



## UNITED NATIONS

Office of the Resident Coordinator  
Madagascar

### Humanitarian Situation in Madagascar 15 June 2009

#### CONTEXT

The situation in Madagascar remains unstable and unresolved, if relatively calm. The resulting climate of on-going uncertainty is exacerbating an already fragile economy, which has been suffering from the impact of the global economic situation, against a background of chronic poverty.

In the drought-affected south of the country, intermittent rain during the months of April and May has enabled planting of counter-season crops in certain areas. However, due to the patchwork of micro-climates which characterizes this region, the quality of the harvest varies from one municipality to the next: whereas sorghum may be thriving in one area, a mere 10 kms away the crop is withering due to a lack of rainfall, while 10kms in another direction, the crop is infested with pests due to excessive rainfall.

This makes accurate crop assessments all the more important, in particular with the up-coming lean season, which begins in September and lasts through December/January. Since disruptions in government services as a result of the political situation have impeded regular and reliable data collection, WFP and FAO will be undertaking a joint crop and food security assessment in order to ascertain production levels, with a view to responding to food security needs as from September.

According to the latest predictions from the 'Système d'Alerte Précoce' (SAP), an estimated 44 communes (600,000 people) will likely be classified as 'food insecure', compared to the 31 previously identified in December 2008 (381,000 people) in the regions of Anosy, Androy and Atsimo Andrefana.

The situation in urban areas remains hard to pin down in terms of increased vulnerability linked to the political crisis. The first results from a multi-cluster rapid assessment mechanism (McRAM) carried out at the end of May indicate that overall, the food security situation has remained largely unchanged compared to November 2008<sup>1</sup>. However, a more detailed analysis of data reveals that the situation of those households originally at less risk has deteriorated – thereby indicating greater vulnerability to increased food prices, loss of employment and reduced income levels in traditionally less vulnerable households.

The Malagasy culture relies on extended family support and 'making do' in hard times. The true picture of increasing vulnerability may therefore be hidden from view. This underlines the need for systematic and on-going tracking of the situation. The next McRAM survey is scheduled to take place in July.

According to the latest World Bank update<sup>2</sup>, the Malagasy economy is headed towards a severe recession. At the end of April 2009, government spending was about 1/3 lower than one year ago, thereby impacting negatively on GDP growth. The public sector has been the traditional driver of growth over the past few years. Fiscal adjustments have been described as 'brutal': although salaries and debt services continue to be paid for the time being, all other expenses have been stopped.

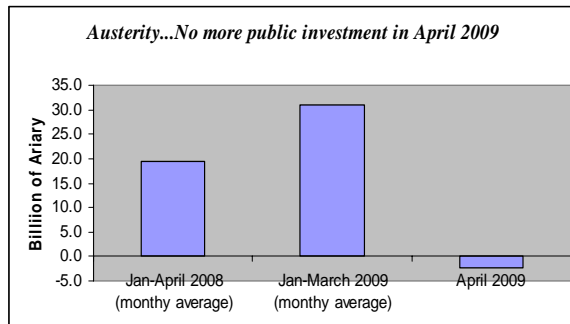
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<sup>1</sup> Food security assessment carried out by WFP in the same areas.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Economic Update, 19 May 2009

There is a strong presumption that the slowdown in real activities observed during the first three months of 2009 has intensified. The overall slowdown in private activities is confirmed by lower electricity consumption, down by 40% for the industry sector and 16% for households, and by the decline in credit to the private sector.

Quarterly figures of international trade reveal that the decline in main export products (textile, shrimp and vanilla) exceeded 50% and 40% respectively in volume and value terms during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009 compared to the same period in 2008<sup>3</sup>.



Looking ahead, concerns remain that increasing losses in the private sector, and disruptions in social and government services could seriously exacerbate an already fragile situation. This trend is expected to continue until the current uncertainty is resolved.

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION - UN AND PARTNERS RESPONSE

Humanitarian partners working within the Sectoral Groups continue to respond to urgent needs in the drought-affected south of the country, and to closely monitor the situation in urban areas (primarily the capital, Antananarivo).

UN agencies have been assessing the impact of the political situation on basic social services. In the health sector, the Ministry of Health is experiencing difficulties in transporting vaccines to the regions due to lack of funds for fuel/transportation costs<sup>4</sup>. There is therefore a high risk of rupture of cold chain functioning at sub-national level. A shortage of delivery kits in health centers has also been noted.

UN partners are working on defining human security strategies, based on an in-depth analysis of the impact of the crisis on key sectors, and aimed at ensuring that immediate humanitarian needs are met, and that the population will have continued access to basic services so as to prevent a slide into further vulnerability. A Strategy Workshop will be held on 16-17 June with UN Agencies.

From 5-15 May, a mission from the regional office of OHCHR met with UN/NGO/civil society and government actors to evaluate the human rights situation in Madagascar, conduct a needs assessment, and submit recommendations to head office for potential programming in the country. Decisions on recommendations made are pending.

The Flash Appeal is now close to 23% funded. The majority of these funds are being used to meet emergency nutritional and food security needs in the south, supported by coordinated water and health interventions. Funding is still being sought to support monitoring of vulnerability in urban areas and respond to critical needs identified, as well as for broader action to cover on-going food security, health and water supply needs in the south. All humanitarian partners including donors and recipient agencies are encouraged to inform FTS of cash and in-kind contributions by sending an email to: [fts@reliefweb.int](mailto:fts@reliefweb.int)

## DROUGHT IN SOUTH

The already financially strained food security operations in the south of the country have been put under supplementary pressure due to the projected increase in 'food insecure' districts. It is now estimated by the partners that around 4,100MT of foodstuff are needed to reduce malnutrition rates under threshold, and an additional 4,100MT will be required to meet mid-term needs (next lean season).

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Economic Update, 19 May 2009.

<sup>4</sup> The GAVI funds which support this activity are currently not available until the new signatories are named by the new authorities in the Ministry.

WFP is facing difficulties in clearing food aid into the country, due to a new regulation suspending all tax exemptions. If this is not addressed as a matter of urgency, operations will be seriously hampered and delayed. At present, some 1,400MT of food aid is on hold in Tulear and Tamatave ports, awaiting clearance.

## **NUTRITION**

In the five districts of Anosy and Androy Regions, active nutritional screening at village level by trained community workers is on-going. Since April 2009, 4,115 children (2,410 in Androy and 1,505 in Anosy) have been detected as severely malnourished and are being managed at basic health facility level. Of these, 172 were admitted to four district hospitals due to malnutrition-related complications. Active screening took place during the first week of June in two districts of the south-western region.

Planning is underway with implementing partner ASOS to put in place Community Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (C-IMCI) in the five districts, through training of ministry of health and community health workers and to ensure availability of medicines at primary health care and community levels.

To strengthen routine activities, UNICEF is facilitating and supporting the process for the implementation of Results Based Approach (RBA). This is done in consultation with local authorities and local communities.

## **FOOD SECURITY and LIVELIHOODS**

The 'Système d'Alerte Précoce' (SAP) is forecasting a worsening of the situation, with 44 municipalities expected to be classified as food insecure in June, as compared to the 31 currently classified as such. WFP is seeking additional funds, with a view to assisting 150,000 individuals (25% of the population of the 44 communes) with 4,000MT of food through food-for-work (FFW) activities over a minimum period of 3 months.

As of 4 June, WFP had received USD 6.2 million in contributions against the USD 8.2 million requested in the Flash Appeal for activities in the south. These contributions are being used to respond to immediate needs in the seven most affected districts. Because of time and resource constraints, priority is being given to supporting nutrition interventions, by providing food assistance to families with a malnourished child in the 31 communes classified as being in a confirmed state of food insecurity. This includes a supplementation ration for the 22,000 moderately malnourished children, and blanket supplementary feeding to 24,000 pregnant and lactating women (PLW); family protection rations to 4,000 families with a SAM child and 10,000 of the families with a GAM child living in critical areas, in order to "protect" their therapeutic ration from selling and dilution. The short term target is to provide food to 116,000 beneficiaries in 119 municipalities

Humanitarian response activities taking place in the seven most affected districts include safety net activities, blanket feeding and general food distributions. Between April and May, 1,550 MT of food aid was distributed to 138,000 beneficiaries, in collaboration with CARE, ADRA, Azafady and ASOS.

A Letter of Understanding has been signed between UNICEF and WFP for implementation of above mentioned nutritional activities in the 119 communes (supplementation ration for the 22,000 moderately malnourished children, and family protection rations to 4,000 families with a SAM child).

WFP and FAO will be undertaking a joint crop and food assessment from 17 June to 17 July, in order to analyse the levels of production for 2008/2009 in drought (and cyclone) affected areas, determine the impact in terms of food insecurity over the coming months, assess market functioning and relative impact on food security. This will enable the Agencies to identify required interventions in the short and medium term, as well as make recommendations for the coming agricultural season.

FAO and partner NGOs (CARE / CRS / ADRA) have started preparatory work to assist the most vulnerable in producing counter-season crops. Beneficiary identification is currently underway, targeting households receiving nutritional and food assistance through UNICEF/WFP, thereby ensuring that seeds will not be used for consumption. A targetted 23,000 households will receive cassava cuttings, seeds (market gardening varieties) and appropriate tool kits to assist with production.

Regions	Partners	Distribution	Beneficiaries
Anosy	CARE	18 000 packs of market gardening seeds	6 000 HH <sup>5</sup>
		6 000 watering cans	
		6 000 spades	
Androy	CRS et ADRA	6 000 carts of cassava cuttings	17 000 HH
		30 tons of bean seeds	

This critical activity aims to help relaunch agricultural production in the most affected areas. Sowing will take place during the months of June and July, with harvest of beans and garden vegetables expected in September, and cassava in January/February or next June/July depending on seed varieties. Suppliers are in the process of being chosen.

### WASH

Following two missions to identify needs and determine rehabilitation requirements, WASH interventions began on 6 April, with priority being given to providing community health centres (CSBs) with WASH kits and ceramic water filters. As of 30 May, a total of 85 out of the 91 CSBs had received WASH kits. Follow-up monitoring visits show that 65 of these have already started using the ceramic water filters.

Following mid-May rainfall, field assessments showed that water tanks in 25 CSB were only half-full, due to heat-related cracks in the reservoirs, leading to only 10 days' supply of water, instead of the usual 20 to 45 days' supply. Over the coming months, most tanks will be repaired.

In the meantime, CSBs will be supplied by means of water trucking. To date, 24,000 L of water have been delivered to 4 CSBs. Two CSBs have also been equipped with two new water tanks with a capacity of 5000L serving 600 patients in total. In addition, assessments also identified four CSBs which could be connected to the existing water supply system. UNICEF is ensuring quality control of water made available to each CSB every two days. UNICEF has installed hand washing facilities in 20 CSBs, and latrines in one CSB in urgent need. Agreements will be signed in June with the NGOs CRS and ASOS for the rehabilitation of water tanks, wells and boreholes in 91 CSBs and 30 communities. ASOS will also undertake an awareness-raising campaign to ensure appropriate hygiene practices in CSBs, villages and communities.

WASH assessments also identified vulnerable families requiring support to improve their water treatment and storage. As of 10 May, a total of 2,902 families had been identified around 65 CSBs for distribution of WASH kits.

### HEALTH

A key priority is the strengthening of the routine immunization programme. Efforts are being directed towards ensuring vaccine availability and cold chain functioning. UNICEF has updated the cold chain inventory for the regions of Androy and Anosy, and is in the process of finalizing its response to address gaps, including replacing old refrigerators and making new ones available to 15 health centers which currently do not have cold chain refrigerators. Furthermore, to ensure cold chain functioning, spare parts are being ordered, and planning finalized to determine actual petrol needs.

Through the Reach Every Village (REV) strategy, UNICEF is currently supporting micro-planning in health centers to identify priority 'fokontanys' for outreach and mobile strategies for immunization. Furthermore, a

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<sup>5</sup> HH: Households

technical mission is currently in the field to determine actual status related to common childhood illnesses, particularly whether there are any increases in cases of fevers, cough or diarrhea.

The health response also calls for making available essential supplies and medicines for integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI) in the health centers; the results of the on-going mission will help to determine actual needs.

## EDUCATION

School canteens in food insecure districts will continue until the end of the 2008/2009 school year, providing a much needed additional meal per day for around 150,000 students. However, the political crisis has led to a freeze in funding for the programme, which so far has been financed by the Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Funds. Unless alternative donor support can be found, the continuation of the school canteens for 90,000 of those children is at risk.

WFP is serving a daily meal to more than an additional caseload of 125,000 students from 675 schools in the seven districts mentioned above. In total, 150,000 students from 883 schools in 11 districts are benefiting from the programme.

## URBAN VULNERABILITY

Although data about the impact of the political crisis at macro level has begun to emerge, to date there has been no consistent information available on the effects of the crisis on populations living in urban areas. For this reason, the UN decided to carry out a household-based rapid assessment in Antananarivo in May 2009, in order to obtain quantifiable information on the evolution of the situation and help frame a targeted response.

The first results from the Multi-cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism (McRAM), targeting 360 households in 12 *fokontany* in Antananarivo show that the situation has remained largely unchanged compared to November 2008<sup>6</sup>. However, a more detailed analysis of the data shows that improvements in food security are found only amongst households situated in areas previously classified as 'food insecure'. These households are apparently benefitting significantly from the harvest period, given that nearly 50% of them are engaged in urban agricultural production.

On the other hand, the food security situation of households living in areas classified as 'moderately food insecure', 'at risk' or 'good' has deteriorated. This would indicate that these households have been affected by increased food prices, loss of employment and reduced income levels.

This would point to high vulnerability levels of that segment of the population which reacts immediately to any form of crisis. It clearly demonstrates that any additional form of crisis would immediately increase food insecurity levels even further – the reduction in quantity and quality of food being one of the last-resort coping mechanisms that households generally adopt.

Other key results from the McRAM survey show that:

- Education and agricultural sectors appear untouched to date, with regards to the selected indicators;
- The data presents an improvement in the status of malnutrition in children, although the sample size necessitates treating the results with caution. A total of 4.5% of children under 5 are 'wasted' as compared with 11% in November 2008. However, these developments may be associated with seasonal improvements in traditionally food insecure households.
- A total of 14.2% of households cannot afford to pay for adequate potable water supply.
- A deterioration in public services is reported with regards to garbage collection, road maintenance and street lighting.

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<sup>6</sup> Based on a food security assessment carried out by WFP in November 2008 in the same 'fokontany'.

- The majority of households responded that the overall security situation has remained the same. Of those cases where politically motivated arrests are known, an estimated two thirds have not been transferred to court within the mandatory timeframe of 48 hours.

The next follow-up McRAM survey will be carried out in July 2009.

## **FOOD SECURITY and LIVELIHOODS**

WFP continues urban interventions through general food distributions in health centres and orphanages in the cities of Antananarivo, Fianarantsoa, Tamatave and Tulear, in collaboration with Regio Terzo Mondo, ASERN and Salfa. Between April and May, approximately 76,000 people benefited from 1,072 MT of food aid in urban areas.

The Malagasy Red Cross (CRM) is launching 21 soup kitchens (*cantines populaires*) in 6 of the most vulnerable neighborhoods of Antananarivo. A balanced meal will be provided to 6,300 people each day over a period of 5 months. The opportunity will also be used to raise awareness amongst beneficiaries regarding hygiene and nutrition. The sum of 100 Ariary (approx. 5 cents) will be charged per meal, to generate revenues for a solidarity fund which will be used for income generation activities for the most needy families.

## **WASH**

WASH cluster assessments carried out in 10 '*fokontany*' in Antananarivo show some deterioration in access to water. In two of the '*fokontany*', there was a sharp decline in water consumption, from 10 to 4 buckets daily, due to reduced capacity to pay.

Complaints have been made in most '*fokontany*' regarding uncollected garbage. Reports indicate that only 50% of accumulated garbage has been collected since the beginning of the crisis, despite financial support from UNICEF over a period of 3 months (Feb-Apr. 09), due to lack of trucks (a number having been destroyed during the early days of the crisis).

WASH partners are closely monitoring known plague pockets in the city. If further deterioration is noted, partners will take specific actions to avoid any increase in water-borne or related diseases. The Cluster works in close consultation with municipal garbage collection services and the water board (Jirama) in order to deal with any immediate risks to the population.

## **HEALTH**

An assessment of the impact of the political crisis on the health sector is being undertaken by health partners (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WB). Amongst other, the initial analysis shows that the health sector budget has been cut by 30%. Monitoring reports show that although health workers are still present in health facilities, attendance has been reduced. Data collection has also been affected.

## **PROTECTION**

Assessments on the impact of the current situation were carried in 54 out 192 '*fokontany*'. A team of social workers is conducting 115 focus group sessions (3 per '*fokontany*'). Results are expected in June.

UNICEF, in partnership with Play Therapy Africa, assessed the state of juvenile justice during the crisis at national level, following a two-day workshop on juvenile justice held on 28-30 May.

## **EDUCATION**

UNICEF and the education cluster have monitored the impact of the political situation on children's education in Antananarivo since April, and in Ambositra and Fianarantsoa during the first week of June. In all, 43 primary, 11 lower secondary and 3 upper secondary schools have been visited. The information collected shows a considerable regression in student performance, and teachers are having to do comprehensive revisions with students to bring learning up to date. There are concerns with regard to end-of-year exam results, as practice exams have shown abysmal results in schools in all three towns, which were heavily affected by the crisis. Students' behavior has also changed, in many cases becoming more aggressive, and students in some schools have taken to re-enacting demonstrations in their play. There are indications that

families' difficult financial situations are having an impact on children's education: Schools report that many children are unable to buy basic school materials such as notebooks and pens, and fights over existing materials have even been reported. There are cases of students in private schools who are being transferred to already crowded public schools because parents who have lost their jobs can no longer afford the school fees.

In response, UNICEF with the education cluster has so far provided psycho-social support to 5,910 students in a total of 19 schools in Antananarivo. Notebooks and pens for an estimated 42,000 economically vulnerable children are being purchased to help them finish the school year. These activities will be extended to 26 schools in Ambositra and 13 schools in Fianarantsoa in the coming weeks. UNICEF is also in the process of engaging an international expert to assist in developing peace education modules for in- and out-of-school youth. The purpose is to promote peace and reconciliation and to prevent youth involvement in violent activities in the case of further civil unrest.

## CYCLONES

On-going needs remain in the areas of education and rehabilitation of water sources.

### WASH

As part of the WASH Cluster response plan, UNICEF has been supporting various NGOs (SAHI, ASOS (Fenerive Est) and ASOS (Moramanga)), along with the emergency section of the Ministry of Water to disinfect wells in the affected region. The treated wells will benefit around 1,000,000 people.

UNICEF has also provided support to the Red Cross through the provision of 31 pumps (15 in Menabe, and 16 in Manajara districts) for the rehabilitation of 31 wells serving 7,750 people.

These interventions are aimed at reducing the impact of water-borne diseases in flood-affected areas. Over the coming months, WASH plans include: compiling cluster member interventions, setting up water quality testing in the affected areas, and training of local associations and NGOs in disaster preparedness.

### EDUCATION

UNICEF conducted a monitoring visit to Mananjary during the week of 1 June to assess progress in the education sector cyclone response to Jade. The mission verified that 30 temporary classrooms in 19 schools constructed in collaboration with a local NGO were in place and being used. The 30 'tarpa-tents' have permitted 1,500 students to return to school, and have had the additional effect of building local capacity to construct strong temporary shelters. The mission confirmed that the coverage is sufficient compared to the destruction. However, the classroom shelters in place are temporary and the challenge remains to find financing to rebuild. Thirty cyclone-resistant classrooms are needed. With unit costs per classroom exceeding USD 12,000, the funding gap is at least USD 360,000.

## OVERALL COORDINATION

The Situation Room is operational and located at the UN's common premises.

UNICEF has posted 2 staff in the South for the coordination of WASH activities. In addition to this, a regional cluster will be set up to foster coordination amongst WASH partners in the South. Members will include CRS, ASOS (Fort Dauphin) and CARE.

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