

"Starvation has no political party"
Mat South

Background

In March 2002 a number of National NGOs viewed the growing food crisis with concern, and formed a network to share experience, views and resources on a response. This National NGO Food Security Network (FOSENET) involves 24 organisations that collectively cover ALL districts of Zimbabwe, and all types of communities.

FOSENET members subscribe that food distribution in Zimbabwe must be based on a platform of ethical principles that derive from international humanitarian law, viz:

- The right to life with dignity and the duty not to withhold or frustrate the provision of life saving assistance;
- The obligation of states and other parties to agree to the provision of humanitarian and impartial assistance when the civilian population lacks essential supplies;
- Relief not to bring unintended advantage to one or more parties nor to further any partisan position;
- The management and distribution of food and other relief with based purely on criteria of need and not on partisan grounds, and without adverse distinction of any kind;
- Respect for community values of solidarity, dignity and peace and of community culture.

FOSENET Monitoring

As one of its functions FOSENET is monitoring food needs, availability and access through NGOs based within districts and through community based monitors. Monthly reports from all areas of the country are compiled by FOSENET to provide a monthly situation assessment of food security and access to enhance an ethical, effective and community focused response to the food situation.

FOSENET is conscious of the need to ensure and constantly improve on data quality and validity. Data quality is being improved throughout the next three months through training, supervision and verification cross checks. One of the validity checks is through the double reporting from the same areas from both NGOs and community based monitors. A second measure is through verification from field visits. A third measure is through subjecting the information to peer review from those involved with relief work, including the UN, to enable feedback on differences found and follow up verification.

In this first round, the NGO monitoring was being piloted and was thus not available for substantive reporting. Training of community based and NGO monitors is still being implemented as an ongoing programme for the next three months. Follow up through field visits is being set up and has not been implemented with this first round of reporting.

As a result the report does not provide detailed evidence by district as the data quality does not yet support this level of reporting. Where district evidence is raised this is done to signal issues for follow up verification and investigation, through both FOSENET and the wider UN, international and national network of organisations working on food security and relief. FOSENET will actively follow these issues up within these frameworks. The evidence presented with greater certainty is that reported from a large share of districts. The report for July can thus only signal broad issues. More detailed assessments will be provided in future reports. Specific cases of concern will be followed up directly.

This summary provides the report of the community based monitoring for June/July 2002. Future reports will provide both community and NGO based monitoring cross checking for

cross-validation between sources. Areas of concern are flagged for follow up verification and action.

Coverage of the data

The report is drawn from **141 reports** drawn from local level across all provinces of Zimbabwe. In some constituencies more than one report was filed. Constituencies covered within provinces include

PROVINCE	Constituencies covered
Mashonaland West	Chinhoyi, Hurungwe East and West, Makonde, Mhondoro, Zvimba North.
Mashonaland East	Chikomba ,Hwedza, Marondera East and West,Mudzi, Murewa North and South, UMP, Mutoko South.
Mashonaland Central	Bindura, Muzarabani, Guruve South, Mazowe East and Shamva.
Manicaland	Buhera North and South, Chimanimani, Mutare, Chipinge North and South, Makoni North , East and West
Masvingo	Bikita East and West, Masvngo Town, Chiredzi North, Chivi North and South, Gutu North and South, Mvuma, Sabi Valley, Mwenezi, Zaka East and West.
Midlands	Mkoba, Gokwe North, Easr, West and Central, Gweru Rural and Urban, Shurugwi, Silobela.
Matabeleland North	Binga, Hwange East and West, Lupane. Nkayi, Tsholotsho, Bubi/Unguza
Matabeleland South	Beitbridge North and South, Gwanda North and South, Matobo, Bulilimamangwe
Harare	Budiriro, Chitungiza , Dzivarasekwa, Glen View, Glen Norah, Harare Central and North, Hatfield Highfield, Kuwadzana, Kambuzuma, Mabvuku, Tafara, Mbare East and West,Mufakose, St Mary's, Zengeza, Seke.
Bulawayo	Bulawayo North east and South,Lobengula/ Magwegwe, Pumula/Luveve

The term 'constituency' refers to an electoral constituency. The data covers the period mid June to mid July 2002.

Food needs

Geographical areas

Food needs were identified in specific parts of every district covered. In 25 out of 120 constituencies (21%) the whole constituency was defined as needing food. Specific areas reported by monitors as high need by province are

PROVINCE	Areas identified as high priority for food needs
Mashonaland West	Banket, Farms in Zvimba North, areas far away from business centers, Gadzema, Chitambo, Chikonohono, Coldstream, Nyangavi, Chikuti area, Kenzamba, Kanyaga, Gamburi, Hombwe, Sheckleton, Alaska, Nyamupamhiri, Kamhonde, Obva, Zumbara, Rukuma, Mulana, Rwizi, Nyagori, Chingmere, Mafudzi, Goromi, Gora, Chivero, Nyamunda, Marisamhika, Nyangweni, Mutipitipi, Norton, kante Estate, Madzongo, Mubaira, Kamanzarua, Mfiri, Nhema, Tinhira, Chanaiwa
Mashonaland East	Mushipe, Chirasauta, Pokoteke, Mupatsi, Rwehute, Nzuma Govere, Pamuzinda, Gokomere, Mwerahari, Mahusvu, Chikomba, Mudzverengi, Jekwa, Chigondo, Gandamasunga, Zaire, Mutema, Urban Areas, Resettlement Areas, Chihota, Muda, Mahusekwa, Chitangazuva, Resettlement Areas, Farms, Nyandoro, Guzha, Chinhengo, Nakaha, Gozi, Chimukoko, Nyahuku, Shinga, Mudzi, Guzha, Matenha, Bhunhu-Zaranyika, Njedza-Mupanguri, Madamombe, Murehwa North, Murewa South, Mutoko South, UMP.

Mashonaland Central	Masembura, Musvosve Street(Chipadze), Kumahwani, Chipadze, Kitsiyatota, Chiwaridzo Phase Two, Nzvimbo Growth Point, All The Farms, Mvurwi Township, Chadereka, Mufudzi, Machaya, Bore, Hoya, Utete, Kapembere, Sohwe, , Nyamhondoro, Chibumbu, Chakaodza, Kondo, Muzika, Mucherengi, Mudhindo, Magaya, Nyangavi, Chikwirandaombera, Marimahko, Nyahunzi, Nyandoro, Shamva
Manicaland	Mafuruse, Matsetsa, Muzokomba, Bhegedhe, Mahoko, Mombeyarara, Makumbe, Chapwanya, Gute, Mutiusinazita, Nhizokomba, Matsetsa, Mafuruse, Birchenough Bridge, Mid And Western Areas, Biriri, Sabi/Odzi Valley, Tanganda, Mutema, Musani, Manesa, Goko, Bangwe, Maunganidze, Birirano, Chipangayi, Chikore, Chitsanza Village, Makoni East, Tanda, Gunda, Gurure, Manonga, Rukweza Township, Gushure, Madzinga, Kanyongo, Chitovhoro, Masvosva, Mt Jenya, Muchena, Stapleford, Old Murapa, Vumbunu, Watsomba, Tsikada, Temaruru, Chikore, Dewerwi, Maparura, Zimunya Township, Mafuke, Gombakomba, Dangamvura, Sakubva, Muzareewetu, Nyaman, Manyengawana, Samaringa, Sahumani, Dora(Outskirts Of Dangamvura), Sakubva- Chineta, Mcgregors, OTS Dangamvura - Section One, Two Rooms, Muzondo Village, All 19 Villages In Chitsanza Ward 19
Masvingo	Chikukutu, Duma, Mukore, Zarabada, Mutikizizi, Gudo, Bikita West, Munjanja Village, Chivi Wards 23 And 10, Masukune Village, Chivi South, Chiriga, Gutu North, Masvingo Town High Density Areas, Nemarundwi, Masvingo North Wards 5 , 6, 9 And 10, Mvuma, Mwenezi, Chibuwe, Mahenye. Dembedza, Mushaya, Dekeza, Vanyoro, Bota, Mushungwa, Chanika, Chipfuti, Munjanja, Mutamba, Muचेचेतेरा/Nemauku, Veza, Harara,
Midlands	Kamakuya, Sandura, Hongoro, Chitekete, Nenyunga, Zvimba, Makorobani, Masimba, Mutimutema, Huchu 3, Mufungo, Kasuwe, Nemangwe Ward 2, 3 And 4, Svisvi, Masakadza, Mutimutema, Masoro, Chevechere, Gokwe Growth Point, Goredema, Makore, Coppa Queen, Nembudziya, Resettlement Areas, Masoro, Chevechere, Gokwe Growth Point, Lower Gweru, Chiwundura, Gweru Urban, Shurugwi, Silobela,
Matabeleland North	Bumi Hills, Pashu-Dobola, Musenampongo/Sikalenge, Siadindi, Tinde, Manola, Kariangwe, Chikamba, Makara, Ndoweni, Kanywambizi Villages, Nekatambe Ward, Nekabandama Ward, Chidobe Ward, Dingani Ward, Nekatambe/Simangani Ward, Zinyangeni, Matshuzula, Guqeni, Jingeni, Gwiitshi, Dimbamiwa, Guwe Villagers, Tsholotsho Wards 1 To 12, , Bubi-Unguza
Matabeleland South	Matsemshuta Ward 9, Masera No 1 Ward 7, Hunga Dendere Ward 10, Masera, Smithvale Resettlement Area, Gwanda South Wards 4, 5 And 6, Matshetshe, Matsiya, Matsholomotshe, Seloka Silima Line, Mzola Central, Matshokotsha, Nono, Mahetshe, Mbuya In Maphisa,.
Harare	Seke, Chitungwiza Rural, Dzivarasekwa, Glen View, Harare Central, Warren Park D, Harare North, Epworth, Budiriro, Glen Norah along Mukuvisi River, Highfield Kuwadzana. Mbare East and West along Mukuvisi River Banks, Mufakose, St Mary's, Zengeza.
Bulawayo	Richmond City Council refuse Damp, Castle Arms Motel, Cowdray Park, Trenance, Killarney squatter camp, Bulawayo south, Sidojiwe, Lobengula-Magwegwe , John Staale Home, RhoSt Peters' village, Robert Sinyoka, Methodistdes Jubilee Old People's home, Pumula Methodist,

Vulnerable groups

Groups identified as highest need were

- Elderly 44 constituencies
- Orphans and child headed h/holds 38
- Young children 29
- The sick / HIV/AIDS patients 20
- Unemployed / informally employed 17
- Poor / destitute 14

- School children 13
- MDC supporters 8
- Disabled people 4
- Squatters and displaced people 4
- Resettled farmers 3
- Households that did not harvest enough 2

Elderly people, orphans and young children were thus most commonly identified as vulnerable. The first two groups were noted to have difficulties in traveling to depots, queueing for food and affording the food.

“On July 4 one elderly woman collapsed in the queue. Why can’t there be two queues – one for the elderly and one for the rest of the people to avoid elderly people collapsing?”
Chitungwisa

Orphans particularly were noted to have problems as they do not have IDs to prove origin and thus do not get onto lists for GMB food that require proof of local origin through IDs. It would appear that more specific attention should be paid in GMB distribution to the needs of these groups.

Elderly people looking after young children whose parents have died were noted to be a particular risk group due to their inability to afford maize, even that sold by the GMB.

Communities outside the catchment areas of relief programmes were also identified as food insecure. In some areas (eg: Mutoko South, Shamva, Binga) school children were reported to be dropping out of school due to hunger.

“School children have dropped out of school, they spend time picking wild fruits currently in season, they sell these fruits and after selling they buy bread”

“School children especially primary level are now refusing to attend school and are being driven to growth points in search of food.” (Shamva)

“The resettled peasants are finding life unbearable. A visit to these places confirms the hunger in their faces.”

MDC supporters were identified as most vulnerable in eight constituencies, although political bias in food access was noted more widely. This suggests that marginalised groups such as the elderly and orphans were viewed as most vulnerable even in areas where political bias is reported. People newly settled in land areas were identified as vulnerable in three constituencies and displaced farmworkers in four constituencies, due in part to the difficulties in proving residence in an area and in accessing GMB supplies.

Reported causes of food insecurity

Food insecurity is mainly traced back to poverty (40 constituencies) as people are unable to afford the increased costs of food, driven in part by scarcities and speculation (see later). Drought is identified as a cause of food insecurity in 33 constituencies, while early adult mortality due to AIDS is identified as a cause of food insecurity in 11 districts. Political discrimination is identified as a primary cause of food insecurity in 4 districts.

In 128 of the 141 reports (91%) monitors identified maize supplies as inadequate. Even where maize deliveries were taking place (see later) they were too little to meet the basic demand in the area. Other priority food needs were identified as cooking oil (56 constituencies), sugar (49 constituencies), salt (41 constituencies), beans (37 constituencies) and matemba (20 constituencies).

Controlled price goods were reported to be out of stock, making it difficult for people to afford larger quantities.

Cooking oil is available but 375ml is going for \$192 and 20l for \$9 500. 750ml, 2l and 1 bottles are nowhere to be found. This is mainly because they have controlled prices.” Harare

Food availability

Food (grain) was reported to be coming into in almost all constituencies. The following were reported to not have received grain deliveries in the past month.

PROVINCE	Areas identified as not having received any food deliveries in the past month
Mashonaland West	None
Mashonaland East	Murewa North Villages of Guzha, Matenha, Bhunhu-Zaranyika, Njedza-mupanguri and Madamombe;
Mashonaland Central	Chaminuka in Shamva; Mudhindo, Magaya and Nyangavi Vges in Guruve South; The farms in Mazowe West.
Manicaland	None
Masvingo	Zaka West’s areas of Mushaya, Dekeza, Vanyoro, Bota, Mushungwa, Chanika, Chipfuti, Munjanja, Mutamba, Muchechetera/Nemauku, Veza, Harara
Midlands	None
Matabeleland North	Hwange East’s areas of Chikamba, Makara, Ndowneni and Kanywambizi villages; Lupane’s areas ofMzola Central, Matshokotsha and Nono
Matabeleland South	Smithville area of Bulilimamangwe; Beitbridge south’s areas of Matsemthuta Ward 9, Maseru No 1 ward 7, Hunga Dendere ward 10, Maseru;
Bulawayo	St Peters’ village, Robert Sinyoka, Methodist in Pumula/Luveve area;
Harare	Mabre West along Mukuvisi River and parts of Dzivarasekwa

This needs follow up investigation.

GMB Deliveries

The food was primarily maize coming primarily from GMB with some maize from non government organizations through relief activities. The GMB deliveries were reported to be infrequent and inadequate, with an average of 1,5 deliveries per constituency in the month. There was a high level of variability between constituencies, with a range of 0-8 GMB deliveries within the month. It was reported that wide variability was observed in frequency of delivery even between constituencies close to each other.

Transport shortages were blamed in some cases for inadequate GMB deliveries to local areas. In some areas it was reported that a ‘handling charge’ is raised (eg: \$100 / bag in one area) for the grain to be brought to the ward. This is used to defray transport costs and shared between those who organize the food coming in.

Relief Deliveries

The areas reporting relief activities were:

PROVINCE	Areas identified as having relief food (and agencies named)
Mashonaland West	Makonde from D and R (a Christian organization) and New Growth Ministries.
Mashonaland East	No relief reported
Mashonaland Central	No relief reported
Manicaland	Chipinge South and Sabi Valley from Christian Care; Samaringa and Sahumani areas of Mutare from Plan International; Mt Jenya, Muchena, Stapleford, Old Murapa, Vumbunu, Watsomba by unnamed NGO;
Masvingo	Chivi South from Care International and RUDO; Chiredzi South and Zaka East from Care International. Mwenezi from both Plan and Care International; Masvingo North from Christian Care.
Midlands	No relief reported

Matabeleland North	Binga from SCF (UK) and CCJP. Hwange West from ORAP and Plan International.
Matabeleland South	Gwanda South from World Vision. Tsholotsho from ORAP and WFP.
Harare	Dzivarasekwa by the Anglican Church

In urban areas where relief was less common, government food for work programmes were reported, where people earn money for public works. In some areas it was reported that this scheme covered all those seeking access. In others it was reported that one must be 'cleared' by the local ward councilor or Zanu(PF) chairman. In one urban area MDC ward councilors were reported to be bypassed as channels for this programme (Gweru).

Survival strategies

Where food deliveries are inadequate (or not accessed) a range of survival strategies are being used: The primary strategy reported is substituting staples (sweet potatoes, bread) for maize (in 15 constituencies). In eleven (11) constituencies people were reported to be selling household assets or livestock to afford the costs of buying food and people were reported to be relying on informal markets or wild foods in nine constituencies each. People with difficulties in accessing GMB sales within their districts were reported in 5 constituencies each to be buying from others in the district or traveling to buy outside the district. Both circumstances are likely to raise the costs of the food. In four constituencies those buying food were noted to be using barter trade. Selling sex for money for food or for food was identified as a survival strategy in 2 constituencies.

"People in Musenampongo soak busika (Tamarind) in water and mix the juice with white ashes to make it thick and children drink it."

In one area of Mashonaland West it was observed that relief food is being distributed to people who already had a harvest and are selling the grain to a neighbouring area. This would need to be further verified.

Food access

Different people were observed to be getting different access to food across a number of constituencies. Access to money and political discrimination were the major factors identified as enabling or impeding access, although physical issues of distance to grain sales points, lack of IDs or difficult procedures were also raised. The infrequent deliveries to local depots by the GMB were also identified as a problem.

Cost Barriers

Cost was identified as the major barrier across the majority of reports. It was noted that this was related to the cost of the grain, or the added charges for accessing it from informal markets due to transport costs and price increases. Grain prices were found to be very variable across constituencies and from GMB and informal markets. Reported prices were:

- \$995/50kg in Mutoko
- \$1200/50kg in Nkayi
- \$555/50kg in Tsholotsho GMB
- \$560/50Kg in Gutu GMB
- \$800/10kg in Chivi south shops
- \$1200/50kg in Gokwe Central and Gokwe North GMB
- \$650/10kg in Gweru shops
- \$1 200 / 20kg in Gweru informal traders
- \$1 000 / 50kg in Shurugwi
- \$400 / 20 kg in Seke Rural
- \$600 / 50kg Murewa South
- \$875 / 90kg in Muerwa south
- \$875/ 50kg in Marondera West
- \$600 / bucket in the informal market in Gadzema (Mash West)
- \$560/50kg in Mhonodoro GMB
- \$900/50 kg in Honde Valley

- \$850/10kg in informal markets in Harare

Reported prices varied widely: Within GMB sales from \$11/kg to \$24 / kg, while informal market prices varied from \$20 / kg to \$85 / kg.

Cost barriers were identified in 43 constituencies (33% of constituencies). Cost barriers were reported to lead to those with money accessing food over poor, elderly, disabled, sick people and children. Groups not accessing food from GMB were reported to be elderly and ill people, orphans, people without Zanu(PF) party cards, MDC supporters and people without IDs such as orphans and new settlers.

Limited GMB sales or barriers in access to GMB sales were reported to result in people buying from informal markets where prices were up to five times higher than GMB costs. Businesses are also reported to be selling grain at over the controlled price. Informal traders are reported to buy up food in urban areas and resell the food at significantly increased cost. Food sales have been reported from people's homes.

"On July 1 there was a delivery of mealie meal at the shopping centre and a 10kg bag of mealie meal was being sold at \$300" (Tafara)

"If deliveries are made then the traders dash in and grab most of the commodities for resale just outside the shops at very high prices." (Hatfield/Epworth)

If reports are valid that marginalized groups such as the elderly and orphans have less access to GMB sales, then these groups are least able to afford the prices at the informal markets.

The areas identified as facing primarily financial barriers to food were

PROVINCE	Areas identified as facing cost barriers to food access
Mashonaland West	Makonde
Mashonaland East	Murewa North and South, Marondera East and West, Mutoko South
Mashonaland Central	Guruve, Bindura, Mazowe East,
Manicaland	Mutare, Buhera North. Chimanimani, Chipinge North, makoni West,
Masvingo	Gutu, Masvingo North, Masvingo Town,
Midlands	Gokwe Central and East, Silobela, Shurugwi, Gweru Rural and Urban
Matabeleland North	Hwange West
Matabeleland South	Bubi-Unguza, Nkayi
Harare	Seke, Chitungwiza, Zengeza, Hatfield, Harare North, Dzivarasekwa, Kambuzuma, Glen View, Glen Norah, Mufakose. Mbare East and West, Harare Central, Highfield, Mabvuku/Tafara
Bulawayo	Bulawayo South

Political Barriers

Political factors were reported to be affecting food access in 39 constituencies (33% of constituencies). This was primarily found to affect access to GMB food. The bias was reported in two ways: either through people with political access or authority (through Zanu PF) having priority access to GMB sales or people without Zanu(PF) cards or people associated with the MDC not accessing GMB sales.

Opposition party supporters were reported to have found difficulties in registering for maize grain with chiefs or ward chairmen in some areas, meaning that they would not access GMB distributions based on the lists. Zanu(PF) youth were reported in a number of areas to be at the GMB depots and screening who is allowed to buy maize. In some places report was made that a Zanu(PF) card is asked for to purchase maize.

"Maize grain is accessed from the GMB through the local councilor. Top Zanu(PF) officials and war veterans compile a list of members and forcibly demand the grain from the GMB officials otherwise they will be fired if they refuse to sell them the grain... Those suspected to

be MDC supporters do not access the grain because they will be chased away from the queue or have their names cancelled from the councilors list of grain recipients even if they want to buy. You have to be a Zanu(PF) supporter in order to access the grain.” (Jerera).

“Party youths were making sure that only their party supporters bought the maize. Other people and opposition supporters were told to go and ask Morgan Tsvangirai for food whom they voted for.” (Gwanda South).

In one report showing an MDC ‘badge’ was reported to enable people to obtain a carton of sugar while others were allowed to buy 2kg.

Political interference was reported less commonly in the distribution of relief food by non government agencies. In Binga report was made of relief food from CCJP being barred from distribution to schools, due to accusations by Zanu(PF) youth that the agency was allied to the opposition. Children who were the targets of the relief were reported to have not accessed food relief since May, reports were made of school dropouts and some reports were made of children fainting from hunger.

Other cases of direct interference were noted:

“On the 9th July people were gathered at Thichidza T/ship. They were to be given maize by a food aid group (named). The group only managed to give about 10 people and Zanu (PF) youth started beating the organisation’s workers saying that they were MDC workers. They said that on opening the 10kg mealie meal they had given in the past days they had found small pieces of papers written Naini Ndakupai Tsvangirai. They threatened to kill the organisations workers if they come to Thichidza again.”

“The (named) Church in Nyanga has tried to give people food but was ordered to stop by the war veterans saying only Zanu(PF) can distribute the food.” (Nyanga)

“While everyone is given food in the day, during the night war veterans go and confiscate the food from those suspected to be MDC supporters” (Manicaland).

One report was made that people in the area did not understand the basis for the distribution of relief food by one of the agencies (Hatfield/Epworth).

Constituencies where political bias in food access from any source was reported are shown below.

PROVINCE	Areas identified as facing political barriers to food access
Mashonaland West	Chinhoyi Townships of Gadzema, Chitambo, Chikonohono and Coldstream;
Mashonaland East	Whole constituencies of Chikomba, Mutoko South and UMP
Mashonaland Central	Bindura Urban’s areas of, Musvosve Street(Chipadze), Kumahwani, Chipadze, Kitsiyatota and Chiwaridzo phase two, Mazowe East at Nzvimbo Growth Point, Mazowe West at all Farms, Muzarabani’s areas of Chadereka and Mufudzi
Manicaland	Buhera North’s areas of Mahoko, Mombeyarara, Makumbe, Chapwanyaa and Gute; Buhera South in Mafuruse, Matsetsa, Mutiusinazita, Muzokomba, Bhegedhe, Birchenough, Mutiusinazita, Nhizokomba, Matsetsa, Mafuruse and Bhegedhe, Chipinge South; Also in Mt Jenya, Muchena, Stapleford, Old Murapa, Vumbunu, Watsomba, Zimunya township, Mafuke, Muzareewetu, Nyaman, Manyengawana Gombakomba and Nyanga’s entire Chitsanza Ward
Masvingo	Bikita East, Bikita West, Chiredzi North’s Munjanja area, Chivi North and South, Gutu North, Sabi Valley’s Chibuwe and Mahenye areas, Zaka West’s areas of Mushaya, Dekeza, Vanyoro, Bota, Mushungwa, Chanika, Chipfuti, Munjanja, Mutamba, Muchechetera/Nemauku, Veza and Harara

Midlands	Gokwe North's areas of Makokorobani, masimba, mutimutema, Huchu 3, Mufungo and Kasuwe; Gokwe Central's Masoro, Chevechere and Gokwe growth point areas. Lower Gweru, Chiwundura, Kwekwe, Mkoba, Shurugwi and Silobela.
Matabeleland North	Hwange West's areas of Chidobe, Dingani, and Nekatambe/Simangani wards; Lupane's Mzola Central, Matshokotsha and Nono areas.
Matabeleland South	Bubi-umguza; Gwanda North's Matshetshe, Matsiya and Matsholomotshe areas;
Harare	Seke and Mufakose
Bulawayo	Bulawayo Bouth, Lobengula-Magwegwe, Luveve

Other Barriers

In some areas it was reported that there is a requirement for one have a letter from the employer to access food. Unemployed people are not able to get such letters and are thus dependent on ward chairmen or councilors for such access. In some areas elderly and child headed households are reported to face difficulties accessing through these methods.

In Murehwa South access to GMB maize was reported to require production of an ID card to prove local residence. This type of system is reported to create difficulties for resettled people who come from outside the area.

Urban people noted that the usual practice of accessing food through families bringing in grain from rural areas was now being stopped by police, undermining food access in urban areas. Further those in formal employment face problems in that they can only get to shops after hours when any stocks will already have been sold.

Inequitable access and speculation

While cost was the major barrier to food access, the reports indicated a further problem of speculation taking place using basic food commodities by those with greater access, due to economic or political factors.

“Political interference in the operations of the major food houses and black marketeering are the major threats to food security in Bulawayo.”

In 11 constituencies, nepotism or corruption was reported to impact on food access, with local business people, GMB officials or local leaders reported to be involved.

“A truck load of maize arrives at the depot and non existing names are called out and then people are told that since these people did not come to collect the maize then it should be taken elsewhere. The maize is then divided amongst the officials for resale at exorbitant prices.” (Mvuma)

It was reported in one area for example that people with influence (due to political or economic factors) were able to buy maize from GMB through the DAs office and then resell this on the black market at \$1 000 for a bucket. Supermarkets were reported to be selling 'behind back doors' to influential people. Preferential access to GMB maize was cited to be stimulating a proliferation of informal retail outlets where a 20kg bag of maize meal sells for \$1 200.

“People are buying grains from illegal dealers who sell a bucket of maize grain at \$1 200” (Chivi)

In one Midlands constituency an individual with political connections was reported to have collected money from people for food and bought GMB maize. He is then reported to have resold this at high cost, given people back their original funds and kept the profits, leaving people without food. Shopworkers were reported in a number of cases to have preferential access and to be selling food on in informal markets. One report was made of conditional sales, with shops requiring purchases of above \$500 of groceries to be allowed to buy sugar, mealie meal or cooking oil.

A number of reports were made of police stopping sales at above controlled price costs. However, a number of reports were also made of preferential access being given to police to food when called in to control crowds where food is being distributed or to stop sale of foods at above control prices. In St Mary's Chitungwisa this was reported to have led to clashes between police and community.

In areas where the councilor and GMB manager both worked to ensure fair access reports were made that people were happy that food distribution was free from bias and corruption. The role of the GMB manager in saying no to corruption was noted.

Corruption in use of relief food was suggested in two reports in urban Harare. In one case the report was of informal sale of relief foods and in another of misuse of relief food intended for ill people. Lack of understanding in the community of selection criteria for relief was also reported in several cases.

Summary

1. Food needs are high: While specific wards were identified as high need, in one fifth of constituencies the whole constituency was identified as needing food. Maize shortages are the primary concern, but sugar, salt, cooking oil, beans and matemba shortfalls were reported as priorities to address.
2. Elderly people, orphans and young children were most commonly identified as vulnerable. Specific measures are needed to specifically enhance access in these groups that deal with barriers to GMB grain access from travel to depots, proof of origin through IDs (for orphans), long periods of queuing and food costs.
3. Reported vulnerability primarily derives from poverty, drought, inadequate food supplies into areas, child insecurity due to adult deaths from AIDS and political bias in food access. Of these poverty, the increasing cost of food due to speculation with food and distortions in access to GMB grains are exacerbating an underlying situation of inadequacy of harvests and GMB supplies.
4. Food deliveries from GMB have been variable and infrequent with an average of 1,5 reported deliveries per month, some areas reported as having frequent deliveries and others none at all. Wide variability in frequency of grain deliveries were reported even across neighbouring areas.
5. Relief activities were reported across a number of constituencies, more commonly in Manicaland and Masvingo.
6. In the absence of secure food supplies people are substituting maize for other staples or sourcing wild foods. Informal markets are a commonly reported source of foods, but at widely differing prices. Maize sales for example ranged from \$11/kg to \$24/kg at GMB depots, and from \$20/kg to \$85/kg at informal markets. Speculation with food is clearly widespread. Poor households forced to buy from more expensive informal markets are reported to be bartering goods for food, selling household assets or livestock to afford the costs of buying food and, in two areas, selling sex for money or food.
7. Wealth / poverty and political authority / discrimination were widely identified as factors enabling or impeding access to GMB and commercial sources of food. Access to informal sources was determined by cost. Positive discrimination in access to relief food was given to vulnerable groups, with few reports of political interference, mis-targeting or mismanagement and some lack of clarity reported at community level on targeting criteria.

Two major issues emerge from this report as fundamental to food security and food access:

- Poor people, especially those who are vulnerable due to age, orphanhood or other causes of marginalisation, have greater difficulty accessing food, particularly from GMB and commercial sources. As relief food is still sparsely distributed such people may depend on more expensive markets when they cannot access GMB food, and may thus be forced to sell household assets, driving even greater poverty. This situation is not sustainable and urgent measures are needed to ensure that the elderly, orphans and poorest are positively advantaged in accessing GMB food.
- Wealthy people, those with political or business influence, with power derived from their law enforcement role or other sources of power are accessing food and in some cases reported to be using this access to speculate with food by driving informal markets selling food at highly inflated prices. While this means that some people are making substantial amounts of money out of food, it also increases the inequity of who is accessing food. This widens the level of vulnerability and food insecurity.
- Compounding this is the problem of a polarized political situation. Inadequate food supplies, reported failures by some people to access deliveries, non transparent procedures and overt political interference in food distribution have been reported. This reported bias is compounded by situations where people with economic or political influence or authority are reported to abuse that authority to access food at controlled prices and sell it on at high cost.

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