

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	CFS: 84/2 Sup. 1 April 1984
	联合国粮食及农业组织	
	FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS	
	ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE	
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Item II of the  
Provisional Agenda

COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

NINTH SESSION

Rome, 11-18 April 1984

ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT WORLD FOOD SECURITY AND STOCK  
SITUATION, AND THE SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK

UPDATING STATEMENT

1. At the global level, the current food situation is still as reported in the main paper (CFS: 84/2): It is characterized by adequate availabilities of wheat and rice, tight supplies of coarse grains and a sharp reduction in carryover stocks of cereals, primarily coarse grains. The food security situation in a number of developing countries, especially in Africa, has worsened since the beginning of the year. In mid-March, the FAO Early Warning System identified 37 countries as suffering from abnormal food shortages, compared to 33 when the main document was written. The number of countries in Africa facing food emergencies has increased from 22 to 24. Although the response by food aid donors to the appeals for assistance in Africa has so far been good, food aid shipments have been delayed and there is a danger that they will not arrive in time. Further, the outlook for crops now being harvested in southern Africa is poor, and it is anticipated that additional assistance will be required in this region.
2. Since the main document was written in early January 1984, some upward revisions have been made in the 1983 global cereal production estimates primarily on account of larger crops in China and Mexico. Reflecting these changes, the 1983/84 import forecast for the developing countries has been revised downward somewhat and there has been a substantial increase in the forecast for their stocks at the end of the current season (Table 1). Other revisions include reduced estimates of production in the USSR and Argentina and an increase in Australia.
3. Despite improvement in the aggregate stock position of developing countries, world carryover stocks of cereals at the end of the 1983/84 season are now expected to decline by over 20 percent, more sharply than had been earlier estimated. Downward revisions have been made in the forecasts for both wheat and coarse grains. World cereal stocks at the end of the 1983/84 seasons are still forecast to represent only 16 percent of expected utilisation in 1984/85, as reported in the main document. This would be less than the 17-18 percent estimated by the FAO Secretariat to be the minimum for world food security. Although the decline is concentrated in the main exporting countries, stocks in many developing countries will also be smaller, particularly in Africa and South America, and are practically exhausted in a number of them.
4. Prices of maize weakened during January and February, following reports that farmer participation in the United States area reduction programme would be considerably less than expected and that the crop would be substantially larger than anticipated earlier. However prices recovered sharply in early March to the high levels which prevailed at the end of 1983, reflecting larger imports by South Africa and delayed harvesting and shipments from Argentina. Prices of both wheat and rice remained depressed due to forecasts of record wheat stocks at the end of the current season together with expectations of a large 1984 crop and, for rice, ample export availabilities and limited import demand. Although import demand does not appear to have increased in response to low prices of wheat and rice, in a number of countries low prices have encouraged the use of wheat as animal feed.

TABLE 1: WORLD PRODUCTION, IMPORTS AND STOCKS OF BASIC STAPLE FOODS, 1981/82 TO 1983/84

	PRODUCTION			IMPORTS			CLOSING STOCKS		
	1981	1982	1983 prelim.	1981/82	1982/83 prelim.	1983/84 forecast	1981/82	1982/83 prelim.	1983/84 forecast
..... million tons .....									
Basic staple foods <u>1/</u>	1 669	1 720	1 632	223	207	207	...	...	...
of which:									
Wheat	454	486	495	99	98	98	103	120	130
Coarse grains	787	796	689	102	88	88	133	159	80
Rice (milled)	275	283	292	11	12	11	43	43	41
Rice (paddy)	(411)	(425)	(437)						
Total cereals <u>2/</u>	1 516	1 565	1 476	212	197	197	279	321	251
of which:									
Developing countries	683	697	737	98	106	104	103	105	113
Low-income food-deficit countries <u>3/</u>	477	491	533	42	47	42	74	77	89
(Excluding China and India)	(118)	(118)	(120)	(20)	(22)	(23)	(21)	(19)	(20)
Developed countries	833	868	744	115	91	93	176	217	139

1/ Includes pulses, roots and tubers (in grain equivalent), rice in milled equivalent as well as grains.  
2/ Totals calculated from unrounded data.  
3/ Includes all food-deficit countries with per caput income below the level used by the World Bank to determine eligibility for IDA assistance (i.e. with a per caput income of US\$ 805 and below in 1982), which in accordance with the guidelines and criteria agreed by the CFA should be given priority in the allocation of food aid.

### OUTLOOK FOR 1984 CEREAL CROPS

5. Although it is still too early to forecast the level of cereal production in 1984, early indications are that global output is likely to be above last year's level of 1 620 million tons, mainly reflecting an expected recovery in the output of coarse grains in the United States from its lowest level since 1964.
6. World production of wheat is now provisionally forecast at about 500 million tons, against 495 million tons in 1983. The weather for the winter wheat crops has been generally favourable in most countries in the northern hemisphere. Larger areas are anticipated in 1984 in the United States, the USSR, much of western Europe and the major producing countries of Asia, including China and India. In the United States a 7 percent increase in the planted area is expected as the acreage reduction programmes are less attractive than last year. However, these increases in area are not likely to result in a substantial increase in global production, as smaller areas may be planted in Canada and Australia and the wheat crops in northern Africa have been adversely affected by drought.
7. As regards coarse grains, only one-third of the total area has been planted and production estimates are available only for the southern hemisphere, which normally accounts for only 10 percent of world production. On the basis of early estimates for these areas, and on planting intentions elsewhere, a sharp rise in world production is anticipated. FAO's first forecast indicates that global coarse grains output may reach 800 million tons in 1984 against 689 million tons last year.
8. In the southern hemisphere, several countries in southern Africa will again harvest poor crops owing to drought for the third successive year. In Australia, output of coarse grains is also expected to decline. In contrast, Argentina and Brazil are expected to harvest larger crops than last year. In the northern hemisphere, which accounts for 90 percent of global production and where most of the crop is yet to be sown, higher prices will stimulate a substantial increase in area. As a result larger crops of coarse grains are expected in the United States, where the area reduction programme has been weakened, and in Canada. This will be the major factor behind the expansion in global production and supply of coarse grains in 1984/85.
9. As regards rice, the bulk of the crop will be sown around the middle of the year, and the outcome will depend heavily on the behaviour of the monsoon in Asia. The outlook for the early rice crops, which account for around one quarter of world production, points to an improvement over last year. Planting conditions have been favourable for the main crops in Indonesia and the weather this year has been better in Australia, where an increased crop is expected. In Argentina, yields are likely to be substantially higher and production may increase, despite a reduction in the area sown. By contrast, production from the main crops in Malaysia and Sri Lanka is likely to be lower than in 1983. As far as the crops to be planted later this year are concerned, Japan plans a slight reduction in the rice area which is held out of production and output is expected to increase provided growing conditions are normal. In the United States, output is expected to rise substantially reflecting the absence of a Payment-in-Kind Programme for the 1984 rice crop.

### FOOD SITUATION IN LOW-INCOME FOOD DEFICIT COUNTRIES

10. While the overall food situation in the low-income food-deficit countries improved in 1983/84, the outlook for many of these countries is deteriorating. Although the 1983 cereal crop estimates for China have been revised upwards, no other significant improvements have been reported. Excluding China and India, output rose by only 2 percent in 1983 and the increase in cereal imports is unlikely to be sufficient to maintain per caput consumption which is expected to fall in many countries. The food supply problems are particularly serious in Africa, where the outlook for the 1984 cereal crops points to another bad year for at least some countries in the region (see paragraphs 12 - 18 below). Several countries in other regions are also facing difficult conditions. In some countries in Asia, including Kampuchea, Laos, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, food shortages are expected to be larger than earlier estimated, and the shortage of foreign exchange in many of them is increasing dependence on food aid. In Latin America, the effects of the 1983 drought in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru will limit domestic supplies during the current season and increase import requirements, although rains in recent weeks have improved the outlook for the 1984 crops.

11. The situation for the non-cereal staple foods (roots, tuber and pulses) continues to be difficult, reflecting in particular problems with cassava crops in Africa. Although it is too early to forecast production from this year's harvests, no substantial increases can be expected in 1984. In Africa, pests and diseases are likely to limit the output of cassava as the new biological measures for their control cannot be expected to bring results in the current season. In Latin America, rains in recent months may allow some recovery in the output of potatoes from their drought affected levels last year.

#### FOOD EMERGENCIES IN AFRICA

12. The food situation in Africa continues to give cause for grave concern, particularly as a number of the affected countries in southern and eastern Africa are now in the lean period which precedes their 1984 harvests. The number of countries threatened by food emergencies has increased to 24 <sup>1/</sup>, following the deterioration in food supplies in Guinea Bissau and Upper Volta. In addition, food supplies in these 24 countries have been strained further by the continuing needs of refugees who now total over 1.2 million.

13. Cereal production in 1983 in the affected countries is now estimated at 16.8 million tons, 11 percent below the poor crop of the previous year and 14 percent less than the last normal crop of 1981 (Table 2). The estimates of the cereal import requirements of individual countries in 1983/84 have been revised on the basis of the findings of FAO/WFP Food Supply Assessment Missions, official surveys and other information which has become available. As a result, the estimate of the cereal import requirement of the 24 countries has been increased to 5.4 million tons and their food aid needs to 3.3 million tons.

14. Since January, FAO has continued its efforts to mobilize external assistance. At a special meeting of the United Nations in February on the African food situation, the Director General reiterated his appeal to the international community for additional assistance. Donors have responded generously. As at mid-March, the allocations of food aid in cereals to the affected countries totalled 2.3 million tons. This was 0.7 million tons more than reported in January and 50 percent above their total receipts for the whole of the previous year. However, there still remains an uncovered need of 1.0 million tons.

15. As less than one half of the known pledges of food aid have so far been received, there is an urgent need to expedite the delivery of the outstanding quantities, currently estimated at 1.2 million tons. In Tanzania and in the affected countries of southern Africa, 360 000 tons of pledged aid which had not been delivered by mid-March are needed before May, when the next crop will be harvested. Although the aid in cereals is needed for consumption later in the year in western Africa, in most Sahelian countries it is essential that it be received and distributed before the onset of the 1984 rains, which are expected to start in June.

16. Although the food aid pledged so far has been allocated against the 1983/84 deficits of the affected countries, part of any deficits which might arise in these countries due to failure of the 1984 harvests will also need to be covered from food aid allocations in the current financial year of donor countries. For southern Africa, it is already certain that such crop failures will occur and that there will be a need for food aid during the later part of 1984 over and above the requirements set out in this report. In East Africa, crop conditions in 1984 have been favourable so far in Tanzania. In Ethiopia and Somalia the main harvest is not due until later in the year. In West Africa, the main season crops will also only be planted in the next few months and a preliminary assessment of the food aid requirements in 1984/85 is not yet possible.

17. In the months immediately ahead, first priority should be given to expediting the shipment of pledged food aid, particularly to Tanzania in East Africa, to Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe in southern Africa and to Chad, Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Upper Volta in West Africa. Additional pledges of food aid are also needed urgently to meet the uncovered requirements of the affected countries in 1983/84. Over half of these requirements are needed in West Africa, where Ghana and Senegal alone need 400 000 tons. Further assistance will also be necessary to cover most of the food deficit in southern Africa in 1984/85,

<sup>1/</sup> Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Upper Volta, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

TABLE 2

AFRICA: CEREAL SUPPLY POSITION IN 24 AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH ABNORMALLY HIGH CEREAL IMPORT REQUIREMENTS (QUANTITIES IN THOUSAND TONS)

Country	Market- ing year	Total Cereal Production <sup>1/</sup>			Total Cereal Imports			Estimated actual imports			of which covered by:				
		1981	1982 estim.	1983 f'cast	Total	of which food aid	Total	of which food aid	Total needs	of which food aid	Estimated actual imports	Total needs	of which food aid	Known commer. imports	Known food aid pledges
		1976/77 - 1978/79 average <sup>2/</sup>			1981/82 or 1982			1982/83 or 1983			1983/84 or 1984				
<b>West Africa</b>		5 779	5 180	4 463	1 326.0	416.9	1 482.5	485.5	1 981.6	1 348.4	516.4	2 575	679	882	1 561
Benin	Cal.-year	359	347	324	69.8	6.6	87.0	7.6	70.0	65.0	14.0	75	-	14	14
Cape Verde	Cal.-year	3	4	3	58.3	38.0	53.2	43.2	61.1	48.0	39.0	61	-	38	38
Chad	Nov/Oct	522	460	500	47.5	36.8	55.0	47.0	200.0	51.2	51.2	125	-	75	75
Gambia	Oct/Sept	102	110	50	59.9	11.6	49.6	5.5	55.5	48.6	8.6	70	37	18	55
Ghana	Oct/Sept	680	518	(450)	253.4	73.2	200.7	53.1	350.0	115.0	48.0	(400)	4/	146	228
Guinea	Cal.-year	408	405	377	88.6	28.1	86.5	40.6	120.0	97.0	17.0	155	60	32	92
Guinea Bissau	Cal.-year	92	116	103	39.3	31.5	26.5	26.5	25.0	24.5	19.5	39	-	28	28
Mali	Nov/Oct	1 068	975	880	76.1	20.6	126.9	53.5	210.0	154.6	79.6	330	10	126	136
Mauritania	Nov/Oct	78	20	15	122.7	37.0	171.5	57.7	180.0	133.7	69.6	240	78	146	224
Senegal	Nov/Oct	885	746	480	396.2	88.2	455.6	80.8	565.0	486.0	107.6	838	346	173	519
Togo	Cal.-year	286	304	281	46.1	12.6	45.0	3.1	60.0	59.8	6.8	92	-	8	8
Upper Volta	Nov/Oct	1 296	1 175	1 000	68.1	41.2	120.0	66.9	85.0	65.0	55.5	150	66	78	144
<b>Central Africa</b>		109	114	89	32.5	3.3	39.7	7.1	61.0	55.0	3.5	75	-	25	25
<b>Central Afr.</b>		108	113	88	25.0	1.4	34.4	3.8	51.0	50.0	2.5	65	-	15	15
Republic	Sept/Aug	1	1	1	7.5	1.9	5.3	3.3	10.0	5.0	1.0	10	-	10	10
Sao Tome	Jul/Jun	8 036	9 434	8 945	530.2	277.2	1 014.0	834.5	785.0	590.0	561.3	995	103	587	690
<b>East Africa</b>		5 395	6 718	6 300	226.7	99.7	255.0	155.0	300.0	278.3	278.3	(300)	4/	176	176
Ethiopia	Cal.-year	375	578	245	162.0	80.1	390.0	325.0	200.0	148.1	145.1	355	3/	180	180
Somalia	Jun/May	2 266	2 338	2 400	141.5	97.4	369.0	354.5	285.0	163.6	137.9	340	103	231	334
<b>Southern Africa</b>		5 575	4 118	3 274	824.6	184.3	1 180.4	407.7	1 495.0	1 239.2	382.6	1 740	531	767	1 298
Angola	Apr/Mar	331	323	350	166.0	11.5	350.0	60.8	350.0	303.0	23.4	290	140	79	219
Botswana	Jul/Jun	52	17	14	90.0	6.9	120.0	6.6	150.0	150.0	17.0	160	110	5/	150
Lesotho	Jul/Jun	171	124	120	125.7	11.0	120.0	17.7	160.0	160.0	20.2	180	80	3/	156
Mozambique	May/Apr	490	468	330	248.5	117.9	306.5	198.6	400.0	253.9	191.5	550	59	388	447
Swaziland	May/Apr	101	69	45	37.3	0.4	53.0	1.0	75.0	75.0	4.0	110	60	5/	74
Zambia	Jun/May	1 067	782	990	121.6	36.6	219.9	123.0	310.0	247.3	123.3	270	60	108	168
Zimbabwe	Oct/Sept	3 363	2 335	1 425	35.5	-	11.0	-	50.0	50.0	3.2	180	22	62	84
Wheat	Apr/March	19 499	18 846	16 771	2 713.3	881.7	3 716.6	1 734.8	4 322.6	3 232.6	1 463.8	5 385	1 313	2 261	3 574
<b>Total 24 countries</b>		19 499	18 846	16 771	2 713.3	881.7	3 716.6	1 734.8	4 322.6	3 232.6	1 463.8	5 385	1 313	2 261	3 574

SOURCE: Estimates based on the latest available official and unofficial information collected through the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System.  
 Note: Figures in parenthesis are early forecasts.

<sup>1/</sup> Includes paddy production in milled equivalent. <sup>2/</sup> July/June basis. <sup>3/</sup> Includes cereal needs of refugee population estimated at about 90 000 tons.  
<sup>4/</sup> Provisional estimate pending findings of FAO/WFP Food Supply Assessment Mission. <sup>5/</sup> Estimated.

following the poor main season harvests which are expected in most countries of the region over the next few months. In view of this serious prospect, the Director-General has formed a special crop assessment mission which is now visiting the most seriously affected countries in southern Africa. Its report will form the basis for a preliminary assessment of this region's deficit, to be made by the Global Information and Early Warning System in late April.

18. In addition to their food aid needs, there also remain serious gaps in the support to the affected countries for agricultural and livestock rehabilitation. Commitments by donors to support the recovery of food production and to feed and protect herds are below the minimum required. The report of the Special FAO/WFP Task Force of March 1984 outlines projects to meet the most immediate needs, for which external assistance totalling approximately US\$ 100 million is required urgently. This is in addition to the US\$ 12 million which were made available recently for emergency projects by the liquidation of the UN Emergency Operations Fund.

#### CONCLUSIONS

19. Developments during recent months indicate that the serious problem areas identified in the main document remain relevant.

(i) The critical food supply situation in many low-income countries, especially in Africa (paragraph 7, CFS: 84/2). This has worsened in recent months. The number of countries in Africa threatened by food emergencies has increased and the fact that the main season harvests in the next few months in southern Africa will be small means that this region will be threatened by food shortages again in 1984/85.

(ii) The inability of the low-income food-deficit countries to secure access to supplies in international markets (para 8). Access to food imports by low income countries continues to be severely constrained by shortages of foreign exchange. Such constraints are of particular concern in Africa, where the food supply situation remains critical. Food aid pledges to the 24 most severely affected African countries have been increased, but the requirements for purchases on commercial terms are still estimated at 35-40 percent of their combined foreign exchange reserves. This is double the level of the late 1970's. Additional pledges of food aid are urgently needed to meet uncovered requirements in 1983/83; further assistance will also be required in view of the anticipated failure of the main season crops now being harvested in southern Africa.

(iii) The need for a substantial increase in cereal production in 1984 (para 9). The further downward revision of the forecasts for closing cereal stocks at the end of the current season reinforces the need for good crops in 1984 to safeguard food security in 1984/85. Although world cereal production is currently expected to increase, less than half the area has been planted so far and the final outcome will depend heavily on planting decisions taken later this year as well as on weather during the rest of the year, including the critical Asian monsoon.

(iv) The persistence of the cyclical pattern of shifts from tight supplies to surpluses (para 11). This continues to be a major problem. The outlook for abundant coarse grain crops led to some decline in prices early in the year but these have recently increased again. By contrast, prices of wheat and rice remain low. Although low prices may bring short term benefits to some importing countries, they do not appear to have stimulated import demand this season partly because of the strong position of the United States dollar. In the case of wheat, however, relatively low prices have encouraged increased use for animal feed rather than food consumption or building stocks.

20. It remains essential to review closely the progress made in providing assistance to the affected countries in Africa in order to close the gap between pledges and assistance during the current season and to meet still uncovered requirements. It will also be necessary to carefully monitor crop developments during the coming months, particularly in the major exporting countries, where good harvests are essential to ensure adequate supplies at the global level, and in Africa where continuing shortages are already anticipated in several countries. In this connection, as indicated above, a special FAO crop assessment mission is now visiting the countries of southern Africa where the crops appear to be most vulnerable. Also, the special FAO/WFP Task Force, which was established by the Director-General to review and monitor the situation in the affected countries of Africa, will continue to keep a close watch on the food supply position in the region.



