

House of Commons  
International Development  
Committee

**THE HUMANITARIAN  
CRISIS IN SOUTHERN  
AFRICA**

Third Report of Session 2002–03

*Volume I*

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CRISIS IN SOUTHERN  
AFRICA**

Third Report of Session 2002–03

*Volume I:  
Report and Proceedings of the Committee*

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### **Footnotes**

In the footnotes of this Report, references to oral evidence are indicated by 'Q' followed by the question number. References to written evidence are indicated by the page number as in 'Ev 12'. The oral and written evidence is published separately in Volume II (HC 116-II)

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# THIRD REPORT

**The International Development Committee has agreed to the following Report:**

## **THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

### **SUMMARY**

In early 2002 southern Africa was gripped by food shortages. These were just one aspect of a complex humanitarian crisis, with impacts ranging across all sectors, from agriculture, to education and health. The trigger for the crisis was erratic rainfall. The vulnerability of the population meant that a moderate environmental shock was enough to push communities beyond the limits of their normal coping strategies, and over the edge.

The sources of vulnerability in southern Africa are: deep and widespread poverty; HIV/AIDS; and, poor governance and inappropriate policies. Poor governance is nowhere more evident than in Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe would normally be a part of the solution to food shortages in southern Africa: at present, it is a major part of the problem. In Malawi, the sale of the Strategic Grain Reserve and the allegations of corruption which surround it, illustrated the role that poor governance plays, and exacerbated the food shortages.

A major international effort has been made to respond to the crisis. The aim is to prevent unnecessary suffering and deaths, and to sow the seeds for sustainable development in the region. It seems that a repeat of the events of early 2002 will be avoided this year. The international humanitarian response was initially clouded by concerns about governments in the region, and has been disrupted by concerns about genetically-modified maize. But overall, the relief effort, led by the World Food Programme, has been a success.

Short-term humanitarian responses must now be integrated into longer-term development. If rural livelihoods are to be improved, the neglect of agriculture must end. Nothing else has the potential to lift millions of poor rural people out of poverty. If communities are to be protected from future shocks, safety nets and social protection measures must be put in place. Well-designed public works programmes—providing food, cash, or agricultural inputs for work—and targeted inputs programmes—providing seeds and fertiliser—offer an effective way of ensuring that short term relief contributes to longer-term development. If communities are to escape from poverty and move towards sustainable development, they must be provided with opportunities; better access to agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser, water, land and credit) and assistance as regards agricultural outputs (maize prices, markets, diversification and exports).

Tackling HIV/AIDS must be a priority as regards both short-term and long-term interventions. Food aid must not miss out the millions of AIDS orphans, and must be nutritionally appropriate. Longer-term development strategies must be based on labour-saving agricultural technologies.

If the countries of southern Africa are to escape the vicious circle of vulnerability, crisis, poverty and HIV/AIDS, governments, donors, NGOs, the private sector and international organisations will have to work together more effectively, and work together regionally. They must make themselves accountable for their actions, so that they put themselves on the path to increased effectiveness. In this way, the "right to food" may become reality rather than rhetoric. If the lessons of the crisis are learnt and applied, and the international community stays engaged, the crisis of 2001-03 in southern Africa might be remembered for the benefits it produced, as well as for the avoidable suffering it inflicted.

## **Background and Acknowledgements**

On 1 July 2002, the United Nations (UN) launched an appeal for US\$611 million to respond to the emerging humanitarian crisis in southern Africa. The Committee announced its inquiry into the subject on 23 July 2002, inviting organisations and individuals with relevant experience and expertise to submit written evidence. In undertaking this inquiry, we set out not to replicate unnecessarily work done elsewhere by academic, governmental and other institutions which have the resources to conduct original research. Our objectives were: to understand the emerging crisis; to examine the response of the international donor community including the Department for International Development; to add what impetus we could to the international response; and, to learn and disseminate lessons which might help to prevent, and/or improve responses to, future crises. We received 17 written memoranda from non-governmental organisations, UN agencies, academics and concerned individuals, and held five evidence sessions at Westminster. A number of us also visited Malawi in October 2002.

We are grateful to all the people and organisations who gave evidence to the inquiry, and to those who assisted us in other ways. We would like to thank especially the following people who gave oral evidence: the Rt Hon Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development; Anthony Smith, Deputy Director, Central and Southern Africa, Department for International Development (DFID); John Winter, former Head, Central and Southern Africa Department, DFID; Rob Holden, Manager, Crisis Management Group, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department Operations Team, DFID; John Hansell, OBE, Food Security Adviser, DFID; Judith Lewis, Regional Director for southern Africa, World Food Programme; Dr. Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex; Dr. John Seaman, OBE, Development Director of the Food Security and Rural Livelihoods Unit, Save the Children Fund, UK; Richard Mawer, Director of the Food Security and Livelihoods Unit, Save the Children Fund, UK; Tony Dykes, Head of southern Africa Team, Christian Aid; Kato Lambrechts, Senior Policy Officer, Christian Aid; Max Lawson, Policy Adviser, Oxfam; Dr. Graham MacKay, Humanitarian Coordinator for southern and West Africa, Oxfam; Professor Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye; and, Dr. Andrew Dorward, Imperial College at Wye. We were helped over the course of the inquiry by our Specialist Adviser, Dr. Stephen Devereux, but stress that the views contained in this report are ours alone.

We would also like thank the British High Commission and the DFID team in Malawi, including Mike Wood and Harry Potter, and the team from Zimbabwe, as well as everyone else we met during our time in Malawi, for helping to make our visit such a valuable and informative experience.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Learning from Malawi

1. Malawi, 2002: hundreds and perhaps even thousands of people die as a result of hunger;<sup>1</sup> millions suffer severe food shortages and see their longer-term development prospects undermined. Southern Africa, 2003: more than 15 million people are in need of emergency food aid and 24% of adults are HIV-positive.<sup>2</sup> The whole region's longer-term development is undermined. As the UN agencies recently stated: "While the world's attention is currently gripped by events in other regions, Africa is in crisis with thousands of people dying silently each day."<sup>3</sup>

2. In October 2002 a number of us visited Malawi to find out about the humanitarian crisis. Malawi is in a desperate state. We saw shocking levels of poverty: villagers with little food and no possessions beyond the second-hand clothes on their backs; people in the capital, Lilongwe, scraping a living by breaking rocks for 40 kwacha—around 25 US cents—per day or selling used plastic bags and bottles by the roadside. We met children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, sitting on dusty walls in the countryside, looking lost, unsure of what to do, or who would look after them. We visited hospitals full of patients with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, which lacked basic equipment and medicines, where people were dying on beds on exposed balconies, and where many of the doctors and nurses were HIV-positive. We also met Government Ministers and officials. Some were battling against the odds to respond to the crisis with the help of donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations; others seemed more concerned with a constitutional debate over whether to allow the President to run for a third term.

3. Thankfully, we also saw signs of hope. We visited a village which had improved its prospects by setting up seed-stores, live-stock enclosures, and a water-pump with the assistance of an NGO. We were shown how to use the water-pump, and a man told us how proud he was that his wife chaired the water-pump management committee. We saw too, in the sweltering heat, the determination of people working to build a bridge to link their village to market, as part of a cash-for-work programme. We met workers at an HIV/AIDS project, who were seeking to change attitudes as well as care for people. We visited a school, full of girls and boys keen to learn. We saw starter packs of seeds and fertiliser being distributed to farmers eager to plant, and were shown a winter crop of maize by villagers rightfully proud of their efforts, and their new treadle-pump. We heard about the efforts of a large commercial farm to diversify its production, and to work in partnership with local smallholders. We heard too about the well co-ordinated efforts of NGOs, Government and donors to respond to the crisis and to provide food aid to the needy.

<sup>1</sup> There are no official estimates of hunger-related deaths in Malawi in 2002. ActionAid, Save the Children Fund (UK) and Traidcraft cite a figure of "at least 500-1000" (Ev 113, 45, 124). This figure comes from Stephen Devereux, *State of disaster: The causes, consequences and policy lessons from Malawi*; see [www.actionaid.org/newsandmedia/the\\_malawi\\_famine\\_of\\_2002.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/newsandmedia/the_malawi_famine_of_2002.pdf) – copy placed in House of Commons Library. In another article, on the basis of information provided by local NGOs, Stephen Devereux suggests that a figure in the range of 1000-3000 may be more accurate; see Stephen Devereux (2002), "The Malawi famine of 2002", *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, vol. 33, no. 4, p. 70 – copy placed in House of Commons Library.

<sup>2</sup> Southern African Development Community (SADC), Food Agriculture and Natural Resources, Vulnerability Assessment Committee, *Regional Emergency Food Security Assessment*, December 2002 – see [www.sadcfanr.org.zw/](http://www.sadcfanr.org.zw/); Ev 1, para 4 [DFID memorandum].

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Southern Africa's humanitarian crisis: Heads of the major humanitarian agencies call for action*, 20 January 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

4. This inquiry is not just about Malawi, but it is coloured largely by our experiences there. We saw during our visit vulnerable people heading towards crisis. We learned about the sources of vulnerability—poverty, poor governance and inappropriate policies, and HIV/AIDS. And we saw the efforts of donors, NGOs and international organisations working—where possible, with Government—to avert a coming crisis, to ensure that short-term assistance supported longer-term development, and to help people to move towards better livelihoods.<sup>4</sup> The causes of poverty and the sources of vulnerability vary across southern Africa. But the issues we learnt about in Malawi are replayed, in different forms, with different emphases, and in different combinations, across southern Africa.

### **Report outline**

5. Our objectives in undertaking this inquiry have been: to understand the emerging crisis; to examine the response of the international donor community including the Department for International Development; to add what impetus we can to the international response; and, to learn and disseminate lessons which might help to prevent, and/or improve responses to, future crises. We continue in chapter 2 by outlining the current situation across the countries of southern Africa. In chapter 3, we examine the ways in which poverty, poor governance and inappropriate policy, and HIV/AIDS have increased the vulnerability of communities in southern Africa to shocks. In chapter 4, we examine the effectiveness of Famine Early Warning Systems in southern Africa, and the adequacy of the international community's response. In chapter 5 our focus expands, as must that of the international community, from the response to the current crisis, to efforts to enable people in southern Africa to move towards food security and sustainable livelihoods, whilst also responding to the challenge of HIV/AIDS. In conclusion, we highlight the lessons we have learnt, particularly as regards the roles and relationships of different organisations, and issues of governance and accountability. We urge our audience, Ministers, politicians and government officials—in rich countries and poor—to do what they can, now, to minimise the effects of the crisis, and to help to sow the seeds of future sustainable development in the region.

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<sup>4</sup> A livelihood is simply a way of making a living. It may include a combination of livelihood activities, for instance some subsistence farming, selling a few vegetables, and some wage labour during the dry season.

## II. CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

### Countdown to the crisis

6. The first signs of an evolving humanitarian emergency in Southern Africa came in January-February 2001, when heavy rainfall across the region caused water-logging of fields and displacement of farming families, notably in southern Malawi, Swaziland, northern Zambia and central Mozambique, where 380,000 people were displaced. Early projections of another good harvest, following the bumper crop of 2000, were immediately revised downward, and the World Food Programme (WFP) launched Emergency Operations to assist flood-affected people in several countries. A large production deficit was also forecast in Zimbabwe, because of a 40% fall in the area planted as a consequence of farm seizures under ZANU-PF's "fast-track land resettlement" programme. In July 2001 the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) post-harvest crop assessments concluded that maize production was 23% down across the region.

7. The official response was slow. The maize-gap in affected countries was expected to be covered by secondary food-crops (such as cassava), commercial and informal imports within the region (from South Africa, Kenya, even northern Mozambique), and national grain reserve stocks. By September-October, however, signs of distress were being reported in several countries: empty granaries, escalating food prices, rising malnutrition rates. Rural areas, where most of the population of southern Africa live, experienced the most severe food shortages and the sharpest increases in food prices. Smallholder families were worst affected, except in Zimbabwe where retrenched farm workers were most vulnerable. In the early months of 2002, at the peak of the annual "hungry season", several hundred hunger-related deaths were recorded in Malawi, and reports of famine were broadcast by the world's media. In April the UN commissioned vulnerability assessments in the six worst-affected countries, and in July WFP launched an appeal for about one million tons of food aid, to assist 10 million people across the six countries of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Following another poor harvest in mid-2002, the number of people considered to be "at risk" by WFP had risen to 16 million by December 2002. Fortunately, by the end of 2002 the international response was reasonably generous, although still patchy and markedly less generous for non-food items (see paragraphs 73-74). By February 2003 the appeal was approximately 70% funded, a level of funding which WFP expected would allow it to meet 85% of its commodity requirements<sup>5</sup>—and the information and logistical constraints that had retarded the response in late 2001 were less binding. At the time of writing, the relief programme appears to be on track and a repetition of the crisis of early 2002 is not expected. However, as the UN's Mid-Term Review of the consolidated inter-agency appeals emphasises, the international community must not become complacent and must stay engaged. Many lives have been saved, but the causes of the crisis have not been removed; "without continued support from the international community, lives and livelihoods of millions remain on the edge of the abyss."<sup>6</sup>

8. According to the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Emergency Food Security Assessment Report, across the six countries included in the UN's appeal, 15.25 million people have needed 733,000 metric tonnes (MT) of food aid from

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<sup>5</sup> *WFP Emergency Report*, no. 6, 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>6</sup> *UN Mid-Term Review of Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeals*, February 2003, p. 1. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

December 2002 to March 2003.<sup>7</sup> Zimbabwe has both the greatest number and the highest percentage of its people in need. Early indications from the current production season are that there will be major food shortages in the coming year too, with the March-April 2003 harvest expected to be well below normal.<sup>8</sup> We are unwilling to speculate on the possible number of deaths due to the crisis. In a context of extreme poverty and high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, it is not easy to differentiate between deaths due to hunger and deaths due to poverty or HIV/AIDS. None of our witnesses have seen fit to speculate on the body-count. In addition, it is our strong belief that humanitarian crises should not be assessed solely in terms of the numbers dying. The humanitarian crisis in southern Africa, as well as leading to avoidable death and suffering, will push millions of households further into poverty, and make it harder for them to escape poverty and to move towards sustainable livelihoods.

## Across the region<sup>9</sup>

### *Zimbabwe*

9. The crisis is at its most acute in Zimbabwe. Fifty-two per cent of its population or 7.2 million people have been in need of food aid, with total requirements amounting to 345,000 MT from December 2002 to March 2003.<sup>10</sup> Thirty-five per cent of adults are HIV-positive. The immediate cause of the humanitarian crisis is a huge shortfall in cereal production. Cereal production for consumption in the current marketing year (April 2002 to March 2003) is 57% down from last year's poor harvest and 69% down from that in 1999/2000. The production of maize is down by 67% on last year and by 77% on 1999/2000.<sup>11</sup> By February 2003, the food security situation had deteriorated across the country, and there were concerns about continuing food shortages beyond the March harvest. The number of commercial farm workers affected by the fast track settlement programme had risen from 488,000 in August 2002 to 1,000,000 in December 2002.<sup>12</sup>

10. In Zimbabwe poor government is the key factor behind the humanitarian crisis. Zimbabwe's badly-planned land redistribution programme has severely disrupted the rural economy—both commercial farms and smallholders—and created a new class of vulnerable people, the displaced farm workers and their families.<sup>13</sup> The politicisation of food aid, the exclusion of the private sector from any role in importing food, and poor relationships between the Government and donors have hindered responses to the crisis. Zimbabwe would normally help to alleviate food shortages in southern Africa. Instead, it is a major cause of the crisis, and an obstacle to an effective humanitarian response.

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<sup>7</sup> SADC Food Agriculture and Natural Resources, Vulnerability Assessment Committee, *Regional Food Security Assessment* [SADC-FANR Assessment], December 2002 - see footnote 2.

<sup>8</sup> *SADC-FANR Assessment*, December 2002 - see footnote 2.

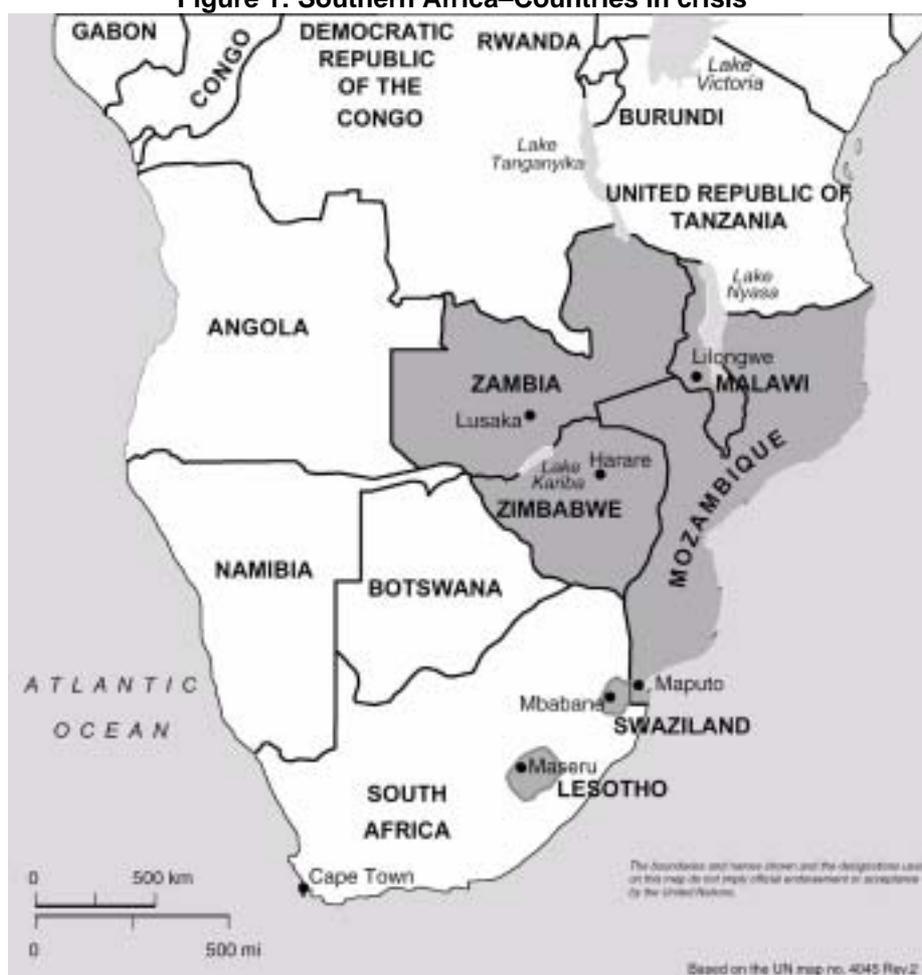
<sup>9</sup> A detailed chronology is provided as an annex to this report - see pp. 94-101.

<sup>10</sup> *SADC-FANR Assessment*, December 2002 - see footnote 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ev 116 [CARE International UK memorandum]

<sup>12</sup> Famine and Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), *Zimbabwe Monthly Food Security Update*, February 2003. Available at [www.fews.net](http://www.fews.net)

<sup>13</sup> Ev 2, para 5 [DFID memorandum]

Figure 1: Southern Africa–Countries in crisis<sup>14</sup>

	Zimbabwe	Malawi	Zambia	Lesotho	Mozambique	Swaziland
<b>Population, 2001</b>	12.8 million	10.5 million	10.3 million	2.1 million	18.1 million	1.1 million
<b>Rural population</b>	64%	85%	60%	71%	67%	73%
<b>Income per capita (GNI, US\$, PPP, 2001)</b>	2340	620	790	2670	1000	4690
<b>Poverty (less than \$2 per day)</b>	64%	85% (estimate)	87%	66%	78%	No data
<b>HIV Adult-infection rate</b>	35%	15%	20%	31%	13%	34%
<b>Peak food aid needs, Dec 02-March 2003</b>	52% 7.2 million	31% 3.6 million	28% 2.8 million	34% 0.76 million	3% 0.65 million	28% 0.3 million
Data sources: Population–World Bank, World Development Report, 2003, Table 1 – see <a href="http://econ.worldbank.org/wdr/wdr2003/">http://econ.worldbank.org/wdr/wdr2003/</a> Rural population–World Bank Country Data Profiles – see <a href="http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html">www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html</a> Income – World Bank, World Development Report, 2003, Table 1. Poverty – World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2002, Table 2.6 – see <a href="http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi2002/">www.worldbank.org/data/wdi2002/</a> Malawi’s PRSP estimates that 65.3% consume less than 10.47 kwacha per day, which is about \$1/day in PPP terms. HIV/AIDS–UNAIDS Epidemiological Factsheets, 2002 – see <a href="http://www.unaids.org/hivaidsinfo/statistics/fact_sheets/">www.unaids.org/hivaidsinfo/statistics/fact_sheets/</a> Food aid–SADC FANR Assessment, December 2002 – see footnote 2.						

<sup>14</sup> See also Ev 23 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

### *Malawi*

11. In Malawi, 3.6 million or 31% of the population have been in need of food aid, with total requirements from December 2002 to March 2003 of 173,000 MT.<sup>15</sup> Malawi has a predominantly rural smallholder population, and—especially when contrasted with Zambia and Zimbabwe—a high population density.<sup>16</sup> Most smallholders rely on producing a single annual harvest of maize from a small plot of land. This is rarely sufficient to meet household needs. Smallholders lack access to seeds, fertiliser or credit to increase their productivity, have few livestock, and are faced with decreasing remittances from mining employment.<sup>17</sup> The addition of HIV/AIDS, with around 15% of adults infected, makes for a country with more than a third of its people at risk of starvation, and with little prospect—either at a household level or a national level—of achieving food security and sustainable livelihoods. In early 2003, Malawi suffered from flooding—damaging roads, houses and crops—which hampered the relief effort.

12. A lower than expected maize harvest in 2000/01, the sale of Malawi's Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR), and logistical bottlenecks hampering the import of maize, resulted in early 2002 “in a widespread shortage of staples and escalating prices for maize taking them beyond the reach of most families.”<sup>18</sup> As the crisis unfolded in late 2001 and early 2002, discussions between the Government of Malawi and donors about how best to address humanitarian needs were—to use DFID's phrase—“clouded” by a lack of transparency on the part of Government about the sale of the SGR.<sup>19</sup> Several hundred people, at least, died due to the food shortages.<sup>20</sup> In early 2003, floods caused by a tropical depression washed away and damaged houses, roads, bridges and crops, affecting nearly 60,000 households.<sup>21</sup>

### *Zambia*

13. Twenty-eight per cent of Zambia's population, or 2.8 million people, have been in need of food aid. The total food aid required from December 2002 to March 2003 was 133,000 MT.<sup>22</sup> As DFID wrote in their supplementary memorandum: “In Zambia, successive years of adverse weather in southern districts has been compounded by declining public services and poor economic performance throughout the 1990s. Consistent disregard of rural policy by the previous government has left small farmers without access to markets or off-farm income generation opportunities.”<sup>23</sup> Small farmers are also unable to access agricultural inputs or credits.<sup>24</sup> Excessive rain in 2001 and dry spells during the 2001/02 growing season led to a major shortfall in maize production; a decrease of 42% compared with the average.<sup>25</sup> An adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 20%, and the Government of Zambia's decision not to accept genetically-modified food aid, have worsened the crisis. However, the level of impact forecast in some areas has not yet happened.

<sup>15</sup> *SADC-FANR Assessment*, December 2002 – see footnote 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ev 23 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>17</sup> Ev 1, para 3 [DFID memorandum]; Ev 15, answer 1 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>18</sup> Ev 15, answer 1 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>19</sup> Ev 2, para 9 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>20</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>21</sup> *WFP Emergency Report*, no. 4, 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>22</sup> *SADC-FANR Assessment*, December 2002 – see footnote 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ev 2, para 6 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>24</sup> Ev 57, [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>25</sup> Ev 118 [CARE International UK memorandum]

### *Lesotho*

14. Thirty-four per cent of Lesotho's population or 0.76 million people have been in need of food aid, with requirements totalling 36,000 MT from December 2002 to March 2003.<sup>26</sup> Thirty-one per cent of adults are HIV-positive. The WFP reports that the underlying problem in Lesotho is one of falling agricultural productivity, due to soil erosion, soil degradation and declining soil fertility, problems which are exacerbated by population increase, and compounded by inappropriate agricultural policies and ineffective agricultural extension services.<sup>27</sup> The current crisis resulted from "a below average harvest, a steep increase in food prices, a reduction of employment possibilities in South Africa and the devaluation of the Rand which increased transport and input costs imposing further shocks on an already weakened economy."<sup>28</sup>

### *Mozambique*

15. The Government of Mozambique is not as badly affected as its neighbours, but 0.65 million people or 3% of its population, particularly in the Southern and Central regions, have been in need of assistance, amounting to 31,000 MT of food aid from December 2002 to March 2003.<sup>29</sup> In 2001/02 there was a maize surplus in the North, but the transport infrastructure was too weak, and the transport costs too high, to allow the Northern surplus to fulfil Central and Southern needs.<sup>30</sup> Food prices rose, leading to problems of access for the poor. Mozambique suffers recurrent droughts and has witnessed a long-term increase in vulnerability, in part due to a reduction in remittances from South Africa and Zimbabwe, and an adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 13%.<sup>31</sup> In early 2003, a poor harvest was predicted, leading to greatly increased food insecurity, especially in central and southern regions.<sup>32</sup>

### *Swaziland*

16. Despite Swaziland's position as a middle income country, 28% of its population, or 0.3 million people, have been in need of assistance, with food aid requirements totalling 15,000 MT from December 2002 to March 2003.<sup>33</sup> Thirty-three per cent of adults are HIV-positive. The humanitarian crisis here is a complex mix of food security, poor planning, and health issues. King Mswati III's plans to purchase a luxury jet for his own use at a cost of around US\$45 million suggest that responding to the current crisis is not a priority, at least for the King.<sup>34</sup>

### **Southern Africa in context: Over-stretch for the international humanitarian system?**

17. The crisis in southern Africa is not an isolated event. During the course of the inquiry, it became apparent that Ethiopia is facing major food shortages in 2003, with at

<sup>26</sup> *SADC-FANR Assessment*, December 2002 – see footnote 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ev 56 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>28</sup> Ev 15, answer 1 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>29</sup> *SADC-FANR Assessment*, December 2002 – see footnote 2.

<sup>30</sup> Ev 59 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>31</sup> Ev 15, answer 1 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>32</sup> FEWSNET, *Mozambique Monthly Food Security Update*, February 2003. Available at [www.fews.net](http://www.fews.net)

<sup>33</sup> *SADC-FANR Assessment*, December 2002 – see footnote 2.

<sup>34</sup> Ev 15, answer 1 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

least 11.3 million people in need of 1.4 million tonnes of food aid.<sup>35</sup> **The simultaneous occurrence of major crises in southern Africa and the Horn of Africa poses a serious challenge to the international community's ability and willingness to respond. We share Clare Short's concern that the international humanitarian system may be getting over-stretched.** As the Secretary of State put it: "I am really worried that we are getting to a point where the capacity of the international system to deal with the crises we have got in the world is being stretched to the level where I do not know whether it will carry on functioning."<sup>36</sup>

18. On 16 December 2002 the WFP launched the "Africa Hunger Alert Campaign" to draw international attention to the unprecedented hunger crisis which is putting 38 million people in Africa—in Ethiopia, in Eritrea, in Zimbabwe, in Malawi, in Zambia, in Lesotho, in Swaziland, in Mozambique, in Sudan, in Angola, in the Great Lakes region, and in West Africa—at risk of starvation.<sup>37</sup> Launching its consolidated inter-agency appeals for 2003, called "Hope for the future", the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), estimated that 50 million people worldwide would need humanitarian assistance, with an estimated cost of nearly US\$3 billion.<sup>38</sup> As UN-OCHA points out in its appeal, this compares to the US\$5 billion, which is spent each year on chocolate in the UK, and the US\$7 billion, which is spent on cosmetics in the USA each year. **We are concerned that Africa is the only continent which is moving backwards as regards reaching the Millennium Development Goals.**<sup>39</sup> **If the international community fails to respond adequately to the humanitarian crises in southern Africa, Ethiopia and elsewhere, it will be impossible for countries to halve poverty and hunger by 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goals.**

19. **Southern Africa is not suffering a drought-induced famine.**<sup>40</sup> **It is suffering a complex humanitarian crisis, which was triggered by erratic rainfall and a relatively modest fall in food production.**<sup>41</sup> There is a food security element to the crisis—people are unable to access food, either by growing or purchasing food—but this is one element of a wider problem. In contexts of extreme vulnerability, minor triggers can push poor people and households from insecurity to crisis by inflating food prices beyond their limited purchasing powers. The poor in southern Africa are extremely vulnerable. Even in a good year, many poor farmers in southern Africa only produce enough food to feed their families for half a year.<sup>42</sup> This year, they are being pushed over the edge, and it will be very difficult for them to scramble back to security and towards sustainable development.

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<sup>35</sup> *WFP Emergency Report*, no. 50, 2002. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>36</sup> Q 165 [Clare Short]

<sup>37</sup> UN-OCHA, *Hope for the future* – see [www.wfp.org/appeals/africahungeralert/#](http://www.wfp.org/appeals/africahungeralert/#)

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> The poverty rate is increasing in Europe and Central Asia too, but remains under 4%. See [www.developmentgoals.org](http://www.developmentgoals.org)

<sup>40</sup> Edward Clay, Louise Bohn, Enrique Blanco de Armas, Singand Kabambe and Hardwick Tchale (2003), "Climatic variability, economic performance and the uses of climatic forecasting in Malawi and Southern Africa", *Disaster Risk Management Working Paper Series*, No. 7, World Bank; and, personal communication with Edward Clay.

<sup>41</sup> Ev 15, answer 1 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

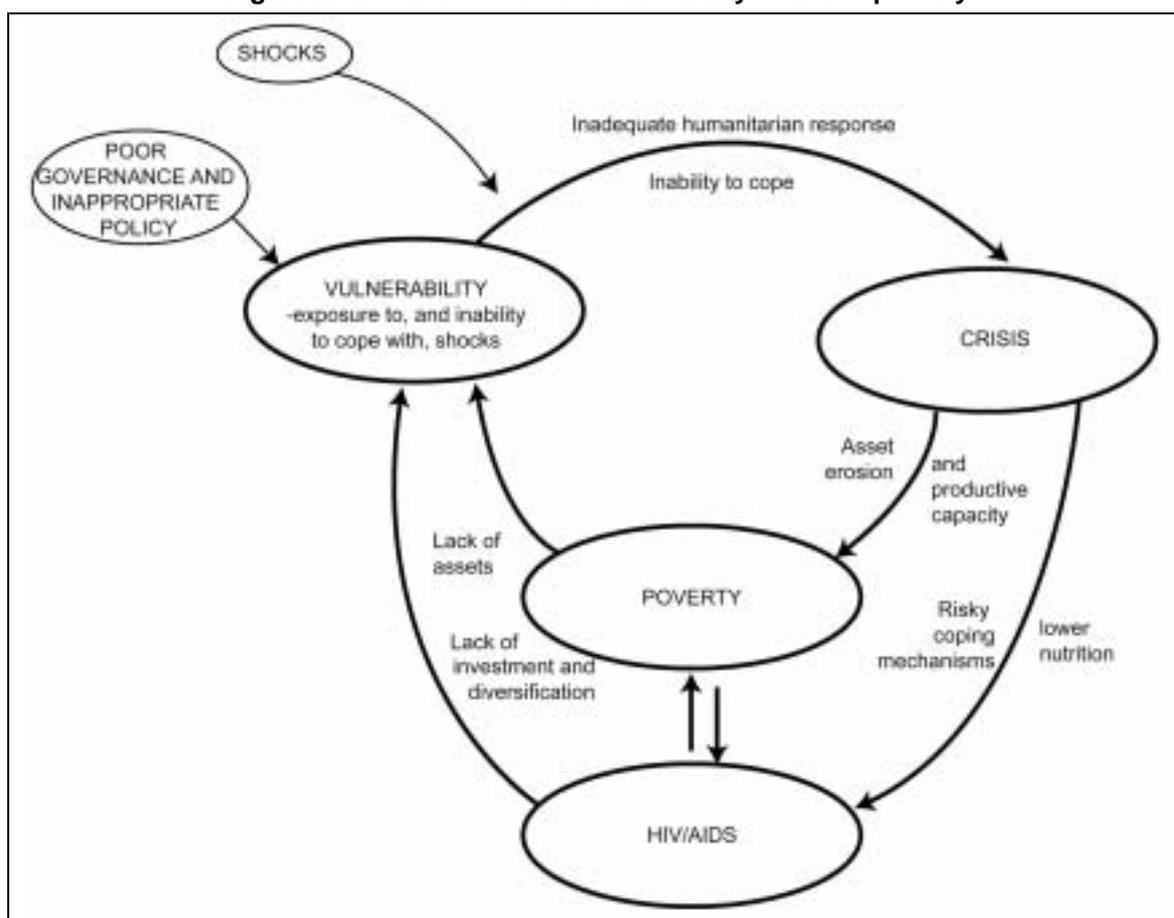
<sup>42</sup> Ev 80, para 9 [Oxfam memorandum]; Ev 114 [CARE International UK memorandum]

### III. VULNERABLE LIVELIHOODS: FROM SHOCK TO CRISIS

#### The vicious circle: Poverty, vulnerability and crisis

20. The humanitarian crisis in southern Africa is not simply a short-term food crisis. Rather, it is a complex humanitarian crisis with multiple causes and effects, and with long-term developmental as well as short-term humanitarian aspects. It is important that the crisis is understood in these terms because responses to the crisis are shaped by perceptions of it. The crisis in southern Africa has come about because of a long-term deterioration in the sustainability of rural, predominantly agricultural, livelihoods, and an increase in vulnerability due to poverty, poor governance and inappropriate policies, and the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS (see figure 2). As Christian Aid emphasised in their memorandum: “Environmental shocks such as drought bring collapse only to systems that are already weak owing to poor policies and governance. ... National Vulnerability Assessment Committees in the six countries have confirmed that: ‘those most affected by the current crisis are poor, have few assets, few entitlements and are therefore highly vulnerable to livelihood failure.’”<sup>43</sup>

Figure 2: The vicious circle: Vulnerability—crisis—poverty



Source: Committee's own

<sup>43</sup> Ev 52 [Christian Aid memorandum]

21. Vulnerability has two aspects, external vulnerability or exposure to shocks, and internal vulnerability or inability to cope with shocks.<sup>44</sup> Humanitarian crises occur when vulnerable populations are subjected to shocks which they cannot deal with, and which make their already precarious livelihoods impossible. Such shocks might be primarily natural (drought, flood or erratic rainfall), or economic and political (currency devaluations, governance crises or conflict), and are compounded by poor governance and inappropriate policy. Crises in turn increase poverty, as people sell their assets and engage in risky coping mechanisms, in order to survive. Such strategies undermine productive capacity, resulting in deeper poverty. Hungry people do not have the energy to climb out of poverty; hungry people who sell their assets do not have the tools either. As DFID notes: “When people are malnourished, their ability to benefit from social sector investments and respond to livelihoods enhancing opportunities is diminished.”<sup>45</sup> Deeper poverty—fewer assets and a lack of investment—combined with the twin threat of HIV/AIDS, leads in turn to increased vulnerability. The cycle, if unchecked, continues. If the poor people and countries of southern Africa are to escape the cycle of poverty, vulnerability and crisis, interventions must address the longer-term developmental issues—tackling poverty and reducing vulnerability—as well as providing much-needed food aid to prevent famine and starvation in the short-term.

### Sources of vulnerability

22. A major drought throughout southern Africa in 1991 caused a greater production shock than the erratic rainfall of 2001/02, but had less severe consequences on livelihoods, and no reported excess mortality.<sup>46</sup> As CARE explained in their submission, the bad weather that triggered the food crisis of 2001/02 “has served to expose the underlying vulnerability of the region.”<sup>47</sup> Livelihood vulnerability has increased over the past decade, for a combination of reasons, including: deepening poverty; growing population pressure and declining soil fertility in some areas; poor governance and inappropriate policies, including externally imposed policies of rapid agricultural liberalisation; and a rapidly rising incidence of HIV/AIDS. As Christian Aid put it: “This crisis cannot be divorced from the continuing realities overshadowing most people’s lives and livelihoods.”<sup>48</sup>

23. Rural livelihoods in southern Africa are extremely vulnerable because the dominant livelihood activity—subsistence farming—is highly risky, being dependent on inputs that are either unreliable (in the case of rainfall), declining (farm size, soil fertility), or financially inaccessible to the poor (fertilisers and improved seed). Opportunities for off-farm employment are limited, markets are weak, and vulnerable households (female-headed households, people living with HIV/AIDS) face severe labour constraints. These problems are compounded by limited livelihood diversification, either within agriculture or beyond agriculture. When bad weather affects the agriculture sector, employment on neighbouring farms and estates is also affected, as is demand for goods and services from local communities. Rural households have limited assets to buffer them against shocks, as their assets have been steadily eroded in recent years by the costs of caring for

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<sup>44</sup> DFID (2002), *Eliminating hunger: Strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goal on hunger*, p. 13. See [www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/elimhunger.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/elimhunger.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Christopher Eldridge (2002), “Why was there no famine following the 1992 southern African drought?”, *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 79-87. Copy placed in House of Commons Library.

<sup>47</sup> Ev 114 [CARE International UK memorandum]

<sup>48</sup> Ev 51 [Christian Aid memorandum]

family members affected by HIV/AIDS, rampant food price seasonality, and rising levels of insecurity (for example, livestock theft).

24. In their memorandum, Christian Aid explained that: “Almost two thirds of the region’s population live below the poverty line and are chronically food insecure; up to two thirds live in rural areas, trying to make a living from infertile land with very little opportunity to earn off-farm income (three quarters of those living in rural areas also live beneath the poverty line); in some countries up to a third are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS; public funds for health, education and agricultural services are extremely limited; public institutions (including legal and regulatory ones) are weak; and staple food markets have failed to stabilise staple food prices for both producers and consumers.”<sup>49</sup> If future crises are to be avoided, these sources of vulnerability must be addressed.

### ***Poverty***

25. Levels and causes of poverty and vulnerability vary from country to country across the region. In Zimbabwe, for instance, poverty is much lower than in Malawi, Mozambique or Zambia, but the policies of Robert Mugabe’s ZANU-PF government are clearly to blame for rapidly rising vulnerability. In Lesotho, where agricultural productivity has been falling for the past thirty years, macroeconomic factors such as declining employment opportunities in South Africa and rising food prices due to the devaluation of the Rand are most important.<sup>50</sup> Malawi and Mozambique are chronically poor.

26. Poverty at national level has left the governments of many southern African countries structurally dependent on international assistance, in particular on structural adjustment loans from the multilateral financial institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank) since the 1980s. Bilateral and multilateral donors, notably DFID and the European Union (EU), have also provided a great deal of financial and technical assistance in this period. More recently, the governments of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia have completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, usually as a precondition for obtaining debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. In all these cases, accessing international assistance has been contingent on ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ conditionalities: either concessional finance is provided on condition that certain policy reforms are implemented, or technical advice orients policy and spending priorities towards donor priorities, for instance towards education rather than agriculture.

27. This is not to suggest that debt relief is unwelcome; rather, careful attention must be paid to the conditions which donors attach to such relief. Indeed, submissions to the inquiry have identified unsustainable debt burdens as a contributory factor to the crisis. According to the World Development Movement: “the donors have insisted that Malawi continue to service its foreign debt at a time when there is widespread hunger. Even after debt reduction under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, debt service still amounts to around 29% of Malawi’s Government spending.”<sup>51</sup> Repaying or simply servicing debts uses scarce resources which might otherwise be spent on humanitarian assistance and longer-term development. Oxfam argues that “Malawi, Mozambique and

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<sup>49</sup> Ev 51 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>50</sup> Ev 1, para 3 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>51</sup> Ev 129, para 10 [World Development Movement memorandum]

Zambia should be granted an immediate suspension of their HIPC debt repayments.”<sup>52</sup> **We would not wish to see the HIPC process undermined, even for the best of motives, and fully understand that debt relief is not the only form of development assistance. But we do urge DFID and its international partners to consider seriously the possibility of revising the HIPC framework. Realistic debt relief must take account of the resources which creditors/donors are prepared to spend, but development-focussed debt relief should surely take more account of poor countries’ development needs. We would like to hear DFID’s views about the role of debt relief, and about whether or not the HIPC initiative should be revised to take more account of poor countries’ development needs.**

28. Most poor and vulnerable households in southern Africa are dependent on low-input, low-output agriculture. They have restricted access to yield-enhancing inputs, for reasons related to poverty but compounded by economic liberalisation policies (for example, spiralling fertiliser prices following the elimination of subsidies, commercialisation of agricultural credit, scaling down of agricultural marketing parastatals, and cutbacks in agricultural research and extension services). Local varieties of white maize remain the dominant food-crop, despite their low yields and high vulnerability to drought. There is limited evidence among the rural poor of diversification, either: towards other food staples (such as cassava) to spread agricultural risk, or towards cash crops (such as paprika) to enhance cash income, or out of agriculture (into industry or services) to reduce agricultural risk.

29. Stagnant or declining agricultural productivity has two related consequences in terms of poverty: it reduces the amount of food grown for household consumption, and it increases the household’s dependence on market purchases for some of their food needs. The inability of households to acquire sufficient cash to bridge their consumption gap, exacerbated by seasonal price fluctuations—which cause food prices to double or treble in the annual “hungry season”—is responsible for persistently high levels of under-nutrition throughout rural southern Africa.

30. In most of southern Africa, household livelihood strategies include seasonal or permanent migration by one or more household members to towns or other rural areas, to supplement household income and diversify risk. In Malawi one of the world’s least-urbanised countries, this option has been limited by a lack of non-agricultural employment opportunities. In Zimbabwe, as DFID officials told us, “the most common coping strategy, that of having one or more family members in paid employment, has been eroded by the contraction of the economy and high levels of unemployment.”<sup>53</sup> Similarly, retrenchments in South Africa’s mining sector, plus stricter immigration controls, have reduced opportunities for families throughout southern Africa to supplement their production and limited local incomes with remittances from migrant relatives. Southern Mozambique, Swaziland and especially Lesotho, where unemployment rates have now reached 40%, have been particularly severely affected by reductions in this source of employment and income.<sup>54</sup>

31. As a consequence of limited incomes from agriculture and off-farm activities, household assets have declined over the past ten years as remittances from mining jobs have decreased, livestock levels have reduced because security is deteriorating in rural

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<sup>52</sup> Ev 82, para 21 [Oxfam memorandum]

<sup>53</sup> Ev 1, para 3 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>54</sup> Ev 54 [Christian Aid memorandum]

areas, and communal assets such as woodlands and wild resources have dwindled.<sup>55</sup> Many families have sold all their animals and other possessions simply to survive, leaving them with no resources with which to deal with future shocks and shortages.<sup>56</sup> Over the past year, in order to feed their families, households have depleted their remaining savings, livestock and other assets. Their recovery will be gradual and difficult.<sup>57</sup> **Deep poverty at national and household levels is a major source of vulnerability. The depletion of household assets, together with declining opportunities for off-farm employment have raised vulnerability to future shocks throughout southern Africa. DFID and its donor, government and civil society partners must support strategies to restore household assets and to generate non-agricultural employment.**

### *Governance and policy: From corruption to liberalization and market failure*

#### *Corruption and weak governance*

32. Weak governance and inappropriate policy is a key source of vulnerability and a major cause of the ongoing humanitarian crisis. In Zimbabwe particularly, the disruption caused by the government's disastrous land reform programme has severely undermined agricultural production and created "an entire new class of vulnerable people, farm workers and their families, who have lost their livelihood as a result of the land resettlement programme."<sup>58</sup> According to UN-OCHA: "The fast track land reform process has effectively killed off the ability of the commercial farming sector to provide for the country as well as Zimbabwe's neighbours."<sup>59</sup> We would not deny the importance of land reform in Zimbabwe, but if land reform is to lead to poverty reduction rather than contribute to political turmoil, governments need to ensure that it is carefully planned, through broad-based consultations, and<sup>60</sup> integrated into poverty reduction strategies.

33. The dire situation in Zimbabwe has major implications for the rest of southern Africa too, as regards both the availability and price of food, especially maize, and the delivery of food aid and commercial imports. According to DFID: "The fact that Zimbabwe, normally a food supplier and a key transit country, has suffered such a collapse in agricultural production has made the situation in neighbouring countries worse and weakened the prospects for recovery; for the longer term, it throws into question one of the bases of food security planning in southern Africa for the last 20 years, namely that surpluses would normally be available in Zimbabwe."<sup>61</sup>

34. Lower production in Zimbabwe means that maize is in short supply regionally, and hence sells for higher prices. Zimbabwe's deteriorating transport infrastructure, restrictions imposed by the government on the commercial importation of maize, and security concerns, make the use of Zimbabwe as a transit corridor untenable, forcing deliveries to Malawi and Zambia to follow longer and more costly routes.<sup>62</sup> This problem is amplified further by restrictions on the transport of genetically-modified

<sup>55</sup> Ev 1, para 3 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>56</sup> Ev 119 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

<sup>57</sup> Ev 47 (SCF-UK memorandum)

<sup>58</sup> Ev 2, para 5 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>59</sup> Ev 24, para 1 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>60</sup> DFID (2002), *Better livelihoods for poor people: The role of land policy*, Consultation paper. See [www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/landpolicy\\_consult.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/landpolicy_consult.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> Ev 1, para 2 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>62</sup> Q 9 [John Winter, DFID]

(GM) maize (see paragraphs 93-98). Economic uncertainty, including inflation rates of around 175%, have also reduced the opportunity for poor people from neighbouring countries to provide their families with remittances from employment in Zimbabwe. As Clare Short told us: “The Zimbabwe crisis and tragedy is the explanation of this [the crisis in southern Africa] being such a monumental, serious catastrophe. If Zimbabwe was not in trouble it would be a fairly easily handleable crisis which we could cope with well.”<sup>63</sup> **We believe that the UK Government is failing to communicate clearly the ways in which Zimbabwe is exacerbating food insecurity in southern Africa. DFID should explain clearly the culpability of Robert Mugabe’s policies on land reform, and emphasise too that restrictions placed on the movement of genetically-modified maize have hampered the relief effort and contributed to the deteriorating situation across the region. If he continues with the same policies and approach, Zimbabwe will remain part of the problem rather than part of the solution to famine and food insecurity in southern Africa.**

35. In Malawi, despite the establishment of a Presidential Land Commission in the mid-1990s to examine and reconcile the enormous disparities in land holdings between the commercial estates and the smallholder sector, little progress has been made with land reform. Uncertainty about the likely direction and pace of change, along with increasing population pressure especially in the south of the country, contribute to food insecurity. We welcome the fact that DFID are now putting their resources—“quite a lot of money and effort”—behind efforts to address the land issue at national and SADC regional levels.<sup>64</sup> If a regional approach to the land issue is adopted, this might encourage cross-border solutions to be found. For instance, formalising the informal arrangement whereby farmers from land-scarce southern Malawi are moving into northern Mozambique and cultivating land which is under-utilised as a consequence of the civil war.

36. Problems of weak governance are manifest in Malawi in other ways too. First, governance concerns—a lack of transparency and allegations of corruption—surround the sale of the Strategic Grain Reserve in 2001 (see figure 3). Christian Aid’s Memorandum referred to “a culture of non-accountability” in both Malawi and Zimbabwe, and noted that “legitimate concerns about government corruption [have] led several donor agencies to suspend their aid budgets to Malawi at a time of great uncertainty and increasing vulnerability.”<sup>65</sup> Indeed, the suspension of donor aid reveals a further source of vulnerability, the fact that donors—major contributors to the budgets of the countries of southern Africa—may change their policies, and suspend or withdraw their funds.<sup>66</sup>

37. Second, despite several years of donor technical and financial support, Malawi’s National Safety Nets Programme had still not been put into place prior to the crisis of 2001/02<sup>67</sup> (see paragraph 111). A third indication of governance problems is given by the protracted and heated debate about whether the constitution should be amended to allow President Muluzi to run for a third-term in office. Such matters are important, but have been a distraction from the country’s pressing humanitarian needs. In late January

<sup>63</sup> Q 182 [Clare Short]

<sup>64</sup> Q 22 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>65</sup> Ev 56-58 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>66</sup> In Malawi, we were told that 80% of the development budget, and 40% of the recurrent budget was financed by donors. In 1999, aid as a percentage of Gross National Income was: Lesotho, 3%; Malawi, 25%; Mozambique, 3%; Swaziland, 2%; Zambia, 21%; Zimbabwe, 5% (Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2001).

<sup>67</sup> Ev 2, para 6 [DFID memorandum]

2003, protestors on the streets of the commercial centre, Blantyre, reportedly forced Muluzi to abandon his plans for constitutional change. Fourth, as we saw, civil society is lacking, in part as a result of years of repression under the previous regime. Many of the NGOs in Malawi are focused on service-delivery and seem ill-equipped to play the role of holding the Government of Malawi to account. A healthy civil society, including, but not limited to development NGOs, is essential to the development of a vibrant democracy with accountable government.

### Figure 3: The sale of the Strategic Grain Reserve

In 2000, the Government of Malawi commissioned a study, financed by the European Commission, to inform future food security policy, and to include recommendations on the size and management of the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR). The study recommended that the size of the SGR be reduced from its existing level of 167,000 Metric Tonnes (MT) to between 30,000 and 60,000 MT. The study argued that this would be sufficient to deal with a localised crisis, and would also reduce operating costs. Over the course of 2001, most of the SGR was sold off, largely, it seems, within Malawi.

In September 2001, the Anti-Corruption Bureau received a complaint alleging that top United Democratic Front officials, including Cabinet Ministers, had purchased maize from the SGR cheaply, which they had then resold at high prices, to the detriment of the people of Malawi. The Anti-Corruption Bureau inquiry reprimanded Leonard Mangulama (Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation) and Friday Jumbe (General Manager of Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation—ADMARC—the parastatal grain marketing agency) for “criminal recklessness and negligence”. Leonard Mangulama was sacked in August 2002. Friday Jumbe is now Malawi’s Finance Minister. After our visit in October 2002, the Director of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Gilton Chiwaula, was replaced, shortly before the Bureau was to interview senior ministers in connection with the sale of the SGR.

In November 2001, the UK, EU, Denmark and the USA suspended their aid programmes to the Government of Malawi: Denmark and the EU following evidence of corruption involving their funds; DFID complaining about political violence and the suppression of political debate; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in protest at the suspension of Malawi’s privatisation programme. Concerns about the sale of the SGR “clouded” discussions between the Government of Malawi and DFID about how to respond to the emerging food crisis.

Over the course of 2002, questions about the sale of the SGR—where the grain went, if it ever left the grain silos or the country, what happened to the proceeds of the sale—remained unanswered. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was involved in discussions with the government and—at the very least—supported the advice to reduce the size of the SGR. The role of the IMF has since been distorted by those who seek to deflect attention away from the corruption which lay at the heart of the sale. The IMF itself vehemently rejects the allegations that it advised the Government of Malawi to sell the SGR, and emphasises that it has no competence to advise on food security issues.

In Malawi, the local press reported that Joe Manduwa, the chair of the parliamentary Agriculture Committee, had produced a report providing evidence of wrong-doing by prominent Cabinet Ministers. Joe Manduwa was thrown out of the United Democratic Front in October 2002 but reinstated in January 2003.

President Muluzi has ordered another inquiry, and external audits of the management of the SGR are due to be carried out by the National Audit Office, and by a team headed by Ernst and Young, Nairobi.

38. In Zambia, the Government stands accused of denying its people food aid by making an ill-informed decision to refuse GM food aid. In Swaziland too, concerns about governance and the priority accorded to poverty reduction and food security have been highlighted by the King's decision to press ahead with purchasing a luxury jet, in the face of opposition from the Swazi Parliament.

*Agricultural liberalisation*

39. Policies of agricultural liberalisation have been implemented throughout southern Africa since the 1980s, with mixed results. There has been growth in selected sub-sectors for some groups of (mainly better-off) farmers, but rising food insecurity for others. NGO witnesses were especially critical of the implementation and impacts of liberalisation. According to CARE: "Structural adjustment in the early 1990s saw the demise of state marketing institutions that had, however inefficiently, supported rural communities with agricultural inputs and output marketing services. These have not been replaced by adequate private sector mechanisms."<sup>68</sup> Christian Aid identified four effects of liberalisation that have been detrimental for maize yields and household food security in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe: "reduction in rural credit subsidised by the state, a decline in subsidies for agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and seeds, declining public investment in agricultural marketing services, especially in remote rural areas, as well as a decline in government advice and extension services."<sup>69</sup> Initiatives such as the targeted inputs programme which DFID funds in Malawi (see paragraphs 120-122), are important and necessary, but may send confusing messages to farmers and traders. Furthermore, they do not address the structural problem of constrained access to seeds and fertiliser that smallholders have faced throughout southern Africa, ever since liberalisation made these inputs unaffordable for the majority of farmers.<sup>70</sup>

40. The World Development Movement argued that donor-supported liberalisation policies "have failed" because they assumed "that markets will be able to meet social aims; to supply food at affordable prices throughout the country, and to ensure that smallholder farmers can feed their families."<sup>71</sup> For some witnesses, it was far from surprising that markets did not spring up to serve the needs of poor rural communities. As Christian Aid put it: "Markets can only respond to purchasing power, not to needs."<sup>72</sup> Jonathan Kydd too told us in evidence that: "In agriculture, our complaint is that reform has been, if you like, too rapid, too broad brush, too ideological and not sufficiently well thought through."<sup>73</sup> We believe that this illustrates a wider problem in international development, the tendency of policy makers to latch on to the latest fashion in the hope that it will provide a solution to development problems. ActionAid suggested to us that there is a need to revisit some of the economic reforms that were implemented under structural adjustment programmes.<sup>74</sup> Clare Short commented in evidence that:

Probably in hindsight you have got to manage change in a way that ensures that you do not do away with something that is maybe inefficient and over-subsidised without making sure that something else is coming in to take it over. I think it was probably done a bit too absolutely and there were lots of views

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<sup>68</sup> Ev 115 [CARE International UK memorandum]

<sup>69</sup> Ev 57 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>70</sup> Ev 50, para 6 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>71</sup> Ev 128, para 3 [World Development Movement memorandum]

<sup>72</sup> Ev 61 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>73</sup> Q 141 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

<sup>74</sup> Ev 114 [ActionAid memorandum]

that the private sector would come forward supplying seeds and fertiliser and purchasing but those institutions did not appear as quickly as was predicted and there should have been more preparation.<sup>75</sup>

**41. We are pleased that the Secretary of State is keen to learn from the past, and we welcome DFID's support for Poverty and Social Impact Assessments. We trust that such assessments will be made in the field of agricultural and food security policy, so that policy decisions and DFID's position itself are evidence-based rather than reactive, broad-brush and ideological. Oxfam called for mandatory impact assessments of the likely impacts of agricultural liberalisation. They recommended that donors, particularly the World Bank and IMF, end all lending conditions that promote further liberalisation of agriculture in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, pending thorough Poverty and Social Impact Assessments on agricultural policy reform in these countries, which can be used to inform policy choices about long-term food security and sustainable livelihoods.<sup>76</sup> We endorse Oxfam's recommendation and urge DFID to do the same.**

*Market failure*

42. In addition to weak state governance and inappropriate policies, the failure of markets for food is another source of vulnerability. Apart from food-crop production, the main sources of food in the region come from commercial imports (by governments and commercial traders), informal cross-border trade, and food aid. At the national level, South Africa and Zimbabwe have historically been surplus maize producers, meeting their own domestic requirements and exporting to deficit neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland and (southern) Mozambique. Although there is a good deal of informal cross-border trade within the region—for instance DFID suggested that 100,000 tonnes of maize had moved from northern Mozambique to Malawi and Zambia in the last year<sup>77</sup>—Malawi was normally self-sufficient in the past, and did not supplement its maize production with large-scale commercial imports until relatively recently. In fact, there has been a trend of increasing dependence on food imports since the 1970s in all of the six crisis-affected countries except (until the last two years) Zimbabwe.

43. At the household level, however, the market is a vital source of food for poor farmers throughout southern Africa, most of whom are not self-sufficient even in good rainfall years. A survey in Malawi by Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy—consultants to DFID for its Targeted Inputs Programme (see paragraph 120-122)—found that “86% of rural smallholder households bought maize in the 2002 lean period.”<sup>78</sup> Because of this market dependence, the level of food prices has a direct impact on household food security. Rapid price rises undermine household purchasing power and trap people in poverty by forcing them to grow sufficient food for themselves and to engage in risky coping strategies. Since the removal of price controls in the mid-1990s, maize prices in Malawi vary by approximately 150% each year, but the production shock exacerbated normal price seasonality. Maize prices increased by 400% or more over post-harvest lows and made staple food inaccessible for the poor, who were priced out of the market in some isolated communities.<sup>79</sup> For this reason Barahona and Levy conclude that:

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<sup>75</sup> Q 190 [Clare Short]

<sup>76</sup> Ev 82, para 19 [Oxfam memorandum]

<sup>77</sup> Q 34 [John Hansell, DFID]

<sup>78</sup> Ev 122, para 3 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]

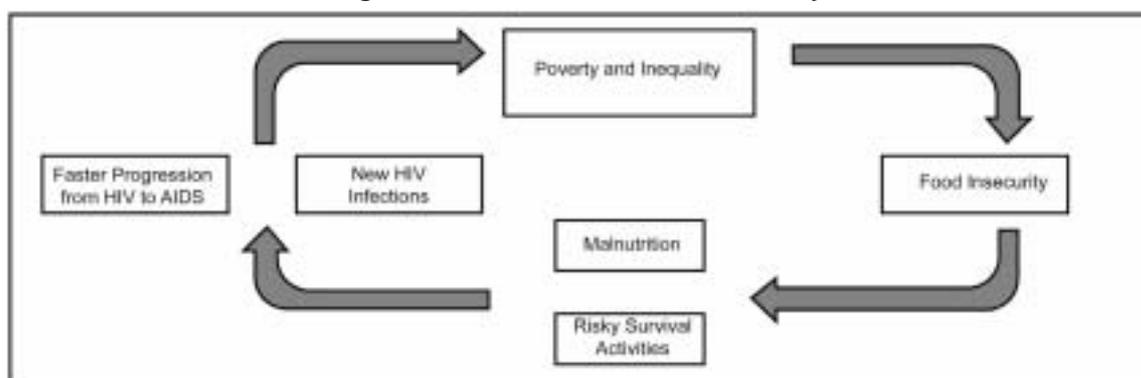
<sup>79</sup> Ev 129, para 6 [Oxfam memorandum]

“policies that help to keep maize prices low are pro-poor policies”<sup>80</sup> (see paragraphs 134-136).

### **HIV/AIDS**

44. HIV-prevalence rates average 24% over the six crisis-affected countries. The range extends from 13% in Mozambique to over 30% in Lesotho, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe,<sup>81</sup> with prevalence rates for young women often twice as high as those for young men. As the UN’s Mid-Term Review states: “The attack on women—the lifeline for African societies—is unprecedented and is serving to unravel the entire fabric of the region.”<sup>82</sup> In an extremely useful paper which we have used extensively below, Oxfam and Save the Children Fund, UK (SCF-UK) describe the HIV/AIDS pandemic as being “at the heart of the crisis.”<sup>83</sup> The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), in their memorandum, reminded us that as well as contributing to household food insecurity, AIDS has killed and will kill many more people in southern Africa than hunger.<sup>84</sup> HIV/AIDS is creating new groups of vulnerable people, in particular orphans, child-headed and grandparent-headed households. There are already 3.2 million AIDS orphans in the six crisis-affected countries, most of whom are living in grandparent-headed or child-headed households, or fending for themselves on the streets. The numbers are increasing dramatically. By 2010, between one-fifth and one-quarter of all children under 15 years old will have lost their mother or both parents to AIDS.<sup>85</sup>

**Figure 4: HIV/AIDS and food insecurity**



Source: Oxfam/SCF-UK paper on HIV/AIDS and food insecurity (see footnote 83)

45. HIV/AIDS has the greatest impact on productive members of society, such as teachers, farmers, traders, and agricultural extension workers, and therefore increases the number of dependants in a household. This reduces household productivity and caring capacity, and interrupts the transfer of local knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. In Malawi between six and eight percent of teachers die each year, and the cost of their funerals takes up a major slice of the education administration budget. In Zimbabwe, maize production on communal farms fell by 54% between 1992 and 1997

<sup>80</sup> Ev 122, para 4 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]

<sup>81</sup> Ev 1, para 4 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>82</sup> UN, *Mid-Term Review*, February 2003, p. 1. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>83</sup> Oxfam/SCF-UK (2002), *HIV/AIDS and food insecurity in southern Africa*, p. 1. See [www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/hivsa/hivsa.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/hivsa/hivsa.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> Ev 127 [UNICEF memorandum]

<sup>85</sup> Oxfam/SCF-UK (2002) *HIV/AIDS and food insecurity*, pp. 5-6 – see footnote 83.

because of AIDS-related illness and death. The impact on the public-health sector is also devastating, as health workers either die or leave employment to care for family members, leaving clinics with low levels of qualified staff. This in turn undermines preventative health measures and increases the burden on public-health structures.

46. At a macro level, HIV/AIDS has a direct impact on rates of economic growth. Where HIV-prevalence is predominantly urban, as in Zambia and Zimbabwe, remittances from urban to rural areas have declined, reducing an important source of supplementary income. In rural areas HIV/AIDS has critically diminished the agricultural labour force and reduced production. Many are dead, and those who are living with AIDS are weakened and—having sold their assets and farming implements too—are less productive. As the Vice-President of Malawi explained to us, not planting at the appropriate time due to sickness, could lead to a 20% fall in smallholders' production. As labour is lost, nutritious leafy crops and fruit are replaced by starchy root crops such as cassava. Protein is lost as livestock assets are sold to pay debts. Labour losses are estimated to reduce food consumption by up to 32%.<sup>86</sup> Households with reduced income, and increased medical expenses are less able to access food, so the stability and quality of food supplies is likely to fall. This leads to chronic food insecurity, high levels of protein-energy malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies, which further compromises immune systems, and speeds up the contraction of AIDS-related diseases.<sup>87</sup> Children are often taken out of school to help with production or to take care of younger siblings; a short-term coping strategy with long-term consequences.<sup>88</sup>

47. As a result of HIV/AIDS, more households are now headed by women, children, and elderly people. They are particularly vulnerable because they have often sold off many of their assets to care for sick family members, and have fewer opportunities to earn an income or grow crops. Many of these households also need to take care of sick relatives and orphans, which further stretches traditional family-based support networks. As Oxfam pointed out, HIV/AIDS “is creating an enormous strain on communities, which are increasingly dependent on dwindling numbers of able-bodied and healthy workers. The pandemic places a particular burden on women, as caring for sick family members falls most often to them, depriving them of opportunities to earn an income outside the home.”<sup>89</sup> Finally, HIV/AIDS kills the very people needed to respond to the current crisis: government officials, civil servants, members of civil society, and staff in the private sector. **HIV/AIDS is central to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa. In a continent ravaged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, southern Africa is at its epicentre. The first defence against HIV/AIDS is food. Famine exacerbates disease, as disease exacerbates famine, in southern Africa. In creating new groups of vulnerable people, and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, HIV/AIDS plays a major role in the cycle of vulnerability, crisis and poverty.** We return to the issue in subsequent chapters, examining the extent to which the humanitarian response has taken account of HIV/AIDS, and the ways in which both social protection measures and longer-term development strategies must be designed with HIV/AIDS very much in mind.

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<sup>86</sup> Ev 17, answer 3 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

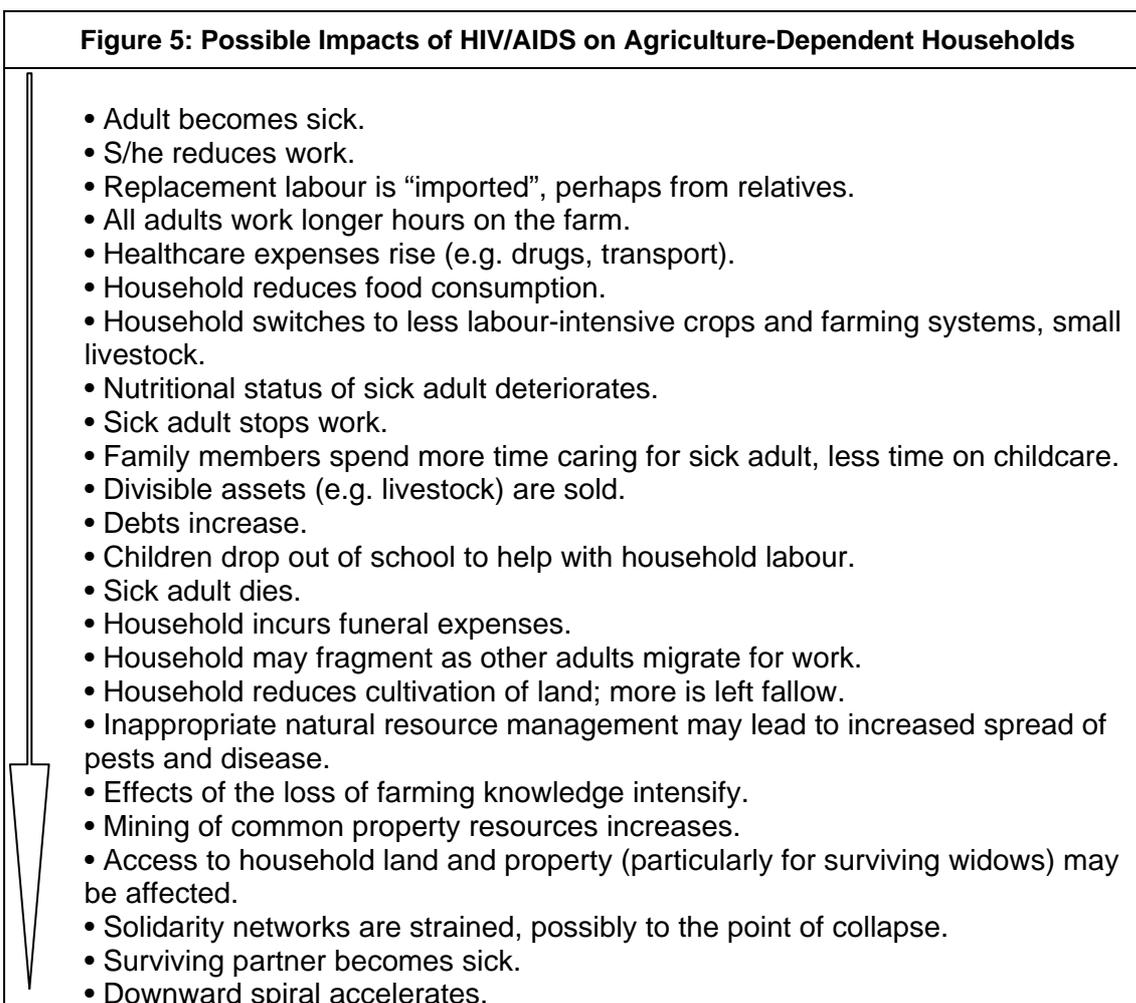
<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Ev 81, para 16 [Oxfam memorandum]

## Shock and crisis

48. The food crisis was precipitated by erratic rainfall over much of southern Africa during the peak growing season months of December 2001 to March 2002. Normal or excessive rains in the early part of the season were followed by patchy and inadequate rain in later months, with localised water-logging of fields and lack of sunshine in some places (lowland areas of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia), and frosts and hailstorms in others (mountainous Lesotho and Swaziland). This combination of bad weather events was directly responsible for depressing maize yields and the national cereals harvest in all six affected countries.<sup>90</sup>



Source: International Food Policy Research Institute 2001/02 Annual Report – available at [www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org)

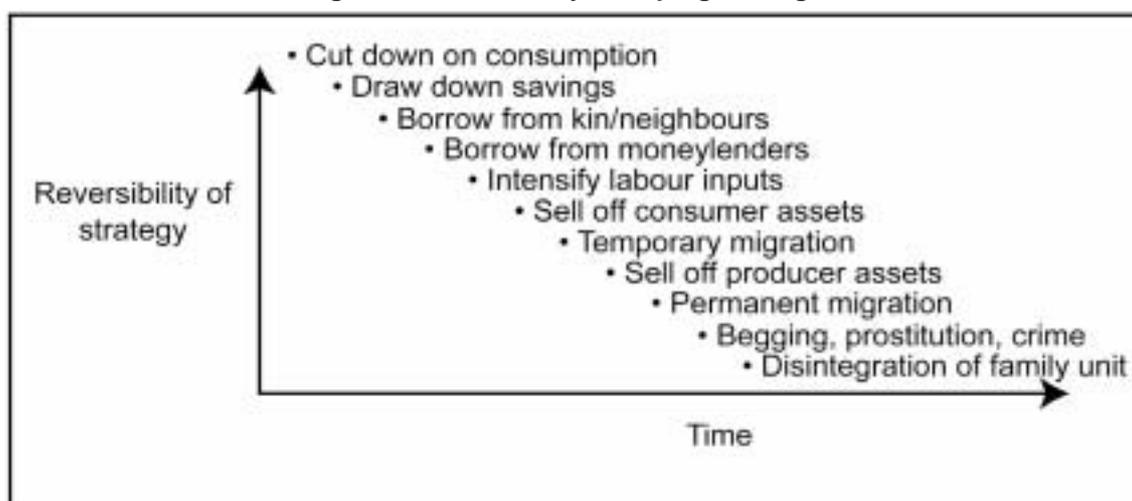
49. The food crisis has had multiple impacts, ranging from the most severe—starvation deaths—to the adoption of various coping strategies that have helped people survive but increased their vulnerability to future livelihood shocks. While there are no official estimates of the scale of hunger-related mortality that can be attributed to the food crisis, unofficial estimates range from a few hundred to several thousand people—including

<sup>90</sup> Ev 2, para 8 [DFID memorandum] and Ev 119 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

many adults—in Malawi, where the crisis was worst in 2001/02.<sup>91</sup> It is important to note that these deaths occurred in a context of tens of thousands of infant and child deaths each year, and that this “low-level crisis” of poverty and hunger, though it receives less media attention than that generated by famine, presents even greater challenges to policymakers in national governments and the international development community. Nutrition surveys commissioned by SCF-UK in two districts of Malawi in late 2001 and early 2002 found a rapid and dramatic rise in under-nutrition levels. Whilst the food crisis attracted most of the media attention in 2002, the donor community recognised that the emerging humanitarian crisis is multi-sectoral. As DFID noted, “the WFP appeal [for food aid] was accompanied by plans for urgent inputs for the next planting season, health (especially for drugs and epidemiological surveillance), water and sanitation and protection of the extremely vulnerable.”<sup>92</sup>

50. The term “coping strategies” refers to unusual behaviours that people adopt in response to an external shock, with the objective of helping them survive the short-term threat with minimum long-term disruption to their livelihoods and way of life. The adoption of coping strategies tends to follow a sequence of increasing cost and irreversibility (see figure 6). Eating less food is an early response while selling assets and borrowing to buy food comes later, and leaving the land to start a new life in urban areas is a final “distress response” that is resorted to only after all efforts to preserve the viability of the farming household’s way of life have failed.

**Figure 6: Reversibility of coping strategies**



Source: Naila Kabeer (2002), in *Development Policy Review*, p 594 – see footnote 184

51. Many of the coping strategies observed are adopted annually by poor rural households in response to seasonal hunger which is prevalent throughout southern Africa. With the current humanitarian crisis, the difference is that, “consecutive crop failures have forced households to rely on these coping mechanisms much earlier this year.”<sup>93</sup> According to Christian Aid, consumption rationing was widespread in 2002, as people skipped meals or reduced portions to make their limited food stocks and incomes go further, and many ate wild foods, often incurring health risks. People raised money to

<sup>91</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>92</sup> Ev 3, para 12 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>93</sup> Ev 54 [Christian Aid memorandum]

buy food by selling livestock, farm tools and household goods (furniture, clothes, even kitchen utensils), all at low “distress sale” prices due to excess supplies on the market. For instance, in Zimbabwe, livestock prices fell 80% between July 2001 and July 2002. Children were withdrawn from school to save on education costs and to help forage for food or earn income. Women engaged in prostitution to earn money, accelerating the spread of HIV/AIDS. Opportunities for casual work, limited even in normal years, became increasingly restricted as more people searched for work (including children, people living with HIV/AIDS and the elderly) but fewer people could afford to hire them.<sup>94</sup>

**52. If the people of southern Africa are to escape from the cycle of vulnerability, crisis and poverty, the sources of vulnerability—poverty, weak governance and inappropriate policy, and HIV/AIDS—must be understood and addressed, both in terms of immediate humanitarian response and in laying the foundations for longer-term development. This will also require that policy-makers do not latch onto the latest fashion in the misplaced hope that it will provide a solution to development problems.** In the following chapter, we investigate the response to the humanitarian crisis, and in chapter five we examine what is needed in terms of both social protection and diversification, if the rural poor in particular are to escape from poverty and move towards sustainable livelihoods.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

## IV. EARLY WARNINGS, INFORMATION, AND DONOR RESPONSE

### Introduction

53. Governments across Southern Africa declared emergencies and called for international assistance at different times between February and May 2002.<sup>95</sup> However, signals of an impending food crisis were evident from many months before, when harvests failed in mid-2001. NGOs were reporting on localised household food insecurity in Malawi and Zimbabwe by August 2001. In her oral evidence, Clare Short emphasised that the response in Malawi was not “extraordinarily slow”, but acknowledged that: “There was a general lack of urgent response to the crisis in Southern Africa”.<sup>96</sup> NGOs<sup>97</sup> and other commentators<sup>98</sup> suggested to us a number of reasons why the signals were not acted on promptly, and why the donor response was late. In general, the obstacles to an effective humanitarian response are either informational, political-institutional, or logistical. The humanitarian response can be derailed at various stages, from the initial collection of information for early warning systems, to the assessments made on the basis of that information, to the warnings issued or not on the basis of those assessments, to the response of donors to those warnings, to the delivery of assistance (see figure 7).

54. Problems at each stage resulted in the failure to prevent a tragedy in southern Africa, especially in Malawi, in early 2002. Official information about food availability and access was confused or inadequate, governments and donors were slow to react to signals of impending food crisis, and the humanitarian response was delayed by logistical bottlenecks. We were encouraged to hear that information flows are stronger now than in late 2001, and the political and logistical failures of 2001/02 have been addressed by stronger commitment of key actors and a more timely response to the evolving 2002/03 emergency. There remain some concerns about whether the international community has sufficiently recognised the underlying problems of poverty and vulnerability of which the immediate crisis is a symptom. This is the subject of later chapters.

### Famine Early Warning Systems

55. Famine early warning systems were established across most of sub-Saharan Africa following the drought-triggered famines of the 1980s. In southern Africa, national early warning systems are coordinated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU). This early warning unit draws on data collected or analysed by: SADC’s Regional Remote Sensing Unit and Regional Food Security Database Project; the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning System (FEWSNET); WFP and other donors; and NGOs, as well as Ministries of Agriculture. However, the southern African systems are less comprehensive and are institutionally

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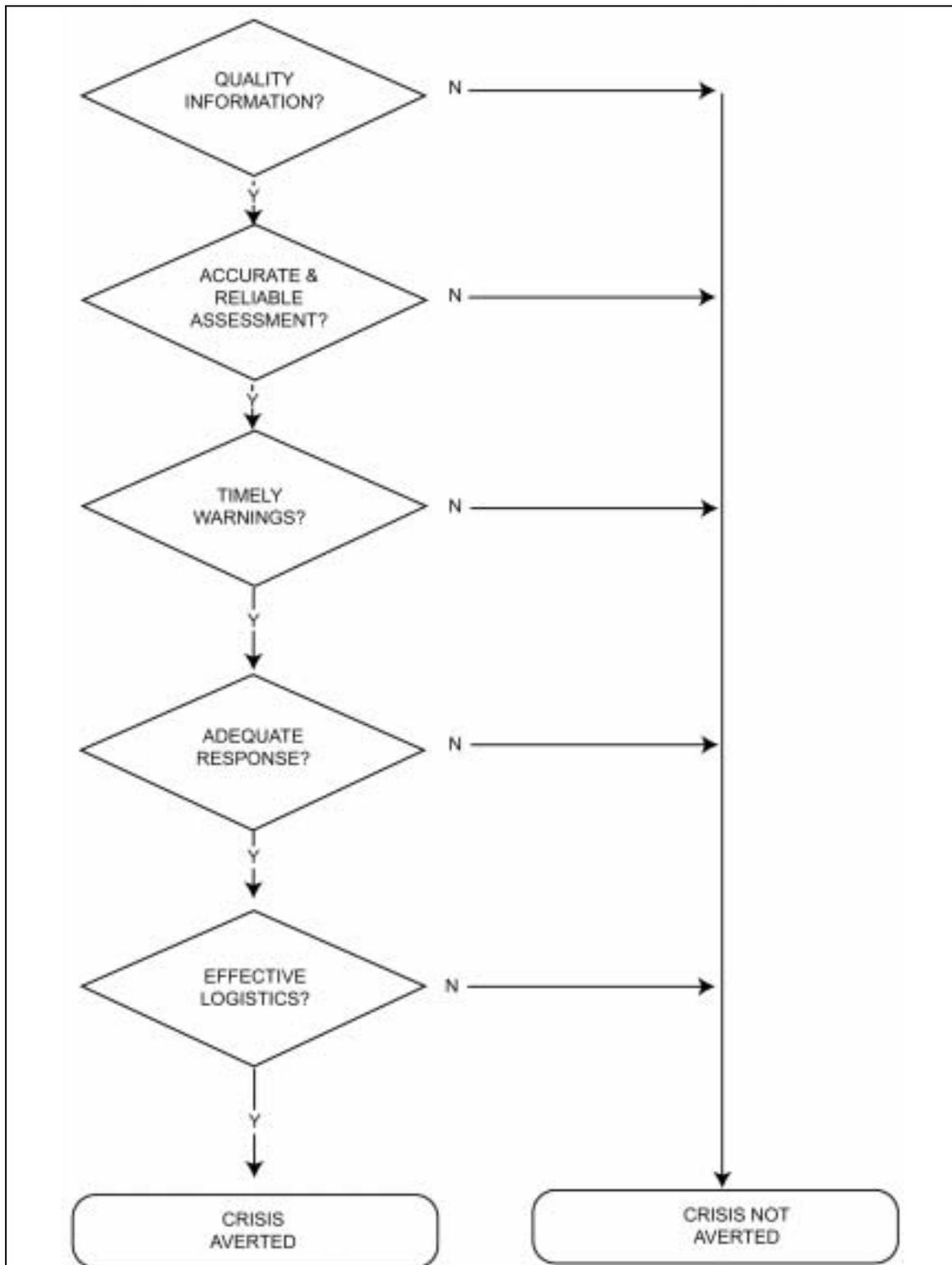
<sup>95</sup> The dates when emergencies were declared in 2001 were: Malawi, 27 February; Lesotho, 19 April; Zimbabwe, 30 April; Zambia, 29 May.

<sup>96</sup> Q 177 [Clare Short]

<sup>97</sup> Ev 42-49 [SCF-UK memorandum]; Ev 62 [Christian Aid memorandum]; Ev 113-114 [ActionAid memorandum]

<sup>98</sup> Ev 75 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward, Megan Vaughan memorandum]; Ev 123 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]; Ev 119-120 [Stephen Carr memorandum]; Background Paper 6 – Megan Vaughan’s note on DFID’s response to the situation in Malawi in late 2001 – copy placed in House of Commons Library.

**Figure 7: Obstacles to the effective operation of early warning systems**



Source: Committee's own

weaker than those in the Horn of Africa, where recurrent droughts and conflict-triggered food emergencies necessitate constant vigilance. Consequently, although national and regional food security information systems are in place, REWU has not been adequately

resourced, either financially or technically.<sup>99</sup> The USAID-funded FEWSNET project synthesises available information on food security in most countries of the region, but draws mainly on other sources, such as Ministry of Agriculture crop estimates, which are not always reliable. Because of these limitations, conflicting signals about food shortages in the region during 2001 were difficult for policymakers to reconcile and interpret.

56. A second problem faced by early warning systems is that estimating crop production is only the first step in the famine prevention process. Understanding how crop failure will affect rural livelihoods and survival prospects is far more complex, but is critical for mobilising an adequate, appropriate, and timely response. Most of the investment in early warning systems in Africa has gone into predicting harvest failures. Recognising the limitations of early warning systems based on rainfall and crop forecasts, DFID and other donors are beginning to invest more of their resources into “vulnerability assessment” approaches such as the “household economy” approach pioneered by SCF-UK. This will be supported throughout the SADC region, and will emphasise bottom-up reporting from local “vulnerability committees”.<sup>100</sup> Work needs to be done to establish why the needs assessment in Zambia lacked geographical nuances and therefore over-estimated problems in some areas. DFID is also drawing up a programme of support to SADC in food security which will, among other things, improve the ability of SADC member states to acquire and use information on vulnerability.<sup>101</sup>

**57. We strongly endorse these encouraging developments. Food crises are likely to recur in southern Africa in the coming years. It is vital therefore that famine early warning systems are strengthened at both regional and national levels:**

- ∄ **Firstly, by improving *crop production forecasts*, especially of non-maize food-crops including cassava, and assessments of their contribution to food availability and consumption;**
- ∄ **Secondly, by strengthening *vulnerability assessment* at national and sub-national levels, including systematic monitoring of market prices and better understanding of the analytical linkages between poverty, seasonality, and access to food;**
- ∄ **Thirdly, by incorporating *non-official data sources*, such as qualitative NGO reports and monitoring by vulnerability committees, into official early warning systems.**

**58. Implementing these improvements to early warning systems in Southern Africa will require a commitment of financial resources and technical expertise from the donor community, national governments and regional organisations, notably SADC. We urge DFID to support reasonable requests for financial and technical assistance.**

59. Early warning systems should provide information to policymakers about food supply (availability) as well as the demand for food. In late 2001, three sources of information about the evolving food crisis in southern Africa were available to policymakers: crop production estimates, reports from rural areas, and maize prices. These information sources are discussed below.

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<sup>99</sup> Q 111 [John Seaman, SCF-UK]

<sup>100</sup> Q 28 [John Hansell, DFID]

<sup>101</sup> Ev 4, para 22 [DFID memorandum]

*Supply-side (Food availability)*

60. A primary function of conventional early warning systems is to forecast national levels of food availability, especially the annual harvest. As Save the Children Fund (UK) told us: “The estimation of supply is a proper, necessary and fundamental step.”<sup>102</sup> In 2001, harvests in southern Africa were reduced by erratic weather, compounded by policy failures such as the “fast track resettlement” programme in Zimbabwe, which reduced the area planted to crops by an estimated 40%. In January 2001, WFP announced that 500,000 tonnes of food aid would be needed for Southern Africa because of flooding of crops, and Swaziland appealed for international assistance for flood victims. In Malawi, the early warning system proved to be reasonably accurate in terms of predicting a 32% fall in the maize harvest (though only after the mid-season and interim forecasts were each revised downwards). But it was highly unreliable with respect to other food crops, resulting in inaccurate projections of total national food availability.

61. The problem of over-optimistic crop forecasts leading to complacency and sluggish response was most acute in Malawi. Although it was known that maize harvests were lower than the previous (bumper) year, the scale of the food deficit was not accurately predicted. Specifically, the Famine Early Warning System used Ministry of Agriculture final crop production figures to conclude, in its Monthly Food Security Report of July 2001, that the projected maize deficit of 273,000 MT would be more than adequately covered by other cereal crops and tubers, especially cassava, leaving “a national food surplus of 438,000 MT.”<sup>103</sup> This forecast turned out to be grossly exaggerated.<sup>104</sup> One reason why forecasts proved to be wrong may well be that as cassava and other tubers grow underground, it is inherently difficult to predict harvests. One reason why the forecasts were so exaggerated might be the fact that the agricultural extension workers who were involved in making the assessments have an incentive to over-estimate, to demonstrate their success in encouraging cassava production.

62. An unanswered question is why these estimates were accepted as credible, and used by donors as a justification for late and minimal intervention, when it was well known that their methodological foundations were seriously flawed. DFID’s Food Security Adviser acknowledged the low credibility of cassava production estimates in Malawi, but explained to us that: “What we did not expect was that the figures we were given were going to be as exaggerated as they turned out to be.”<sup>105</sup> DFID also wondered in late 2001 whether the “fixation on maize” in the countries of southern Africa might have led to cassava being dismissed as a snack food, with the result that actual availability of cassava would be greater than that reported,<sup>106</sup> and the food shortage less severe than predicted.

63. Conversely, information about food shortages from NGOs active at community level was ignored, presumably because the estimation of crop production is seen as a technical task that can only be undertaken by experts and agricultural specialists. In December 2001, for example, SCF-UK commissioned a national study on the availability of roots and tubers in Malawi. The report found that surpluses were produced in those areas where roots and tubers are predominantly grown (along the

<sup>102</sup> Q 114 [John Seaman, SCF-UK]

<sup>103</sup> Ev 45 [SCF-UK memorandum]

<sup>104</sup> Ev 120 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

<sup>105</sup> Q 24 [John Hansell, DFID]

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

lakeshore and in northern region), but that poor transport networks and weak markets made it prohibitive to shift this food to maize deficit areas.<sup>107</sup>

*Demand-side (Food accessibility and affordability)*

64. A second function of famine early warning systems is to predict the likely consequences of food shortages on affected population groups, to answer the key policy question: “What proportion of households of what type will be unable to acquire sufficient food to meet their requirements?”<sup>108</sup> In the second half of 2001, community-level reports from NGOs and community-based organisations highlighted emerging problems including poverty and demand failure, problems which were publicised in the international media by October. Rapidly rising maize prices in the same period—maize prices in rural Malawi quadrupled between July and October 2001—provided a further indication of emerging problems. Nutrition data and, later, reports of hunger-related mortality in some communities, provided late indicators of food stress.

65. NGO reports failed to mobilise an official response, perhaps because their information was perceived as localised and/or not credible. SCF-UK conducted household economy assessments in two Malawi districts during October and November 2001 that reached “alarming” conclusions about the inability of large proportions of the rural population to meet their annual food energy requirements. In mid-November, SCF-UK convened a meeting of government, donor and NGO representatives in Malawi to convince them of the severity of the food crisis. Although their predictions were subsequently confirmed by later tragic events, SCF-UK was unable to mobilise a concerted humanitarian response. Instead, FEWSNET, WFP and the European Commission Food Security Programme conducted a rapid food availability assessment, after which WFP approved an Emergency Operation (EMOP) that targeted only 255,000 beneficiaries over a period of three months.

66. Maize prices were monitored and reported in Malawi by FEWSNET as well as by NGOs, but received surprisingly little attention, despite a widespread recognition that rapid food price rises are both a symptom and a cause of household food insecurity. As Professor Kydd, Dr. Dorward and Professor Vaughan explained in their memorandum:

rapid rises in staple food prices relative to purchasing ability are the key problem and symptom of famine situations, and therefore need to be taken very seriously. They are also relatively easy to monitor. [...] It therefore seems extraordinary that the dramatic rise in maize prices was not recognised as a key indicator of widespread and rapid deterioration in food security over the period June to October 2001.<sup>109</sup>

67. Following the abolition of price controls and food subsidies in most southern African countries in the 1980s and 1990s,<sup>110</sup> price seasonality has returned as a major cause of household food insecurity. Food price movements in rural areas follow a predictable seasonal pattern, with prices being lowest around the harvest period when supplies are abundant and market demand is low, then rising gradually through the dry season and into the next farming season, as granary stocks and market supplies dwindle.

<sup>107</sup> Ev 46 [SCF-UK memorandum]

<sup>108</sup> Q 114 [John Seaman, SCF-UK]

<sup>109</sup> Ev 75 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>110</sup> Zimbabwe reintroduced price controls on many commodities in late 2002, mainly in an attempt to control rampant inflation, not as a food security instrument.

Food prices typically peak in the pre-harvest “hungry season”, which is associated with peak under-nutrition rates. As such it is extremely important to monitor food price movements closely, as a “demand-side” component of famine early warning systems. As the Nobel Prize-winning economist Professor Amartya Sen has demonstrated, it is possible for people to die of starvation simply because food prices rise to levels that are unaffordable for the poor, irrespective of the food availability situation at local or national level.<sup>111</sup> The Indian Famine Codes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century—a famine early warning system established by the British—included food price monitoring as an early warning indicator, and contemporary early warning systems in East Africa use price rises above seasonal norms to trigger relief interventions.

68. Finally, nutrition surveys conducted in Malawi found clear evidence of deteriorating nutrition status—the outcome of acute food insecurity. In Salima District, global malnutrition rates rose from 9.3% in December to 19% in February 2002. These statistics provided quantitative support for the anecdotal evidence from NGOs and community-based organisations of severe coping strategies being adopted by crisis-affected households, including distress sales of livestock and other assets, withdrawal of children from school, and dietary adjustments including food rationing.

69. We agree with Stephen Carr<sup>112</sup> that: “donors have to be prepared to seek advice from members of the local community with a broader knowledge of the situation than that available to their own staff, many of whom have only brief local experience.”<sup>113</sup> We endorse too the recommendation made by Professor Kydd, Dr. Dorward and Professor Vaughan, in their written submission: “Early warning systems should place more emphasis on maize price monitoring and on reports from rural areas.”<sup>114</sup> But we would go further still: **Agricultural market information systems should be introduced or strengthened as a matter of urgency in all southern African countries. Lessons should be learned from the Indian Famine Codes and Kenya’s Turkana District drought monitoring system, about how to incorporate price information into national and regional early warning systems. In addition to monitoring food prices and supplies in local markets, these systems should also collect data on agricultural input supplies and prices (especially fertiliser), and possibly also livestock prices and volumes, as “distress” sales of livestock at low prices are widely acknowledged as a robust indicator of livelihood stress.**

70. More generally, however, we conclude that lack of information was not a critical constraint in triggering the food crisis of 2001/02. If anything, the problem was too much contradictory and uncoordinated information, to which the appropriate actors failed to respond. Rob Holden of DFID’s Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, explained to us the importance of institution building at national and regional levels. He stated that: “More work needs to be done in terms of building institutions, particularly in Africa, so we need good baseline data and regular data coming in so that when we get blips in the system we can respond rapidly to check that and to obtain some more detailed information coming through. More important is to have an institution and mechanism that will give us the level of analysis and give us

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<sup>111</sup> Amartya Sen (1981), *Poverty and Famines*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>112</sup> Stephen Carr has extensive first-hand experience of farming in Africa, built up over 50 years. He lives in Malawi, and has held the posts of: Director of Agriculture in the Southern Sudan; agricultural advisor to the Prime Minister’s Office in Tanzania; and the Principal Agriculturalist in the Africa Region of the World Bank.

<sup>113</sup> Ev 120 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

<sup>114</sup> Ev 77 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

credible data on which we can base a response in a more timely manner.”<sup>115</sup> We share Mr. Holden’s views; improvements to the capacity of early warning mechanisms, and Ministries of Agriculture, are very important. However, the Secretary of State cautioned against the naïve view that these complex problems can be easily resolved through technocratic interventions. In a context of collapsing state capacity—as in Zimbabwe—building or rebuilding effective early warning systems may be politically unfeasible for the foreseeable future. As she put it: “In many very poor countries we are experiencing a collapse in state capacity so you cannot put in a good early warning system on hunger if everything else is weakening. We have to put it in a context that works.”<sup>116</sup>

### **The humanitarian response**

71. The donor response to the humanitarian crisis in southern Africa has gone through three phases. At first (late 2001) the donors denied there was a crisis at all; then they responded but slowly and inadequately (early 2002); and finally they launched an enormous international appeal (mid-2002) and moved rapidly to prevent the recurrence of a tragedy. As SCF-UK wrote in their memorandum: “Until mid-2002, the international humanitarian response to this crisis was inadequate, lacking due attention and in-depth analysis. [...] the international humanitarian community is now orchestrating what may become the largest humanitarian effort in the southern Africa region.”<sup>117</sup>

72. In 1995, a book published about famine early warning systems had the subtitle: “The Missing Link”.<sup>118</sup> This book focused on policymakers’ failure to act on available information as a key factor contributing to famines. Several witnesses made this point in the context of the current southern African emergency:

- ∄ early warning systems are only as good as the information that goes into them; but they are also as good as the response that they generate. What we have seen increasingly is not a failure of information but a failure of response. [...] for whatever reason governments and donors do not act on the signals.<sup>119</sup>
- ∄ inadequate food security and livelihood monitoring systems existed, and there was poor integration of these systems with effective national, regional and international policy response mechanisms.<sup>120</sup>
- ∄ some of the donors—in particular the EU Food Security Office—did not take the early warning signals about food crisis seriously in the 2001-02 season. As a result, much valuable time and many lives were lost. [...] There is a need to create a system for translating early food crisis warnings into action. The system should agree on indicators which would ring alarm

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<sup>115</sup> Q 181 [Rob Holden, DFID]

<sup>116</sup> Q 181 [Clare Short]

<sup>117</sup> Ev 43 [SCF-UK memorandum]

<sup>118</sup> Margie Buchanan-Smith and Susanna Davies (1995), *Famine Early Warning and Response: The Missing Link*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

<sup>119</sup> Q 95 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies]

<sup>120</sup> Ev 45 [SCF-UK memorandum]

bells—such as a low maize harvest and sharp increases in key food prices.<sup>121</sup>

### ***Fund-raising: Food and non-food aid***

73. In the last quarter of 2001, the World Food Programme (WFP) changed their senior management in Malawi and Zambia and opened a new office in Zimbabwe to improve and increase their capacity in the region. In March 2002 the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group convened a special meeting in Rome on the emerging Southern Africa Food Crisis. Following this, in April/May 2002, WFP coordinated a series of inter-agency vulnerability assessments in the six most affected countries in the region, together with OCHA, UNICEF and FAO. In May, WFP set up a regional coordination and logistics unit in Johannesburg, to provide an overall humanitarian coordination role. On 6-7 June, a Humanitarian Needs Meeting was held in Johannesburg, and in July 2002 WFP launched an international appeal (EMOP 10200) for almost one million tonnes of food worth \$507 million, with the aim of assisting 10,255,880 people throughout the region, including a General Food Distribution to 9,958,000 people. The initial focus of the appeal was on food, with a slightly delayed recognition of the centrality of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In its November 2002 update, the UN remarks that although the international community was acutely aware of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, its depth and breadth “was not fully factored into the response.”<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, as part of the July 2002 appeal, \$104 million was requested for non-food items, including support to health, water supplies and other vital social services, as well as the provision of agricultural inputs.

**Figure 8: Funding for the southern African humanitarian response**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Requirements (US\$)</b>	<b>Contributions (% of requirements)</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	29,783,796	35%
<b>Coordination and support</b>	9,814,183	42%
<b>Economic recovery and infrastructure</b>	1,949,000	Not available
<b>Education</b>	11,016,731	Not available
<b>Family shelter and non-food items</b>	900,000	Not available
<b>Food</b>	539,378,619	70%
<b>Health</b>	64,339,161	15%
<b>Multi-sector</b>	557,000	378%
<b>Protection/human rights</b>	1,425,000	Not available
<b>Water and sanitation</b>	8,511,385	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>671,864,225</b>	<b>60%</b>

Source: UN-OCHA, reported in UN Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office (RIACSO) update, 24 February 2003 – Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>121</sup> Ev 123 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]

<sup>122</sup> UN, *Crisis in southern Africa: Update regional strategy*, (November 2002) p. 1. See [www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2003/files/saf03.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2003/files/saf03.pdf)

74. By 21 February 2003, contributions to the southern Africa appeal (EMOP 10200) amounted to 60% of requirements<sup>123</sup> This is a significant improvement from the situation in October 2002, when only \$200 million of the total appeal for \$611 million had been secured.<sup>124</sup> The food aid component of the appeal is now—March 2003—70% funded, with the largest contributions coming from the United States and the United Kingdom. As is typical in most famine relief programmes, the response to the non-food appeals has been much lower than for food. For instance, the health component and the water and sanitation components of the appeal are 15% and 8% funded respectively. In November 2002, UN-OCHA complained that non-food needs, although of equal importance to food, “cannot be described as ‘adequately addressed.’”<sup>125</sup> Most worryingly, UN-OCHA noted too that: “the impact of HIV/AIDS both as a cause and an effect of the current food crisis has been underestimated in terms of response required”<sup>126</sup> (see paragraphs 141-153). Also in November 2002, the UN summed up the response to the food appeal to date as “positive”, but the response to the non-food requests as “limited” and the timing of contributions as “disappointing”.<sup>127</sup> These remain fair assessments, and were re-iterated in February 2003 by the UN’s Mid-Term Review, which emphasised the need to fund non-food items including water and sanitation, educational supplies, agricultural inputs and medicines.<sup>128</sup>

### *Logistics and delivery*

75. Transport and infrastructure bottlenecks throughout southern Africa imposed constraints on the mobilisation and delivery of both commercial food imports and food aid in 2001/02. As we were told: “Simultaneous shortages elsewhere in the region, together with difficulties in managing the demands placed on an already difficult transport system meant that maize imports came into [Malawi] very slowly.”<sup>129</sup> Limited port handling capacity, deteriorating rail and road infrastructure and lengthy customs clearance procedures were identified as serious impediments.<sup>130</sup> Nacala port in Mozambique proved unable to cope with the volume of food imports, rail routes from South Africa were affected by a derailment on the Zimbabwe border, and trucks were already engaged in transporting other commodities (including fertilisers, later Christmas goods), leaving little spare capacity. Within Mozambique, “the almost complete lack of adequate road and railway infrastructure linking the maize deficit south from the maize surplus north” inhibited the movement of food within the country.<sup>131</sup>

76. Following the problems with food imports and food aid distribution in 2001/02, substantial investments have been made in upgrading ports and rail lines to expedite the response to the crisis of 2002/03. In particular, DFID deserves praise for its support for the major improvements made to the Nacala rail link from Mozambique to Malawi. Nonetheless, it remains the case, that: “what is happening in Southern Africa is as much a logistical crisis right now as anything else, because they do not have enough transport; they do not have the institutional support; they do not have the presence of aid agencies like WFP on the same scale; they do not have the history or institutional memory for

<sup>123</sup> UN RIACSO update, 24 February 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>124</sup> UN, *Crisis in southern Africa: Update regional strategy*, (November 2002) p. 11 – see footnote 122.

<sup>125</sup> Ev 24, para 2 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>126</sup> Ev 25, para 3 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>127</sup> UN, *Crisis in southern Africa: Update regional strategy*, (November 2002) p. 1 – see footnote 122.

<sup>128</sup> UN, *Mid-Term Review*, February 2003, pp. 7-10. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>129</sup> Ev 76 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>130</sup> Ev 25, para 5 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>131</sup> Ev 59 [Christian Aid memorandum]

dealing with these kinds of crises.”<sup>132</sup> The Government of Mozambique has set up a National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC) to coordinate emergency preparedness, with financial support from UN Development Programme (UNDP). However, information flows to and from the provinces and districts are extremely weak, because the INCG has been under-resourced and lacks physical infrastructure. Local NGOs have been working with the INCG to strengthen its role, with support from Christian Aid, which concludes: “Despite a current lack of capacity, such national bodies could play a key role in assisting communities to cope with situations of stress before they occur. However, they need to be resourced, well planned and supported by local structures to be effective.”<sup>133</sup>

77. Despite the financial and logistical constraints which it has faced, the WFP has achieved impressive—if somewhat patchy—results, particularly as regards the proportion of its intended beneficiaries that it has managed to deliver food aid to (see figure 9). At one extreme, in Zambia, where the GM issue has added another layer of constraints, WFP had by December 2002 reached 40% of its intended beneficiaries. In Swaziland, WFP had met 93% of its target number of beneficiaries. For the region as a whole, WFP had delivered food aid to more than 6 million people, 62% of the target number.

	<b>Lesotho</b>	<b>Malawi</b>	<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Swaziland</b>	<b>Zambia</b>	<b>Zimbabwe</b>	<b>Regional Total</b>
<b>Beneficiary target</b>	445,000	3,188,000	440,000	231,000	1,706,000	3,903,000	9,913,000
<b>Beneficiaries actual</b>	330,440	2,339,527	247,130	214,589	680,876	2,354,210	6,166,772
<b>Coverage of beneficiaries</b>	74%	73%	56%	93%	40%	60%	62%
<b>Metric Tonnes target</b>	40,175	140,943	42,435	16,548	90,024	290,852	620,976
<b>Metric Tonnes actual</b>	13,307	100,821	14,301	9,775	31,506	96,263	265,973
<b>Metric Tonnes coverage achieved</b>	33%	72%	34%	59%	35%	33%	43%

Source: The office of Judith Lewis, WFP

### ***Donor-Government relationships, NGOs, and donor coordination***

78. A crucial determinant of the speed and effectiveness of public response to contemporary humanitarian emergencies is the nature of the relationship between international and national actors. In most recent food crises, bad relations at the critical time between bilateral and multilateral donors, on the one hand, and national governments, on the other, have resulted in famines that could and should have been prevented.<sup>134</sup> This was a factor in the current southern Africa emergency, certainly in

<sup>132</sup> Q 104 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies]

<sup>133</sup> Ev 62 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>134</sup> *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin* (2002), vol. 33, no. 4, The “New Famines”. Copy placed in House of Commons Library.

Zimbabwe and Malawi, and to a lesser extent in Zambia and Swaziland. Professor Kydd, Dr. Dorward and Professor Vaughan noted in their submission that: “Problems of weak governance led to difficult relations between government, donors and NGOs, [and] was a major factor in delayed recognition of and response to emerging evidence of a famine crisis.”<sup>135</sup> ActionAid similarly pointed to poor relations between national governments and international donors as fatally delaying donors’ response to the food crisis.”<sup>136</sup> In reacting slowly to signals of impending food shortages in southern Africa, the donors did not appear to act in concert, but individually and for different reasons in different countries.

79. In Malawi, for instance, DFID’s official position was that the maize production shortfall should have been adequately covered by cassava and sweet potatoes, but subsequent discussions about food aid needs were also “clouded” by the non-transparent sale of the Strategic Grain Reserve. After the EU’s first delivery of food to Malawi was allegedly misappropriated, they were reluctant to pledge more food aid. USAID at first accepted the misleading information provided by FEWSNET, the USAID-funded early warning system, and later argued that they were statutorily unable to deliver food aid because Malawi had exported food earlier in the same agricultural year.<sup>137</sup> In Zambia, the inclusion of genetically-modified commodities in the food aid basket led to lengthy negotiations—and delays—about the delivery of relief supplies. In Zimbabwe, accurate information about the true situation was, and still is, difficult to ascertain. In addition, once an emergency response was mobilised, donors were concerned about the possibility that the relief programme would be politicised, with evidence that opposition areas and opposition supporters were excluded from food aid, food-for-work and school feeding programmes. In Swaziland, donors withdrew all non-humanitarian assistance as they doubted that poverty reduction was being prioritised sufficiently.

80. The network of local and international NGOs that are active throughout southern Africa have played an important and commendable role during the humanitarian crisis, firstly in alerting the world to the impending emergency, then in mobilising and delivering relief resources to affected households and communities. For example, Save the Children Fund UK: commissioned nutrition surveys in food insecure districts of Malawi; called meetings with government and donors to urge that assistance be provided; made representations to the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group on the Southern Africa Food Crisis; and contributed to vulnerability assessments in several affected countries. ActionAid commissioned a study of the food crisis in Malawi and lobbied in the UK, Washington and elsewhere for a more effective international response. In late 2002, an NGO “Consortium for the Southern Africa Food Emergency” (C-SAFE) was established, based in Johannesburg, with lead agencies being CARE in Malawi, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Zambia and World Vision in Zimbabwe. **We were impressed in Malawi with the coordination between NGOs involved in the delivery of food aid and humanitarian assistance. In the medium term, such tasks ought to be performed by government, but NGOs are providing an essential and much-needed service.**

81. International agencies are routinely criticised for failing to respond in a coordinated fashion to humanitarian emergencies, but coordination among the donors does not

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<sup>135</sup> Ev 76 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>136</sup> Ev 113, para 8 [ActionAid memorandum]

<sup>137</sup> Both the General Manager of the National Food Reserve Agency and Alfred Kammer, the Deputy Divisional Chief of the IMF’s southern Africa division told Stephen Devereux that some maize from the Strategic Grain Reserve had been sold to Kenya, on IMF advice.

appear to have been a significant problem in this crisis. One reason for this may be the strengthening of UN coordination around emergency response over the past few years. The Secretary of State acknowledged this in evidence, stating that: “The building up of OCHA as the core centre part of the UN system that is capable of moving has strengthened enormously. My department and the people in CHAD [DFID’s Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department] have been leading workers on that.”<sup>138</sup> In terms of the current southern Africa crisis, since the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group first met in March 2002 to assess the situation, UN agencies have worked together with bilateral donors and NGOs to mobilise and deliver relief assistance. The UN has set up an inter-agency mechanism in Johannesburg, together with the Red Cross, “so that they can take a collective view and a collective approach to dealing with the problems on the ground and providing direction and support to the country teams at the coal face. It is quite an interesting test case in some respects and I think on the whole it has added a lot of value to the operation and has helped enormously.”<sup>139</sup> DFID have provided technical and financial support to a number of UN agencies and NGOs, and are actively engaged in strengthening donor coordination at the regional level.<sup>140</sup>

82. SCF-UK however, argued that “the big players of USAID, EU and DFID have not worked well together.”<sup>141</sup> Other witnesses pointed out that SADC (especially through its technical body, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Division) had not taken as strong a lead in “managing the crisis both politically, economically as well as operationally” as might be expected, given the central role of SADC as a regional institution.<sup>142</sup> There was a general view that the current crisis has the potential to improve coordination between regional institutions and the donors, as well as within the donor community, for instance through joint needs assessments. As John Seaman of SCF-UK points out: “Agency coordination is a national function: only governments can adequately coordinate external agencies. Paradoxically, those countries that depend most heavily on external assistance have the least capacity to control its use.”<sup>143</sup> This reality presents enormous challenges to governments attempting to coordinate external agencies. Yet the effective coordination of multiple organisations and institutions, each pursuing its own interests, is vital for accurate prediction and timely intervention in all emergencies.

**83. We are concerned at the lack of coordination within and between the donor community and regional institutions on food insecurity in southern Africa. On the basis that we believe food crises are likely to recur in the region, we believe it is unrealistic and unfair to expect regional governments in the immediate future to implement alone effective co-ordination between multiple organisations and institutions. As part of its evaluation of the UK response to the southern Africa emergency, DFID should assess the effectiveness of its working relationships with international, regional and national partners, including NGOs, and should draw lessons for improved coordination among multilateral and bilateral agencies.**

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<sup>138</sup> Q 186 [Clare Short]

<sup>139</sup> Q 187 [Rob Holden, DFID]

<sup>140</sup> Ev 3, para 13 [DFID memorandum]; Q 11 [Rob Holden, DFID]

<sup>141</sup> Q 132 [Richard Mawer, SCF-UK]

<sup>142</sup> Ev 25, para 3 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>143</sup> John Seaman (2002), “The failure of early warning in Malawi in 2001: Time to rethink international famine early warning systems”, *Humanitarian Exchange*, no. 22, p10.

### *The politicisation of food aid*

84. In some countries, especially Zimbabwe and to a lesser extent in Malawi, there have been concerns over the manipulation of food aid and commercial imports for political objectives. We are aware too of the suggestion made in relation to Zambia, that the methodology used for assessing food aid needs is seriously flawed and “wide open to subjectivity and political manipulation.”<sup>144</sup> We are not in a position to comment in detail on the methodology for assessing need, but the importance of accurate, reliable and trustworthy assessments, free of political manipulation, is clear. As regards Malawi, it has been suggested to us that the scheme agreed between the Government of Malawi and the World Bank to deliver an untargeted food subsidy might be connected to forthcoming general elections. In Zimbabwe, donors and relief agencies have tried to operate independently of government interference, but in a very difficult and even hostile context, as DFID explained:

The environment in Zimbabwe poses particular problems for the relief effort. Against a background of deep political polarisation and antagonism to the outside world, the Government has not maintained an open dialogue with donors or civil society. The extent and impartiality of Government plans to mitigate the crisis are unclear. There are frequent complaints from the opposition and human rights groups that the Government is using food as a way of rewarding its supporters and punishing its opponents. Donors have agreed that external food aid must be distributed through impartial and independent channels. However, the authorities have failed to facilitate the use of all available distribution channels. The strict control on private sector imports, together with price controls, has frozen the private sector out of the national response.<sup>145</sup>

85. The WFP is very careful to ensure that the food aid that it provides is not diverted, but there are concerns about the mis-use of the Grain Marketing Board’s [GMB] supplies. UN-OCHA noted that: “Politicisation of food distribution is a major impediment to effective targeting in Zimbabwe. [...] There have been reports of specific examples of opposition members being denied food assistance or access to the GMB-sold maize, as well as cases of children from known Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters being denied supplementary feeding at school.”<sup>146</sup> UN-OCHA added that the Government has been “extremely reticent” about the needs of Zimbabwean farm workers made vulnerable by land redistribution, and has not supported relief efforts targeted at these farm workers and their families, estimated at 175,000 households or around 950,000 people. In SADC’s December 2002 Emergency Food Security Assessment, it was noted that distribution of GMB imports at the community level is inconsistent with reported imports at the national level. National level figures indicate a surplus of 200,000 MT while at sub-national levels 40% of communities were reporting that cereals were not, or rarely, available from the GMB or the market. This suggests, at best, that the distribution of food within the country is very uneven. As SADC states: “The discrepancy between reported import levels at the national level and community availability of cereals warrants further investigation.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> “Means to measure ‘famine’ in Zambia”, *The Times*, 3 February 2003, Letters.

<sup>145</sup> Ev 4, para 21 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>146</sup> Ev 26, para 5 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>147</sup> SADC-FANR Assessment, December 2002, p. 3. See footnote 2.

86. Despite these difficulties, a fairly extensive relief programme has been launched in Zimbabwe. Judith Lewis of the World Food Programme told us that WFP was working during 2002 with ten NGOs in Zimbabwe to deliver 55,000 tonnes of food aid per month. She also reported that the Executive Director of WFP, James Morris, had told President Mugabe “that WFP [has] a zero tolerance policy for political interference in its feeding programmes.”<sup>148</sup> John Winter of DFID told us that DFID was contributing to the WFP programme and was also running bilateral supplementary and general feeding programmes in Zimbabwe, with its NGO partners.<sup>149</sup> **We applaud these efforts by the international community to deliver effective relief programmes in the face of political indifference or hostility by certain governments. DFID and its partners in the international community must strive to maintain freedom from political interference in their responses to humanitarian emergencies, while at the same time ensuring that the humanitarian imperative remains the overarching principle, irrespective of the nature of the regime or difficulties in relationships between international actors and national governments.**

### **DFID’s response**

87. The principal objective of DFID’s humanitarian regional strategy for southern Africa has been “to support efforts that enable vulnerable people to survive and cope through the provision of life saving services and goods, while seeking to establish the basis for recovery activities that promote sustainable development.”<sup>150</sup> We were told that DFID’s response to the crisis was “led by the country offices”, because the causes were “deeply rooted in governance and economic and agricultural policy within the countries.”<sup>151</sup> This country-level response was supported by DFID’s regional Food Security Adviser, based in Harare since April 2002, and by DFID’s Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD), which set up a Unit in Johannesburg in September 2002.<sup>152</sup> DFID’s response has been extensive and varied (see figure 10); by 25 February 2003 DFID’s humanitarian assistance in the region since September 2001 amounted to £141 million.<sup>153</sup>

88. If timeliness of response is assessed in terms of humanitarian need, DFID was late to respond to the food crisis in 2001/02. It was however the first donor to respond, and has since demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that a similar crisis is prevented in 2003 and future years. We have no doubt that compared with the other donors, who shared DFID’s concerns about governance and corruption, DFID performed well. Indeed one major donor, DANIDA, the Danish development agency, pulled out of Malawi completely because of deteriorating relations with the Government of Malawi. In a recent debate, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Sally Keeble, stated that: “In Malawi, the Government and donors agreed in August 2001 that action needed to be taken, but the Government decided not to ask for outside help. An emergency was finally declared in February 2002.”<sup>154</sup> This is true, but it fails to explain what happened in the months between August 2001 and February 2002, or to explain adequately why

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<sup>148</sup> Q 66 [Judith Lewis, WFP]

<sup>149</sup> Q 6 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>150</sup> DFID, *Background Briefing on Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa*, 12 December 2002. See [www.dfid.gov.uk/News/News/files/bg\\_brief\\_safc\\_dec2002.htm](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/News/files/bg_brief_safc_dec2002.htm)

<sup>151</sup> Q 3 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> See [www.dfid.gov.uk/News/PressReleases/files/sa\\_crisis.htm](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/PressReleases/files/sa_crisis.htm)

<sup>154</sup> HC Deb, 6 February 2002, col 143WH.

DFID and its partners failed to act in late 2001 to prevent or minimise the tragedy of early 2002.

**Figure 10: DFID's response**

Country	2000/ 01 Regular DFID Spend (£ m)	2001/ 02 Regular DFID Spend (£ m)	DFID Humanitarian Assistance
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	10.5	14.7	DFID spend is expected to rise to £25 m in 2002/03. Zimbabwe has also benefited from Regional programmes amounting to £33m in 2003/04. DFID has pledged £47m since September 2001 for humanitarian assistance, using NGOs and UN structures to deliver assistance. The UK was an early contributor and is the second largest bilateral donor.
<b>Malawi</b>	56	43	DFID is the biggest donor (inc. multilaterals) contributing £62m, including suspended £25m budgetary support. As regards the immediate humanitarian crisis, DFID has spent approximately £34m on food import and distribution, provision of wages for employment on public works programmes, support to agricultural production and rehabilitation of rail and road links on the import corridors.
<b>Zambia</b>	52	45	DFID is a big player and contributes funds between five and eight percent of the Government of Zambia's expenditure. As regards the current humanitarian crisis, this year DFID has provided £16.1 million supporting WFP feeding programmes and the distribution through NGOs and the FAO of seeds and tools, and improving food surveillance systems.
<b>Lesotho</b>	2.5	2.7	DFID is supporting the Government's PRSP process. At current forecasts DFID expect to spend approximately £4m on development assistance in 2002/03. As regards the current crisis, DFID responded with an immediate contribution of £1.5m for food through WFP and a later contribution of £0.5m. DFID has provided a further £1 million for essential development assistance for the worst affected areas with a Livelihoods Recovery through Agriculture programme. Under regional funding, DFID is supporting improvements to UNICEF's national surveillance system.
<b>Mozambique</b>	30	40	Donors fund some 50 percent of Government expenditure. DFID is the fourth largest donor and has a high level of policy influence, particularly through its provision of direct budget support. During the current crisis, DFID has provided just under £2m for interventions related to the drought and is considering a further £300,000. With other donors, and through the national agricultural development programme, DFID supported the distribution of input kits and seed fairs. DFID also funds a longer-term programme in Zambezia Province, in partnership with World Vision, which includes both agricultural and infrastructure development, and supports UNICEF and Red Cross supplementary feeding and food ration programmes and WFP food-distribution programmes.
<b>Swaziland</b>	1.3	1.1	DFID's bilateral programme is declining as DFID moves to implement a new Southern Africa Regional Strategy. At current forecasts we expect to spend approximately £0.5m in 2002/03 on direct development assistance to Swaziland. DFID responded to the current crisis with a donation of £0.25 million through WFP. Under a regional programme, DFID is supporting UNICEF's national surveillance system. DFID is appraising further support for emergency water supplies building on DFID's current Rural Water Supply programme and possible support to SCF's contribution to the National Disaster Task Force.

Source: DFID – received on 13 February 2003

89. In the months leading up to the crisis in Malawi, DFID was asked directly on at least three separate occasions—by the Minister of Agriculture in Malawi, by concerned experts both in-country and in the UK, and by international NGOs led by SCF-UK—to respond to the signals of impending food crisis. On each occasion, DFID declined to intervene. In late October 2001, DFID chaired a meeting at which Malawi’s Minister of Agriculture asked the donors for food aid to alleviate the shortfall in local production. DFID declined this request, arguing that the maize-gap should be bridged by a combination of other food-crops (especially cassava), Strategic Grain Reserve stocks, commercial imports, and food aid already pledged (15,000 tons from the EU).<sup>155</sup> In November 2001, DFID Malawi claimed that there was no overall shortage of food, giving the impression that there was “no crisis”.<sup>156</sup> In December 2001, SCF-UK appealed to DFID for funding to launch an emergency programme for Mchinji District, but this request was declined until the crisis had peaked, three months later.<sup>157</sup>

90. It seems highly likely that DFID was aware of the unreliability of the Ministry of Agriculture’s cassava production estimates, and of the fact that the government had sold most of the 165,000 MT of maize in the Strategic Grain Reserve, leaving no grain stocks to draw upon.<sup>158</sup> However, DFID claim they were unaware of the extent to which cassava production was overestimated. The logistical constraints that hampered the subsequent food import programme could not have been predicted. DFID acknowledged that they did have “information on crops, information from rural areas and information on prices” in Malawi by August/September 2001, but argued that these sources of information “did conflict”.<sup>159</sup> As John Hansell of DFID admitted: “there was a glitch in Malawi with the early warning systems.”<sup>160</sup> The second reason given by DFID for what might be perceived as its inaction was political: “a lot of the discussion with government in the last quarter of last year was clouded by the problem of what had happened to the national food reserve.”<sup>161</sup>

91. Save the Children Fund UK applauded DFID for being the first donor to respond to the crisis in Malawi, but suggested several shortcomings in DFID’s response across the region. These included: DFID’s inconsistent engagement with civil society in different countries at different times; a lack of clarity about where decision-making was taking place—at national, regional or London level—which may have delayed DFID’s response; and unclear internal linkages between long-term development programmes and emergency response, and between the functions of DFID country offices and DFID’s Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department. As SCF-UK wrote: “It was unclear what triggers DFID were using to prompt an emergency response, with its concomitant requirements of appropriate scaling-up, urgency of response and the need to view the crisis within a regional rather than specifically national context.”<sup>162</sup> In addition, SCF-UK suggested that there were varying degrees of commitment to the emergency and post-emergency recovery needs of different countries; high commitment in Malawi and Zimbabwe, but unclear commitment to Angola and Mozambique.

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<sup>155</sup> Ev 119 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

<sup>156</sup> Background Paper 6 – Megan Vaughan’s note on DFID’s response to the situation in Malawi in late 2001. Copy placed in House of Commons Library.

<sup>157</sup> Ev 46-47 [SCF-UK memorandum]

<sup>158</sup> Ev 45 [SCF-UK memorandum]

<sup>159</sup> Q 12 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>160</sup> Q 28 [John Hansell, DFID]

<sup>161</sup> Q 12 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>162</sup> Ev 43-44 [SCF-UK memorandum]

92. It is important not to lose sight of the longer-term in responding to the emergency. In this context, SCF-UK suggested to us that there may be a danger, in the current trend towards budget support and away from donor financing of projects and programmes, that the vulnerability of rural livelihoods may be overlooked. That is, governments receiving budget support may not prioritise sufficiently investment in rural livelihoods. As SCF-UK wrote: “Whilst direct budget support to governments is welcome, this should not be at the expense of livelihood support initiatives (e.g. in Mozambique where no emergency response is anticipated).”<sup>163</sup> DFID—which endorses the move among the donor community towards budget support—argued that food security, and rural livelihoods more generally, must be better emphasised within Poverty Reduction Strategies.<sup>164</sup> We agree.

### Genetically-modified food aid

93. During 2002, it emerged that genetically-modified (GM) maize, mainly provided by the United States, was included in food aid shipments to southern Africa. The Government of Zambia took strong exception and refused to accept GM food aid. They felt that GM food aid posed potential health risks to the population, and that if GM seeds contaminated local crops, Zambian export farmers might be barred from access to European Union markets. Referring to the latter possibility, Clare Short suggested to us that: “I think in the early days when this was being argued, representatives of the European Commission were not exactly active in putting down the notion.”<sup>165</sup>

94. In October, the Zambian government turned away 18,000 tonnes of American maize, after also turning down an offer by DFID to mill the food into flour so that it could only be consumed, not planted. President Mwanawasa told the international media: “I’d rather die than eat something toxic.” Of course, in the event of food shortage, it would be the poor and hungry people of Zambia, rather than the President, who would die. **We take the view that Zambia’s decision—and especially the refusal to accept milled maize which could not possibly have impacted on Zambia’s future export potential as it cannot germinate—was mistaken, particularly in the context of widespread hunger.** This issue hampered the relief effort to Zambia, as Clare Short explained to us: “It meant that the humanitarian response was damaged, there was food in the country, there were hungry people and they were not allowed to eat it and, indeed, logistics had to be used to take it out of the country when we had to find other food and get it into the country.”<sup>166</sup> DFID’s estimate of the cost of removing this food and importing non-GM food was £25-£30 million.<sup>167</sup>

95. International opinion on the food safety and environmental risks attached to GM organisms (GMOs) is divided. Even within the UK Government there are a range of views. Some argue that scientific evidence has found no significant health risks associated with consuming GM crops. Others claim that American multinationals have cynically exploited recent food crises to introduce GM crops into African diets and agriculture. At a meeting about GM food aid on 27 November 2002, Michael Meacher, Minister of State for the Environment and Agri-Environment, suggested that countries were being pressured to take GM food for reasons of GM politics, behaviour which he

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<sup>163</sup> Ev 44 [SCF-UK memorandum]

<sup>164</sup> Ev 5, para 22 [DFID memorandum]

<sup>165</sup> Q 201 [Clare Short]

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Q 201 [Anthony Smith, DFID]

described as “wicked”.<sup>168</sup> Mr. Meacher’s allegation was forcefully denied by the US Embassy. Clare Short dismissed strongly such allegations in oral evidence. She described the suggestion made by Greenpeace<sup>169</sup>—that the US Government, USAID and the GM industry are using the famine to force the introduction of GM crops—as “a complete lie.”<sup>170</sup> She described fears that GMOs could pose risks to human health as “myths”, asserting that the World Health Organisation has declared these fears to be “absolutely untrue”.<sup>171</sup> The Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr. Brundtland, stated on 28 August 2002 that GM foods “are not likely to present human health risk”. Dr. Brundtland explained that “WHO is not aware of scientifically documented cases in which consumption of these foods has had negative human health effects”, and concluded that “these foods may therefore be eaten” and that southern African countries should consider accepting GM food aid in the face of the humanitarian crisis facing the region.<sup>172</sup> **We recognise that GM is a complex and fast-moving technology, but we believe that the UK Government should seek to build a consensus on the use of GM food aid, and agree a clear and coherent policy on GM-maize if it is to succeed in persuading food aid recipients of its benefits.**

96. Under the terms of the Cartagena bio-safety protocol, to which the UK is a signatory, national governments are encouraged to develop their own regulatory framework for the importation of GMOs, and informed agreement should guide any importation decision. Zambia does not yet have a regulatory framework in place, but took a precautionary stance against importing GM maize, highlighting in particular the centrality of maize in local diets and livelihoods. With better information, a different decision may have been reached. In a country at risk of mass starvation, a different decision certainly should have been reached. However, if the Cartagena protocol is to be adhered to, poor countries as well as rich countries must have the right to determine their position on GMOs, and to apply the precautionary principle.

**97. DFID and other donors—but not the USA which is a non-signatory—are bound, under the Cartagena Protocol on bio-safety, to respect the right of aid-dependent governments to refuse genetically-modified commodities if these are offered as food aid. We were pleased to hear Clare Short state that: “We take the view under the Cartagena Convention, the bio-diversity convention,<sup>173</sup> that every country has the right to decide for itself whether to import GM food or seeds and needs the capacity to be able to think about it and make the decision in an intelligent way.”<sup>174</sup> It seems to us that this is at heart an issue of governance; an accountable government, making decisions intelligently, would surely not opt for a policy of rejecting GM food aid when many of its citizens face starvation?**

98. WFP told us that: “The lesson we are learning is that we have to have a good, sound, solid discussion about GM and the commodities that are available before we go into humanitarian situations in terms of what governments will and will not receive. We have to be very clear with our cash donors that we are going to need more cash in the future. We cannot depend on 50 per cent of commodities coming from the United States Government, so we have to do a lot more effort and energy in discussions up-front

<sup>168</sup> “US policy on aid is ‘wicked’”, *The Independent on Sunday*, 1 December 2002, p. 7.

<sup>169</sup> Greenpeace, *USAID and GM Food Aid*, October 2002. Available at [www.greenpeace.org.uk](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk)

<sup>170</sup> Q 202 [Clare Short]

<sup>171</sup> Q 201 [Clare Short]

<sup>172</sup> WHO, *WHO Director General speaks on GM foods*, 28 August 2002. See [www.afro.who.int/press/2002/pr20020828.html](http://www.afro.who.int/press/2002/pr20020828.html)

<sup>173</sup> To be precise, the Cartagena Protocol concerns bio-safety and is supplementary to the Convention on bio-diversity.

<sup>174</sup> Q 201 [Clare Short]

before we get into a humanitarian situation.”<sup>175</sup> **Donors should make every effort to provide food and non-food aid of a type and form acceptable to recipients. Looking beyond the current emergency, donors should also make more concerted efforts to source food staples locally as this is likely to be nutritionally-appropriate and culturally-preferred, is less likely to be genetically-modified, and will often be cheaper than shipping food aid from Europe and North America. In regions like southern Africa, where markets are relatively well-developed except in the most isolated rural areas, more consideration should be given to providing relief aid in the form of cash rather than food, as this maximises choice and supports rather than undermines local food producers and traders.**

### **The humanitarian response: Conclusions and lessons**

99. **There is no room for complacency, but the humanitarian response has so far been a success.**<sup>176</sup> **Overall, we commend DFID and its partners in the international community for responding generously to the crisis in Southern Africa in 2002, after a slow start and in the face of difficult governance contexts in several countries.** We agree with Judith Lewis of WFP, that “the lack of emaciated and starving people on our television screens should be heralded as a success”, rather than as proof that initial assessments of need were exaggerated.<sup>177</sup> We are reassured that every effort is being taken to avert famine deaths and protect rural livelihoods in the crisis-affected countries, and that the food security situation in Southern Africa is currently under control. However, we agree too with the assessment made by Rob Holden of DFID’s Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department. He stated that: “there has been good work done up to now and food has got in but it is time to take stock, it is time to make sure that where the need for food is required that should continue but we need to take a more analytical, more strategic approach making sure that the continuing operation is clearly targeted, [that] it is based on assessed need and, more important, [that] it does very minimal damage to people’s recovery systems and people’s coping systems.”<sup>178</sup>

100. It is highly likely that there will be recurrent food shortages and subsistence crises in countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe in the next few years. Indeed, food shortages are likely to continue beyond the March harvest, which, in many countries is expected to be disappointing. **We therefore urge the donor community and its regional partners (governments, SADC, NGOs and civil society) to establish contingency plans, such as pre-positioning of food stocks in the region, technical support to national safety net programmes, including better planned and transparently-managed Strategic Grain Reserves, and greater dialogue with the private sector to enhance coordination between public and private food flows. Those responsible for ensuring food security in the countries of southern Africa—including national Governments, the SADC-Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Vulnerability Assessment Committee, DFID, WFP and other bilateral and multilateral donors, NGOs and community-based organisations active in poverty reduction activities in the region—must establish clear criteria for predicting food shortages, declaring humanitarian emergencies, and mobilising relief resources. This requires institutional strengthening and coordination. To this end, national governments**

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<sup>175</sup> Q 77 [Judith Lewis, WFP]

<sup>176</sup> UN, *Mid-Term Review*, February 2003, pp. 4-7. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>177</sup> “Reality of crisis in southern Africa”, *The Times*, 29 January 2003, p. 19.

<sup>178</sup> Q 194 [Rob Holden, DFID]

**and their donor partners should consider establishing permanent Food Security and Evaluation Units, probably located in Ministries of Agriculture, which would liaise closely with local Vulnerability Committees.**<sup>179</sup>

**101. As for the longer term, steps must be taken to reduce vulnerability to food production shocks. These will include: encouraging diversification away from maize and even out of agriculture for some of the population; providing appropriate support to poor households affected by HIV/AIDS; and where direct budgetary support is given, prioritising household food security within Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes.**

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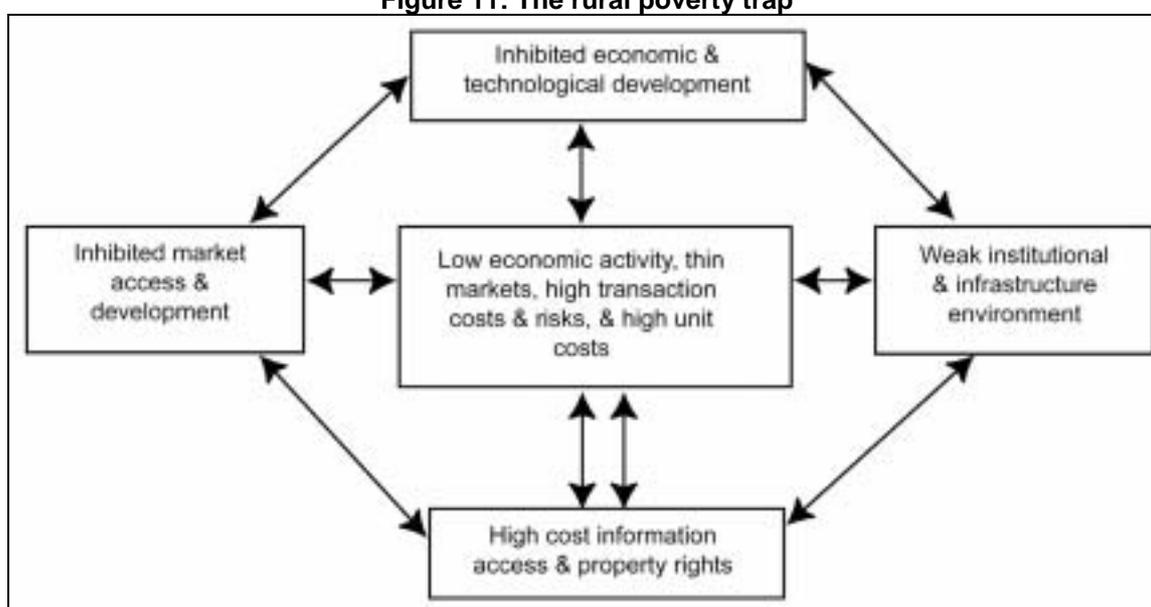
<sup>179</sup> Ev 123 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]; Ev 43 [SCF-UK memorandum]

## V. FROM CRISIS RESPONSE TO FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

### Poverty traps, vulnerability and risk management

102. In southern Africa, individuals, households, communities and indeed rural economies as a whole find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, vulnerability and crisis (see figure 2).<sup>180</sup> In poor rural economies, low levels of agricultural productivity lead to low levels of market demand and marketed produce; low levels of market activity lead to high marketing costs and risk, preventing market development; and lack of market development prevents the use of more productive agricultural inputs and sales of farm produce.<sup>181</sup> If communities in southern Africa are to become food secure and move towards sustainable livelihoods, they must be enabled to escape the rural poverty trap, and to break the cycle of poverty, vulnerability and crisis.

Figure 11: The rural poverty trap



Source: Andrew Dorward, Jonathan Kydd, Jamie Morrison and Colin Poulton (2002), *Institutions, markets and policies for pro-poor agricultural growth*<sup>182</sup>

103. Vulnerable communities are unable to manage risk. They are ill-equipped to deal with crises, and—being at the margins of survival—are likely to be unwilling to make risky investments to improve their well-being, even if they have the resources to consider such investments. People in rural areas in the countries of southern Africa face high risks on any investment that they might make, including climatic risks, coordination risks and risks of opportunism. Coordination risks exist when the complementary investments which are needed for an investment to pay off, may not be made.<sup>183</sup> For

<sup>180</sup> Q 137 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]; Ev 78 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>181</sup> Ev 78 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>182</sup> Andrew Dorward, Jonathan Kydd, Jamie Morrison and Colin Poulton (2002) *Institutions, markets and policies for pro-poor agricultural growth*. See [www.wye.ic.ac.uk/AgEcon/ADU/research/projects/ppag/ghentpap2.pdf](http://www.wye.ic.ac.uk/AgEcon/ADU/research/projects/ppag/ghentpap2.pdf)

<sup>183</sup> Q 137 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

instance, investing in irrigation to increase agricultural productivity beyond subsistence levels will not pay off unless there is a road to take the produce to market. So-called risks of opportunism exist where an actor who might make the necessary complementary investment would have an effective monopoly and hence be able to extract an undue share of revenue from the supply chain. Coordination risks and risks of opportunism are both the result of thin markets, with few buyers, few sellers and a lack of institutions to mediate between buyers and sellers. In such situations, where there is a high risk that investments will fail, and people can't afford to fail, it is likely that investment will not take place and people will remain trapped in rural poverty (see figure 11). **If people and communities are to escape from poverty traps and move towards food security and sustainable livelihoods, they must be enabled both to cope with crisis-related risks and to make the risky investments which are needed to climb out of poverty.**

104. Approaches to reducing poverty and vulnerability through improving risk management range from “protective measures” and welfare support, to “preventive measures”, to “promotional measures” and productivity enhancement.<sup>184</sup> Protective measures aim to provide relief from poverty and deprivation. Preventive measures are direct measures for poverty alleviation. Promotional measures aim to improve real incomes and capabilities. This conceptualisation emphasises that reducing insecurity and improving livelihoods are part of a continuum of social protection and improved risk management. This is especially so in contexts such as southern Africa where livelihood insecurity is endemic rather than periodic.<sup>185</sup> This conceptualisation also reinforces the importance of integrating relief, recovery and development activities (see figure 12), and “points to the need for multiple approaches to social protection where poverty and vulnerability are widespread and highly differentiated.”<sup>186</sup> As Clare Short emphasised in oral evidence: “we have got to merge the continuing humanitarian catastrophe with the development programme because we are not going to come out of this quickly. Partly because it is so deep, but certainly because of the HIV dimension, recovery is going to take a lot longer.”<sup>187</sup> If short-term crisis management is to lead to longer-term development, poor rural communities must be enabled to better manage and deal with their risks. Long-term development reduces the need for short-term crisis management in the future. Donors and Governments must take this wider view when evaluating development interventions and investments.

105. Recognising that relief, recovery and development interventions ought to be integrated, and that protective, preventive and promotional measures form a continuum, in the remainder of this chapter we discuss aspects of rural development ranging from safety nets and social protection, to opportunity ladders, diversification and development. As Dr. Stephen Devereux argued in evidence: “We need to really focus on supporting the private sector, as well as putting in place some kind of safety net or some institutional support for food security. This might sound paradoxical, but I think it is a

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<sup>184</sup> Naila Kabeer (2002), “Safety nets and opportunity ladders: Addressing vulnerability and enhancing opportunity in South Asia”, *Development Policy Review*, vol. 20, no. 5, pp. 595-6.

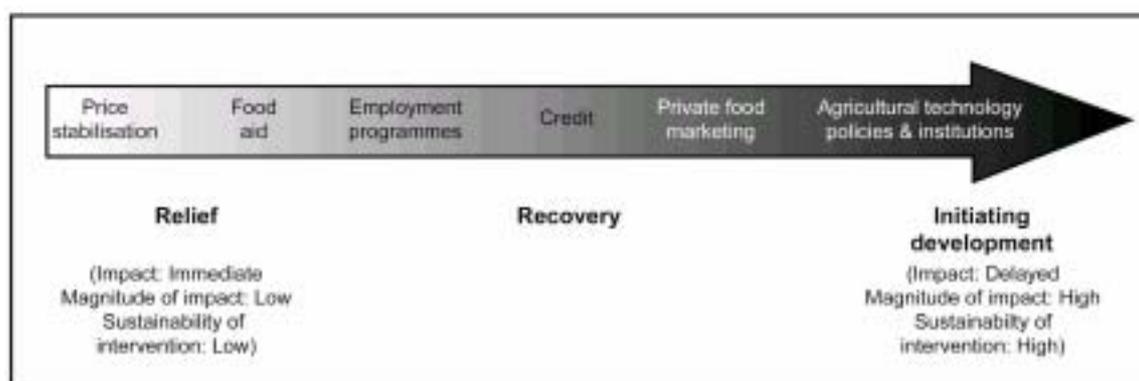
<sup>185</sup> The World Bank's Social Protection Strategy conceptualises three types of risk management and vulnerability reduction. Risk reduction strategies reduce the probability of risk before it occurs, reducing the variability of income flows and consumption patterns in the face of shocks, and improving welfare. Risk mitigation strategies help to reduce the magnitude of impact of a future shock through diversification and insurance strategies. Risk coping strategies enable people to cope by reducing the severity of the impact after a shock. Such strategies include drawing down savings, increasing child labour, and reducing food consumption. See Caroline Moser with Oscar Antezana (2002), “Social protection in Bolivia: An assessment of the terms of the World Bank's social protection framework and the PRSP”, *Development Policy Review*, vol. 20, no. 5, pp. 637-656.

<sup>186</sup> Naila Kabeer (2002), p. 595 – see footnote 184.

<sup>187</sup> Q 170 [Clare Short]

two-pronged approach [...] It is a combination of finding the right mix of minimal support from the state for agriculture and food security and, at the same time, promoting the private sector really strongly and giving them the right signals so that they can fill those gaps they were supposed to fill.”<sup>188</sup> It should be noted that there is no simple mapping between the time horizon of an intervention, and whether it focuses on helping people to cope with crisis, or to take opportunities. Interventions to enable people to make the most of their opportunities are likely to be long-term in orientation, but some aspects of social protection—welfare programmes for orphans and people living with AIDS, but not perhaps free inputs programmes—are likely to be needed in the long-term too. We emphasise too in what follows the need to take account of the challenge of HIV/AIDS in all stages of, and approaches to, relief, recovery and development.

**Figure 12: The relief-recovery-development continuum**



Source: Babu and Bhouraskar (2002), p. 9 in *Humanitarian Exchange*, p.9 - see footnote 215

## Rural development: Agriculture, safety nets and opportunity ladders

### *The role of agriculture in rural development*

106. Agriculture has fallen out of favour with donors and multilateral agencies who have become disenchanted with the poor performance of agricultural investment as a development intervention. Coupled with this has been a growing belief that agriculture alone is insufficient to guarantee sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction. As DFID notes in its recent issues paper on agriculture: “The proportion of ODA directed towards agriculture and rural development has fallen by almost two thirds between 1988 and 1998.”<sup>189</sup> Indeed, while in Malawi, we were appalled to hear that the share of agriculture in the World Bank’s Malawi portfolio had been scaled down from 40% to zero.<sup>190</sup> **DFID itself does not have a “strategy” for agriculture, because—DFID argues—“it is too diverse a subject”, in relation to which developing countries must themselves take the lead.**<sup>191</sup> **Instead, DFID has recently published an “issues” paper which discusses the role of agriculture in improving the livelihoods of poor people. We fail to see why agriculture is any different in this regard from other sectors such as education,**

<sup>188</sup> Q 93 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies

<sup>189</sup> DFID (2002), *Better livelihoods for poor people: The role of agriculture*, p. 15. See [www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/agri\\_livelihoods.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/agri_livelihoods.pdf)

<sup>190</sup> International Development Committee, *Notes on Visit to Malawi*. Copy placed in House of Commons Library.

<sup>191</sup> DFID (2002), *Better livelihoods for poor people: The role of agriculture*, p. 4 – see footnote 189.

**and urge donors such as DFID to encourage their partner governments in southern Africa to take agriculture seriously, and to provide the necessary financial and technical support. Donors should not be active in all sectors—they should work to their comparative advantages—but given its considerable policy influence in the region, we believe that DFID has a responsibility to ensure that agriculture is not neglected by governments in southern Africa.**

107. Poverty reduction requires economic growth, and for many developing countries—particularly in Africa, where agriculture remains the largest source of employment and accounts for one-third of GDP and one-half of exports—agriculture is an important engine of growth.<sup>192</sup> With the exception of Hong Kong and Singapore, all recorded rapid reductions in widespread poverty began with livelihoods being enhanced through agricultural transformation.<sup>193</sup> As Kydd, Dorward and Vaughan put it in their memo:

Historically, dramatic poverty reduction in other parts of the world has most commonly been achieved by technological and institutional changes that have led to increased labour productivity, increased demand for labour, and increased wage incomes in relation to staple food prices. This has generally involved in its earlier stages sustained increases in productivity in staple food production (wheat, rice or maize), outstripping population growth. Increased cash crop production has played a supporting role, and then once growth has been stimulated by increased agricultural productivity stimulating labour markets, diversification into non-farm activities has taken off, and taken over as the engine of poverty reducing growth.<sup>194</sup>

108. Whilst accepting that poverty reduction strategies in countries such as Malawi or Zambia do need to address agriculture, DFID officials told us that: “meeting the needs of the rural poor does not necessarily mean concentrating on agricultural strategy.”<sup>195</sup> We accept that agriculture on its own will not ensure poverty reduction, and agree with DFID when it says that: “Improving food security will increasingly become a matter for employment strategies, social security policy and food policies relating to international trade, food marketing and subsidy programmes and relief. In other words, although agriculture will remain central to food security in sub-Saharan Africa, policies to tackle hunger will need to become increasingly multi-sectoral.”<sup>196</sup> **We disagree with DFID that meeting the needs of the rural poor does not necessarily mean focussing on their agricultural capacity. We believe there is a risk that agriculture—which is the key component of rural livelihoods for millions of people in southern Africa, and the basis for growth and development—will continue to be neglected.** We welcome Clare Short’s acknowledgement that, “the swing away [from agriculture] went too far and we need to look again at how you can pay more attention to improving the livelihoods of poor rural communities. [...] The move away from agriculture has been too big.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> DFID (2002), *Eliminating hunger: Strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goal on hunger*, p. 17 – see footnote 44.

<sup>193</sup> DFID (2002), *Better livelihoods for poor people: The role of agriculture*, p. 16 – see footnote 189; Q 146 [Andrew Dorward, Imperial College at Wye]

<sup>194</sup> Ev 77-78 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>195</sup> Q 22 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>196</sup> DFID (2002), *Eliminating hunger: Strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goal on hunger*, p. 15 – see footnote 44.

<sup>197</sup> Q 191 [Clare Short]

109. We accept that there is a need to try to find alternative incomes, livelihood strategies and ways out of poverty, in addition to agriculture, but we were told that: “At the moment, nobody seems to know where those alternative livelihoods are going to come from.”<sup>198</sup> The work of organisations such as Traidcraft, who seek to create sustainable livelihood opportunities through production and trade of handicrafts is important, but it is not a solution to widespread rural poverty.<sup>199</sup> **If poverty reduction and food security is to be achieved in southern Africa, agricultural investment must not be neglected. Rather than despairing at the hitherto poor performance of agriculture, donors must help to put in place the institutional environment which is needed to support agricultural investment and make it deliver significant poverty-reducing returns. Donors should support the re-building of agricultural extension services which were undermined as donor support to agriculture decreased.** We agree with Christian Aid that: “Support is needed for programmes to increase agricultural productivity through targeted affordable inputs and credit, rural social and economic infrastructure, and large-scale irrigation.”<sup>200</sup>

110. Attention must also be paid to the form of agricultural development. According to DFID, the “greatest impact on poverty has been seen in countries where small and medium scale agricultural producers have driven agricultural growth. Agricultural growth has not had as much effect in countries where the bulk of increased farm income has accrued to larger businesses.”<sup>201</sup> **The development of a cash-crop economy and export businesses can play an important role (see paragraphs 139-140), not least in transferring technology to developing countries, but for widespread poverty reduction and livelihood enhancement the focus must be on small and medium scale agricultural producers.**<sup>202</sup>

### *Safety nets and social protection*

111. Safety nets and social protection measures have two inter-linked aims. First, to ensure that people do not fall below a certain level of poverty. Second, by providing this buffer against risk, to encourage people to invest and take the associated risks.<sup>203</sup> As figure 13 shows, there are some social protection measures in Mozambique, and discussions have taken place in Zimbabwe, but in the countries affected by the current crisis only Malawi has a well-developed safety nets strategy. Malawi’s National Safety Nets Strategy has four components, targeted at different groups of vulnerable people: firstly, welfare transfers targeted at the chronically ill, the elderly and the disabled; secondly, targeted nutrition for malnourished children, vulnerable pregnant or lactating mothers; thirdly, public works programmes for the rural poor who have spare labour, and the urban poor; and, fourthly, targeted inputs (seed and fertiliser) for the rural poor with land.<sup>204</sup> Targeting assistance by type of vulnerability is key to the effective functioning of social protection measures. **We applaud DFID for its role in supporting the design of Malawi’s National Safety Nets Strategy. We urge DFID to do its utmost to**

<sup>198</sup> Q 106 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies]

<sup>199</sup> Ev 123-126 [Traidcraft memorandum]

<sup>200</sup> Ev 63 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>201</sup> Ev 22, answer 10 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>202</sup> This touches on a broader debate within development thinking: whether to continue supporting the “peasant mode of production” in sub-Saharan Africa, or to encourage land privatisation and consolidation of family plots into large commercial farms, with smallholders either becoming waged agricultural labourers or moving to towns. It is beyond the scope of this inquiry to arbitrate between these two alternatives for Africa’s future development path.

<sup>203</sup> Ev 21, answer 9 [DFID supplementary memorandum]; Q2 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>204</sup> Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, p. 65. See [http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/Malawi\\_PRSP.pdf](http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/Malawi_PRSP.pdf)

ensure that the strategy is put into practice, that the different elements of the strategy are integrated, and that, where appropriate, safety nets strategies are developed throughout the region.

Figure 13: Safety Nets in southern Africa	
<b>Malawi</b>	In 1999 the World Bank led a consultative process of designing a National Safety Net Programme for the poorest 20% of Malawi's population. Implementation of the Safety Nets Strategy stalled after it was handed over to the Government of Malawi in 2000, and at present it remains as a series of uncoordinated donor-funded projects, the largest among these being the World Bank-financed Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), and DFID's Targeted Inputs Programme (TIP).
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	The World Bank and the Government prepared a draft framework for a National Social Protection Strategy in 2000 that would pull together and enhance the various schemes that were operating in the country. While this was a fully consultative process the current political situation precludes further dialogue while the Government's arrears in both interest and capital repayments in excess of US\$130 million prevents the World Bank from taking this forward.
<b>Mozambique</b>	While there is no safety net programme the cash-for-work programme being developed by DFID as part of a longer-term relief programme could be the precursor for a wider Safety Net programme within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.
<b>Zambia</b>	No discussions have taken place with Government or donors on a national safety net strategy.
<b>Swaziland</b>	No moves towards developing safety net programmes.
<b>Lesotho</b>	No moves towards developing safety net programmes.

Sources: DFID Supplementary memorandum and Committee's research

### *Food supplies: School feeding, price subsidies and grain reserves*

112. Humanitarian interventions should seek to build on positive livelihood strategies and mitigate the damaging coping strategies that households adopt to survive shocks and crises. Targeted nutrition programmes, organised through school feeding programmes such as UNICEF's "Food for education" scheme have the added benefit of keeping children in school. As Clare Short told us: "In Zimbabwe children are dropping out of school and getting food to children in school gets food to children but it also keeps children in school, which in terms of their future lives is important for them."<sup>205</sup> In addition, such schemes can usefully target orphans and geographic areas of particular need. **We therefore endorse the recommendations made by UN-OCHA, which as well as encouraging support for food-for-work and food-for-asset-creation programmes—(see paragraphs 117-119)—include increasing support to school feeding programmes to reduce withdrawals of children and promote enrolment and attendance.**<sup>206</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Q 195 [Clare Short]

<sup>206</sup> Ev 25, para 4 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

113. The provision of targeted nutrition and food supplies has been a matter of contention in southern Africa. Whilst in Malawi, we became aware of the World Bank's scheme to support a general maize subsidy to ensure that poor people could afford food, a scheme which is part of the Emergency Drought Recovery Project.<sup>207</sup> We would not argue with this goal, but in our view the general subsidy scheme is misguided and its implementation—without adequate consultation with other donors—was unhelpful. It undermined plans for a targeted subsidy which DFID and other donors had been drawing up with the Government of Malawi. The World Bank-supported general subsidy also increases Malawi's debt by US\$50 million. The general subsidy scheme was justified to us by Malawian government and World Bank officials in terms of the immediate and pressing emergency needs, and the difficulty and cost of targeting subsidies accurately, particularly given the widespread nature of poverty in Malawi. Indeed, as Clare Short accepted in oral evidence: "one of the things that happens in food shortages is prices do go shooting up, so some intervention to bring them down while organising a recovery is not necessarily ruled out."<sup>208</sup> We were also told that as most maize is produced for subsistence, its market price has little impact on the incentives or otherwise to produce more.<sup>209</sup>

**114. We consider that a general maize subsidy is likely to strike the wrong balance between short-term relief and longer-term development.** No doubt it will contribute to short-term food security. But it is likely to work counter to the longer-term development needs of Malawi by removing the incentives for farmers to move beyond subsistence levels of production and by undermining the incentives for traders. **In addition, given the likelihood of corruption in the sale of the SGR** (see paragraph 36 and figure 3), **and the possibility that a general maize subsidy might be diverted to buy votes at forthcoming elections<sup>210</sup> or leaked through resale to neighbouring countries where prices are higher, we are not confident that a general maize subsidy is the most effective way of combating poverty and improving food security. It is essential that efforts to meet the short-term needs of communities do not undermine longer-term development.** We accept that the needy in Malawi form a substantial majority of the population, and that differentiating between the poor and the very poor so as to target only the latter may seem to be perverse. But every effort must be made to maximise the effectiveness of (costly) social protection measures. **Targeting assistance to the most needy is the most effective way of spending scarce resources, and is likely to minimise the risk of profiteering by elites. We remain concerned at the likely impacts of the general maize subsidy in Malawi, and share DFID's frustration at the World Bank's lack of consultation during the design of the scheme.**

115. Governments in southern Africa have, since the 1970s and 1980s, maintained strategic grain reserves in order to ensure that their people have access to affordable maize. Over recent years, some members of the donor community—including the World Bank, the IMF, and DFID—have been opposed to the maintenance of substantial grain reserves, and encouraged governments to reduce their holdings.<sup>211</sup> This opposition has been for understandable reasons. In the past, grain reserves have often been poorly managed and costly to maintain. It has also been thought that their existence and use to

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<sup>207</sup> See [www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid=P080368](http://www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid=P080368)

<sup>208</sup> Q 196 [Clare Short]

<sup>209</sup> Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy (2002), *2001-02 Targeted Inputs Programme (TIP) Main report of the evaluation programme*, footnote 37. Background Paper 4 – copy placed in House of Commons Library.

<sup>210</sup> Q 179 [Clare Short]

<sup>211</sup> Q 38 [John Hansell, DFID]

smooth prices between harvests might act as a disincentive to increasing maize production. In Malawi there have been serious concerns about the sale of the SGR as discussed in figure 3. **We are not a committee of inquiry into the complexities of the sale of Malawi’s Strategic Grain Reserve, but such episodes do cast light on issues of governance and accountability. Greedy and corrupt officials in positions of responsibility must not be allowed to profit from the sale of a country’s grain reserve. As such, we trust—although the removal of Gilton Chiwaula from the Anti-Corruption Bureau does not fill us with confidence—that the continuing inquiries will uncover what happened in Malawi, and that appropriate actions will be taken.**

116. **Properly managed grain reserves, coupled with the holding of options to purchase grain on commodity markets, must be part of future food security strategies in the region. Further—whilst it is important that the maintenance of grain reserves does not take too large a slice out of scarce governmental resources—we do not think it realistic to expect strategic grain reserves to operate on a full cost-recovery basis.**<sup>212</sup> As with other forms of social protection, grain reserves are an investment in social welfare, food security and development, and must be supported as such. However, they must be managed transparently, accountably and efficiently, and in such a way that market disruption is minimised.

#### *Public works programmes*

117. Public works programmes seem to offer a promising approach to the provision of safety nets in such a way that they build the assets of individuals and communities, providing the basis for longer-term development. In southern Africa, where many poor families have spare labour in the dry season, public works programmes can utilise this spare capacity for the development of rural infrastructure. Put simply, public works programmes can—as we saw for ourselves in Malawi—construct the roads and bridges which are needed to link agricultural communities to markets for agricultural inputs and products, build the schools which are needed for education, and construct the irrigation schemes which are needed to increase agricultural productivity. As Professor Kydd, Dr. Dorward and Professor Vaughan wrote in their memorandum: “If designed and administered appropriately these can be used to develop input supply markets and maize markets, improve rural roads, increase national and household maize production and food security, strengthen rural administrative capacity, and reduce dependency.”<sup>213</sup>

118. Public works programmes can take various forms; payment for work can be made in cash, food, agricultural inputs, or partial repayment of credit.<sup>214</sup> The type of payment must be informed by a clear understanding of the livelihood strategies of the participants, and the contexts in which they find themselves. For instance, cash payment schemes may contribute to the emergence of markets, but if food prices are too high, or markets are non-existent, payment in food or agricultural inputs may be more appropriate.<sup>215</sup> Schemes which reward work by paying off an individual’s debt—as suggested by Professor Kydd<sup>216</sup>—may improve people’s access to credit. Schemes which provide agricultural inputs in return for work can play an important role in

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<sup>212</sup> Q 157 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

<sup>213</sup> Ev 78 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>214</sup> Ev 121 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

<sup>215</sup> Suresh Babu and Ashwin Bhouraskar (2002), “Fighting famine in southern Africa: Steps out of the crisis”, *Humanitarian Exchange*, no. 22, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> Q 161 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

improving agricultural productivity. Stephen Carr reported in his memorandum that: “Experiments with this approach with thousands of farmers (funded by USAID) have proved immensely popular and have brought quite obvious benefits both in terms of food production and rural road development.”<sup>217</sup>

**119. Public works programmes must be designed carefully.** As Rob Holden and Anthony Smith of DFID explained: “it is a question of having a range of tools and interventions at your disposal and using them as appropriate”,<sup>218</sup> “there is no blueprint that is applicable across the region.”<sup>219</sup> **In many ways, local people, including intended participants and beneficiaries, may well be in the best position to advise on the most effective form of payment and should be involved fully in the design and implementation of such schemes. Public works programmes must take account of local situations and gender relations, and other measures must be taken to support those who cannot work. For instance, labour intensive public works programmes are entirely inappropriate for people living with HIV/AIDS, the infirm, and women with child-care responsibilities.**<sup>220</sup> **But we believe that public works programmes provide an excellent way of linking short-term relief to longer-term development and urge DFID to support such schemes wherever communities in southern Africa have spare labour.**

#### *Targeted subsidised inputs*

120. The provision of targeted, subsidised, inputs—seeds and fertiliser—is another way of simultaneously addressing food security needs and promoting longer-term development. Malawi has been something of a pioneer in this regard. During our visit, we saw packs containing 5 kilograms of seed, 10 kilograms of fertiliser, instructions on planting, and leaflets about HIV/AIDS being distributed. DFID and other donors have supported the provision of “Starter Packs” since 1998/99. According to Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy—the leaders of the team which has evaluated this programme for DFID—two-thirds of smallholders in Malawi cannot afford to purchase inputs. They argue that this is the key reason for the under-production of maize, sharp rises in food prices, and resultant food security crises. The DFID-financed ‘Starter Pack’ and ‘Targeted Inputs Programme’ has partially offset the declining access to inputs associated with economic liberalisation (currency devaluation, removal of subsidies, and collapse of rural credit).<sup>221</sup> Introduced as a post-drought rehabilitation programme in the mid-1990s, the free distribution of agricultural inputs aimed to promote both household and national food security. Because of concerns that it was unsustainable and undermining markets, the programme was reduced from a universal to targeted distribution in the season preceding the 2001/02 food crisis.<sup>222</sup> As an immediate response to the crisis, DFID launched a Winter Targeted Inputs Programme in mid-2002, and the Government of Malawi announced a return to universal free inputs distribution for the 2002/03 farming season.

121. There has been criticism of the “stop-go” nature of what is now termed the Targeted Inputs Programme, and of the speed with which the programme was scaled down. Some commentators have suggested that the reduction in the Targeted Inputs

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<sup>217</sup> Ev 121 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

<sup>218</sup> Q 194 [Rob Holden, DFID]

<sup>219</sup> Q 195 [Anthony Smith, DFID]

<sup>220</sup> Q 161 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

<sup>221</sup> Ev 121-123 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]

<sup>222</sup> Ev 122, para 7 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]

Programme contributed to the food shortages of 2001/02. This may be so, but had other factors not come together—erratic rainfall, logistical problems, the sale of the grain reserve—the phasing out of the Targeted Inputs Programme might not have been implicated in a crisis. Inputs programmes and their phasing out should be well-planned, but they cannot be based on perfect foresight. Indeed, Clare Short explained to us the converse risk that Targeted Inputs Programmes might seek to do too much, and hence increase dependency on free inputs. As the Secretary of State recalled: “We were involved in the Starter Packs of seeds and fertiliser scheme but then government wanted us to broaden and broaden it, and we did, and there was a big growth in production and then, of course, prices dropped and we think we overdid it, but it is easy to be wise after the event.”<sup>223</sup>

Year	Weather	Beneficiaries (households and % coverage)	Total Harvest	Targeted Inputs Programme Contribution
1998/99	Good	2.86 million 100%	1 650 000 MT	500 000 MT
1999/2000	Good	2.86 million 100%	1 860 000 MT	350 000 MT
2000/01	Moderate/Poor	1.5 million 50%	1 420 000 MT	75 000 MT
2001/02	Moderate/Poor	1 million 33%	1 280 000 MT	40 000 MT

Source: Ev 122, para 7 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]

**122. Targeted Inputs Programmes can play an important role in achieving food security. To do so they must be part of a longer-term rural development strategy which, over time and where possible, reduces dependence on free inputs, making inputs more affordable and accessible by raising rural incomes and promoting rural development.<sup>224</sup> We urge DFID to continue its support for Malawi’s Targeted Inputs Programme, and to work with other Governments to examine whether such schemes—with carefully planned exit strategies—might enhance their food security and longer-term development prospects.**

**123. Donors and governments in southern Africa urgently need to find ways of making yield-enhancing inputs (fertiliser and seeds) accessible to smallholder farmers at affordable prices. The free distribution of inputs, whether universal or targeted, in Malawi or elsewhere, is a useful interim measure but does not provide an appropriate model for a sustainable long-term solution to food insecurity. An alternative proposal made to us by Stephen Carr, to amend the existing rural public works programmes so that participants are paid with vouchers for**

<sup>223</sup> Q 179 [Clare Short]

<sup>224</sup> Ev 122-123, paras 8-9 [Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy memorandum]; Q 159 [Andrew Dorward, Imperial College at Wye]; Q 159 [Max Lawson, Oxfam]

**agricultural inputs, rather than in food or cash as at present, should be seriously considered.**<sup>225</sup>

124. The key principle of effective social protection strategies is that they must not undermine longer-term sustainable development. As we were told by DFID officials, this meshing of approaches, and time horizons, has not been systematically achieved in southern Africa.<sup>226</sup> Ideally, social protection measures ought to actively contribute to—as well as not undermine—sustainable development. The challenge is to devise asset-building social protection measures which are investments in production rather than simply protective of consumption.<sup>227</sup> **Short-term assistance and focused safety nets must contribute towards longer term goals of improving governance, reducing dependency, nurturing functioning and equitable markets, developing infrastructure, and increasing agricultural productivity.**<sup>228</sup> **Finally, effective social protection strategies, whilst addressing short-term needs, must—by including plans for the phasing out of certain forms of assistance such as free inputs programmes where possible—look to a future where such measures are employed less frequently and less widely.**

### *Opportunity ladders*

125. If poor rural communities are to climb out of poverty they need “opportunity ladders” as well as safety nets and social protection. Professor Kydd, Dr. Dorward and Professor Vaughan suggested in their memorandum that the key conditions necessary for the rural economy to escape from the poverty trap are: “crops, technology development and input and output prices and interest rates that make investments in farming and in marketing profitable; systems that provide farmers and traders with reliable and coordinated demand and supply, free from excessive risks of opportunism; improved roads and other communications, including mobile phones; and a momentum of growth and increasing trust in rural markets and services.”<sup>229</sup> Had such conditions been met in the past, agricultural liberalisation might have contributed to food security, rather than as seems to be the case, undermined it (see paragraphs 39-41). As Christian Aid argued, investment in rural transport, accessible market information, the ability of producers to come together in associations to increase their bargaining capacity, and effective institutions to manage the process of change were all lacking.<sup>230</sup>

126. The priority now is to put in place the essential preconditions for the development of sustainable rural livelihoods and a healthy rural economy, phasing in measures to kick-start markets (see figure 15). DFID wrote that:

At country level the priority for rural development is to create a policy and institutional environment that provides opportunities for poor people to derive a better livelihood from agriculture and non-farm enterprises. This will include strengthening or creating a sound institutional framework to improve poor people’s access to land, markets and services. It means creating an enabling environment that encourages private sector investment, particularly in agriculture and agricultural services. It also means supporting the agricultural

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<sup>225</sup> Ev 121 [Stephen Carr memorandum]

<sup>226</sup> Q 2 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>227</sup> Naila Kabeer (2002), p. 590 – see footnote 184.

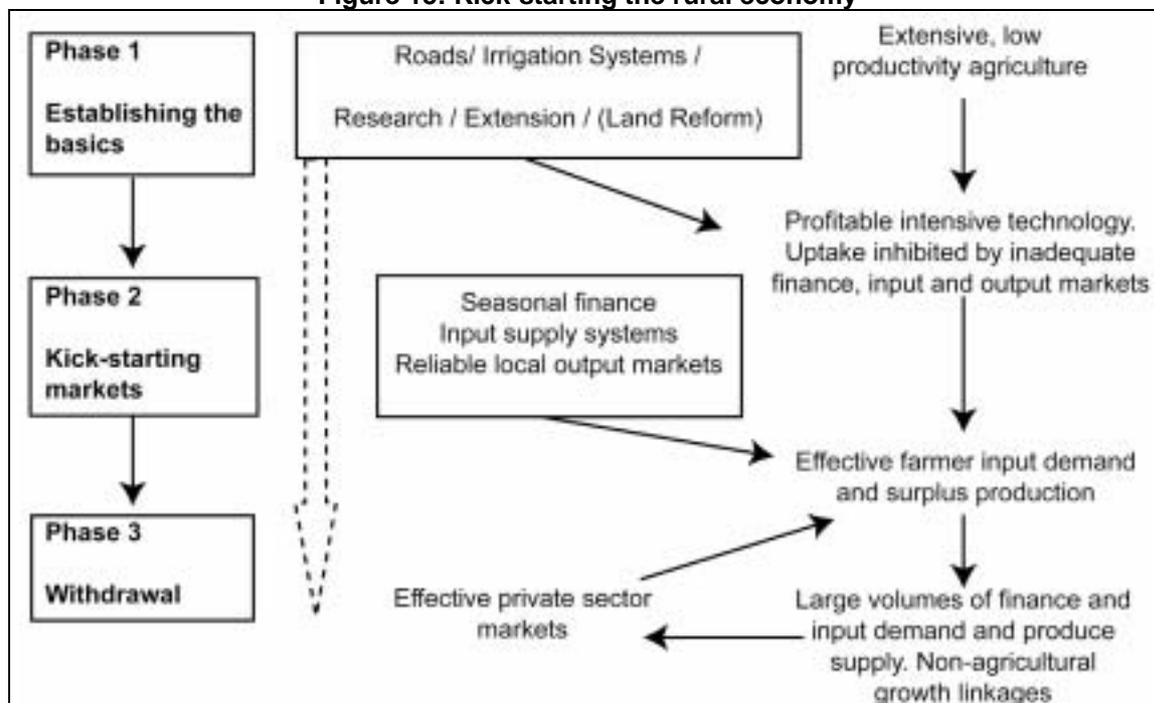
<sup>228</sup> Ev 78 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> Ev 56 [Christian Aid memorandum]

sector by giving particular emphasis to agricultural technology and marketing institutions.<sup>231</sup>

Figure 15: Kick-starting the rural economy



Source: Dorward et al (2002) – See footnote 182

#### *Agricultural inputs: Seeds, fertiliser, water, land and credit*

127. As regards technological improvements, there are a range of ways in which progress might be made. World Vision suggested that the crisis has been created by “decades of policies” that have encouraged dependence on white maize and on technologies (such as chemical fertilisers and hybrid seeds) that are economically unfeasible and environmentally damaging.<sup>232</sup> In terms of seeds, there may be some potential in the use of particular drought-resistant varieties of maize and other crops. Such possibilities should be explored, but **we believe that the open-pollinated varieties (OPVs) which require few inputs, and which farmers can store and re-use, are more appropriate for poor smallholder farmers than hybrid and genetically-engineered varieties which require annual repurchase and could tie poor farmers into costly relationships with powerful transnational seed companies.** As a recent report by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre on the development, maintenance, and seed-multiplication of open-pollinated maize varieties notes: “Improved OPVs are easier to develop than hybrids, their seed production is simpler and relatively inexpensive, and subsistence farmers who grow them can save their own seed for planting the following season, reducing dependence on external sources.”<sup>233</sup>

<sup>231</sup> Ev 21, answer 10 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>232</sup> Ev 130 [WorldVision memorandum]

<sup>233</sup> CIMMYT (1999), *Development, maintenance, and seed multiplication of open-pollinated maize varieties*. Available at [www.cimmyt.cgiar.org/](http://www.cimmyt.cgiar.org/)

128. Fertiliser presents a similar problem, with many smallholders in southern Africa unable to afford expensive fertilisers marketed by transnational fertiliser firms. We agree that more progress is needed in the development of practical organic methods of providing soil nitrogen for maize production, to complement, and reduce, the application of inorganic fertilizers needed to support sustained higher yields.<sup>234</sup> The delivery of free or subsidised seeds and fertilizer—for instance through the DFID-supported Targeted Inputs Programme in Malawi—has provided some seeds and fertiliser to some farmers. But, useful as this programme undoubtedly is, it does not allow people to choose how much fertiliser or seeds they acquire, or when. What is needed in the longer-term is well-functioning markets which make seeds and fertiliser available to smallholder farmers at affordable prices.<sup>235</sup> An additional way of making fertiliser more widely available would be to encourage livestock husbandry. Livestock numbers have been drastically reduced as households have sold assets in response to the crisis, and have also fallen because of concerns about security. But livestock can and should provide an important source both of protein and of fertiliser. **We would like DFID to explain its plans for making affordable fertiliser available to smallholders in southern Africa, in both the short and longer-term.**

129. Irrigation technologies provide another way of improving the availability of inputs, in this case water. Whilst in Malawi, we received a presentation about the Government's long-term irrigation plans. But we were dismayed that such plans had not been initiated already. We also heard about DFID's plans to encourage smallholders to join together to purchase treadle-pumps to increase their productivity. The treadle-pumps would pay for themselves in one year of increased productivity, and could play an important role in enabling and encouraging smallholders to move beyond subsistence, and to work cooperatively. **Climatic uncertainty, drought or erratic rainfall, is an increasingly important source of vulnerability in southern Africa, and one which should be addressed by developments in irrigation. Just as price-smoothing in maize markets can reduce one form of vulnerability, making maize prices less erratic, more predictable and more affordable, so too can irrigation and "rainfall-smoothing" or "rainwater-harvesting" reduce vulnerability.** This is particularly important given the sensitivity of food-crops to the timing of rain, and the likelihood that global climate change will lead to more erratic weather in southern Africa.<sup>236</sup> Investment in irrigation and rainfall-smoothing would also remove the disincentive that farmers face to adopting higher-yielding varieties of maize which are more sensitive to climatic conditions.

130. Land reform and redistribution is not a panacea for rural development in southern Africa. As Professor Kydd pointed out to us, in Malawi, productivity enhancements from land reform would be eaten up by only a few years of population growth. On the other hand, in Zimbabwe for instance, improved access to land has significant potential, and is clearly a very important issue, both politically and in terms of increasing agricultural production. DFID told us in their supplementary memorandum that land and agrarian reform pose significant challenges to the countries of southern Africa. If these challenges are not tackled, they have the potential to deter economic growth and promote instability. **Historical imbalances in land ownership do need to be corrected, but land reform programmes must be planned and implemented carefully, legally, with adequate consultation, and as part of poverty reduction strategies. We strongly**

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<sup>234</sup> Ev 78 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>235</sup> Q 106 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies]

<sup>236</sup> Third Report from the International Development Committee, Session 2001-02, *Global climate change and sustainable development*, HC519. See [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmintdev/519/519.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmintdev/519/519.pdf)

**endorse DFID’s support for a regional technical facility to take forward land policy issues at a regional level within SADC.**<sup>237</sup>

131. Credit too can help move people on to opportunity ladders. Without access to credit, few smallholders can even contemplate making investments in their future well-being. In their memorandum, Christian Aid reported that in Malawi private credit companies charge around 45 to 50% interest on loans.<sup>238</sup> At this rate, and lacking the assets needed for collateral on loans, poor households are unable to contemplate taking the risks associated with investing in their future livelihoods. **We agree with Christian Aid, that support should be provided to enable commercial and government credit institutions to provide rural credit, and urge DFID to increase the support it offers to this sector in southern Africa. There is a role too for farmers’ associations such as NASFAM in improving smallholders’ access to agricultural inputs and credit, provided they have the ability to reach and serve the very poorest farmers.**

*The role of the Food and Agriculture Organisation*

132. The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) might be expected to play an important role in improving the provision of inputs and encouraging the adoption of new technologies. But as we heard both in Malawi and in oral evidence, the FAO—in part because of constraints beyond its control—is limited in what it does. Not for the first time, Clare Short criticised the FAO for its approach to agricultural development, sustainable livelihoods and hunger. The Secretary of State suggested that the FAO is less effective than it might be, and argued that its emphasis on food security is “hopeless because you can have a country self-sufficient in food with lots of hungry people or you can have a country not self-sufficient in food and everybody fed.”<sup>239</sup> Indeed, there is a mistaken lingering tendency in the countries of southern Africa to assume that food security and national food self-sufficiency are one and the same.

133. We share the sentiments expressed by Clare Short, but acknowledge the constraints within which the FAO works. Unlike the World Bank, or even DFID, the FAO does not have the resources to provide a great deal of advice on agricultural policy to developing countries.<sup>240</sup> We appreciate too the role of the FAO as an important repository of specialist expertise which developing countries can use, and the normative role it plays in backing up the negotiation of international norms and standards. **We support strongly Clare Short’s efforts to reform the FAO, and in particular its approach to food security, but encourage the FAO’s critics to be realistic in their expectations of what the FAO can do within its resource constraints. They should not undermine the important work which the FAO does in promoting and developing international standards, and in providing agricultural advice for hard-pressed developing countries. Nevertheless, if the FAO is not—in the absence of sufficient governmental capacity—the right organisation to be involved in agricultural extension, improving agricultural productivity and encouraging diversification, we wonder which organisation is.**

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<sup>237</sup> Ev 22, answer 11 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>238</sup> Ev 60 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>239</sup> Q 193 [Clare Short]

<sup>240</sup> Q 147 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

*Agricultural outputs: Prices, markets, diversification and exports*

134. Relatively stable and predictable prices are good for both consumers and producers, and for rural development. Consumers want prices to be stable at a level which enables them to buy sufficient food to eat. Producers want prices to be stable at a level which provides them with a reasonable return on investment. Rural development, as discussed earlier (paragraph 125), requires a momentum of growth and increasing trust, a momentum which requires price stability. States and parastatal marketing agencies such as ADMARC in Malawi have in the past attempted to provide some price stability, balancing the needs of consumers and producers. But there is no enthusiasm in the donor community for a return to the use of state or state-related institutions for price-smoothing; and, as donor financial support would be crucial, a return to such practices is unlikely. As Christian Aid explained: “Some members of the donor community (including the World Bank and DFID) have on occasion shown reluctance to acknowledge, promote or support the role of the state or state-related institutions in creating, supporting, and regulating staple food markets.”<sup>241</sup> The fear—based in part on past experience—is that such institutions are likely to be expensive, suffer from poor governance (mismanagement, corruption, elite capture, lack of transparency), and, in distorting the market, may crowd out the emergence of small- and medium- private processing and trading entrepreneurs.

135. We share the above-mentioned concerns, and would not wish to see a return to the inefficiencies of the past. Nonetheless, we have some sympathy with the view of Christian Aid that “some form of government intervention is clearly needed in crisis-affected countries to regulate and create markets in order to ensure stable food supplies and distribution, to align demand more closely to supply, to regulate the activities of private market actors, and to protect and promote the production capacity of households with few assets and low resilience to external shocks.”<sup>242</sup> John Seaman of SCF-UK told us in oral evidence that: “if you had stabilised the price of maize in 2001 in Malawi no crisis would have occurred.”<sup>243</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, many African countries subsidised food prices and applied counter-seasonal price-smoothing policies, supported by parastatal interventions in the grain market (buying up surpluses post-harvest and releasing these stocks onto the market at cost price during the hungry season). The aim of these policies was to maintain constant consumer food prices and supplies all year round. In the 1980s, these interventions were heavily criticised by the World Bank and IMF as inefficient, unaffordable and market-distorting, and by the mid-1990s price subsidies and price-smoothing interventions were phased out. In India, on the other hand, thousands of ration shops continue to provide access to food for the poor at affordable prices.

**136. Price stability and food security—enabling better management of the risks associated with crises—is fundamental to efforts to develop a sustainable market economy. Food- insecure households are risk-averse households; risk-averse households do not make the investments needed to move beyond subsistence. John Winter of DFID said: “We would, of course, like to see an open market in maize within the region.”<sup>244</sup> If the appropriate institutions were in place to ensure that sufficient maize was provided at prices which the poor could afford, we would**

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<sup>241</sup> Ev 60 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Q 115 [John Seaman, SCF-UK]

<sup>244</sup> Q 34 [John Winter, DFID]

**agree. Currently, they are not. Without advocating any particular form of intervention, we believe that the principle of guaranteeing access to affordable food for the poor at all times is one that should be re-instituted and followed.**

137. There is clearly a need for institutional innovation and experimentation, freed from ideological straitjackets. Kato Lambrechts of Christian Aid argued that: “The challenge is to sit down and think through what is the most appropriate response and not necessarily go down an ideological road, i.e. liberalisation for the sake of liberalisation, but to look at what would be a response that would be pro-poor that would actually serve and help to sustainably grow the livelihoods of the most vulnerable.”<sup>245</sup> We agree. **The potential of using targeted food subsidies as an alternative to the unsustainable and inefficient consumer price subsidies of the past should be explored. DFID has recent experience with a pilot scheme of targeted “flexi-vouchers” in Malawi.** Under this scheme, beneficiaries were given vouchers to a certain monetary value which they exchanged for commodities at local stores. Many acquired food for their families, but interestingly, many acquired blocks of soap which they stored and bartered or sold for food some months later, when food prices rose. **Perhaps the lessons learned from this initiative could be expanded and incorporated into larger safety net programmes at the national or even regional level.**

138. **In addition, DFID should support southern African governments and SADC in their efforts to encourage the emergence of new and more effective “hybrid institutions”, which involve the state and the private sector in the regulation of staple food markets. It is not clear what sorts of systems might be able to deliver both price stability at appropriate levels, and the coordination and protection needed to nurture fragile market development. But it may be worth exploring the idea of private companies tendering for franchises to deliver specific services—including food supplies—at predetermined, and if necessary supported, prices.**<sup>246</sup>

139. Limited progress has been made in southern Africa with diversifying agricultural production, firstly as regards staples, from maize to cassava and sweet potatoes, and secondly into the production of cash crops, such as cashew nuts, oilseeds, pigeon peas, and paprika, alongside the more established commodities of tobacco, tea, sugar and coffee. In terms of staples, the preference for eating maize in much of southern Africa is a constraint to diversification, and one which donors should, sensitively, seek to reduce. In terms of cash crops, there is considerable potential. As DFID wrote in their supplementary memorandum: “Currently, exporting out of Africa is the only promising avenue for growth, given that intra-African trade is likely to remain constrained, due to low local demand and poor integration of African markets. African trade represents a tiny fraction of world trade and its exports are in many cases below their level of three decades ago, so there is great potential for expansion.”<sup>247</sup> **We believe that some diversification into production of cash crops for export is desirable and were pleased to hear in Malawi of DFID’s support for efforts to develop export capacity and know-how through the Integrated Framework. There are however important limitations and obstacles. Cash crop production is not a panacea, particularly for land-locked countries such as Malawi. In addition, a shift to cash crops will not in itself guarantee food security—the fundamental basis for development beyond subsistence levels—for rural communities. As Andrew Dorward explained:**

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<sup>245</sup> Q 131 [Kato Lambrechts, Christian Aid]

<sup>246</sup> Ev 78 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>247</sup> Ev 22, answer 10 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

If maize goes from two kwacha a kilo to 30 kwacha a kilo, you cannot rely on tobacco income to buy maize, so you have to carry on producing your own maize to insure yourself against that eventuality. That means that, if you are going to get cash crops actually having a more generic effect throughout the poorer parts of the rural economy where the majority of people live and operate, then you have to get food crop markets going and food crop production going as well, so that there is a lot more stability and people can rely on those markets.<sup>248</sup>

**140. The major obstacle to export-led growth is of course that of limited market access and the highly hypocritical maintenance of export subsidy regimes in the EU and US.**<sup>249</sup> This is an issue we are exploring in our current inquiry into “Trade and development: Aspects of the Doha agenda”, but it is clear already that **perhaps the best thing that developed countries could do to improve the prospects of developing countries such as those in southern Africa would be to practice what they preach, improving market access and eliminating export subsidies, at the same time as helping to build developing countries’ export capacity. We urge DFID and the UK Government as a whole to step up its efforts to persuade our European partners that fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy must to be a priority. In addition, consideration should be given to the role of a “development box” in allowing developing countries to maintain subsidies for essential food security reasons.**

### **The challenge of HIV/AIDS**

141. HIV/AIDS is central to the humanitarian crisis in southern Africa. HIV/AIDS is creating new groups of vulnerable people, and will kill many more people in southern Africa than hunger. As the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee stated: “Unless prompt and decisive action is taken now, it is estimated that, just due to HIV/AIDS, 20% of the adult population will die prematurely.”<sup>250</sup> Hunger may be alleviated, at least temporarily, by a good harvest; HIV/AIDS will remain a problem for decades. As we discussed in section 3.2.3, HIV/AIDS and food insecurity are linked together in a cycle of malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, poverty and food insecurity. If communities in southern Africa are to emerge from the current humanitarian crisis, and to move towards sustainable livelihoods, the challenge of HIV/AIDS must be addressed, and integrated into all stages and aspects of relief, recovery and development. As DFID noted in its strategy paper on eliminating hunger: “Policies for food security, agriculture and rural development must all take into account the consequences of HIV/AIDS, such as the loss of labour, the changes in livelihood strategies and the reduction of capacity in local organisations.”<sup>251</sup> We were disappointed therefore to hear Clare Short report that: “everybody is talking about it but there is very little change in the way that things are done.”<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Q 145 [Andrew Dorward, Imperial College at Wye]

<sup>249</sup> Q 144 [Max Lawson, Oxfam]

<sup>250</sup> UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Southern Africa’s humanitarian crisis: Heads of the major humanitarian agencies call for action*, 20 January 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>251</sup> DFID (2002), *Eliminating hunger: Strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goal on hunger*, p. 18 - see footnote 44.

<sup>252</sup> Q 169 [Clare Short]

## *HIV/AIDS and humanitarian assistance*

### *Improving nutrition*

142. In their joint paper on HIV/AIDS and food security, Oxfam and SCF-UK argued that: “Successful efforts to improve the food security and livelihoods of families should reduce the probability of HIV infection, slow the progression of HIV to AIDS and increase the resilience of households trying to recover from HIV-related illness and death [...] Efforts to reduce the rate of HIV infection in adults and children should—if successful—have a positive impact on people’s food security.”<sup>253</sup> HIV-infected individuals have 50% higher protein needs, and 15% higher energy requirement than do uninfected individuals. A good diet helps HIV-infected individuals to avoid opportunistic infections, and prolongs their survival.<sup>254</sup>

143. One of the best ways to help to address the HIV pandemic in terms of those who are affected is to improve nutrition. Unfortunately, as Judith Lewis of WFP explained to us: “We have not been able to do that with the pipeline. Basically our pipeline has centred around cereals and, of course, that has an adverse affect on health. When you have too much dependence on cereals, you have pellagra and all of the things that go with that. We have not been able to [improve the nutrition of food aid] but we are convinced that this is one of the best ways to help at giving people a little longer and a more productive life.”<sup>255</sup> Clare Short told us why it has not as yet been possible to improve the nutritional content of food aid, explaining that: “we have been struggling to get enough money to get food of any kind through to people.”<sup>256</sup> **We appreciate that the priority has been to get enough food of any type through to the hungry, but trust that DFID and the international community will—now that the food pipeline is more secure—seek to improve the nutritional content of food aid, to maximise its effectiveness in addressing the needs of those infected with HIV.**

### *Improving targeting*

144. In addition to improving the nutritional content of food aid, special efforts must be made to target assistance, to ensure that orphans are not left out. Clare Short acknowledged the importance of targeting orphans for food aid, but told us that in many cases, for instance in Zimbabwe, it is not even known where the hungry, including hungry orphans, are.<sup>257</sup> As the Secretary of State put it: “We would love to be in a position where we knew where all the orphans were and we were capable of making special support and provision for them, but we are not there yet.”<sup>258</sup> Efforts must be made to improve this situation. **Targeting of assistance is crucial. Targeting is impossible if agencies do not even know where the hungry, and particularly the most vulnerable groups of people, including orphans, are. We would like to know what steps DFID is taking, in partnership with other agencies, to improve the mapping of need.**

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<sup>253</sup> Oxfam/SCF-UK (2002), *HIV/AIDS and food insecurity in southern Africa*, p. 2 – see footnote 83.

<sup>254</sup> Ev 17, answer 3 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>255</sup> Q 52 [Judith Lewis, WFP]

<sup>256</sup> Q 169 [Clare Short]

<sup>257</sup> Q 172 [Clare Short]

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

## *HIV/AIDS and long-term development*

### *Maintaining agricultural capacity*

145. HIV/AIDS has major implications for food security and the longer-term development prospects of southern Africa. Death and physical weakness devastate the agricultural capacity of rural communities and households, making survival near-impossible. DFID officials posed the question: “how do we help them where they are depending upon family labour, where you may have sold your assets which include draught oxen and you are down to family members hoeing the land, and the family members consist of a grandmother and a grandfather and ten orphan children?”<sup>259</sup> The international community needs to make a special effort to answer this question. In particular, **efforts must be made to assist HIV-affected households through the provision of appropriate labour-saving technologies, by encouraging diversification into less labour-intensive crops, and by working out how to ensure that agricultural know-how is passed down through the generations despite the early death of HIV-infected parents.**<sup>260</sup>

146. In parallel to developing less labour-intensive technologies, donors, governments and agricultural specialists need to think creatively about how labour-scarce households can be assisted at times of the agricultural year when labour is especially important, for ploughing for instance. In Ethiopia households with oxen and labour plough and weed the fields of households who lack oxen and labour (e.g. elderly widows) in exchange for a share (one-quarter or one-third) of the harvest from that field. A public works programme could pay labour-surplus households to work the fields of labour-constrained households, and might work well in contexts such as southern Malawi where there are growing numbers of landless and near landless households who might be encouraged to participate in this kind of programme. **We encourage DFID to consider the possibility of designing a public works programme to provide extra labour for child and grandparent-headed households at critical times, in return for food, cash, or agricultural inputs.**

### *Maintaining governmental capacity*

147. HIV/AIDS also has a major impact on the capacity of governments and civil services in southern Africa to respond to the current crisis, and to put in place the foundations for long-term sustainable development. To put it starkly, a government Minister, or a senior official, who is HIV-positive may be more concerned with their own health and their family’s well-being over the next few months or years, than with a ten or twenty year time-horizon for their country’s sustainable development. There are some frightening anecdotal accounts of the percentage of government ministers in certain countries who are HIV-positive. Whatever the true figures there is no doubt that HIV/AIDS is removing the capacity at a senior level of decision-makers in many southern African governments.

148. As more and more people die from AIDS-related illnesses and opportunistic infections, the pool of talent and leadership—which countries need to address their development needs—shrinks. We discussed this issue with DFID and government officials whilst in Malawi, considering what DFID and other donors might do to help

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<sup>259</sup> Q 31 [John Hansell, DFID]

<sup>260</sup> Q 53 [Judith Lewis, WFP]

governments to maintain their capacity. In particular, we considered whether or not it would be sensible and sustainable for DFID and other donors to increase the provision of technical assistance in the form of personnel. Such a step should not be taken lightly. **DFID officials suggested us in evidence that a first approach to improving capacity ought to be through enticing emigrants from the countries of southern Africa—perhaps emigrants who have studied and stayed in North America or Western Europe—back to southern Africa. Increasing technical assistance to enable countries to hire expatriate expertise, whether from other parts of Africa, other parts of the developing world, or elsewhere, should be a secondary step.**<sup>261</sup> Putting more “white faces” in developing countries’ governments would be something of a last resort. As Clare Short told us: “Nothing is ruled out given the scale of damage and loss that the HIV/AIDS pandemic will mean for some countries, but generally the development of local talent and capacity is always the best.”<sup>262</sup>

#### *Anti-retrovirals*

149. Anti-retroviral drug therapies are a further way in which HIV/AIDS might be addressed. They offer, in particular, the prospect of prolonging the lives of “essential workers” such as teachers and health-workers, and maintaining the capacity of developing countries’ governments and civil services. Oxfam and SCF-UK pointed to the inaccessibility of essential medicines including anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) due to high prices and the lack of health infrastructure as a major problem. We welcome the fact that the cost of ARVs has fallen to around \$300 per patient per year and look forward to seeing prices fall still further.<sup>263</sup> **Access to essential medicines must be improved, and provision must be made within the World Trade Organisation’s agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights for the production of more affordable drugs for public health purposes. Part of the international response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic must be a more flexible application of patent rules in developing countries.**<sup>264</sup> **The USA and its pharmaceutical industry must not be allowed to obstruct unilaterally such important and sensible initiatives.**

150. Nevertheless, we do not regard the widespread provision of ARVs as a realistic solution to the problems of HIV/AIDS. As Clare Short told us: “The whole Western, European obsession with anti-retroviral drugs is not where Africa is, except in the cities.”<sup>265</sup> A good diet is essential to successful ARV therapy; effective health-care systems are essential to the delivery of ARVs. Neither of these prerequisites are in place in southern Africa. **In our view, whilst efforts should be made to improve the affordability of ARVs, this must not distract donors and governments from the need to focus on basic health-care systems.** ARVs must not be seen as a magic bullet; the crisis in southern Africa is primarily one caused by poverty and vulnerability, rather than by lack of access to medicines. As Clare Short put it: “We need to think through what kind of care and support we need for the poor, and what is the first priority for the orphans. I am sure we should be willing to try and put anti-retrovirals into that, but I do not think we should start with the question of anti-retrovirals, we should start with

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<sup>261</sup> Q 47 [John Winter, DFID]

<sup>262</sup> Q 168 [Clare Short]

<sup>263</sup> Oxfam (2002), *False hope or new start? The Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria*, footnote 6. See [www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/24globalfund/24globalfund.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/24globalfund/24globalfund.pdf)

<sup>264</sup> Oxfam/SCF-UK (2002), *HIV/AIDS and food insecurity in southern Africa*, p. 4 – see footnote 83.

<sup>265</sup> Q 174 [Clare Short]

people and their health and how to protect them and if they are going to be sick, give them some care and treatment, and then look at where anti-retrovirals fit into that.”<sup>266</sup>

### *Attitudes and behaviours*

151. HIV/AIDS still carries with it a stigma and sufferers continue to face discrimination. Individuals, communities and countries need to address the issue openly. Behavioural change—more use of condoms, less promiscuity and prostitution, and a later start to people’s sexually active lives—rests on attitudinal change, including changing attitudes about gender and the place of women in society. Clare Short explained to us that a reduction in HIV-infection rates amongst young people in Uganda from around 30% to 5% had been achieved mainly through behaviour change which had come about by “energising the whole country to understand the cause of the pandemic.”<sup>267</sup> Poverty plays its role in the spread of HIV/AIDS; prostitution, for example, tends to be economically-motivated rather than culturally-determined. Nonetheless, **we urge donors, NGOs and governments to do their utmost to promote improved understanding of HIV/AIDS, and to lay the foundations on which attitudinal and behavioural changes are built.**

### *The Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria*

152. The UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa reported that the HIV/AIDS pandemic could be defeated through “joint and Herculean efforts by the African countries and the international community.” He noted signs of strength and hope in every country, but described the lack of funding for the fight against HIV/AIDS—in particular for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria—as “mass murder by complacency.”<sup>268</sup> **In January 2003, the USA announced that it will treble its spending on HIV/AIDS to \$15 billion over the next five years.**<sup>269</sup> **We applaud the USA for taking this step, and for demonstrating the priority which they attach to the fight against HIV/AIDS. We hope that other donors will be encouraged to do the same. We are concerned however that only \$1 billion of the new money will be channelled through the Global Fund. The rest is to be distributed bilaterally, and will therefore be more subject to pressures from domestic interest groups which object to the linking of HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues. It is of course vital that money is spent effectively, and every effort should be made to ensure that the Global Fund is effective, but marginalising multilateral initiatives is surely counter-productive.**

153. Clare Short told us that “there is a lot of muddle around the Global Fund”, and argued that its weaknesses were more about a lack of leadership in some countries than a lack of funds. As she stressed “a lump of money” is rarely the answer to development questions; in the case of HIV/AIDS what is most needed is effective health care systems.<sup>270</sup> **We agree with this sentiment—the focus should be on healthcare systems—but we urge donors, including the UK, to not marginalise the Global Fund, but to work to make it more effective. The Special Envoy’s language may have been extreme, but the sense of urgency which he injected is welcome. If southern Africa is to move from crisis to food security and sustainable livelihoods,**

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> Q 168 [Clare Short]

<sup>268</sup> *Press briefing by Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa*, 8 January 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>269</sup> See [www.usaid.gov/about/hiv/aids/](http://www.usaid.gov/about/hiv/aids/)

<sup>270</sup> Q 167 [Clare Short]

**responding effectively to the threat of HIV/AIDS must be integrated into all stages and aspects of relief, recovery and development now. We therefore support the requests made by Oxfam and SCF-UK to the international community to ensure that all programming and funding activities respond to the impact of HIV/AIDS; to increase funding for food aid and food aid that meets the needs of people infected with HIV; and to increase funding for non-food needs including health, nutrition, water and sanitation.<sup>271</sup> We look forward to hearing how DFID is taking account of HIV/AIDS in its continuing response to the immediate crisis, and in its work with partner governments to lay the foundations for longer-term development.**

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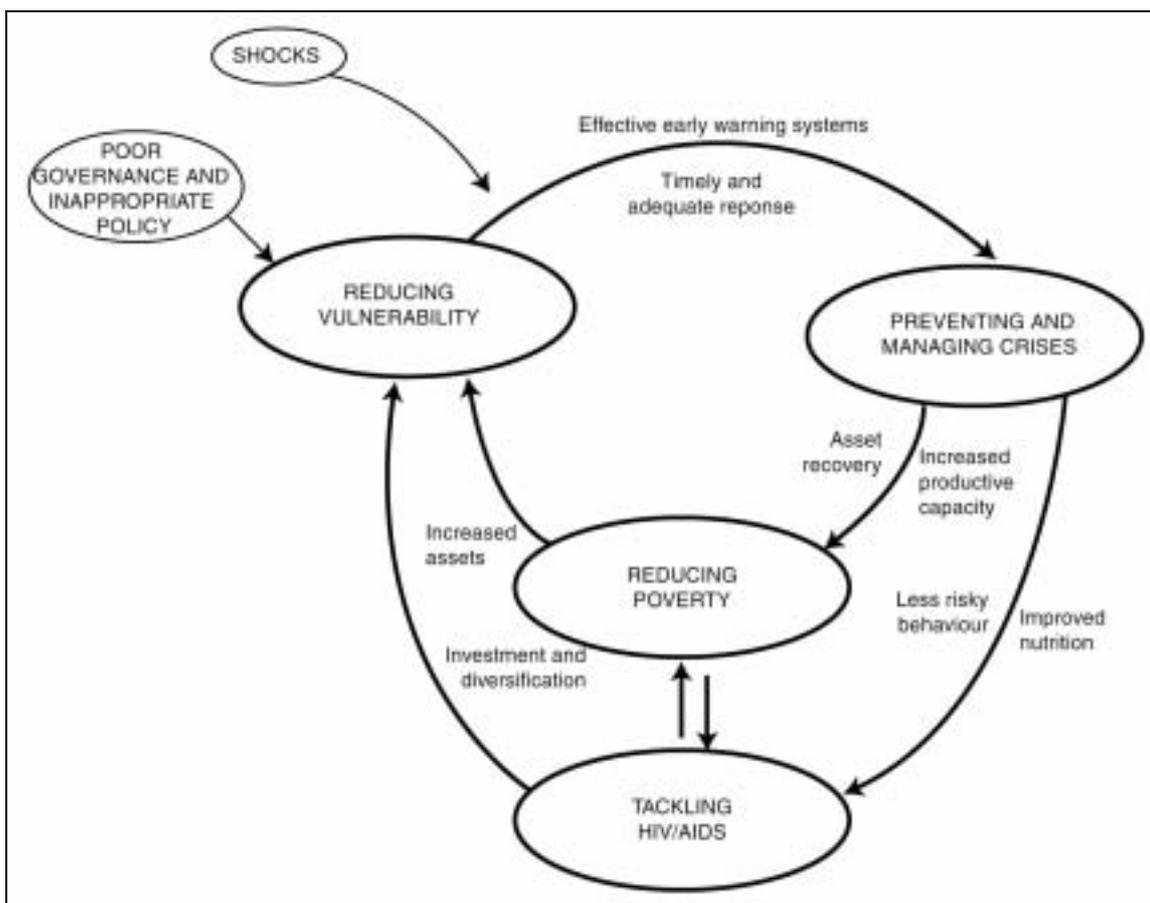
<sup>271</sup> Oxfam/SCF-UK (2002), *HIV/AIDS and food insecurity in southern Africa*, p. 1 – see footnote 83.

## VI. FROM A VICIOUS CIRCLE TO A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

### From a vicious circle to a virtuous circle

154. If southern Africa is to emerge from the humanitarian crisis and achieve food security and sustainable livelihoods, then its cycle of vulnerability, crisis and poverty must be broken. The current vicious circle must be transformed into a virtuous circle of preventing and managing crises, reducing poverty, tackling HIV/AIDS, and reducing vulnerability (see figure 16). In a virtuous circle, Famine Early Warning Systems would be effective and the international humanitarian response would be adequate and timely. Crisis would be averted. Assets would be built up, productive capacity would be increased and nutrition would be maintained. Poverty would be reduced, and prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS would fall. Households and communities would make more investments in, and seek to diversify, their future livelihoods. Vulnerability—both in terms of exposure to shocks, and inability to cope—would be reduced as a result of addressing the sources of vulnerability. The question is, what can be done to move towards a virtuous circle?

**Figure 16:**  
The virtuous circle: Vulnerability reduction—crisis management—poverty reduction



Source: Committee's own

## Actors, roles and relationships

### *Governments, markets, the private sector and NGOs*

155. If the countries of southern Africa are to achieve sustainable livelihoods, a concerted and coordinated response will be needed from governments, NGOs, the private sector, donors and international organizations. Different actors will play different roles, but there must be more creative thinking about the roles which actors play, and the nature of their relationships. The starting point for allocating roles, managing relationships, and developing partnerships has to be: “what works?” Donors should acknowledge the role of governments in shaping market reforms so that they contribute effectively to rural development, food security and poverty reduction.<sup>272</sup> But an enhanced role for governments must not be at the expense of the private sector. The private sector has to provide the innovation and dynamism which is necessary to generate the growth and resources needed for poverty reduction.

156. Professor Kydd spoke of “an ecology of variety competing to provide the best service” and suggested that “the way forward [in terms of escaping rural poverty and improving food security] is likely to involve a hybrid of NGOs, various levels of private sector and government and indeed, as we have indicated earlier, what may be elements of supra-national regional government institutions.”<sup>273</sup> In their memorandum, they wrote that: “Institutional innovation is needed to develop more imaginative solutions that reduce risk and promote coordination, sustainable investment, confidence and market development, addressing the twin problems of state and market failure that have each bedevilled in different ways both the market intervention and the market liberalisation approaches to development.”<sup>274</sup> **We urge DFID, with its partners, to consider these suggestions, and to examine what a poverty-reducing “ecology of variety” might look like, and how it might be nurtured in southern Africa. We also encourage DFID to continue its work in helping healthy civil societies to grow in the countries of southern Africa. Civil society provides an important counter-balance to government, making governments more accountable to their electorates and improving governance. Finally, of perhaps greatest importance, we would like to hear from DFID as to how it plans—with its partners—to help to build the capacity of governments, and key ministries such as those concerned with agriculture, education and health.**

### *Donor roles and resources*

157. No matter how innovative the proposal for southern Africa’s development, there will continue to be a long-term role for development agencies such as DFID, for the UN’s humanitarian and developmental agencies, and for the resources provided by developed countries such as the UK to their developing country partners. As the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development emphasised, developing country governments have to take responsibility for their own development, in part through improving their governance. To fulfil its side of the bargain, the developed world must provide more financial resources. This is what the Chancellor of the Exchequer refers to

<sup>272</sup> Ev 82, para 20 [Oxfam memorandum]

<sup>273</sup> Q 149 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

<sup>274</sup> Ev 79 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

as the “global new deal”.<sup>275</sup> This global new deal, with both sides fulfilling their responsibilities, is the only way in which the Millennium Development Goals might be reached. **Africa is missing the Millennium Development Goals partly because donors are missing the 0.7% target. We once again urge the UK Government to make swift progress towards its target of providing 0.7% of GNI in aid, to set out a timetable for meeting this target, and to encourage other donors to do likewise. We welcome in this regard, the Chancellor’s innovative proposal for an international financing facility.**<sup>276</sup> On trade, we urge the UK Government to press its EU partners, and to press them harder, to agree to substantial reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. **It is disgraceful for the developed world to subsidise over-production and the dumping of surplus agricultural products, and to restrict access to the EU’s market, whilst preaching the virtues of trade liberalisation to developing countries.**

### *The World Food Programme and other international organisations*

158. The WFP is the central player in any food crisis, and southern Africa has been no exception. All of the UN’s humanitarian agencies expect to be busy for the foreseeable future. This year, to repeat ourselves, UN-OCHA estimates that 50 million people worldwide will need humanitarian assistance, at a cost of nearly \$3 billion.<sup>277</sup> This raises important questions of capacity, effectiveness and funding, particularly for the WFP.<sup>278</sup> According to James Morris, the Executive Director of the WFP: “The World Food Programme [...] are finding it increasingly difficult to find the resources to respond adequately to the growing number of emergencies. Dependent on voluntary contributions, WFP and NGOs are caught between the rising needs of millions of hungry people and government budgets that are already stretched and contending with a global economic slowdown. The sad truth is that, as things stand, the humanitarian system faces the prospect of being completely overwhelmed.”<sup>279</sup> The WFP’s funding arrangements are unsatisfactory. Under the present system, whenever there is a crisis, there is a lengthy process of announcing appeals, receiving pledges, translating those pledges into funds, purchasing food aid, and delivering it to the areas of need. This makes it more difficult for WFP to plan ahead and to ensure that food pipelines are maintained.<sup>280</sup> In an informal meeting, James Morris, the Executive Director of the WFP, told us that WFP would welcome an approach based on a more reliable funding structure, which would save valuable time and money, and enable greater pre-positioning of stocks.<sup>281</sup> DFID agreed, stating that: “It may well be that if we get to the point where WFP are feeling they are going to be faced, year after year, with very large emergencies that we do need to move to some kind of more predictable funding basis.”<sup>282</sup>

**159. We urge DFID—particularly at a time when WFP’s Executive Board is chaired by a DFID representative—to help WFP to make progress on three fronts: one, to consider a change to WFP’s funding regime, to provide it with some predictable base funding; two, to engage more with a wider range of donors such as**

<sup>275</sup> Fifth Report from the International Development Committee, Session 2001-2002, *Financing for development*, HC 785, para 4. See [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmintdev/785/785.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmintdev/785/785.pdf)

<sup>276</sup> See [www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/International%20Finance%20Facility2003.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/International%20Finance%20Facility2003.pdf)

<sup>277</sup> UN-OCHA, *Hope for the future* – see footnote 37.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> WFP, *Millions threatened with starvation in Horn of Africa*, 28 October 2002. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>280</sup> Q 184 [Rob Holden, DFID]

<sup>281</sup> Informal meeting with James Morris, WFP, 28 October 2002.

<sup>282</sup> Q 1 [John Winter, DFID]

**India, Russia, China and the oil-exporting countries; and three, to encourage donors including the USA to provide cash donations rather than food, in order to increase WFP's flexibility and ability to deliver timely and effective humanitarian assistance.** In addition, DFID must seek to ensure that other international organisations—the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO, as well as the UN humanitarian agencies and the FAO—work well together, both in addressing short-term humanitarian needs and in helping countries to move towards sustainable development. Organisations must coordinate their work, but should take care not to step into areas where they are not competent. We welcome the announcement made recently by WFP and the UN agency which focuses on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, that they are to work more closely on issues of food shortages, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS.<sup>283</sup>

### *Unsustainable countries and a regional solution*

160. The prospects for transforming a vicious circle into a sustainable virtuous circle vary across southern Africa. For a densely-populated, land-locked, resource-poor country such as Malawi, whose people are lacking in skills, sustainability is a distant dream. Given its current access to technology, Malawi is not able to achieve food security, either through food production, or through earning foreign exchange to import food.<sup>284</sup> Neither can it afford to buy sufficient fertiliser to boost its agricultural productivity. Without the long-term assistance of donors and multilateral agencies, the situation looks bleak. Large-scale migration, new technologies, or the discovery of natural resources seem to offer the only options. But, this is not an excuse for inaction. If considerable donor support is needed to ensure household food security, then it should be given. As Professor Kydd, Dr. Dorward and Professor Vaughan wrote in their memo: “The fiscal costs of rural development must be set against the human, economic and financial costs of development failure, either continuing poverty and sporadic relief (with unacceptable human costs that are particularly apparent in the current crisis) or indefinite safety nets.”<sup>285</sup> In addition, in supporting the development of a more dynamic rural economy, donors will “buy time”—time in which there may be important institutional, political and technological breakthroughs—and stimulate the emergence of new, and as yet unpredicted, ideas and opportunities.<sup>286</sup> We must not underestimate the potential, resilience and resourcefulness of the Malawian people.

161. One solution suggested throughout the inquiry for the problems of southern Africa, and particularly for the problems of countries such as Malawi, has been a “regional solution”. This has been proposed in terms of vulnerability assessments and early warning systems,<sup>287</sup> managing grain reserves,<sup>288</sup> responding to crises,<sup>289</sup> facilitating greater trade,<sup>290</sup> and addressing questions of land reform.<sup>291</sup> In their memorandum, UN-OCHA noted that:

With the exception of WFP, the UN and donor governments have been slow to establish mechanisms that could think and act on a regional basis. This could

<sup>283</sup> *WFP Emergency Report*, no. 06, 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>284</sup> Ev 79 [Jonathan Kydd, Andrew Dorward and Megan Vaughan memorandum]

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> Ev 95 [Andrew Dorward supplementary memorandum]

<sup>287</sup> Ev 48 [SCF-UK memorandum]; Ev 24, para 1 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>288</sup> Ev 60 [Christian Aid memorandum]; Q 142 [Jonathan Kydd, Imperial College at Wye]

<sup>289</sup> Ev 131 [WorldVision memorandum]; Ev 25, para 3 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>290</sup> Ev 22, answer 11 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

easily be improved if the principal regional institution (SADC) were more centrally engaged in managing the crisis both politically, economically, as well as operationally. [...] With increased capacity and responsibility, SADC could facilitate and lead a more dynamic international response for the region particularly if were able to take more of a political and economic lead for its member states. This in turn could enhance the prospects for improved food security for its member states.<sup>292</sup>

**162. Moves to enhance the role of SADC are a matter for the member states themselves, involving, as they do, sharing of responsibility and even sovereignty. But they could provide one way of enhancing the region's food security and prospects for sustainable development. As DFID noted in evidence, moves towards regional cooperation and economic integration are in line with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) agenda.<sup>293</sup> DFID should encourage governments in the region to consider seriously the benefits which enhanced coordination of policy through SADC might confer.**

### **International development, human rights and accountability**

#### ***“Good governance”***

163. Effective well-coordinated institutions are the key to transforming the vicious circle of vulnerability, crisis and poverty into a virtuous one of vulnerability reduction, crisis prevention, and poverty reduction. For institutions to be effective, and to become progressively more effective, they must be well-governed and accountable to those whom they are meant to serve. The international development community, including DFID, is correct to emphasise the importance of good governance to developing countries' prospects. The crisis in southern Africa has demonstrated clearly the importance of good, accountable, domestic governance by such issues as: land reform and political opposition in Zimbabwe; the decision by Zambia to refuse GM food aid; the sale of the Strategic Grain Reserve in Malawi; and plans to purchase a luxury jet for the King of Swaziland.

164. Less dramatically, but of no less importance, if southern Africa is to move towards food security and sustainable livelihoods, greater emphasis must be given to these issues within countries' Poverty Reduction Strategies. Christian Aid noted that “food security is not dealt with adequately in the World Bank-sponsored poverty reduction strategies of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia.”<sup>294</sup> DFID agreed with this assessment, and stated that this is one of the areas where DFID wants to work with governments to deliver improvements.<sup>295</sup> **We urge DFID to encourage its governmental partners to pay more attention to rural livelihoods and food security in their PRSPs, and trust that the World Bank will be supportive of this move.**

165. Although good governance is hugely important, the “good governance” agenda does raise issues which must be addressed: first, the agenda must not be abused; second, “good governance” should be practiced by donors as well as developing country

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<sup>292</sup> Ev 25, answer 3 [UN-OCHA memorandum]

<sup>293</sup> Ev 22, answer 11 [DFID supplementary memorandum]

<sup>294</sup> Ev 50, para 7 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>295</sup> Q 2 [John Winter, DFID]

recipients of assistance. The World Development Movement argued that: “The agenda of good governance and accountability has all too often been abused by donors, using it as leverage to ensure that developing country governments comply with their policies.”<sup>296</sup> The IMF and World Bank do insist on policy reforms if countries are to qualify for financial assistance; the question is, when does the use of such conditionality move from being prudent financial management and helpful policy influence, and become excessive and illegitimate leverage? When does the external imposition of policy conditions undermine the local ownership and accountability which is crucial to good governance and effective institutions?

166. It is difficult for donors to find the right balance between making sure that their taxpayers’ funds are spent effectively, and ensuring that the development process is owned by the developing country itself. As we noted in our report on Financing for Development: “Donors have a right and a responsibility to ensure that aid is used effectively, that recipient countries are committed to poverty reduction, and that appropriate policies are in place. However, we recognise that the external imposition of conditions can undermine local ownership and accountability. Conditionality, in some form, is sure to continue, but it needs to be practised flexibly so that countries are treated on a case-by-case basis, rather than in a one-size-fits-all manner, and so that local ownership and accountability are not undermined.”<sup>297</sup> **“Good governance” must be more than a badge given to countries which accept the donors’ policy advice. Good governance, fundamentally, is about being accountable to those who one is supposed to serve. Governments, if they are to be democratic, must be accountable to their citizens. Donors, in their use of policy conditionality, must take care not to undermine the relationship between developing country governments and their citizens upon which true good governance is based. As Clare Short recently wrote: “The old approach to aid, with a plethora of projects, reporting requirements, conditionality and management systems, undermines sovereignty and accountability.”**<sup>298</sup> We would welcome more information about DFID’s work on defining and assessing standards of governance. In addition, we encourage DFID to show leadership in the donor community and put itself forward for the donor review process which is envisaged as part of (NEPAD).

167. Donors face particular problems when their partner governments are ineffective and unaccountable. The question then is: how can donors such as DFID engage with countries with corrupt or ineffective governments so that poor people are effectively supported, but bad governments are not? This question has been posed repeatedly in the current crisis. DFID officials told us, in relation to Zimbabwe that: “The Secretary of State took the view very early on in this developing crisis that we were going to do all we could to make sure that the people did not starve (in her words) because of the actions of the government in Zimbabwe.”<sup>299</sup> Similarly, speaking of the sale of the Strategic Grain Reserve in Malawi, Clare Short told us that: “you must never say, ‘It is so disgraceful it has happened we are not going to work with this country’ because that means the poor old people who have already been abused by that happening would be doubly abused if in response to that corrupt behaviour we said we would be not be willing to step forward and work with the government to provide the food people

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<sup>296</sup> Ev 129, para 9 [World Development Movement memorandum]

<sup>297</sup> Fifth Report from the International Development Committee, Session 2001-2002, *Financing for development*, HC 785, para 79. See footnote 275.

<sup>298</sup> “A new way to help the poorest”, *The Times, Business and Sport*, 11 February 2003, p. 25.

<sup>299</sup> Q 29 [John Winter, DFID]

need.”<sup>300</sup> **We welcome DFID’s commitment to the humanitarian imperative and its efforts to remain free from undue political interference, in what have been very difficult circumstances** (see paragraphs 84-86).

168. Institutional change and more effective institutions are needed at all levels, from the household, through the village, to the national, regional and international level.<sup>301</sup> As such, the agenda of good governance and accountability should apply to donors and international organizations as well as to developing countries’ governments. For instance, whilst DFID’s Public Service Agreement for 2003-06 includes as an objective, to: “Increase the impact of key multilateral agencies in reducing poverty and effective response to conflict and humanitarian crises”, the Service Delivery Agreement says little, and the Technical Note is silent, about how this is to be achieved and how progress is to be measured.<sup>302</sup> **DFID plays a major role in the international humanitarian system in its own right as well as a supporter of UN agencies. We believe that DFID and other donors should be accountable for the humanitarian assistance they provide; such accountability must begin with clarity about the purpose and methods of humanitarian assistance, and about how the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance might be measured.**<sup>303</sup>

### *Accountability and the right to food*

169. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights established a right to food, which, in 1976, was defined more clearly by the entry into force of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The right to adequate food is realised “when every man, woman or child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.”<sup>304</sup> The right to food entails the right to food security. In November 2002, the UN Secretary General’s Special Rapporteur, using an emotive vocabulary of “murder”, emphasised that governments have a legal obligation to “respect, protect and fulfill the right to food”.<sup>305</sup> In reference to the crisis in southern Africa, Oxfam argued that: “in the long-term the food crisis will recur unless the right to food for all is put top of the agenda of international financial institutions and governments both inside and outside the region, and policies changed.”<sup>306</sup> **If the right to food is to mean anything, someone—governments, organisations and individuals—should be held accountable when the basic human right to food is violated.**

170. In terms of allocating responsibility for fulfilling the right to food, Clare Short argued that “the first duty is on the state and clearly in Zimbabwe at the core of this crisis the state has completely and absolutely failed in its duty.”<sup>307</sup> We agree; states have the primary responsibility for ensuring their citizens’ food security. But responsibility

<sup>300</sup> Q 176 [Clare Short]

<sup>301</sup> Ev 63-64 [Christian Aid memorandum]

<sup>302</sup> DFID’s 2003-2006 Public Service Agreement, Service Delivery Agreement and Technical Note. See [www.dfid.gov.uk/AboutThisWebsite/files/AboutPubServ.htm](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/AboutThisWebsite/files/AboutPubServ.htm) - It should be noted that the Technical Note available at 26<sup>th</sup> February 2003 is still labelled “draft”.

<sup>303</sup> See Overseas Development Institute research on humanitarian assistance, donors and accountability - [www.odi.org.uk/hpg/donorship.html](http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/donorship.html)

<sup>304</sup> UN, Note by the Secretary General, *The Right to Food*, 27 August 2002. UN Document A/57/356. Available at [www.un.org/ga/57/](http://www.un.org/ga/57/)

<sup>305</sup> *Press release from UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food*, 11 November 2002. See [www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/gashc3721.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/gashc3721.doc.htm)

<sup>306</sup> Oxfam (2002), *Crisis in southern Africa*, Briefing Paper no. 23. See [www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/southernafrica/crisisinsouthernafrica.rtf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/southernafrica/crisisinsouthernafrica.rtf)

<sup>307</sup> Q 200 [Clare Short]

does not end with the state. Indeed in its “Eliminating hunger” strategy paper, after reasserting that the primary responsibility lies with the state, DFID accepts that “there are obligations above state level and within states that require us all to act to eradicate hunger wherever it occurs.”<sup>308</sup>

171. In some instances, the position which a state finds itself in—because of its relationships with other, more powerful organisations—may partially diminish its responsibility. When poor countries are dependent on rich countries for humanitarian assistance, development assistance and policy advice, it is too simplistic to argue that poor countries’ governments alone should be accountable for ensuring the food security and the right to food of their citizens. In such instances, the meaning of sovereignty has become blurred, and the basis for accountability confused. As Dr. Stephen Devereux put it: “accountability has in a sense been ceded by national governments to the international community. As they have given up some of their sovereignty in terms of economic policy, and, to some extent, political policy as well, they have also given up control over their food security.”<sup>309</sup> When a range of actors have such an influence on the fate of the country and its citizens, there is no clear locus of accountability. Everyone is partially responsible; no-one takes responsibility. To re-iterate, donors must take great care to ensure that they do not undermine the policy autonomy and accountability upon which good governance is based. Otherwise, the international humanitarian system may find itself sucked into a “black hole”<sup>310</sup> of unaccountability.

172. The solution may be some form of joint accountability, in which a range of actors shares the responsibility for ensuring food security. This might take the form of a “National food security agency”, jointly owned by national governments, together with local representatives, local NGOs and community-based organisations, working together with donors.<sup>311</sup> **We urge DFID to consider how progress towards realising the right to food might be furthered by improving accountability within the international humanitarian system, and what this might mean in practice for the provision of food security in southern Africa. We would be interested too, to hear DFID’s views about the wider relationship between international development partnerships, sovereignty, and accountability.**

### *Human rights and international development*

173. As Clare Short reminded us, the framework of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights stipulates that when people’s rights, including the right to food, cannot currently be provided, the “best possible effort must be made to bring them to people as rapidly as can be done.”<sup>312</sup> Human rights must be progressively realised. As such, signatories to the Universal Declaration must consider carefully the ways in which violators of human rights should be held accountable. Over the course of this inquiry we have heard a range of suggestions as to how to achieve this goal. In reference to the famine of early 2002 in Malawi, ActionAid (Malawi) argued that “the parties involved should be accountable, and where necessary there should be some commitment for compensation for those directly affected.”<sup>313</sup> The UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa

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<sup>308</sup> DFID (2002), *Eliminating hunger: Strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goal on hunger*, p. 10 – see footnote 44.

<sup>309</sup> Q 92 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies]

<sup>310</sup> Q 97 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies]

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*; Q 92 [Stephen Devereux, Institute of Development Studies]

<sup>312</sup> Q 200 [Clare Short]

<sup>313</sup> Ev 114, para 10 [ActionAid memorandum]

suggested, in relation to what he sees as the under-funding of the Global Fund by developed country governments, that: “There may yet come a day when we have peacetime tribunals to deal with this particular version of crimes against humanity.”<sup>314</sup> Violators of human rights should be held accountable for their actions. But determining compensation—who should pay how much to whom for what—seems to us to be fraught with complexities; and, holding peacetime tribunals for violations of the right to food is not going to happen in the foreseeable future, and may not be the best route to accountability and improvements in the provision of human rights.

174. Clare Short, developing this theme, argued that the way to progressively realise human rights is to employ the force of shame, “exposing failure rather than locking people up in prison.”<sup>315</sup> The Secretary of State described how the Cold War divided the discourse on human rights into “blue rights” about individual political freedoms and “red rights” which address economic and social welfare. We agree with her; there should be a re-focusing of attention towards what she termed “red rights”, which are perhaps of more concern to those seeking to escape from poverty.<sup>316</sup> We were encouraged to hear the Secretary of State express her vision of the relationship between human rights and international development, and to make the link between the Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction and human rights. Poverty is a denial of human rights; a shortfall in human rights is an obstacle to poverty reduction. The framework of human rights can be used to empower poor people to engage more effectively in their own development. As DFID’s paper on realising human rights for poor people states: “The Millennium Development Goals can only be achieved through the engagement of poor people in the development processes which affect their lives.”<sup>317</sup> DFID and the whole of the international development and human rights community must work hard to turn this vision into a reality. As Clare Short enthusiastically put it:

with the commitment of the Millennium Development Goals and these different ways of working to get the whole international system working with governments to secure them, we have moved towards a world that is organised to try and deliver the rights in those social and economic rights for all people and we need to drive it and popularise it and enthuse the world and embarrass anyone who is failing in their country to take measures or make their contribution.<sup>318</sup>

## Lessons

175. Historically, southern Africa has not been famine-prone. As a consequence, its early warning systems have been under-resourced at both national and regional levels. This emergency has served as a wake-up call; ideally it will result in a greater commitment of technical and financial resources to improved early warning systems, including a better understanding of the causes of vulnerability, and the incorporation of qualitative information from informal sources. On a related point, the crisis has exposed policy-makers’ neglect of agriculture and rural non-farm livelihoods in recent years,

<sup>314</sup> *Press briefing by Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa*, 8 January 2003. Available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

<sup>315</sup> Q 209 [Clare Short]

<sup>316</sup> There is no right to a life free of poverty. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights includes a variety of rights which relate to poverty. None of them mention poverty by name, but “the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of the individual and his/her family, including food, water and housing” perhaps comes closest.

<sup>317</sup> DFID (2000), *Realising human rights for poor people*, p. 7. See [www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/tsp\\_human.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/tsp_human.pdf)

<sup>318</sup> Q 209 [Clare Short]

something which has precipitated the descent into poverty and vulnerability of millions of southern Africans. The devastating contribution of the HIV/AIDS pandemic to this vicious circle of impoverishment has also been highlighted as never before. This should be factored into national and regional food security strategies that aim to install safety nets against short-term shocks while simultaneously promoting “opportunity ladders” for long-term poverty reduction.

176. Since the governments of southern Africa are now mostly democratic, the crisis has highlighted the complex links between governance and vulnerability. The simplistic argument that “democracy ends famine” needs to be revisited in the light of the fact that the trend towards more democratic and (in theory) accountable regimes in the region during the 1990s has evidently been associated with increasing vulnerability to food crisis. A first explanation is that in some of the countries of southern Africa, formally “democratic” regimes are bedevilled with corruption, poor governance and leaders who are not accountable to their citizens. Relatedly, many governments in southern Africa and their constituent ministries are desperately short of capacity. A second explanation is that domestic governance shapes the relationship between governments and the international community. When relations are good (as was the case during the 1991/92 drought emergency), the donor response will be timely and generous; but if goodwill is lacking and the relationship is clouded by suspicion or hostility (as in Malawi and Zimbabwe in 2001/02), fatal delays in mobilising relief assistance can occur. On the plus side, governments and donors will surely reconsider the way Strategic Grain Reserves are financed and managed, following Malawi’s experience; while the food crisis has highlighted the illegitimacy of Robert Mugabe’s rule in Zimbabwe, and could well contribute to his downfall. If these lessons are learnt and applied, the crisis of 2001-03 in southern Africa might be remembered for the benefits it produced, as well as the avoidable suffering it inflicted.

## Abbreviations and acronyms

ADMARC	Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (Malawi)
ARVs	Anti-Retrovirals (HIV/AIDS drugs)
CARE	Care and Relief Everywhere (NGO)
CHAD	Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (DFID)
C-SAFE	Consortium for the Southern African Food Emergency (NGO consortium)
DFID	Department for International Development
EMOP	Emergency Operation (World Food Programme appeal for, and plan of, assistance)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FEWSNET	Famine and Early Warning System Network (USAID-funded)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM	Genetically-Modified
GMOs	Genetically-Modified Organisms
GMB	Grain Marketing Board (Zimbabwe)
GNI	Gross National Income
HIPC	Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries debt relief initiative
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGC	National Institute of Disaster Management (Mozambique)
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe opposition party)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MT	Metric Tonnes
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OPVs	Open-Pollinated Varieties (seeds)
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity (cost-adjusted measure of income, for cross-national comparisons)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REWU	Regional Early Warning Unit (SADC)
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SCF-UK	Save the Children Fund, UK (NGO)
SGR	Strategic Grain Reserve (Malawi)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN-RIACSO	United Nations Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)

## LIST OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Crisis in southern Africa

1. **The simultaneous occurrence of major crises in southern Africa and the Horn of Africa poses a serious challenge to the international community's ability and willingness to respond. We share Clare Short's concern that the international humanitarian system may be getting over-stretched. (Paragraph 17)**
2. **We are concerned that Africa is the only continent which is moving backwards as regards reaching the Millennium Development Goals. If the international community fails to respond adequately to the humanitarian crises in southern Africa, Ethiopia and elsewhere, it will be impossible for countries to halve poverty and hunger by 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goals. (Paragraph 18)**
3. **Southern Africa is not suffering a drought-induced famine. It is suffering a complex humanitarian crisis, which was triggered by erratic rainfall and a relatively modest fall in food production. (Paragraph 19)**

### Vulnerable livelihoods: From shock to crisis

4. **We would not wish to see the HIPC process undermined, even for the best of motives, and fully understand that debt relief is not the only form of development assistance. But we do urge DFID and its international partners to consider seriously the possibility of revising the HIPC framework. Realistic debt relief must take account of the resources which creditors/donors are prepared to spend, but development-focussed debt relief should surely take more account of poor countries' development needs. We would like to hear DFID's views about the role of debt relief, and about whether or not the HIPC initiative should be revised to take more account of poor countries' development needs. (Paragraph 27)**
5. **Deep poverty at national and household levels is a major source of vulnerability. The depletion of household assets, together with declining opportunities for off-farm employment have raised vulnerability to future shocks throughout southern Africa. DFID and its donor, government and civil society partners must support strategies to restore household assets and to generate non-agricultural employment. (Paragraph 31)**
6. **We believe that the UK Government is failing to communicate clearly the ways in which Zimbabwe is exacerbating food insecurity in southern Africa. DFID should explain clearly the culpability of Robert Mugabe's policies on land reform, and emphasise too that restrictions placed on the movement of genetically-modified maize have hampered the relief effort and contributed to the deteriorating situation across the region. If he continues with the same policies and approach, Zimbabwe will remain part of the problem rather than part of the solution to famine and food insecurity in southern Africa. (Paragraph 34)**
7. **We are pleased that the Secretary of State is keen to learn from the past, and we welcome DFID's support for Poverty and Social Impact Assessments. We trust that such assessments will be made in the field of agricultural and food**

security policy, so that policy decisions and DFID's position itself are evidence-based rather than reactive, broad-brush and ideological. Oxfam called for mandatory impact assessments of the likely impacts of agricultural liberalisation. They recommended that donors, particularly the World Bank and IMF, end all lending conditions that promote further liberalisation of agriculture in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, pending thorough Poverty and Social Impact Assessments on agricultural policy reform in these countries, which can be used to inform policy choices about long-term food security and sustainable livelihoods. We endorse Oxfam's recommendation and urge DFID to do the same. (Paragraph 41)

8. **HIV/AIDS is central to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa. In a continent ravaged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, southern Africa is at its epicentre. The first defence against HIV/AIDS is food. Famine exacerbates disease, as disease exacerbates famine, in southern Africa. In creating new groups of vulnerable people, and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, HIV/AIDS plays a major role in the cycle of vulnerability, crisis and poverty. (Paragraph 47)**
9. **If the people of southern Africa are to escape from the cycle of vulnerability, crisis and poverty, the sources of vulnerability—poverty, weak governance and inappropriate policy, and HIV/AIDS—must be understood and addressed, both in terms of immediate humanitarian response and in laying the foundations for longer-term development. This will also require that policy-makers do not latch onto the latest fashion in the misplaced hope that it will provide a solution to development problems. (Paragraph 52)**

#### **Early warnings, information and donor response**

10. **We strongly endorse DFID's support for a regional approach to the improvement of early warning systems. Food crises are likely to recur in southern Africa in the coming years. It is vital therefore that famine early warning systems are strengthened at both regional and national levels:**

**Firstly, by improving crop production forecasts, especially of non maize food-crops including cassava, and assessments of their contribution to food availability and consumption;**

**secondly, by strengthening vulnerability assessment at national and sub-national levels, including systematic monitoring of market prices and better understanding of the analytical linkages between poverty, seasonality, and access to food;**

**thirdly, by incorporating non-official data sources, such as qualitative NGO reports and monitoring by vulnerability committees, into official early warning systems. (Paragraph 57)**
11. **Implementing these improvements to early warning systems in Southern Africa will require a commitment of financial resources and technical expertise from the donor community, national governments and regional organisations, notably SADC. We urge DFID to support reasonable requests for financial and technical assistance. (Paragraph 58)**
12. **Agricultural market information systems should be introduced or strengthened as a matter of urgency in all southern African countries. Lessons should be learned from the Indian Famine Codes and Kenya's Turkana District drought monitoring system, about how to incorporate price**

information into national and regional early warning systems. In addition to monitoring food prices and supplies in local markets, these systems should also collect data on agricultural input supplies and prices (especially fertiliser), and possibly also livestock prices and volumes, as “distress” sales of livestock at low prices are widely acknowledged as a robust indicator of livelihood stress. (Paragraph 69)

*The humanitarian response*

13. We were impressed in Malawi with the coordination between NGOs involved in the delivery of food aid and humanitarian assistance. In the medium term, such tasks ought to be performed by government, but NGOs are providing an essential and much-needed service. (Paragraph 80)
14. We are concerned at the lack of coordination within and between the donor community and regional institutions on food insecurity in southern Africa. On the basis that we believe food crises are likely to recur in the region, we believe it is unrealistic and unfair to expect regional governments in the immediate future to implement alone effective co-ordination between multiple organisations and institutions. As part of its evaluation of the UK response to the southern Africa emergency, DFID should assess the effectiveness of its working relationships with international, regional and national partners, including NGOs, and should draw lessons for improved coordination among multilateral and bilateral agencies. (Paragraph 83)
15. We applaud these efforts by the international community to deliver effective relief programmes in the face of political indifference or hostility by certain governments. DFID and its partners in the international community must strive to maintain freedom from political interference in their responses to humanitarian emergencies, while at the same time ensuring that the humanitarian imperative remains the overarching principle, irrespective of the nature of the regime or difficulties in relationships between international actors and national governments. (Paragraph 86)
16. We take the view that Zambia’s decision—and especially the refusal to accept milled maize which could not possibly have impacted on Zambia’s future export potential as it cannot germinate—was mistaken, particularly in the context of widespread hunger. (Paragraph 94)
17. We recognise that GM is a complex and fast-moving technology, but we believe that the UK Government should seek to build a consensus on the use of GM food aid, and agree a clear and coherent policy on GM-maize if it is to succeed in persuading food aid recipients of its benefit. (Paragraph 95)
18. DFID and other donors—but not the USA which is a non-signatory—are bound, under the Cartagena Protocol on bio-safety, to respect the right of aid-dependent governments to refuse genetically-modified commodities if these are offered as food aid. We were pleased to hear Clare Short state that: “We take the view under the Cartagena Convention, the bio-diversity convention, that every country has the right to decide for itself whether to import GM food or seeds and needs the capacity to be able to think about it and make the decision in an intelligent way”. It seems to us that this is at heart an issue of governance; an accountable government, making decisions intelligently, would surely not opt for a policy of rejecting GM food aid when many of its citizens face starvation? (Paragraph 97)

19. Donors should make every effort to provide food and non-food aid of a type and form acceptable to recipients. Looking beyond the current emergency, donors should also make more concerted efforts to source food staples locally as this is likely to be nutritionally-appropriate and culturally-preferred, is less likely to be genetically-modified, and will often be cheaper than shipping food aid from Europe and North America. In regions like southern Africa, where markets are relatively well-developed except in the most isolated rural areas, more consideration should be given to providing relief aid in the form of cash rather than food, as this maximises choice and supports rather than undermines local food producers and traders. (Paragraph 98)
20. There is no room for complacency, but the humanitarian response has so far been a success. Overall, we commend DFID and its partners in the international community for responding generously to the crisis in Southern Africa in 2002, after a slow start and in the face of difficult governance contexts in several countries. (Paragraph 99)
21. We urge the donor community and its regional partners (governments, SADC, NGOs and civil society) to establish contingency plans, such as pre-positioning of food stocks in the region, technical support to national safety net programmes, including better planned and transparently-managed Strategic Grain Reserves, and greater dialogue with the private sector to enhance coordination between public and private food flows. Those responsible for ensuring food security in the countries of southern Africa—including national Governments, the SADC-Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Vulnerability Assessment Committee, DFID, WFP and other bilateral and multilateral donors, NGOs and community-based organisations active in poverty reduction activities in the region—must establish clear criteria for predicting food shortages, declaring humanitarian emergencies, and mobilising relief resources. This requires institutional strengthening and coordination. To this end, national governments and their donor partners should consider establishing permanent Food Security and Evaluation Units, probably located in Ministries of Agriculture, which would liaise closely with local Vulnerability Committees. (Paragraph 100)
22. As for the longer term, steps must be taken to reduce vulnerability to food production shocks. These will include: encouraging diversification away from maize and even out of agriculture for some of the population; providing appropriate support to poor households affected by HIV/AIDS; and where direct budgetary support is given, prioritising household food security within Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes. (Paragraph 101)

#### **From crisis response to food security and sustainable livelihoods**

23. If people and communities are to escape from poverty traps and move towards food security and sustainable livelihoods, they must be enabled both to cope with crisis-related risks and to make the risky investments which are needed to climb out of poverty. (Paragraph 103)

#### *The role of agriculture in rural development*

24. DFID itself does not have a “strategy” for agriculture, because—DFID argues—“it is too diverse a subject”, in relation to which developing countries must themselves take the lead. Instead, DFID has recently published an “issues” paper which discusses the role of agriculture in improving the

livelihoods of poor people. We fail to see why agriculture is any different in this regard from other sectors such as education, and urge donors such as DFID to encourage their partner governments in southern Africa to take agriculture seriously, and to provide the necessary financial and technical support. Donors should not be active in all sectors—they should work to their comparative advantages—but given its considerable policy influence in the region, we believe that DFID has a responsibility to ensure that agriculture is not neglected by governments in southern Africa. (Paragraph 106)

25. We disagree with DFID that meeting the needs of the rural poor does not necessarily mean focussing on their agricultural capacity. We believe there is a risk that agriculture—which is the key component of rural livelihoods for millions of people in southern Africa, and the basis for growth and development—will continue to be neglected. (Paragraph 108)
26. If poverty reduction and food security is to be achieved in southern Africa, agricultural investment must not be neglected. Rather than despairing at the hitherto poor performance of agriculture, donors must help to put in place the institutional environment which is needed to support agricultural investment and make it deliver significant poverty-reducing returns. Donors should support the re-building of agricultural extension services which were undermined as donor support to agriculture decreased. (Paragraph 109)
27. The development of a cash-crop economy and export businesses can play an important role, not least in transferring technology to developing countries, but for widespread poverty reduction and livelihood enhancement the focus must be on small and medium scale agricultural producers. (Paragraph 110)

#### *Safety nets and social protection*

28. We applaud DFID for its role in supporting the design of Malawi's National Safety Nets Strategy. We urge DFID to do its utmost to ensure that the strategy is put into practice, that the different elements of the strategy are integrated, and that, where appropriate, safety nets strategies are developed throughout the region. (Paragraph 111)
29. We endorse the recommendations made by UN-OCHA, which as well as encouraging support for food-for-work and food-for-asset-creation programmes—include increasing support to school feeding programmes to reduce withdrawals of children and promote enrolment and attendance. (Paragraph 112)
30. We consider that a general maize subsidy is likely to strike the wrong balance between short-term relief and longer-term development. [ ...] In addition, given the likelihood of corruption in the sale of the SGR, and the possibility that a general maize subsidy might be diverted to buy votes at forthcoming elections or leaked through resale to neighbouring countries where prices are higher, we are not confident that a general maize subsidy is the most effective way of combating poverty and improving food security. It is essential that efforts to meet the short-term needs of communities do not undermine longer-term development. [ ...] Targeting assistance to the most needy is the most effective way of spending scarce resources, and is likely to minimise the risk of profiteering by elites. We remain concerned at the likely impacts of the general maize subsidy in Malawi, and share DFID's frustration at the World Bank's lack of consultation during the design of the scheme. (Paragraph 114)

- 31. We are not a committee of inquiry into the complexities of the sale of Malawi's Strategic Grain Reserve, but such episodes do cast light on issues of governance and accountability. Greedy and corrupt officials in positions of responsibility must not be allowed to profit from the sale of a country's grain reserve. As such, we trust—although the removal of Gilton Chiwaula from the Anti-Corruption Bureau does not fill us with confidence—that the continuing inquiries will uncover what happened in Malawi, and that appropriate actions will be taken. (Paragraph 115)**
- 32. Properly managed grain reserves, coupled with the holding of options to purchase grain on commodity markets, must be part of future food security strategies in the region. Further—whilst it is important that the maintenance of grain reserves does not take too large a slice out of scarce governmental resources—we do not think it realistic to expect strategic grain reserves to operate on a full cost-recovery basis. (Paragraph 116)**
- 33. Public works programmes must be designed carefully. [ ...] In many ways, local people, including intended participants and beneficiaries, may well be in the best position to advise on the most effective form of payment and should be involved fully in the design and implementation of such schemes. Public works programmes must take account of local situations and gender relations, and other measures must be taken to support those who cannot work. For instance, labour intensive public works programmes are entirely inappropriate for people living with HIV/AIDS, the infirm, and women with child-care responsibilities. But we believe that public works programmes provide an excellent way of linking short-term relief to longer-term development and urge DFID to support such schemes wherever communities in southern Africa have spare labour. (Paragraph 119)**
- 34. Targeted Inputs Programmes can play an important role in achieving food security. To do so they must be part of a longer-term rural development strategy which, over time and where possible, reduces dependence on free inputs, making inputs more affordable and accessible by raising rural incomes and promoting rural development. We urge DFID to continue its support for Malawi's Targeted Inputs Programme, and to work with other Governments to examine whether such schemes—with carefully planned exit strategies—might enhance their food security and longer-term development prospects. (Paragraph 122)**
- 35. Donors and governments in southern Africa urgently need to find ways of making yield-enhancing inputs (fertiliser and seeds) accessible to smallholder farmers at affordable prices. The free distribution of inputs, whether universal or targeted, in Malawi or elsewhere, is a useful interim measure but does not provide an appropriate model for a sustainable long-term solution to food insecurity. An alternative proposal made to us by Stephen Carr, to amend the existing rural public works programmes so that participants are paid with vouchers for agricultural inputs, rather than in food or cash as at present, should be seriously considered. (Paragraph 123)**
- 36. Short-term assistance and focused safety nets must contribute towards longer term goals of improving governance, reducing dependency, nurturing functioning and equitable markets, developing infrastructure, and increasing agricultural productivity. Finally, effective social protection strategies, whilst addressing short-term needs, must—by including plans for the phasing out of certain forms of assistance such as free inputs programmes where possible—look to a future where such measures are employed less frequently and less widely. (Paragraph 124)**

*Opportunity ladders*

37. We believe that the open-pollinated varieties (OPVs) which require few inputs, and which farmers can store and re-use, are more appropriate for poor smallholder farmers than hybrid and genetically-engineered varieties which require annual repurchase and could tie poor farmers into costly relationships with powerful transnational seed companies. (Paragraph 127)
38. We would like DFID to explain its plans for making affordable fertiliser available to smallholders in southern Africa, in both the short and longer-term. (Paragraph 128)
39. Climatic uncertainty, drought or erratic rainfall, is an increasingly important source of vulnerability in southern Africa, and one which should be addressed by developments in irrigation. Just as price-smoothing in maize markets can reduce one form of vulnerability, making maize prices less erratic, more predictable and more affordable, so too can irrigation and “rainfall-smoothing” or “rainwater-harvesting” reduce vulnerability. (Paragraph 129)
40. Historical imbalances in land ownership do need to be corrected, but land reform programmes must be planned and implemented carefully, legally, with adequate consultation, and as part of poverty reduction strategies. We strongly endorse DFID’s support for a regional technical facility to take forward land policy issues at a regional level within SADC. (Paragraph 130)
41. We agree with Christian Aid, that support should be provided to enable commercial and government credit institutions to provide rural credit, and urge DFID to increase the support it offers to this sector in southern Africa. There is a role too for farmers’ associations such as NASFAM in improving smallholders’ access to agricultural inputs and credit, provided they have the ability to reach and serve the very poorest farmers. (Paragraph 131)
42. We support strongly Clare Short’s efforts to reform the FAO, and in particular its approach to food security, but encourage the FAO’s critics to be realistic in their expectations of what the FAO can do within its resource constraints. They should not undermine the important work which the FAO does in promoting and developing international standards, and in providing agricultural advice for hard-pressed developing countries. Nevertheless, if the FAO is not—in the absence of sufficient governmental capacity—the right organisation to be involved in agricultural extension, improving agricultural productivity and encouraging diversification, we wonder which organisation is. (Paragraph 133)
43. Price stability and food security—enabling better management of the risks associated with crises—is fundamental to efforts to develop a sustainable market economy. Food—insecure households are risk-averse households; risk-averse households do not make the investments needed to move beyond subsistence. John Winter of DFID said: “We would, of course, like to see an open market in maize within the region.” If the appropriate institutions were in place to ensure that sufficient maize was provided at prices which the poor could afford, we would agree. Currently, they are not. Without advocating any particular form of intervention, we believe that the principle of guaranteeing access to affordable food for the poor at all times is one that should be re-instituted and followed. (Paragraph 136)
44. The potential of using targeted food subsidies as an alternative to the unsustainable and inefficient consumer price subsidies of the past should be

explored. DFID has recent experience with a pilot scheme of targeted “flexi-vouchers” in Malawi. Perhaps the lessons learned from this initiative could be expanded and incorporated into larger safety net programmes at the national or even regional level. (Paragraph 137)

45. DFID should support southern African governments and SADC in their efforts to encourage the emergence of new and more effective “hybrid institutions”, which involve the state and the private sector in the regulation of staple food markets. It is not clear what sorts of systems might be able to deliver both price stability at appropriate levels, and the coordination and protection needed to nurture fragile market development. But it may be worth exploring the idea of private companies tendering for franchises to deliver specific services—including food supplies—at predetermined, and if necessary supported, prices. (Paragraph 138)
46. We believe that some diversification into production of cash crops for export is desirable and were pleased to hear in Malawi of DFID’s support for efforts to develop export capacity and know-how through the Integrated Framework. There are however important limitations and obstacles. Cash crop production is not a panacea, particularly for land-locked countries such as Malawi. In addition, a shift to cash crops will not in itself guarantee food security—the fundamental basis for development beyond subsistence levels—for rural communities. (Paragraph 139)

#### *The challenge of HIV/AIDS*

47. The major obstacle to export-led growth is of course that of limited market access and the highly hypocritical maintenance of export subsidy regimes in the EU and US. perhaps the best thing that developed countries could do to improve the prospects of developing countries such as those in southern Africa would be to practice what they preach, improving market access and eliminating export subsidies, at the same time as helping to build developing countries’ export capacity. We urge DFID and the UK Government as a whole to step up its efforts to persuade our European partners that fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy must be a priority. In addition, consideration should be given to the role of a “development box” in allowing developing countries to maintain subsidies for essential food security reasons. (Paragraph 140)
48. We appreciate that the priority has been to get enough food of any type through to the hungry, but trust that DFID and the international community will—now that the food pipeline is more secure—seek to improve the nutritional content of food aid, to maximise its effectiveness in addressing the needs of those infected with HIV. (Paragraph 143)
49. Targeting of assistance is crucial. Targeting is impossible if agencies do not even know where the hungry, and particularly the most vulnerable groups of people, including orphans, are. We would like to know what steps DFID is taking, in partnership with other agencies, to improve the mapping of need. (Paragraph 144)
50. Efforts must be made to assist HIV-affected households through the provision of appropriate labour-saving technologies, by encouraging diversification into less labour-intensive crops, and by working out how to ensure that agricultural know-how is passed down through the generations despite the early death of HIV-infected parents (Paragraph 145)

51. We encourage DFID to consider the possibility of designing a public works programme to provide extra labour for child and grandparent-headed households at critical times, in return for food, cash, or agricultural inputs. (Paragraph 146)
52. DFID officials suggested us in evidence that a first approach to improving capacity ought to be through enticing emigrants from the countries of southern Africa—perhaps emigrants who have studied and stayed in North America or Western Europe—back to southern Africa. Increasing technical assistance to enable countries to hire expatriate expertise, whether from other parts of Africa, other parts of the developing world, or elsewhere, should be a secondary step. (Paragraph 148)
53. Access to essential medicines must be improved, and provision must be made within the WTO's agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights for the production of more affordable drugs for public health purposes. Part of the international response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic must be a more flexible application of patent rules in developing countries. The USA and its pharmaceutical industry must not be allowed to obstruct unilaterally such important and sensible initiatives. (Paragraph 149)
54. In our view, whilst efforts should be made to improve the affordability of ARVs, this must not distract donors and governments from the need to focus on basic health-care systems. (Paragraph 150)
55. We urge donors, NGOs and governments to do their utmost to promote improved understanding of HIV/AIDS, and to lay the foundations on which attitudinal and behavioural changes are built. (Paragraph 151)
56. In January 2003, the USA announced that it will treble its spending on HIV/AIDS to \$15 billion over the next five years. We applaud the USA for taking this step, and for demonstrating the priority which they attach to the fight against HIV/AIDS. We hope that other donors will be encouraged to do the same. We are concerned however that only \$1 billion of the new money will be channelled through the Global Fund. The rest is to be distributed bilaterally, and will therefore be more subject to pressures from domestic interest groups which object to the linking of HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues. It is of course vital that money is spent effectively, and every effort should be made to ensure that the Global Fund is effective, but marginalising multilateral initiatives is surely counter-productive. (Paragraph 152)
57. The focus of efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS should be on basic healthcare systems. However, we urge donors, including the UK, to not marginalise the Global Fund, but to work to make it more effective. The language used by the UN's Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa may have been extreme, but the sense of urgency which he injected is welcome. If southern Africa is to move from crisis to food security and sustainable livelihoods, responding effectively to the threat of HIV/AIDS must be integrated into all stages and aspects of relief, recovery and development now. We therefore support the requests made by Oxfam and SCF-UK to the international community to ensure that all programming and funding activities respond to the impact of HIV/AIDS; to increase funding for food aid and food aid that meets the needs of people infected with HIV; and to increase funding for non-food needs including health, nutrition, water and sanitation. We look forward to hearing how DFID is taking account of HIV/AIDS in its continuing response to the immediate crisis, and in its work with partner governments to lay the foundations for longer-term development. (Paragraph 153)

### From a vicious circle to a virtuous circle

58. We urge DFID, with its partners, to consider the proposals made by Professor Kydd and Dr. Dorward, and to examine what a poverty-reducing “ecology of variety” might look like, and how it might be nurtured in southern Africa. We also encourage DFID to continue its work in helping healthy civil societies to grow in the countries of southern Africa. Civil society provides an important counter-balance to government, making governments more accountable to their electorates and improving governance. Finally, of perhaps greatest importance, we would like to hear from DFID as to how it plans—with its partners—to help to build the capacity of governments, and key ministries such as those concerned with agriculture, education and health. (Paragraph 156)
59. Africa is missing the Millennium Development Goals partly because donors are missing the 0.7% target. We once again urge the UK Government to make swift progress towards its target of providing 0.7% of GNI in aid, to set out a timetable for meeting this target, and to encourage other donors to do likewise. We welcome in this regard, the Chancellor’s innovative proposal for an international financing facility. On trade, we urge the UK Government to press its EU partners, and to press them harder, to agree to substantial reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. It is disgraceful for the developed world to subsidise over-production and the dumping of surplus agricultural products, and to restrict access to the EU’s market, whilst preaching the virtues of trade liberalisation to developing countries. (Paragraph 157)
60. We urge DFID—particularly at a time when WFP’s Executive Board is chaired by a DFID representative—to help WFP to make progress on three fronts: one, to consider a change to WFP’s funding regime, to provide it with some predictable base funding; two, to engage more with a wider range of donors such as India, Russia, China and the oil-exporting countries; and three, to encourage donors including the USA to provide cash donations rather than food, in order to increase WFP’s flexibility and ability to deliver timely and effective humanitarian assistance. (Paragraph 159)
61. Moves to enhance the role of SADC are a matter for the member states themselves, involving, as they do, sharing of responsibility and even sovereignty. But they could provide one way of enhancing the region’s food security and prospects for sustainable development. As DFID noted in evidence, moves towards regional cooperation and economic integration are in line with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) agenda. DFID should encourage governments in the region to consider seriously the benefits which enhanced coordination of policy through SADC might confer. (Paragraph 162)

### *International development, human rights and accountability*

62. We urge DFID to encourage its governmental partners to pay more attention to rural livelihoods and food security in their PRSPs, and trust that the World Bank will be supportive of this move. (Paragraph 164)
63. “Good governance” must be more than a badge given to countries which accept the donors’ policy advice. Good governance, fundamentally, is about being accountable to those who one is supposed to serve. Governments, if they are to be democratic, must be accountable to their citizens. Donors, in their use of policy conditionality, must take care not to undermine the relationship

between developing country governments and their citizens upon which true good governance is based. As Clare Short recently wrote: “The old approach to aid, with a plethora of projects, reporting requirements, conditionality and management systems, undermines sovereignty and accountability.” We would welcome more information about DFID’s work on defining and assessing standards of governance. In addition, we encourage DFID to show leadership in the donor community and put itself forward for the donor review process which is envisaged as part of (NEPAD). (Paragraph 166)

64. We welcome DFID’s commitment to the humanitarian imperative and its efforts to remain free from undue political interference, in what have been very difficult circumstances. (Paragraph 167)
65. DFID plays a major role in the international humanitarian system in its own right as well as a supporter of UN agencies. We believe that DFID and other donors should be accountable for the humanitarian assistance they provide; such accountability must begin with clarity about the purpose and methods of humanitarian assistance, and about how the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance might be measured. (Paragraph 168)
66. If the right to food is to mean anything, someone—governments, organisations and individuals—should be held accountable when the basic human right to food is violated. (Paragraph 169)
67. We urge DFID to consider how progress towards realising the right to food might be furthered by improving accountability within the international humanitarian system, and what this might mean in practice for the provision of food security in southern Africa. We would be interested too, to hear DFID’s views about the wider relationship between international development partnerships, sovereignty, and accountability. (Paragraph 172)

## Annex: The Southern African Humanitarian Crisis of 2002-03: A Chronology

2001	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
January	WFP reported 500,000 MT of food aid needed for southern Africa due to flooding.	Maize production 40% less than last year due to smaller area planted.	Good 2000 harvest, low maize prices (MK4/kg).				Government asked donors for 23,000 MT of maize for flood victims.
February			Flooding and dry spells predicted to cause 15% drop in maize production.	Loss of crops due to dry spells in the south.		Floods in central region displace 380,000.	
March	Flooding still affecting Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia.	Projected deficit of 460,000 MT of maize needed for 2001/02 consumption year.	Government of Malawi appealed for US\$6.7m as flood assistance.	Excessive rainfall in the north affected maize crops.		Retail price of maize rose by 26% in Beira due to floods.	
April	National Early Warning Units report bad climatic conditions will affect maize production in the region.		WFP launched a \$3.2m Emergency Operation to assist 208,000 people. Second-round production estimates predicted 24% drop in maize harvest.	Maize supply remained good and prices stable.		42,000 ha of food crops lost due to flooding in Zambezi valley. First season production decreased by 40-80% following 2 successive seasons of crop loss.	
May		National Crop Forecasting Committee estimated grain harvest at 14% above 1990s average. A Farm Community Trust report indicated some farm workers had lost 33% of their income. Maize price increased by 12% to Z\$8,500/MT.	Harvesting caused maize prices to start falling. National maize stocks low, due to ADMARC not buying maize in 2000.			First production estimates predict food crops levels to remain stable.	
June		Ministry of Agriculture granted temporary monopoly to Grain Marketing Board for	Final-round production estimates concluded that national maize harvest had fallen by 32% over	Maize prices still relatively low at US\$100/MT	15% of Lesotho population predicted to need food aid.		Cereal production down but consumption expected to be met by

2001	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
		buying and selling maize internally and externally. Government announced plans to import 544,000 MT of maize.	the 2000 record harvest. FEWS NET predicted a 437,775 MT food surplus "due to high root crop production". ADMARC announced that it would purchase 120,000 MT of maize locally, to replenish the Strategic Grain Reserve.				imports.
<b>July</b>	FAO reported maize production for the region is down by 23%. (Maize accounts for 90% of total coarse grain production in the region making it the most important crop).		Traders were reportedly stockpiling maize.	Maize prices rose by 9-16% due to drop in supply. Government appealed to donors for 83,400 MT food aid. Estimated 1.7 million affected by bad weather or civil strife.		Joint crop and food availability mission predicts a substantial increase in crop production for first season.	FAO predict drop in maize production will cause food security problems.
<b>August</b>			Official national maize stocks were effectively exhausted. ADMARC failed to buy local maize due to no surpluses.	Italian Government pledged US\$500,000 for purchase of maize. Rapid vulnerability analysis estimated 1.3 million people in 23 districts required relief.			
<b>September</b>			Government announced that National Food Reserve Agency would import 220,000 MT of maize to bridge local deficits. ADMARC quadrupled its	Private grain trading sector proposed a system for importing maize. Government imposed ban on maize export. Maize price stabilised		Production expected to increase by 17% and food availability expected to cover 87% of national needs. 100,000 MT of maize exported, mainly to	

2001	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
			maize price as it shifted from local purchases to imports. Government announced distribution of 60,000 MT of free maize to food insecure households.	due to new cheaper South African import.		Malawi.	
<b>October</b>		WFP opened a new office in Zimbabwe. WFP Food Needs Assessment estimated about 706,000 required food aid.	Limited maize imports arrived from South Africa. SCF-UK reported indicators of stress in some Districts: maize prices up 340% since January, production down 40% on 2000.	Maize stocks were running low. Delay in imports due to delay in signing contracts with importers.	Heavy rain delayed and prevented planting.	Shortages of food stocks in rural areas predicted to affect 369,000 highly food insecure people. Maize prices rose by 4-5%.	
<b>November</b>	SADC reported that all the region had suffered a cereal production shortfall and would need to import.	Establishment of a Relief and Rehabilitation Unit, partly funded by DFID. 13,636 farm worker families displaced and required assistance.	Livestock prices fell as the poor sold animals for food. Several major donors (EU, Denmark, UK, US) suspended aid to Malawi due to concerns about governance issues.		Planned commercial imports of cereal will cover 80% of requirements.	Maize prices at record level of 350,000 Meticals per 70 kg sack.	Shortfall of cereal requirements estimated at 143,000 MT. Imports only expected to cover 65% of this.
<b>December</b>	Heavy rains and dry spells continue to affect crop growing.		Maize imports totalled only 27,000 MT. ADMARC maize sales too limited to affect prices. Global malnutrition rates of 11.8% recorded in Mchinji District. Targeted Inputs Programme (TIP) to 1 million households.	Only 5,000 MT of food relief procured by Government. WFP purchased 10,000 MT of maize with help of German government aid of US\$1.9 million.			Swaziland Human Development Report produced with support from UNDP called for more action against HIV/AIDS – a third of the population are HIV positive.

2002	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
January		Government listed 4,874 commercial farms (9.2m hectares) for acquisition. Around 1,000 farms were no longer working. WFP sent its first consignment of food aid.	Transport bottlenecks on rail, roads and ports restricted maize imports to 40,000 MT to date. ADMARC opened more rural markets to improve distribution to vulnerable communities; purchases rationed to 25kg/person.	Only 26,000 MT of maize imports received. WFP secured 12,000 MT from South Africa.	7,000 households affected by flooding began receiving food aid.	National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC) presented its draft contingency plan for 2001/02 rainy season for expert review. Limpopo River on flood alert.	SADC reported heavy rains expected to cause more problems with flooding.
February	The region is suffering its largest maize production gap in years. Slow imports caused food shortages.	UNDP blamed fast-track land reform programme for economic, political and social instability. EU and United States imposed sanctions against President Mugabe and certain ministers due to human rights violations.	Crop forecasts predict 16% higher maize harvest than last year. Catholic priests pressed Government to declare a national emergency and to subsidise food prices. Civil society released a press statement noting that "hunger has reached crisis levels". The BBC reported famine deaths. President Muzi declared a 'State of Disaster'. Maize prices peaked at MK43/kg in some areas. The Kwacha continued to depreciate, further raising food import costs. ADMARC cut quotas for maize from 25kg to 10kg per person. Traders were banned from purchasing maize from ADMARC.	Significant crop losses predicted in the south due to prolonged dry spell.		Government approve INGC contingency plan. WFP added 170,000 to food aid beneficiaries bringing total to 390,000.	Following a WFP visit in January, the Government is supplying 1,200 MT of maize to households affected by dry conditions.

2002	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
March	UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group met in Rome to assess the Southern Africa Food Crisis.	Mugabe took his oath of office following his re-election, pledged to accelerate land reform.	Global malnutrition rates of 19% were recorded in Salima district. Malawi had received 83,000 of 150,000 MT planned maize imports. WFP launched an EMOP to provide food aid to 300,000 people. Vice President Malewezi appealed for food aid. The government set up a Task Force on the Food Shortage Situation. Farmers harvested green maize.	86,000 MT of maize imported. Eastern, southern and western provinces reported higher than normal livestock sales due to food insecurity.	Frost curtailed the end of the growing season.	Rainfall below normal affected maize yields in southern Mozambique. Northern and central districts were also affected by a moderate drought. INGC, FAO and others visited Gaza province in February to analyse the effects. Maize prices remained high due to demand from Malawi and Zimbabwe.	
April	WFP coordinated UN vulnerability assessments in the six worst affected countries. DFID appointed a full-time Food Security Adviser for the region in its Harare office.	Farm Community Trust launched supplementary feeding programme for children of up to 100,000 retrenched farm workers. Farmers' associations warned of diminished crops due to disruptions to farming. Zimbabwe declared a national drought disaster.	Maize prices fell as early maturing crops were harvested and imports arrived from Tanzania and Mozambique. Maize forecasts were revised downward from 2m MT to 1.6m MT after a 3-week dry spell. Kwacha depreciation reduced government capacity to import maize. Only 92,000MT of maize imports had arrived.	Government awarded a further contract for supply of 30,000 MT of maize. Heavy rainfall – concern of crop loss.	Government declared a state of famine and requested WFP/FAO assistance.	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADER) announced Emergency Plan for the Reduction of Drought Impacts in 2002.	FAO reported food shortages in Swaziland.
May	WFP set up a regional coordination and logistics unit in Johannesburg.	The Land Acquisition Amendment Act speeded up farm seizures: listed farms had to stop work in	US pledged 11,330 MT, and EU 95,000 MT, of emergency food aid.	WFP/FAO Crop and Food supply mission started.	WFP bridging emergency operation for Lesotho finalised.	MADER reported 83,690 ha of maize lost due to drought.	WFP completed logistics arrangements for its intervention in

2002	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
		45 days and vacate their homes in 90 days. A Farm Community Trust survey found that 50% of farm workers in several districts had lost their jobs.	FAO predicted a maize deficit of 600,000 MT. WFP estimated that 53% of Malawians would need food aid by December. The IMF argued that: "Urgent action is needed to prevent starvation", but suspended US\$47m in loans, because of budget overspending by government, "corruption and weak governance".	Significant improvement in maize availability but shortfall still expected for 2002/03 consumption year.	WFP/FAO assessment reports 500,000 in need of food aid. 25 <sup>th</sup> May elections held in Lesotho.	Distribution of 30,300 kits of seeds to drought affected areas. Maize prices lower at the start of the harvest and substantial quantities reported to be exported informally (on bikes) to Malawi.	Swaziland. FAO/WFP report 188,000 MT of maize needed over next 6 months.
June	The UN Inter-Agency Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) held a Humanitarian Needs meeting in Johannesburg.	5,872 farms totalling 10.5m hectares were now listed for acquisition.	WFP/FAO report said 1.7 million MT of relief food aid needed for 2.3 million in need of emergency food.	Price of maize rose sharply in rural areas where 60% of households in highly food insecure areas have run out of food.	Britain donated £2.5 million for food relief.	WFP estimated that 600,000 Mozambicans would need food aid.	National Early Warning Unit reported that pastures and drinking water has seriously deteriorated due to dry conditions. It also reported that the National Maize Corporation will have to import 50,000 MT of maize to last until the end of the year. WFP estimated that 144,000 people will need food aid due to the severe drop in agricultural production.
July	WFP launched an appeal for 992,000 MT of food aid for 10.3 million people, at a cost of US\$507m.	About 500 farm schools were closed due to farm worker retrenchments.			WFP report food aid secured for Lesotho is insufficient for 444,000 people at risk of starvation.		Swaziland's National Disaster Relief Task Force reported that it was confident it could cope.
August		Government was called to assist 300,000 farm workers and 200,000 to 300,000 casual labourers who have no income.				Prices for maize higher than normal.	

2002	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
September	36.5% of WFP's appeal was funded.	An estimated 6 million people were affected by food shortage.				WFP's food aid for cereals expected to cover requirements only to October.	Government purchase E9 million worth of white maize to assist drought victims.
October	A 'Consortium for the Southern Africa Food Emergency' (C-SAFE) was established, with lead agencies being CARE in Malawi, CRS in Zambia and World Vision in Zimbabwe.	The Government failed to deliver inputs (seeds, fertiliser) to smallholders in resettlement and communal areas. National cattle herd had fallen from 1.1 million to 20,000-40,000 head.		Government decided to refuse GM food aid.		WFP expected to have food aid for approximately 60% of the population in need. Retail maize prices rose sharply.	Donors withdraw aid from Swaziland due to Swaziland's insistence on buying a luxury jet for King Mswati III.
November		Allegations of cronyism and corruption in farm allocations.		Southern region still in desperate need of food aid estimated at 8,700 MT/month. Poor rains led to late planting for 2003 crop.		Food insecurity in urban areas increased.	
December	WFP estimated that 16 million people in the region were in need of food aid.	Women had received only 16% of redistributed land, despite being 61% of communal farmers.				Below average rainfall caused setback to 2003 crops. SADC drought monitoring centre released warning statement.	
January	US government pledged US\$114m emergency aid grant to C-SAFE (Catholic Relief Services, CARE and World Vision).	Drought, land reform, inflation (1998) and HIV/AIDS caused widespread hunger. 125,000 of 150,000 rural residents of Binga district received food aid.	A Commission of Inquiry into the sale of the Strategic Grain Reserve was established. Tearfund report a worrying number of children coming on to the streets in search of food and money.	WFP donated 80,000 MT of GM food aid to Zambia. Some reports of looting of GM food aid.	Inter-agency vulnerability assessment reported that 650,000 people need of food aid until the end of March; HIV-AIDS - Lesotho has 4 <sup>th</sup> highest rate in the world - is exacerbating	National Management Institute projected that 1.4 million people would need food aid. Large gap between planned WFP distributions and estimated needs. 43%	Heavy rains have helped crops in some places but in others have devastated maize crops. WFP field staff report that only 20-40% of farming land has been cultivated.

2002	REGION	ZIMBABWE	MALAWI	ZAMBIA	LESOTHO	MOZAMBIQUE	SWAZILAND
			Flooding damages crops of 81,6000 households, 6,800 houses, and damages roads.		the situation.	coverage. Nine hunger-related deaths confirmed in the north-west.	
February	EMOP more than 70% funded, with shortfall of US\$132 million through March 2003. WFP and UN advocate that all UN agency programmes are planned through the lens of HIV/AIDS and its impact on women and children.	Deteriorating food security situation nation-wide. WFP field reports predict "grim prospects" for coming harvest. Cereal deficit of 1 million MT predicted for 2003-04.	Government and World Bank launch US\$50 million Emergency Drought Recovery Project. Government maize stocks at high levels; sales restrictions eased; donor-supported decision to sell 50000 MT of imported maize to prevent future glut.	Zambia is establishing a crop monitoring system to provide timely information on the location and scale of crop failure.		Outbreaks of cholera reported. Poor harvest predicted, leading to a dramatic increase in food insecurity, especially in central and southern regions.	

### Sources:

- § Region: Memorandum submitted to the Inquiry by DFID, 7 October 2002, "Monthly Food Security Updates", FEWS NET Southern Africa.
- § Malawi: "Monthly Food Security Updates", FEWS NET Malawi, Tearfund, sourced from ReliefWeb.
- § Zimbabwe: Documents by UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), Catholic Relief Services, IFRC, sourced from ReliefWeb, "Monthly Food Security Updates", FEWS NET Zimbabwe.
- § Zambia: "Monthly Food Security Updates", FEWS NET Zambia, Deutsche Press, sourced from ReliefWeb.
- § Lesotho: Documents by UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network, Agence-France Presse, sourced from ReliefWeb.
- § Mozambique: Documents by UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network, Catholic Relief Services, IFRC, sourced from ReliefWeb. "Monthly Food Security Updates", FEWS NET Mozambique, "Monthly Food Security Updates", FEWS NET Mozambique.
- § Swaziland: Documents by UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network, Government of Swaziland and PANA, sourced from ReliefWeb.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE  
RELATING TO THE REPORT**

TUESDAY 4 MARCH 2003

Members present:

Tony Baldry, in the Chair

Mr John Battle            Mr Robert Walter  
Tony Colman             Tony Worthington  
Mr Piara S. Khabra

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report [The Humanitarian Crisis in southern Africa], proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read the first time.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph entitled 'Summary' read and postponed.

Paragraph entitled "Background and Acknowledgements" read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 1 to 176 read and agreed to.

Postponed paragraph entitled 'Summary' read again and agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (Select committees (reports)) be applied to the Report.

Several papers were ordered to be appended to the Minutes of Evidence.

Several papers were ordered to be reported to the House.

[Adjourned till Thursday 6 March at a quarter past Ten o'clock

## LIST OF WITNESSES

**(The following pages refer to Volume II)**

*Tuesday 29 October 2002*

Mr John Winter, Head of Central and Southern Africa Department, Mr Rob Holden, Manager, Crisis Management Group, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department Operations Team, and Mr John Hansell, OBE, Regional Food Security Adviser, Department for International Development..... Ev 5

*Monday 25 November 2002*

Ms Judith Lewis, Regional Director for Southern Africa, World Food Programme (WFP)..... Ev 26

*Tuesday 3 December 2002*

Dr Stephen Devereux ..... Ev 35

Dr John Seaman OBE, Development Director of the Food Security and Livelihoods Unit, Mr Richard Mawer, Director of the Food Security and Livelihoods Unit, Save the Children Fund-UK, Mr Tony Dykes, Head of Southern Africa Team, and Ms Kato Lambrechts, Senior Policy Officer, Christian Aid..... Ev 66

*Tuesday 14 January 2003*

Mr Max Lawson, Policy Adviser and Dr Graham MacKay, Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern and West Africa, Oxfam, and Professor Jonathan Kydd and Dr Andrew Dorward, Imperial College at Wye..... Ev 84

*Thursday 23 January 2003*

Rt Hon Clare Short, a Member of the House, Secretary of State for International Development, Mr Anthony Smith, Head of Central and Southern Africa Department, and Mr Rob Holden, Manager, Crisis Management Group, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department Operations Team, Department for International Development..... Ev 97

### **LIST OF MEMORANDA INCLUDED IN THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE**

1.	Department for International Development.....	Ev 1, 15 and 112
2.	OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).....	Ev 24
3.	World Food Programme .....	Ev 33
4.	Save the Children Fund UK.....	Ev 42
5.	Christian Aid.....	Ev 49
6.	Professor Jonathan Kydd, Dr Andrew Dorward and Professor Megan Vaughan.....	Ev 75
7.	Oxfam .....	Ev 80
8.	Dr Andrew Dorward.....	Ev 95

### **LIST OF APPENDICES TO THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE**

1.	ActionAid Malawi .....	Ev 113
2.	CARE International UK .....	Ev 114
3.	Stephen Carr .....	Ev 119
4.	Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy .....	Ev 121
5.	Traidcraft .....	Ev 123
6.	UNICEF.....	Ev 127
7.	World Development Movement .....	Ev 128
8.	World Vision .....	Ev 130

### LIST OF UNPRINTED PAPERS

Copies of the following have been placed in the House of Commons Library, where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Record Office, House of Lords, and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to the Record Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW (tel: 020 7219 3074). The Record Office is open to the public from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays.

*State of Disaster: Causes, Consequences & Policy Lessons from Malawi* - An ActionAid Report commissioned by ActionAid Malawi, by Stephen Devereux, June 2002

*2001-02 Targeted Inputs Programme (TIP) Main report of the evaluation programme*, Carlos Barahona and Sarah Levy (2002)

Malawi Famine: Issues which might be considered in an in-depth study of the topic - Some notes by Jonathan Coulter, Marketing Economist, Natural Resources Institute, Chatham, Kent, October 2002

*Horticulture Exports from Ethiopia and EU Supermarket Sourcing*, Report of a Scoping Study by Peter Dearden, DFID, Peter Greenhalgh, Natural Resources Institute, and Ed Havis, Consultant, Fisher Foods

DFID's response to the situation in Malawi in late 2001 - Comment by Professor Megan Vaughan, University of Oxford

*Institute of Development Studies Bulletin* (2002), Volume 33, No. 4, The "New Famines"

International Development Committee, *Notes on Visit to Malawi*

Overseas Development Institute, *Development Policy Review*, Volume 20, Number 5, November 2002: *Poverty, Risk and Rights: New Directions in Social Protection*, edited by Tim Conway and Andy Norton

*Evolution of a Crisis*: A Save the Children UK perspective, September 2002

*Structural Damage: the Causes and Consequences of Malawi's Food Crisis* - paper written for the World Development Movement by Kwesi Owusus and Francis Ng'ambi, October 2002