

UNICEF Situation Report Swaziland - External

10 July 2007

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The government's pledge for the drought emergency on 6 June has not yet materialized, however the government did announce a new buying price for maize nationally at \$183 per ton. Unfortunately, farmers have little or no extra maize to sell. The government has also convened a national *indaba* (dialogue) on agriculture, which will cover short, medium and long term issues related to the sector.

In response to the growing need for food, the Swaziland United Bakeries announced a donation of bread for children in the primary schools of Pigg's Peak, the second largest city of Hhohho region.

A cold spell in the region prompted the Swaziland Electricity Board to issue a warning of possible black-out if this weather continues. Swaziland is entirely dependant on suppliers from South Africa where the system is strained by a surge of local demand for electricity.

UNICEF Response

Health and Nutrition/WASH

UNICEF staff conducted a rapid assessment of two health facilities in Lubombo, the region identified as worst affected in the VAC survey. In one facility, 3.2 per cent of 2,438 children recently screened were underweight and health workers reported seeing malnourished children. UNICEF staff also visited the Mbabane National Hospital, the largest of six hospitals in the country. Twenty two per cent of the 586 recently admitted paediatric patients at this hospital were malnourished, yet this major referral facility remains ill-equipped to manage children with acute severe malnutrition. The Director of Swaziland National Nutritional Council has called a meeting of major partners on 12 July to discuss ways to rapidly improve national capacity for the management of severe malnutrition.

Inter-agency collaboration and key partners

UNICEF met with 13 partners supporting child protection (NCPs) to discuss monitoring the situation of children during the drought and the use of VAC survey data to inform programming. Delays in food delivery to some NCPs are a great concern. A draft monitoring tool currently being pre-tested by UNICEF was shared. Partners were also advised to prioritise areas of greatest food deficit (as identified by VAC) for scaling up NCPs.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) committed 20 water tanks to benefit 20 NCPs in areas with an acute shortage of water. World Vision secured funding to rehabilitate/establish 35 pumps/boreholes in NCP communities of Lubombo and Shiselweni.

Education

The UNICEF team held a meeting with the Head Teachers of 19 of the 30 "Education for All" schools in Lubombo region the week. The participants reviewed and examined the schools' experiences with the drought. Feedback from the teachers confirmed the scarcity of water but the schools have been resourceful and appear to be coping. None of the schools reported a major change in the health status of the children or in school attendance.