



**OMJ Introductory Statement
Annual Session of the Executive Board
3-6 June 2013**

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
I would like to inform you of two topical issues in the region: the forecasts of the harvest season which has commenced, and our efforts to mitigate and combat the effects of HIV and AIDS.

- Floods and droughts in 2012/2013 have deteriorated food security in many areas of the region, and the situation was exacerbated by massive African armyworm outbreaks in various countries.
- **While most of SADC Member States are still carrying out crop production estimation surveys, forecasts are yet inconclusive.**
- **Namibia and South Africa indicated a 42 percent reduction for cereals compared to last year, and projections point to similar trends in Zimbabwe (possibly by 25%) and Madagascar** (threatened by cyclones and locusts). There are also projected pockets of **reduced cereal production across Malawi** (in the traditional food insecure districts in

the south as well as surplus areas of the centre and north) **and in southern Mozambique. Also in Lesotho, while** the harvest is projected to be above last year's, it remains under the required norm.

- In particular in **Zimbabwe, due to late start of rains, a combination of flash floods and then long dry spells, food insecurity for 2013/14 may be worse than the previous year.** The Deputy Prime Minister has called humanitarian partners to the table and ensured zero delay in the official release of the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC) results. Only then will stakeholders know the degree and extent of food insecurity among the rural population. WFP will partner with other humanitarian actors to respond to these and other food shortages.
- I also inform you that the Southern African Regional Interagency Standing Committee (RIASCO) – of which WFP is part - called for an investigation into the threats to lives and livelihoods likely to confront southern Africa over the next decade, along with available capacities to address these challenges.
- I am pleased to report that based on the outcomes of this study, and on the experience generated by our work on the ground, **WFP and partners will embark in the preparation of a long term resilience strategy for the Southern Africa region.**

- With regards to the harvest forecast, there are also few exceptions to the low production expectations mentioned before. These include **Zambia, Malawi**, and central and **northern Mozambique**, where in fact food surpluses are expected, as well as Tanzania and Swaziland, where forecasts are also encouraging.
- In **Zambia**, the government has officially released its crop forecast which indicates that while maize production has dropped by 10 percent from last year, production is still at 2,5 Million mt, with an estimated surplus of 454,000 mt.
- In **Malawi**, a total of 3,7 million mt of cereals will be produced this year (almost 2% more than last year). Despite this, the anticipated number of food insecure people remains high due to decreased production in some areas, compounded by economic challenges afflicting the country.
- To capitalize on projected surpluses and possible bumper harvests, **OMJ has advocated for the WFP Forward Purchasing Approach to be extended to Southern Africa**. This has come into effect in May and will give WFP access to a steady supply line with anticipation, also leading to faster response to food purchase requests. Purchases closer to harvest season will provide our beneficiaries with higher quality maize, and will allow us to make economies of scale by purchasing large amounts when costs are lowest.

- A total of seven countries will benefit from the launch of this supply line: Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland Zambia and DRC. As you know, SADC is a leading market for purchase of food and non food/services for WFP, with over 290,000 mt of food commodities of origin in SADC countries worth over USD 113 Million purchased in 2012 only. The WFP Forward Purchasing Approach to Southern Africa will further boost our regional markets as it will benefit the region with some revolving 35,000 mt in various commodities until December 31st 2013 (to be verified please). Procurement for these commodities is currently being planned,
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, I now would like to brief you on our activities with regards to HIV and AIDS in this region.** Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing three concurrent, mutually reinforcing epidemics: malnutrition, HIV and active TB, and this region in particular, includes 7 of the 10 highest HIV/AIDS prevalent countries in the world
- WFP has a well-equipped regional HIV and AIDS support team in Johannesburg, and over the past 5 years, our work in this area has consisted largely of building government capacity to design, implement and finance HIV programmes.

- Intensified engagement with regional stakeholders such as SADC and NEPAD, where we contribute to integrate nutrition and HIV into CAADP programmes, is a key priority.
- **In 2012, WFP supported 800,000 beneficiaries from 10 countries,** including clients on ART and TB treatment and their households, mothers enrolled in Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission (PMTCT) programs, Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and people living with HIV receiving Home Based Care. These were assisted either through direct food support or alternative approaches like cash or vouchers. The latter empower small businesses while cutting the cost of delivering food. **In 2012, more than 1 in 10 HIV/TB beneficiaries** (precisely 90,000) **was reached via cash and vouchers.** (this was in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and the Republic of Congo, and we also plan to extend this modality to HIV/TB beneficiaries in Zambia, Swaziland and the DRC).
- Lastly, to adapt to evolving environments and improve our work further, we are at present designing an informed regional HIV strategy for the coming 5 years.

Thank you, Mr. President.