000 people. WFP is prioritizing the purchase of contingency stocks so as to prepare for relief interventions when floods hit.

- WFP is also monitoring the security situation in Mozambique, where there is potential for armed conflict between the government forces and RENAMO, which could create further risks for overall food security.
- In **DRC**, military operations have led to 4.3 million people being displaced. 6.4 million people are food insecure and half of under 5s are stunted. Limited food, cash and voucher assistance reaches 1.9 million people. In North Kivu and South Kivu 600,000 of the 1.6 million displaced rely solely on assistance for their food needs. For nine months, half-rations have been distributed in North Kivu. WFP needs USD 83 million to continue operations for six months.

SADC

- Our partnership with SADC continues to grow. As you may know, the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) has established an urban vulnerability assessment working group which co-led by FEWSNET and WFP, and members include FAO and OCHA, working under direct guidance by the SADC RVAC.

- As part of our partnership with SADC, WFP organised an Urban Assessment Workshop early December 2013 in Johannesburg, to exchange experience in urban food and nutrition insecurity assessment modalities, and to adopt standard practices within the region, in respect of each Member State's context.
- The event targeted Vulnerability Assessment Committees from all over the region together with key stakeholders.
- In March 2014, WFP will facilitate cross-learning between Member States on the Community Household Surveillance (CHS) and will continue to work with RVAC and partners on integrating nutrition into food security assessments in the region, as well as strengthening HIV and AIDS Indicators into vulnerability assessments.

INNOVATIONS

- Lastly, in 2014, OMJ will be spearheading several innovations. The first is the piloting of a new software on smart phones to make data collection simpler for a wide variety of uses – from cross border monitoring in Zambia, to post distribution monitoring and to a more wide spread use of cash and voucher . These activities will be more timely, less prone to error and less expensive. It is a paperless data collection system that we call GRASP. This stands for Geo-Referenced Acquisition of Statistics Platform. Rather than being a custom

developed system, GRASP is a collection of concepts, configurations and open source software working together to fulfil our needs.

- Another innovation under formulation and in discussion through our joint partnership with Mastercard is a regional solution that will enable scaled up use of cash and vouchers tools at competitive costs (value for money).

Thank you Madam President.