

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

**Executive Board
Third Regular Session**

Rome, 20–24 October 2003

EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 6

For consideration

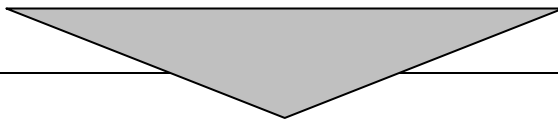
E

Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/2003/6-A/1
10 September
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE REAL-TIME EVALUATION OF WFP'S RESPONSE TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICA CRISIS, 2002–2003 (EMOP 10200.0)

This document is printed in a limited number of copies. Executive Board documents are available on WFP's WEB site (<http://www.wfp.org/eb>).

Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

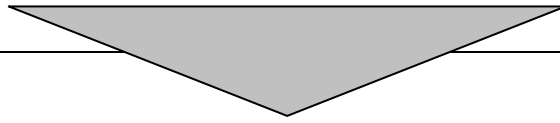
Director, Office of Evaluation (OEDE): Mr K. Tuinenburg tel.: 066513-2252

Chief Evaluation Officer, OEDE: Mr J. Lefevre tel.: 066513-2358

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Supervisor, Meeting Servicing and Distribution Unit (tel.: 066513-2328).



Executive Summary



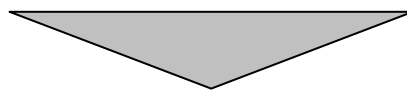
The regional emergency operation for the Southern Africa Crisis Response¹ provided a cohesive response to a food crisis resulting from a combination of drought, economic decline, rising HIV/AIDS prevalence and governance problems. Initial responses to famine in Malawi in early 2002 were inadequate, but the scaling-up of WFP's operations from July of that year coincided with the establishment of a regional management and logistics system; a full regional bureau was set up in October. The regional team responded well to the exceptional circumstances relating to genetically modified organisms, unprecedented levels of local procurement, the need to mill large quantities of maize and new HIV/AIDS challenges.

A combination of pipeline shortages, logistical challenges and lack of capable implementing partners resulted in almost 25 percent of food pledges being carried forward to the new emergency operation in July 2003, following extension of the original operation from April to June. A full complement of food items was rarely achieved: average regional distributions were less than 55 percent of target until January. No appreciable increase in acute malnutrition was noted, however, except in parts of Mozambique where resource levels, access and NGO capacity were insufficient for adequate coverage. Recurrent constraints affecting non-governmental organization partners require corporate attention.

Delays in dispatching sufficient staff with appropriate skills for the emergency operation caused problems. The financial release system linking COMPAS and WINGS needs to be improved, especially for emergencies. The inter-agency vulnerability assessment committees in southern Africa provided useful rolling assessments, but baseline information and comprehensive nutritional surveillance were lacking.² Monitoring and evaluation at the start of an emergency operation need to be improved. Complementary targeted programmes need greater capacity and resources in the transitional post-emergency phase, especially to address chronic issues such as HIV/AIDS.

The response was timely and efficient. Confirmation of its effectiveness will depend on greater investments in impact analysis. Inter-agency coordination, a strength of the regional response, was enhanced by the Special Envoy and by WFP's central role in advocacy and providing information.

Draft Decision*



The Board notes the recommendations contained in this evaluation report (WFP/EB.3/2003/6-A/1) and the management action taken so far, as indicated in the associated information paper (WFP/EB.3/2003/INF/7). The Board welcomed the real-time evaluation approach and encouraged further action on these recommendations, with considerations raised during the discussion taken into account.

¹ The Southern Africa Crisis Response, EMOP 10200.0, covered Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

² Collecting nutrition information is a UNICEF responsibility.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



REAL-TIME EVALUATION

1. WFP's efforts to find ways of evaluating humanitarian relief operations as they unfold include the recently developed real-time evaluation (RTE) approach, which aims to capture important lessons at several stages of a response. WFP's first RTE was applied during the 2002–2003 southern Africa emergency operation (EMOP).
2. Three missions were undertaken, coinciding with three phases of the EMOP: (i) from 13 to 30 July 2002, during the inception period; (ii) from 18 November to 20 December 2002, during the intensive implementation phase; and (iii) from 28 April to 17 May, during the closing stages of the first EMOP and preparation of the second. RTE had the following objectives:
 - to promote corporate learning about preparedness, design and implementation of EMOPs;
 - to assess the relevance of WFP's response to the southern Africa humanitarian crisis, progress in achieving objectives and any gaps or unintended outcomes; and
 - to measure the effectiveness of the mode of implementation and the appropriateness of operational policies, guidelines and support.
3. Standard evaluation methods were mainly used. The unique features of RTE were: (i) the ability to present immediate feedback to country, regional and Headquarters staff; (ii) support for self-evaluation by WFP teams on the ground; and (iii) the ability to evaluate a complex operation at different stages, resulting in improved overall assessment. An internal review will assess the efficiency, methods and timing of RTE for potential future use.

REGIONAL EMOP 10200.0

4. The first signs of distress in the six EMOP countries were recognized in September and October 2001: a poor harvest had resulted in empty granaries, escalating food prices and rising malnutrition rates. WFP responded by making individual country appeals through a series of bridging EMOPs that enabled early distributions in response to pre-harvest food shortages. Fifteen donors provided 139,000 tons of food and US\$65.7 million by the end of June 2002, which were subsumed into regional EMOP 10200.0 on 1 July 2002.
5. In May 2002, Special Operation (SO) 10204 for a WFP regional management-coordination unit for the southern Africa crisis was approved at a cost of US\$3.5 million. US\$1 million was released from the Immediate Response Account (IRA). The SO was to ensure managerial support and enhanced logistics coordination for the regional EMOP: the management unit was to maintain close contact with donors and the regional bureaux of other United Nations agencies and facilitate reporting and information flow. The initiative provided a smooth transition to the opening of the regional bureau in October 2002.
6. Building on experience with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)/WFP Logistics Advisory Centre during the 1992–1993 drought EMOP, WFP's Regional Logistics Unit (ReLogS) incorporated a liaison cell within the SADC/Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) division in Harare that supported ReLogS in coordinating regional transport and logistics. The ReLogS website is updated daily with pipeline information, country-specific situation reports, port operation and other logistics and programme information and has been much appreciated by all stakeholders.



EMOP Objectives and Targets

7. The EMOP aimed to:
 - prevent severe household food shortages that could lead to deteriorating nutritional status and starvation;
 - safeguard the nutritional well-being of vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS, children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly;
 - preserve productive and human assets;
 - prevent distress migration from rural areas to towns and neighbouring countries.
8. EMOP 10200.0 was to provide of 992,459 tons of commodities to feed 10.3 million people; the cost to WFP was US\$507 million, including a food cost of US\$193 million, 38 percent of the total. US\$5 million was released from the IRA at the beginning of the EMOP. The operation was initially approved for nine months from 1 July 2002 to 31 March 2003, and extended to 30 June 2003 with a budget revision approved in March 2003 covering increased food costs. Zimbabwe was the largest operation, accounting for almost half of projected commodities.
9. Three seasonal trends were foreseen: (i) July–August 2002: post harvest, requiring less food assistance; (ii) September–November: field preparation and planting; and (iii) December–March 2003: a critical period of depleted food stocks, high prices and increased need for food and other humanitarian assistance.
10. The EMOP took into account food aid planned by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly the C-SAFE consortium of the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Catholic Relief Services and World Vision, which was to implement a three-year developmental relief programme in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe with 160,000 tons of food from a United States Government grant of US\$114 million in the first year. This programme did not actually start until early 2003 and therefore could not fill the additional food gap as foreseen by the WFP/FAO Crop and Food Assessment Mission (CFSAM).

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Policies, Governance and Accountability

11. There is widespread agreement that production failure in southern Africa was not the sole cause of the food security crisis. Inadequate rains and other climatic shocks were contributing factors, but policy and governance failures and HIV/AIDS exacerbated the crisis. The severity of food insecurity in 2001–2002 is remarkable given that the weather was less severe than a decade earlier, when the 1992–1993 emergency response was implemented, and there were fewer crop losses. Explanations include:
 - **Growth failures, rising poverty and declining migration options.** Economic slowdown and macroeconomic problems have meant that urban and industrial jobs have not been created in step with the growth of the workforce, leading to unemployment and declining real wages. Retrenchment in regional employment has exacerbated the lack of generated cash.
 - **Regional, national and local policy and governance issues.** Price control and unpredictable state involvement in input supply, production, storage, and domestic and international trade sent confused messages to producers and private-sector traders. Two significant factors were rapid land redistribution in Zimbabwe and the sale of strategic grain reserves in Malawi. Multiplication of diverse economic activities was generally suppressed. The key to livelihood enhancement is urban and non-farm economic growth, not farm output alone. The emerging



policy framework, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), tends to favour sectoral targets in areas such as education, health or rural roads, but not necessarily the diversified nature of livelihoods. Private farmers have increasingly withdrawn from the market.

- **HIV/AIDS.** The growing pandemic was beginning to overshadow all vulnerability indicators. Southern Africa has the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world: 5 million of an adult population of 26 million are HIV-positive, with the highest rates in Swaziland and Zimbabwe; 600,000 children carry the virus. Southern Africa is home to 4 million orphans, which puts immense strain on social welfare systems. The “new variant famine” hypothesis suggests that depletion of labour will be a determinant of food insecurity. In households affected by HIV/AIDS, agricultural production has fallen by 60 percent.

Regional Food Security and Malnutrition

12. At no point in the operation was famine a reality, but the situation reflected high degrees of poverty and deprivation over several years. Although the acute food crises of 2001–2003 overstretched coping mechanisms, the relative importance of contributing factors such as food and healthcare still has to be analysed at the national and sub-national levels.
13. Data from 1997–2001 showed that global wasting rates between 1.2 percent and 7.9 percent were not unduly alarming.³ High levels of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition prevailed in all six EMOP countries: 26.5 percent to 53.0 percent of children under 5 were affected by stunting;⁴ between 9.6 percent and 26.1 percent were underweight.⁵ No systematic data are available to analyse the nutritional status of adults.
14. After a review of available surveys, in 2002 the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) found that:
 - Malawi and Mozambique had unacceptably high underweight rates;
 - there were alarming levels of acute malnutrition in parts of Mozambique in December;
 - slow national improvements in underweight status during the 1990s ceased, except in Lesotho; Zimbabwe and Zambia showed deterioration in 2001–2003;
 - national averages hide large sub-national differences in malnutrition trends;
 - a greater number of underweight children were found in districts with high HIV/AIDS prevalence; in Lesotho low weight was worst among child orphans.
15. Addressing such problems in a sustainable way requires a medium-term to long-term strategy that tackles their structural causes. Transition from a large-scale EMOP to a PRRO will require greater conceptual clarity: WFP will need to demonstrate its comparative advantage in recovery and safety-net programmes, particularly in terms of economies of scale.

³ Wasting (acute malnutrition) is growth failure resulting from rapid weight loss or failure to gain weight; it is measured by the weight-for-height index. An acceptable level is less than 2.3 percent, but up to 10 percent is considered usual in developing countries, particularly in Africa.

⁴ Stunting (chronic malnutrition) is measured by a height-for-age index.

⁵ Underweight is measured by a weight-for-age index.



EMOP PERFORMANCE

Innovations

16. The regional EMOP was an opportunity for ODJ and the country offices to develop new approaches to uniquely complex and often unexpected events. In order to learn lessons from the response, it is important to highlight achievements in terms of the factors set out below.
- The role of the WFP Executive Director as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa in high-level advocacy, resource mobilization and coordination was particularly evident in negotiations over genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and in ensuring a unified response from donors and specialized agencies. The Special Envoy's missions called greater attention to the effects of HIV/AIDS on the regional crisis and highlighted the need for increased donor attention to non-food requirements, for example to improve health systems and investments in agriculture.⁶
 - Under the leadership of the ODJ regional director, new models of inter-agency coordination were set up, notably the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination and Support Office (RIACSO). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee working group monitored the situation and invited the WFP regional director to take the lead in consolidating a response to the crisis.
 - There was a new focus on the links between food security, malnutrition and the HIV/AIDS crisis. Approaches developed in the context of the EMOP should help to set standards for future interventions.
 - Preparation of two Implementation Strategies in July and December 2002 helped to clarify operational decisions, identify regional and country-specific issues, improve transparency and provide guidelines for WFP country offices and partners. They constituted an updated advocacy, policy and guidance document for the EMOP as it evolved.
 - The regional logistics apparatus included contingency planning, special funding under two SOs and regional dispatches of food from five entry points in the region.
 - The effective response to the GMO issue challenged WFP's expertise in regional logistics, procurement and resource mobilization to find new funds, milling facilities and sources of local non-GM maize.
 - Continuing investment in Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) assessment methods achieved broad consensus, albeit with reservations from some major donors.
 - ODJ recruited a regional economist to keep abreast of macro-and micro-economic indicators and market trends.
 - Large quantities of food were purchased from surplus areas in the region: between January 2002 and July 2003, ODJ purchased 585,000 tons of food costing US\$116.8 million.

Performance against Targets

17. As with many operations, significant "slippage" was largely beyond the control of WFP management; several external factors were involved. Distribution increased from 25 percent to 77 percent between July 2002 and March 2003, the end of the original EMOP phase. By December 2002 only 265,973 tons, or 43 percent, had been distributed against a target of 620,976 tons. A confirmed 92,000 tons, or 10 percent of projected needs for the regional EMOP,

⁶ In Zimbabwe, the Special Envoy encouraged the Government to allow accreditation of additional NGOs or allow existing NGOs to increase their capacity in different parts of the country.



was carried over from the previous bridging EMOPs but much of this was inherited slippage, not food in store. Without the continuity, performance against targets would have been worse.

18. Distribution shortfalls indicate two variables: (i) the logistical and operational problems facing certain countries, particularly the GMO issue and lack of implementing partners; and, perhaps more importantly, (ii) the 3–5 month time lag between confirmation of donor pledges and delivery of food to beneficiaries. With cash contributions for local and regional procurement, the lead time can be reduced to 1–3 months, which proved an advantage to this EMOP.
19. At the country level, full food pipelines were not established for all four commodities—cereals, pulses, vegetable oil and micronutrient-fortified blended foods—until late 2002 or early 2003. Even then breaks in the pipeline for certain commodities were not unusual. It proved impossible to provide the full balanced food basket to beneficiaries for most of the operation, though calorie and protein intake from all sources were not measured.
20. Between July and November 2002, only 45 percent of targeted beneficiaries were reached, compared with a much-improved 85 percent for the critical months between December and March. By November, only Malawi had reached nearly 100 percent of its target; the rates for the other five countries were: Swaziland 75 percent, Zambia 45 percent, Mozambique 40 percent, Lesotho 35 percent and Zimbabwe 30 percent. Caution is required in reading beneficiary figures alone: in some cases rations were halved in December, and local post-distribution sharing within communities meant that per capita calorie and protein intakes from WFP food were below target.
21. In Mozambique, where higher rates of malnutrition were noted, only 33 percent of the target tonnage had been delivered by November; the 60 percent mark was not reached until March 2003. There were complex reasons: lack of partners in the worst-hit districts, access problems and the fact that most of the food was distributed through 1,200 food-for-work (FFW) projects, which overstretched NGO capacities; WFP noted that the approach was not self-selective of the most vulnerable people. Complementary non-food assistance was inadequate. The regional allocation of food should have favoured Mozambique in the early months, and efforts should have been made to improve the absorptive capacity.
22. By the end of March 2003, over a third of pledged commodities of a 76 percent funded pipeline were undistributed.⁷ Late pledges added to the slippage, which fortunately improved the continuity of assistance in the new EMOP from July 2003, providing a carry-over stock of more than 200,000 tons. But what difference did such slippage make to the populations concerned?

Performance against Objectives

23. The answer lies partly in the analysis of objectives. Reports of starvation in areas of Malawi in early 2002 were the only significant indications of system failure in the region; similarly acute malnutrition was noted only in a few remote districts of Mozambique where WFP partners could not initially be identified and where road access was poor. There were no indications of unusual prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies. A reasonable assumption is that WFP's response during the EMOP, even with the shortfalls, helped to avert extreme consequences.
24. The picture is different when livelihoods in general are examined. Although no baseline information was available and no quantitative evaluation could be conducted, qualitative evidence suggests that the EMOP only partly met its livelihood objectives. There was evidence of asset depletion in Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, where food aid deliveries were below target in

⁷ At the end of March 2003, 90 percent of tonnage requirements had been met, whereas only 76 percent of dollar requirements had been covered. The figures were 97 percent for tonnage and 86 percent for dollars at end June 2003. In measuring resources acquired against targets, the dollar figure may be a better indicator of achievement, because some non-traditional donors do not provide full associated costs and tonnages provided may be delayed in delivery.



the early months, but there were fewer reports of asset depletion in Malawi, where emergency response was more timely. It is difficult to judge the impact of food aid in the overall coping strategy of people affected by the emergency, because information about how they coped is only now emerging.

25. There were no reports of distress migration, and school drop-out rates were kept in check, especially where school feeding was carried out.

Coordinating a Regional Response

26. WFP was instrumental in bringing together stakeholders under the “light-handed” RIACSO umbrella, launched in October 2002, and in advocacy efforts on behalf of the Special Envoy. WFP also facilitated close coordination. Agencies were encouraged to meet the non-food requirements of the emergency. WFP’s public information role was crucial; the new information network and website of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Southern Africa Humanitarian Information Management System should improve data collection and analysis.

PROGRAMME THEMES

Assessment

27. The first CFSAMs took place during the main harvest season in April/May 2002. They predicted a regional cereal deficit of 4 million tons until March 2003, requiring 1.2 million tons of emergency cereal food aid for 12.8 million vulnerable people. The regional EMOP was prepared on the basis of this assessment.
28. There was an understandable focus on food in the initial CFSAM analysis. A broader vulnerability appraisal was sought through the rolling assessments led by the SADC’s FANR division and undertaken by country-based VACs, supported by WFP staff and resources, which were examples of well coordinated inter-agency collaboration. Their figures were almost universally adhered to and the process helped to build institutional capacities in the six participating SADC member states.
29. Three VAC exercises, which combined household surveys and food-economy approaches, were undertaken in August 2002, November 2002 and April 2003. In the first, the number of people requiring assistance was revised upward to 14.4 million; this was increased to 15.2 million in the second exercise. Although both VACs called for an increase in the amount of food required, WFP revised the EMOP without increasing tonnage as a result of slippage against earlier distribution targets. The third VAC provided an update on household food security in the new crop year and a preliminary forecast of food aid requirements in the new season.
30. There were concerns about unassessed needs in remote rural areas, for example in districts of Mozambique bordering Zimbabwe; urban assessments were undertaken only in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Given the complexities of the VAC process, however, the assessment coverage was impressive.
31. Maintaining inter-agency consensus proved a challenge. Some partners felt that too much emphasis was given to food security; others were unhappy about the technical demands of using household food economy approaches. There were tensions between the use of VAC as an emergency needs assessment tool and as a baseline survey for longer-term chronic trends. Given the VAC’s original food focus, some sectoral needs were included in the second and third rounds, but trend analysis over time was possible only for cereal prices and commercial imports.



32. There were more serious impediments to accurate assessment forecasts.
- Absence of reliable data undermined projections of commercial imports and government aid. Estimated levels of government imports in Zimbabwe varied between 250,000 tons and 800,000 tons; there is no accurate account of the amount of food brought into the country and distributed through these and informal commercial channels.
 - Informal cross-border trade bringing cheaper maize than that available through government-subsidized interventions was underestimated. In Malawi, for example, of 250,000 tons of commercial maize procured by the Government only 50,000 tons could actually be sold at subsidized prices.
 - Government population figures from which overall needs were extrapolated were initially wrong; VAC and CFSAM have no other sources. Census data were later corrected by the Governments of Zimbabwe—minus 2 million people—and Zambia—minus 1 million people. In Lesotho, estimates were complicated by a large floating population of work migrants.
 - The deteriorating quality of crop forecasts from some ministries of agriculture resulted in weak data, particularly for alternative staple crops such as cassava.
 - There was a lack of baseline information about consumption of non-cereals as part of household coping strategies.

It must be stressed, however, that all food distributed by aid agencies appears to have been consumed in the targeted communities rather than sold on the market.

33. Integration of nutrition and food-security assessments has been a recurrent concern. Assessments carried out in isolation hindered identification of food and non-food causes of malnutrition. Nutrition-related measurements were included in the first VACs in Zambia and Zimbabwe, though UNICEF was concerned about the appropriateness and adequacy of the VAC sampling frame for nutritional status. This difficulty was overcome in Mozambique, where the second and third VACs included parallel and statistically representative nutritional surveys.

Targeting

34. Four targeting methods were used in the EMOP:
- geographic targeting of the most vulnerable areas, especially when resource delays required prioritization of relief assistance to hunger hotspots;
 - temporal targeting—a staged build-up of coverage based on seasonal hunger;
 - household targeting based on vulnerability profiles including the VAC and food-security indicators; and
 - targeted activities including FFW, school feeding, supplementary feeding and special rations for families affected by HIV/AIDS; the proportion of these activities compared with general food distributions ranged from over 80 percent in Mozambique to less than 20 percent in Zimbabwe.
35. Initial estimated needs were derived from CFSAM and VAC, but a variable supply line meant that partners had to either cut the number of beneficiaries or reduce the ration. Giving a smaller quantity of food to a greater number of households would undermine the plan to provide a full monthly ration, or reference ration. In some countries the exclusion error—the share of eligible beneficiaries not reached by the relief programme—was significantly higher than the inclusion error—the percentage of relief assistance provided to beneficiaries who did not meet the assistance criteria. The breadth-versus-depth dilemma, which is not unique to this EMOP, dogged the targeting strategy from the outset; it was not resolved, other than by simply adapting



distributions to incoming food totals. Rapid scaling up and down in accordance with the VAC updates overstretched the capacity of some NGOs.

36. Constraints on logistics and operational and implementation capacity in some countries increased the exclusion error. Some hot spots in Mozambique, for instance, were not adequately covered in the early months because of a lack of food resources and partners.
37. Field-level targeting and final distribution were guided by VAC-defined vulnerability profiles and beneficiary lists identified by village committees. NGOs assisted in improving initial beneficiary lists based on locally developed distribution guidelines, which were not available at the corporate level.
38. A WFP targeting evaluation in Malawi in November 2002 found that:
 - food aid reached and was consumed by food-insecure households in the targeted villages and was shared with relatives and in communities to meet cultural obligations; where some benefits reached community chiefs, this was generally uncontentious;
 - communities themselves considered that up to 66 percent of households were ultra poor and very poor, in contrast to the 30 percent targeted in most communities; and
 - continuous field presence and monitoring by WFP and partners to refine and adapt distribution systems was evident.
39. In Malawi, an independent Learning Support Office⁸ noted good coordination among stakeholders, especially among district relief committees and district civil-protection committees, and commended WFP for strengthening collaboration between government and district authorities and NGOs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

40. The EMOP document included a logical framework, a review of risks and assumptions and a clear strategy for performance monitoring, but initial EMOP arrangements were largely based on locally available tools and practices of uneven quality. Standard reporting formats had not been developed and were not readily available from Headquarters. The format for EMOPs does not include a budget line for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), but in this case funds were set aside under other headings.
41. The situation was addressed in August 2002, however, by the regional bureau circulating a monthly consolidated output report and other mechanisms. Regional performance could then be summarized: six months into the operation all countries had achieved adequate data accuracy, with greater attention to M&E than in many other operations.
42. M&E guidelines issued by Headquarters were helpful in defining terms and outlining broad strategies, but were less useful as a template to be adapted to country contexts. A step-by-step procedural guide is required, particularly when dealing with inexperienced implementing NGOs, otherwise M&E staff expend a great deal of time producing their own guidelines.
43. Some imbalance was observed between data gathering, which was too extensive, data processing, which was behind schedule, and analysis, which was insufficiently linked to programme adaptation. Many data had not been processed when the EMOP ended. More use could have been made of sample surveys and ad hoc studies such as the targeting study in Malawi.

⁸ The learning Support Office was established on a temporary basis by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action based in the United Kingdom.



44. During the EMOP, ODJ commissioned a questionnaire-based impact evaluation in a few districts in each country. The final report was not available to the RTE team at the time of writing its full and summary reports.
45. ODJ developed a more comprehensive M&E system from February 2003 onwards. This was a regional framework identifying three elements: (i) output monitoring; (ii) post-distribution monitoring; and (iii) a community and household surveillance system that superseded earlier efforts to develop a sentinel-sites system. This will be implemented in partnership with the C-SAFE NGO consortium and will benefit the second year of the EMOP. The new M&E framework envisages greater linkages with VAC assessments.

Implementation

46. The choice of NGO partners was often limited. Constraints included government restriction of NGO numbers in Zimbabwe, lack of partners in remoter areas of Mozambique, reluctance or inability among international NGOs to expand from existing operational areas and inexperienced NGOs, which were usually local. Some of the stronger international NGOs helped to build local capacities by sub-contracting national NGOs. Distributing large quantities of food to acutely needy people was sometimes incompatible with targeting, monitoring and results-driven reporting.
47. Although ODOC funds were available to address capacity constraints, country offices tended to treat these as grants to be made to NGOs in response to requests; as there was little support or guidance from WFP, the onus was on the NGOs to submit proposals. Lack of NGO experience meant that the proposals were sometimes weak. ODJ has pointed out that WFP standard formats such as beneficiary registration forms and ration cards could have been tailored to meet each country's needs, which would have reduced the corrective measures that were needed during implementation.

Food Basket and Nutrition

48. Regular information about the quantity and quality of rations distributed was available at sub-national level, facilitated by standardized monitoring formats; the reference ration was appropriate and in conformity with guidelines. A reference ration of 400 g of cereals, 60 g of pulses, 20 g of oil and 100 g of corn-soya blend (CSB) was formulated at the beginning of the EMOP, taking into account the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which was adjusted when it became clear that global quantities of CSB were insufficient to meet requirements. A separate ration benchmark was introduced for the winter months in Lesotho.
49. In no country was the optimal daily food ration met consistently over time, however. Different planned rations were established by country offices in consultation with ODJ; prioritization strategies were adapted to resource levels and information available through the VAC process.
50. When resources were low at the beginning of the EMOP, a decision was made to purchase maize as a priority, even though the decision was not the best one in terms of a nutritionally balanced food basket. The decision was nonetheless reasonable from the overall programming perspective. ODJ constantly advocated for nutritional quality and was able to provide increasing amounts of higher-quality food later in the operation, which coincided with the peak of the crisis.
51. The unexpected advantage of the GMO issue was the opportunity to fortify maize during milling to improve the micronutrient content. Between July 2002 and April 2003, 70,322 tons of maize meal was fortified; a further 12,000 tons was purchased commercially.
52. There was no comprehensive nutritional surveillance in the region; systems previously run by governments were no longer functioning. Nutritional surveys were conducted by stakeholders in several countries. In Malawi, it was possible to synchronize district surveys to generate data over



time that gave a good overview of nutritional status in targeted districts during the EMOP; lack of technical capacity in Zambia and lack of political will in Zimbabwe made this impossible. Amalgamation of nutrition and food-security data was achieved in some countries during the first round of VAC assessments, but there were concerns that the VAC sampling frame was inadequate for assessing nutritional status; subsequent VAC assessments therefore did not include anthropometric indicators. WFP and other stakeholders are now exploring the possibilities of a surveillance system led by UNICEF.

HIV/AIDS Approaches

53. Targeting people living with HIV/AIDS for food aid interventions is difficult: information on HIV prevalence is still patchy, and stigmatization prevents close examination of the caseload. WFP responded immediately to viable projects, but their scale does not address the emerging crisis.
54. Initiatives included:
- high levels of advocacy, including a joint mission by the Special Envoy (Humanitarian) and the Special Envoy (HIV/AIDS in Africa) to four countries in the region in January 2003;
 - a new more diversified reference food-aid ration for general distribution;
 - integration of HIV/AIDS proxy indicators in the VAC assessment process;
 - HIV/AIDS education campaigns, including local theatre groups and videos, at general distribution sites in Malawi and Zambia;
 - small pilot projects in community-based programmes and community schools, under the country programme in Malawi and the EMOP in Zambia, to be expanded in the new EMOP; and
 - a handout entitled “Food and HIV/AIDS” included in the “Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa” training programme.
55. Food aid can act as a catalyst in the HIV/AIDS regional crisis, for example by changing work patterns and supporting nutritional requirements. It is wholly insufficient without additional non-food interventions, however, a point which WFP has frequently stressed.

Complementary Assistance

56. Efforts were made to include specific population groups in a diversified programme, even though the number of such activities was small in relation to general distribution. Projects included school feeding, therapeutic and supplementary feeding for children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women, and support to AIDS orphans and, in Zambia, AIDS-affected urban families. The challenges include:
- insufficient time for planning and collecting data, identifying and assessing the capacity of implementing partners and preparing the activities;
 - revising old supplementary feeding and therapeutic feeding protocols and creating new guidelines and training for government and NGO staff, as in Malawi;
 - recognizing that preparing, implementing and monitoring additional EMOP activities adds to the workload of country office staff; additional human and financial resources are needed, including non-food inputs, technical knowledge and experience.
57. Launching diverse complementary activities for only a few months with insufficient resources can be inappropriate. Activities that started half way through the operation rarely met their targets. Ongoing recovery activities need to be enhanced to create new livelihood opportunities



for subsequent integration into PRROs and country programmes. The new EMOP envisages expanding these programmes for 2,214,550 beneficiaries in the six countries; it is not yet clear, however, whether the constraints can be overcome in the short term.

Gender Issues

58. There were encouraging signs that gender issues were mainstreamed in the regional EMOP, its country components and supporting documentation. Some shortcomings were recognized by the regional bureau and country offices early on; partners' incapacities were often the cause.
59. WFP's Commitments to Women were reflected in memoranda of understanding with NGOs but they were not systematically followed up during implementation. At the beginning of the operation, registration formats at final delivery points (FDPs) did not cater for collection and analysis of essential gender-disaggregated data. The majority of NGO field personnel in Malawi and Zambia were men. In locations visited by the mission, beneficiary selection was often carried out with little or no participation by women. Regionally, women's representation in food-management committees was below the WFP objective of 50 percent of membership and executive roles, and their participation was often muted.
60. Several positive developments should be recognized.
 - The successful inter-agency task force of UNICEF, Save the Children-UK and WFP ran workshops throughout the region on "Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women and Children in Humanitarian Work". Over 4,650 participants were trained between November 2002 and April 2003.
 - Some VAC data was sufficiently detailed to identify gender-specific levels of inequality and vulnerability.
 - The women's relief committees in Swaziland played a central role in managing food distributions; they are being replicated in Zambia.

LOGISTICS

General Performance

61. Establishment of a management and logistics centre in Johannesburg brought a welcome degree of cohesion to a complicated operation. Globally appropriate logistics policies and guidelines and contingency planning scenarios were in place, established in preparatory visits by the chief of the Surface Transport Service. Logistics country assessments were undertaken quickly and efficiently.
62. The SO, originally developed for the logistics response, was extended to the general management of the regional office and was vital in resourcing regional management and ReLogS. Staffing levels and experience, however, were inadequate for an operation of this scale. There was also a vacuum left by the disappearance of the SADC transport branch set up in 1992–1993.
63. The slow build-up of delivery in the first six months resulted from lack of commodities, port capacity and overland transport, minimum staffing levels, the GMO issue, a shift to local purchases, milling, procedural requirements and an initial lack of implementing partners. By January 2003, these constraints were largely overcome.



64. The strength of the commercial sector in southern Africa enabled WFP to outsource handling at ports, management of food deliveries on the South African rail network and management of transshipment points and extended delivery points. Final delivery points (FDPs) and secondary deliveries were managed by implementing partners.
65. Import certificates were delayed by up to three weeks, and requests through SADC to reduce the delays had no effect. There were sometimes negative effects on food availability, which further complicated pipeline management.
66. The additional SO 10224 was approved in late 2002 to rehabilitate 77 km of railway from the port of Nacala in Mozambique to Malawi and to provide additional leased locomotives. This SO was fully funded by two donors and will be completed by December 2003.
67. The 200 six-wheel-drive trucks donated by the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)/Norway were a significant success, particularly for transport to remote areas, despite early reservations and some country offices' preference for commercial transporters, particularly in Malawi. A cost-efficiency comparison with commercial operators, though desirable, may not be easy because this type of capacity does not exist on the normal transport market.

GMO Issue

68. Response to the GMO issue took the form of extensive regional purchasing in South Africa, in effect turning ReLogS into another country operation dispatching from silos and dealing with milling, bagging and procedural requirements. In Zambia GMOs had to be removed, including those already in-country. Genetically modified maize was diverted to silos in Durban and Dar-es-Salaam and supplies were interrupted while regional procurements were sought.
69. There were several implications of the GMO issue. It was necessary to mill genetically modified maize from the United States in parallel with local purchases; maize meal was simultaneously fortified. South African mills were recommissioned, retaining 25 percent of milling by-products for animal feed, but even this became uneconomic as maize and feed prices fell. In Bulawayo, a normal 8 percent loss was incurred, plus a milling charge. Zambia did not take any genetically modified products, milled or whole. The Malawi country office arranged milling in-country but was only obliged to mill United States maize once the planting season started.

Local and Regional Purchases

70. This was the largest local and regional purchase operation in WFP's recent history. The regional and country office procurement units worked well, but staffing was insufficient for the new circumstances. Because of the question of GMOs, originally anticipated to constitute 15 percent of all commodities delivered, by mid-June 2003 regional purchases had increased to 334,000 tons, costing US\$63 million, of which 280,000 tons came from South Africa; a further 121,000 tons was purchased internationally.⁹ The policy was to make purchases in small lots so as not to affect the market adversely. The cost of South African maize was sometimes high, however, reaching US\$195 per ton in late 2002. The considerable appreciation of the South African rand against the United States dollar was the biggest factor behind price rises.
71. Although contracting of food purchases was professional and effective, the regional office was not able to devote sufficient time and effort to non-food purchases. There was a lack of clarity over available funding: Zimbabwe only received its full allocation of vehicles at the end of the

⁹ This is based on data available to the mission in mid-June 2003 for EMOP 10200.0. International and regional purchases rose to 585,000 tons between January 2002 and July 2003 for the earlier bridging EMOPs and EMOP 10200.0, as noted earlier in this report.



EMOP, for example, and it took five months to deliver Malawi's temporary storage tents, which had been ordered for pre-positioning before the rains.

Information Systems

72. The region had an effective information and communications technology (ICT) operation for general communications, security and e-mail, and the equipment for WINGS and COMPAS. Communications problems were experienced in some locations, however, such as the port of Nacala. Staff training was below par. The initial ICT team (FITTEST) was efficient, but continuity and coverage were compromised because staff were available only for short periods.
73. Pipeline information was regular and enhanced by the ReLogS website. A weakness was that WFP's shipping service was not chartering United States vessels: regional logistics were often only informed of shipments once they were at sea. Country offices and ODJ worked hard at pipeline management, but it was not clear initially whether pipeline staff reported to programming or logistics. ODJ took management decisions to place the regional pipeline officer in the bureau director's office and to have the programme unit chair a pipeline committee.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

74. ODJ devoted considerable time and effort to advocacy and resources mobilization, supported by the Fundraising and communications Department at Headquarters. The Executive Director as Special Envoy was instrumental in raising the profile of the operation. Donor response to the EMOP rose from 37 percent at the end of September 2002 to 86 percent by end June 2003 in dollar terms, and by 97 percent in tonnage terms.
75. A feature of this operation was the number and diversity of donors: more than 40 had contributed by the end of May 2003. Creative solutions had to be found for some non-traditional donors to generate associated costs on contributions, because they did not provide full cost recovery.
76. Malawi and Zambia in particular benefited from the regional flexibility of resource mobilization; initial food for Swaziland was borrowed from Mozambique. The relatively small caseload in Mozambique also benefited, even without a government-declared emergency, but the response could have been greater in the first six months of the EMOP.

HUMAN RESOURCES

77. The EMOP required rapid increases of staff from scratch; out-posted staff from ODK, short-term temporary duty personnel and consultants were used initially. It was helpful to have the ten stand-by agreement staff, particularly for logistics operations; there were also 11 United Nations Volunteers. There was a new country office in Zimbabwe and a new satellite office in Swaziland. By December 2002, 900 personnel were deployed in the region, but there were severe staff shortages in the opening stages of the operation. A small group of professional staff had to train locally recruited staff and guide consultants¹⁰ while tackling their own heavy workload.
78. Involvement of a Rome-based team in designing the EMOP was innovative, but more consistent monitoring by the Human Resources Division (HR) would have been useful. The

¹⁰ There were fifty consultants by November 2002.



Emergency Response Roster (ERR) provided 22 staff to ODJ. An RTE review of ERR arrangements found that managers were reluctant to release trained staff, that most were P3 or below and that in some cases ERR staff were used only to fill gaps pending appointments of regular staff.

79. Women were well represented at all levels. Coordination among Headquarters units was not always efficient with regard to ODJ staffing requirements. HR dealt with re-assignments and temporary-duty staff, OHA with roster deployments and ALITE with standby agreements.
80. The first two RTE missions noted prolonged high levels of stress. Solutions are not easily found; informal peer support may often be the best approach. As the operation stabilized, stress levels were reduced.

FINANCE

81. Country office managers did not have clear information about the availability of finance in general and landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) funding in particular. Transport suppliers were often paid late because of delays in releasing funds.
82. The cash flow problems were systemic, relating to the handling of COMPAS, which is an integral part of releasing direct support cost (DSC) funds in WINGS. Cash releases depended either on the release of the Bill of Lading into the system in the case of in-kind shipments, or confirmation of arrival at destination in the case of regional and local purchases. In both cases there were delays of several months between confirmation of a pledge and availability of DSC funds for commitment. The problem was exacerbated by the need to transfer data manually between COMPAS and WINGS, which required skills that were not always available. The COMPAS system was too rigid; but there was a management failure to implement corporate policy in setting up adequate documentation methods before installing COMPAS.
83. Cash flow under DSC was particularly problematic. By March 2003, commitments of US\$18.9 million exceeded the income level of US\$18.3 million. Four reasons emerge:
 - Non-traditional donors do not always provide DSC funds. This and other factors led to an estimated shortfall of US\$5 million against the DSC budget.
 - There were problems with funds released through WINGS (see above).
 - WFP Headquarters unilaterally transferred US\$1 million of staff costs from the PSA budget to the EMOP DSC budget for the last six months of 2002, which had a negative impact on the DSC cash flow in early 2003.
 - Earlier donations carried a DSC rate of US\$31 per ton, not the adjusted higher EMOP DSC rate.
84. Recognizing these problems, WFP Headquarters has put in place new triggers for LTSH, other direct operating costs (ODOC) and DSC fund transfers; the results will be felt in future EMOPs.

CONCLUSIONS

85. WFP's coherent response to the southern Africa emergency included major new departures, especially with respect to HIV/AIDS and inter-agency coordination, and in response to GMO issues and regional procurement. Although it expresses reservations on some issues, RTE wishes to highlight the enormous personal dedication, expertise and innovation that went into making the EMOP a notable success in many respects, and one from which important lessons will be derived.



RECOMMENDATIONS

86. The following recommendations are made:

- Strengthen WFP's needs assessments through: (i) a review of CFSAM methodology—improved assessment of anticipated imports, replacing crop with food balance sheets and establishment of per capita food requirements; (ii) emergency needs assessment guidelines that meet minimum standards in sampling, livelihood, market and non-food needs analysis; and (iii) clarification of chronic and transitory food insecurity through more baseline studies in areas where populations are exposed to recurrent shocks.
- Provide corporate policy and operational guidance on targeting and distribution strategies, reviewing the concept of individual and family reference rations in the light of improved understanding of community social-support mechanisms and household coping capacities, including the role of famine foods.
- Ensure that M&E has dedicated funding and a budget line in EMOP and PRRO documents. Specialist M&E and VAM staff should be dispatched from the outset of a new EMOP. Corporate guidance on M&E should include practical modules, step-by-step advice and standard forms for easy adaptation to local requirements. A balance should be sought between M&E data gathering, data cleaning/processing and data analysis.
- Review the requirements for rapid installation, operation and linkages of WINGS and COMPAS in an emergency context. It is most important to ensure that adequate training is in place in country offices.
- Rationalize staff recruitment for emergencies. A single Headquarters team could be responsible for all emergency staffing of EMOPs. To complement the ERR, establish a roster of external consultants, including senior programmers familiar with WFP, and ensure gender balance. Request the deputy executive director (Operations) and/or chief of staff (OED) to be more active in roster deployments, ensuring that managers justify retention of staff when needs are acute.
- Address NGO capacity in emergencies, providing guidance for country offices in rapid appraisal of NGO capacity and options to address long-term and short-term capacity weaknesses in funding, training and external inputs.
- Develop clear arguments for WFP's comparative advantage with respect to addressing the structural causes of food insecurity and malnutrition, including HIV/AIDS, particularly in the context of PRSPs and the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework. General food distributions should be limited to clearly defined periods.
- Consolidate and improve the quality of existing complementary targeted interventions, rather than increase them.

87. More detailed recommendations are contained in the full Final Report.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ALITE	Augmented Logistics Intervention Team for Emergencies
CFSAM	Crop and Food Assessment Mission
COMPAS	Commodity movement tracking and analysis system
CSB	Corn-soya blend
DSC	Direct support costs
EMOP	Emergency operation
ERR	Emergency Response Roster
FANR	Food, agriculture and natural resources committee of SADC
FDP	Final delivery point
FFW	Food for work
GMO	Genetically modified organism
HR	Human resources
ICT	Information and communications technology
IRA	Immediate response account
LTSH	Landside transport, storage and handling
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODJ	Southern Africa Regional Bureau
ODK	East And Central Africa Regional Bureau
ODOC	Other direct operating costs
OED	Office of the Executive Director
OHA	Office of Humanitarian Affairs
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
ReLogS	Regional Logistics Unit
RIACSO	Regional Inter-Agency Coordination and Support Office
RTE	Real-time evaluation
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SO	Special operation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System

