Malawi Fact Sheet
Community and Household Surveillance (CHS) March 2009

Highlights of March 2009

- 40% of the sampled households indicated to have no cereal stocks at the time of the survey. This compares to 72% in March 2008 and 90% in March 2006.
- 85% of the sampled beneficiary households indicated food assistance as their most important source of cereal while 43% of the non-beneficiary households rely on purchase, 32% rely on casual labour and 19% on own harvest.
- Twenty-one percent of the non-beneficiary and 17% of the beneficiary households received food remittances in the six months prior to the survey while only 9% and 15% had received cash remittances respectively. Only 13% of the households received agricultural inputs.
- Round 12 shows that 5% of the households sold assets to pay for food, similar to October 2008 results but a decrease from 11% of March 2008. In addition, 5% of the sampled households sold assets to pay for health care which has not changed since October 2007.
- Twenty-two percent of the sample households borrowed money during the 3 months prior to the survey, an increase from 19% in October 2008. Of the households that borrowed money, 73% used the money to buy food, 15% to pay for health care and 11% to buy agricultural inputs.
- Ninety percent of the households had access to agricultural land and nearly all cultivated.

Effects of Food Assistance

Analysis of CHS data allows for comparison of WFP beneficiaries and non-beneficiary groups on the basis of measures computed from the household data. The coping strategy index (CSI) measures the frequency and severity of actions taken by households in response to the presence or threat of a food shortage. A lower CSI score indicates reduced stress on the household and thus, relatively better food security.

As indicated in the graph, the average CSI score for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households increased from October, 2008 and up to March 2008 levels for non-beneficiaries. Furthermore, the mean coping strategies index was significantly (p < 0.001) higher in non-beneficiaries compared to beneficiaries, indicating the positive impact of food assistance on beneficiary households.

- By Programme activity, the average CSI was significantly (p < 0.05) lower for the Home Based Care (HBC) beneficiary households (20) compared to the OVC beneficiary households (43).
- For the non-beneficiary households the mean CSI was highest in Nsanje (50) followed by Chikwawa (48) and Kasungu (25) districts. For the beneficiary households, the mean CSI was highest in Nsanje (43) followed by Chikwawa (41), Phalombe (31) and Kasungu (17) districts.

Food Consumption

The food consumption score not only allows comparisons of dietary quality and diversity between beneficiaries and non-beneficiary populations but also is used to establish threshold of dietary quality against which to compare these populations. Research has shown that dietary diversity and frequency is a good proxy measure of household food security.

The chart below shows an increase in both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households with poor consumption and decrease for those with adequate consumption, this gives an indication of a decrease in food security for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households - possible this being the lean season and following the high food prices.

Consumption classifications

Using a 7-day recall period, data was collected on the variety and frequency of different foods and food groups to calculate a weighted food consumption score. Weights were based on the nutritional density of the foods.

Households were then classified as having either ‘poor’, ‘borderline’ or ‘adequate’ consumption based on the analysis of the data.

Households with ‘borderline’ consumption are the equivalent of cereals and vegetables on a daily basis plus pulses and oils about 4 times per week. Those with ‘poor’ consumption managed to eat the equivalent of only cereals and vegetables on a daily basis. This is considered as a bare minimum and is a sign of extreme household food insecurity.
In order to better understand the relative importance of different livelihood sources the heads of households were asked to estimate the contribution of each source to the total household income.

The graph on the right shows that for non-beneficiary households the greatest contribution comes from casual labour/ganyu (35%) followed by food crop production (26%), cash crop production (12%), small business (8%) and ‘other’ (8%). Compared to March 2007 a much greater share is coming from less is coming from food crops and less from ganyu and small business.

The graph below shows that for beneficiary households food assistance (50%), casual labour/ganyu (18%), sales of food crops (14%) and cash crops (9%) have the greatest contribution to the total income. Comparing to March 2007, beneficiaries are less reliant on casual labour and much more on food assistance. There is also increased reliance on food and cash cropping activities.

When comparing the two groups, significant differences are observed in share from food crops, casual labour, livestock, skilled trade, gifts and food assistance.

### Livelihood Sources and Expenditure

**Main livelihood sources of households**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Non-beneficiaries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food assistance (76%)</td>
<td>'Ganyu' (75%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Ganyu' (61%)</td>
<td>Food crop sales (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food crop sales (37%)</td>
<td>Cash crops (24%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash crops (22%)</td>
<td>Small business (14%)</td>
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</tbody>
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Casual labour or ‘ganyu’ was the most common livelihood source for non-beneficiary households and the reliance is similar for non-beneficiaries in March 2008. On the other hand, food assistance was the most common source of livelihood for the beneficiary households but was much higher than the 42% who named it as a main source in March 2008.

- HBC beneficiary households were most likely to rely on food assistance (82%), casual labour (50%), food crop production (23%) and small business (20%) as main sources of livelihood while OVC beneficiaries also rely mainly on food assistance (72%), casual labour (68%), food crop production (45%), cash crop production (26%) and small business (9%).
- The main differences are that HBC beneficiary households are engaged more in small business and petty trade while OVC beneficiary households tend to be more agriculture based, engaging in crop production and casual labour.

### Expenditure information

- Beneficiary households had significantly ($p < 0.001$) lower share of monthly expenditure for food (46%) than non-beneficiaries (61%). Compared to March 2008, the shares were a bit lower.

- Beneficiary households had a higher share of monthly expenditure for health (3.5%) compared to non-beneficiaries (2.3%) but this was not statistically significant.

- Per capita monthly expenditure was significantly lower ($p < 0.05$) in beneficiary households (MK 430) compared to non-beneficiaries (MK 634). Compared to March 2008, the amounts are higher for both groups.

- By programme, activity, there were no differences in share of monthly expenditure between HBC and OVC households. However, per capita monthly expenditure was significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher in HBC beneficiary households (MK 586) compared to OVC beneficiary households (MK 295).

- There is little difference in share monthly expenditure by consumption groups or asset wealth. However, the per capita monthly expenditure is significantly higher in asset rich households and those with acceptable food consumption.
In this round, vulnerability was assessed by analyzing the number of vulnerable characteristics (out of 12) each household had. Asset poverty, female or elderly head, chronically ill member, hosting orphans, disabled member, recent death of a member, 80% or more effective dependants, poor housing, unsafe water or sanitation and having no livestock were used. Households were described as having either low (0-1 characteristics), medium (2-5) or high (6+) vulnerability.

- Significantly more (p < 0.001) beneficiary households had high vulnerability (25%) as compared to non-beneficiary households (11%). The trend was similar to the past 3 rounds, however the rate had slightly decreased for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households.
- The chart below compares the mean coping strategy index (CSI) and food consumption score (FCS) by vulnerability level and beneficiary status. For both groups the relationship between FCS and vulnerability is clearly illustrated with all beneficiaries having better consumption than non-beneficiaries regardless of vulnerability.
- The coping strategy for beneficiary households was lower than that of the non-beneficiary households in each of the vulnerability categories. This is attributed the food assistance received which reduces the risky coping strategies for the beneficiaries.
- By programme activity, 29% of the OVC households (similar to October, 2008 results) were highly vulnerable as compared to 21% of the HBC households (had decreased from 25% in October, 2008).
- By district, Chikwawa continued to have the highest percentage of highly vulnerable households (23%), followed by Phalombe (19%), Nsanje (16%) and Kasungu (12%).

### Asset wealth

Asset wealth is defined on the basis of the number of different types of productive and/or non productive assets owned by a household. Groups are classified as:

- **Asset Poor**: 0 to 4 different types of assets
- **Asset Medium**: 5 to 9 different types of assets
- **Asset Rich**: 10 or more different types of assets

Targeting efficiency was assessed by analyzing the significant differences of the vulnerability characteristics between the beneficiary and non-beneficiary households.

- The best targeting was found in Chikwawa district followed by Phalombe where 4 or more demographic vulnerability characteristics were found to be significantly different.
- Targeting of programmes should be improved for Kasungu and Nsanje districts as each has only two demographic characteristics with a significant difference between beneficiary and non-beneficiary households. Similar districts were reported to have had targeting problems in October 2008.

In total, 52% (slight increase from last round) of the households were asset poor with significant difference between beneficiaries (58%) and non-beneficiaries (45%).

The chart on the left compares the mean coping strategy index (CSI) and food consumption score (FCS) by asset wealth categories and beneficiary status.

For non-beneficiary households, the asset poor were significantly (p < 0.05) more likely to have poor food consumption levels and to use risky coping strategies. The trend was similar for the beneficiary households.

The highest number of asset poor households were found in Nsanje (59%), followed by Phalombe (57%), Chikwawa (52%) and Kasungu (35%).
Overall, 90% of the beneficiary and non-beneficiary households had access to agriculture land with Chikwawa (79%) as the least followed by Nsanje (88%), Kasungu (97%) while Phalombe was the highest with 99% of households.

When the beneficiary and the non-beneficiary households were compared, there was no difference in land access while by programme activity, HBC beneficiary households were more likely to have access to agricultural land (94%) than the OVC (87%) beneficiaries. From the graph below the majority of the beneficiary and non-beneficiary households cultivated 0.5 to 1.0 acres in the 2008/2009 season. All households indicated that they did not use any means of draught power, meaning they cultivated by hand.

Majority of the cultivating households grew maize in the (2008/2009) growing season (84% of the beneficiaries and 86% of the non-beneficiaries). Other crops that were grown included beans and sorghum (31%), millet (29%), tobacco (22%), groundnuts (21%) and cotton (12%). About 47% used subsidized chemical fertilizer and 21% normal purchase.

Sources of Food Consumed by Households

Identifying and monitoring major sources of food over time is critical to understand the principle factors affecting food security of households. As illustrated in the chart below:

- Non-beneficiary households accessed most of their food from a combination of production and purchase. Those with poor consumption accessed significantly more ($p < 0.001$) from casual labour (ganyu) and significantly less ($p < 0.01$) on purchase.
- Beneficiary households with borderline or acceptable consumption access most of their food from a combination of production, purchase and food assistance while those with poor consumption access mainly from production and food assistance.
- Compared to March 2008, reliance on the various sources is similar for the non-beneficiaries while for beneficiaries there is less reliance on casual labour and more on hunting/gathering and food assistance for the households with poor consumption.

Education in Round 12

- For beneficiaries 92% of the eligible boys and 94% of the eligible girls were enrolled and attending school in March, 2009 as compared to 89% (B) and 90% (G) in October 2008 and 91% (B) and 90% (G) in March 2008.
- When comparing by beneficiary status, there is little difference in the enrollment for both boys and girls.
- However, by programme activity, 97% of the eligible girls from OVC and 89% from HBC beneficiary households respectively were enrolled and attending.
- By orphan status, 92% of the non-orphan eligible boys and girls were enrolled and attending school compared to 93% of orphan boys and girls. Further analysis shows that among the beneficiary households, there is a slight difference in the percentages of orphan (92%) and non-orphan (94%) children currently enrolled and attending school.
- Further analysis showed that only 4% of the eligible boys and girls dropped out of school this year. Only 12% never enrolled.

Households obtain food in one or more of the following ways:
- Grow and consume from their own stocks
- Purchase from markets
- Transfers from relatives or members of the community
- Casual labour
- Transfers in the form of food aid
- Gathering wild foods

Understanding how these patterns differ across groups, provides a general starting point for understanding the nature of food insecurity. (Source: Food And Nutrition Technical assistance (FANTA).)