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**Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator**

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**Humanitarian Situation Update**

[July 2012]

**1. Situation Overview**

The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) annual report indicates that Malawi will for the consumption season 2012/13 will have a total of 1,630,007 people that may be at risk of food insecurity. This represents about 11 % of the population. The projected numbers of people at risk of food insecurity are in 15 districts as follows: Balaka, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Dedza, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Ntcheu, Nsanje Phalombe, Salima, Thyolo and Zomba.

The Humanitarian Response Committee meeting of June 2012 recommended that a humanitarian Response be initiated. Various organizations are in the process of mobilizing resources for the response. In order to determine the correct form of transfer of humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable population, the humanitarian community is conducting a market analysis and assessment of the staple through the MVAC with funding from DFID. Meanwhile Department of Disaster Management Affairs is coordinating development of response plans by newly activated Clusters as outlined in the National contingency plan. Response plans for food security and agriculture, health and nutrition, as well as education will be released shortly.

**Important Points to Note;**

1. Where as in most years the MVAC assessment results show that the majority of the people identified as Missing Food Entitlements (MFE) are considered ultra poor, this year's 1,630,007 represents both the poor and the middle wealth groups. MVAC recommends that the poor wealth group be supported for a period of 8 months, while the middle wealth group is supported for 3 months.
2. The national average maize price as of 4<sup>th</sup> week of June was K48.02 /kg, this is compared to K24.21/kg same time last year. Chikwawa reported the highest prices of MK 76.08, while Chitipa reported the lowest MK22.78
3. There are concerns over chronic vulnerability and hence potentially eroded resilience among populations in districts like Chikwawa, Nsanje, Balaka and an extent Zomba who have had to endure food insecurity for four seasons in a row. There is need therefore for much more longer- term support.
4. Rapidly rising maize prices and general adverse economic conditions, have raised concerns of urban food security, where urban poor may not have sufficient financial resources to access adequate food entitlements. MVAC and its partners will be conducting an Urban Vulnerability Assessment exercise week beginning 23 July to establish the extent.

**2. Monitoring Data**

Available data sources from the districts identified as having populations at risk of food insecurity are MVAC, Ministry of Agriculture and the UNICEF nutrition monitoring surveys. Comparisons of MVAC reports over the years for selected districts show that Balaka, Chikwawa, Nsanje and Zomba have had populations at risk of food insecurity for five seasons in a row as per table below:

MVAC figs/District	Balaka	Chiradzulu	Chikwawa	Machinga	Nsanje	Zomba
June 2008	27,091	125,339	26,240	57,661	46,225	268,268
Nov. 2008	27,091	16,498	26,240	22,761	46,225	76,066
June 2009	55,332	0	57,596	0	34,464	0
Nov. 2009	55,332	0	141,544	0	62,139	16,153
June 2010	64,553	60,235	161,205	21,649	100,711	94,893
Nov. 2010	23,362	19,280	74,724	20,120	44,589	35,832
June 2011	8,658	24,217	45,042	0	23,850	23,685
Jan 2012	11,689	32,692	60,806	0	32,198	31,975
June 2012	208,501	0	275,653	20,556	105,012	120,397

### Price of Food Commodities

The prices of maize continue to increase since the national average price was doubled in December following the announcement of a 50% price increase of maize by the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation. The devaluation of the country's currency coupled with other factors has continued to push the prices up. Below is a summary of prices in some of the districts identified by MVAC as having populations with Missing Food Entitlements for four seasons in a row.

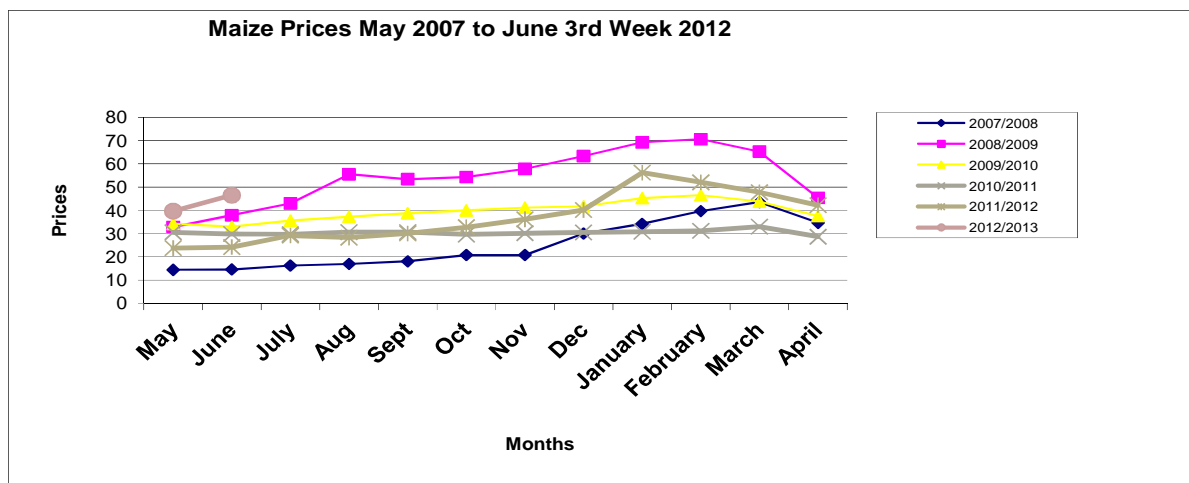
### Maize and other food commodity prices in MK/KG as of 4<sup>th</sup> week June 2012.

CROP	BALAKA		CHIKHWAWA		Nsanje		Zomba	
	Current	Same time last year	Current	Same time last year	Current	Same time last year	Current	Same time last year
Maize	61.14	32.94	76.08	29.89	60.76	32.19	55.55	27.39
Rice (Polished)	320.70	170.60	355.91	157.30	188.74	90.72	306.70	160.50
Cassava		60.34	78.68	46.32	61.06	45.94		-

Source: Balaka, Chikwawa, Nsanje and Zomba District Agriculture Offices, Planning Sections.

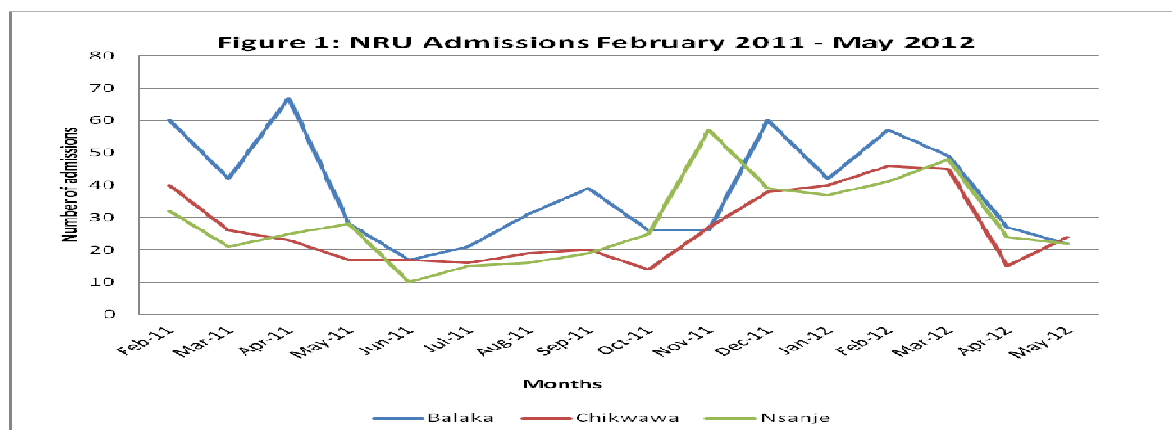
### COMMENTS:

- Zomba district is registering the lowest current maize prices while Chikwawa has the highest current maize prices of all the four districts
- Rice remains the most expensive food crop in all the four districts
- Maize is generally available on the market, although prices have remained high as shown in the figure below.

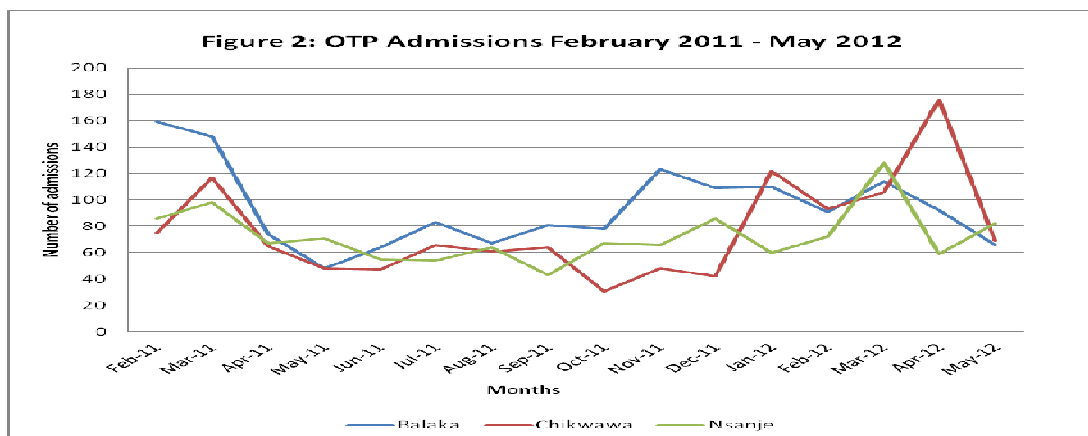


**Nutrition**

Figure 1 & 2 presents a graphic comparison of Nutritional Rehabilitation Units and Out Therapeutic Program centre admissions over the months from February last year for the districts of Balaka, Chikwawa and Nsanje



As compared to May 2011, NRU admissions were higher in 2012 by 34.1% in Chikwawa and Lower by 24% in both Balaka and Nsanje



OTP admissions in the month of May 2012 were higher than May 2011 in all the three districts of Balaka , Chikwawa & Nsanje by 31.6%, 35.9% & 14.4% respectively

### Summary:

- New admissions in OTP program increased significantly in May 2012 and compared to 2011
- Although, there is an increase in admissions in NRUs, the country has adequate therapeutic milks (F-75 and F-100) to last more six months. However the country is yet to order the required stock replenishment.
- The districts have had consistently adequate supply of corn-soya blend for supplementary feeding program (SFP), and have also started receiving vegetable oil for the program after prolonged shortage

## 3. Humanitarian Response

### Food Security

In response to the MVAC report the government has released 25,000 MT for distribution to the people with Missing Food Entitlements. MVAC highlighted that this year's humanitarian response would require maize equivalent of about 75,000 MT with a cash equivalent of about MK6 billion (\$24 million approx.). This leaves out a balance of about 50,000 MT.

At the Humanitarian Response Committee, it was agreed that there is need to better determine the appropriate response to the vulnerable people as identified by MVAC. The MVAC will thus be conducting a market analysis during the month of July, in order to establish the right combination of food and cash, targeting the right population segments at the right time e.t.c. The results of the Market Assessment and Analysis will inform further programming of the humanitarian response intervention in as much as deciding on whether to use cash or food aid.

There are discussions through the Strategic Grain Reserve Committee to the effect that the Agricultural Marketing Board and Grain Traders Association should collaborate in ensuring that the deficit areas especially in the south are kept supplied with maize grain. It is hoped that a steady supply of maize in the south will assist in keeping the prices reasonably low.

Meanwhile humanitarian actors are through the Department of Disaster Management Affairs developing response plans to the current food insecurity focusing on the sectors of Food Security and Agriculture, Health and Nutrition, and Education. The two sectors of food security

and Agriculture, Nutrition identified information gaps and will be conducting the above mentioned Market Assessment and Analysis, while the nutrition sectors will be conducting a rapid nutrition assessment. Resources for the nutrition assessment are yet to be mobilized, while the Market Analysis will be commencing week beginning 23 July with funding support from the DFID.

### **Health**

As of second week of June no cholera cases were reported. However there were reports of a Typhoid fever outbreak at Mchenga and Kaziwiziwi coal mines in Rumphi. A total of 77 cases were reported but the situation was reported to be under control.

### **4. Coordination**

DoDMA is coordinating the development of response plans for the current food insecurity humanitarian partners are encouraged to indicate what they are planning to implement either through the Office of the Resident Coordinator or the Department of Disaster Management Affairs.

#### **Contact:**

Location: Malawi

Name: Richard Dictus

Title: UN Resident Coordinator

Email address: [richard.dictus@undp.org](mailto:richard.dictus@undp.org)

Phone number: +265 999 960 110

Location: Malawi

Name: Atupele Kapile

Title: Humanitarian Officer

Email address: [atupele.kapile@undp.org](mailto:atupele.kapile@undp.org)

Phone number: +265 995 281 791

To be added or deleted from this SitRep mailing list, please email [atupele.kapile@undp.org](mailto:atupele.kapile@undp.org)