



(Continued from page 1)

ing food shortages by district. It is also important to know, even when people have enough food, whether their eating habits promote or encourage healthy lives. This is what is called nutritional status and information on this is on page 3.

**Rumphi district, Bolero and Muhuju EPAs:** Late season, dry spells poor food crop production. Expected low tobacco prices.

**Nkhata Bay district, Chintheche, Tukombo and Mzenga EPAs:** flooding.

District with populations at risk	Population at risk	Population on 'Watch'	Cash to cover missing food entitlements (MWK)	Maize to cover missing food entitlements (MT)
Balaka	25,900		29,000,000	1,000
Blantyre	106,500		165,400,000	5,400
Chikwawa	59,900		132,300,000	4,400
Dowa	48,800		144,800,000	4,400
Kasungu	238,200		611,900,000	18,800
Lilongwe	12,300	75,600	15,000,000	500
Machinga		6,300		
Mangochi	39,500		34,400,000	1,200
Mulanje		65,900		
Mwanza/Neno	22,400		25,000,000	900
Mzimba	51,300		152,100,000	4,600
Nkhata Bay	11,700		9,900,000	300
Nsanje	51,900		114,700,000	3,800
Ntchisi	98,500		292,300,000	8,900
Phalombe	27,000		35,400,000	1,200
Rumphi	25,300		39,900,000	1,500
Salima	13,800		12,000,000	400
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>833,000</b>	<b>147,800</b>	<b>1,814,100,000</b>	<b>57,300</b>

**Kasungu (all except Santhe EPA), Ntchisi (Chikwatula, Chipuka and Malomo EPAs), Dowa (parts of Madisi and Bowe EPAs) and Mzimba (Emfeni and Luwelezi EPAs):** Poor rainfall, devastating dry spells. Low tobacco prices.

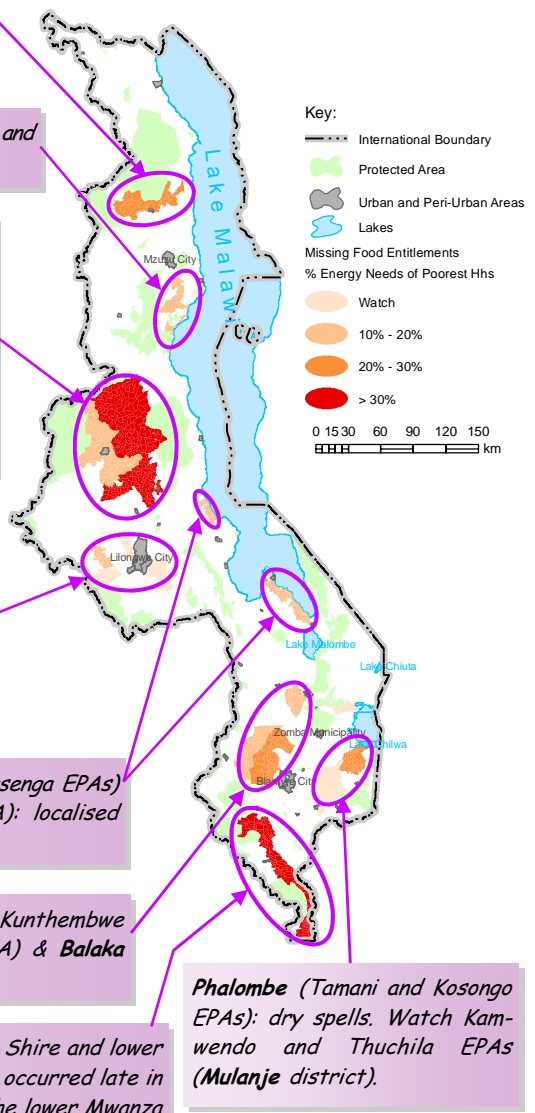
**Lilongwe:** Chilaza EPA: somewhat poor maize and tobacco production, low tobacco prices. Ming'ongo, Mng'wangwa, Mpenu and Nyanja EPAs to be watched.

**Mangochi (Mbwadzulu and Nasenga EPAs) and Salima (Khombedza EPA):** localised flooding.

**Blantyre (Lirangwe and Kunthembwe EPAs), Mwanza (Lisungwi EPA) & Balaka (Mpilisi EPA):** Prolonged dry spells.

**Parts of Nsanje and Chikwawa (along the Shire and lower Mwanza Rivers):** Earlier dry spells, floods occurred late in the farming season along the Shire and the lower Mwanza

Vulnerable Areas in Malawi  
Poorest Households: Forecast for April 2006 to April 2007



**Phalombe (Tamani and Kosongo EPAs):** dry spells. Watch Kamwendo and Thuchila EPAs (Mulanje district).

The figures given in this report represent the picture on 'abnormal' vulnerability as it relates to this year only (called transient vulnerability). Specifically, the figures show the temporary effects of bad events or hazards that have occurred or are likely to occur in the course of this year. They do not include the effect of many other hazards that households may experience in "unaffected" areas, such as diseases (HIV/AIDS being particularly important), crime incidents, etc.

All vulnerability is abnormal. However, the large number of poor households that have entitlements or means of living that fall short of their required needs every year, even when there is no disaster, belong to ongoing (termed 'chronic') vulnerability. The figures in this report do not reflect this 'chronic' vulnerability. This does not mean that the matter is less important, only that it is not yet estimated.

These figures should be used to inform the response that must be made, in terms of the design, the scale and the size of provisions that are to go to the affected people. While every attempt is made to produce information that is accurate, time and areas of coverage often limit the extent to which detail can be collected. It is important, therefore, that agencies operating on the ground in each district determine the exact extent of the affected areas, villages, populations and the names of people in need of assistance.

## The Number of Households without Food and Why it Differs from Entitlements and Vulnerability

Every month, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security provides figures on the number of households without food. This quantity is useful as a measure of how much food is available to people, but it is not a measure of vulnerability because it includes people who can afford to buy their own food. The figure does not also show how food is utilised.

The reason for this is that households do not get all their food just by growing food crops; many of them depend on food purchases or exchanges at their local markets. The money used for purchasing may come from a number of sources, like cash crop sales, sales of livestock, sales of handicrafts, casual labour (*ganyu*, which is very common for the poor households), etc. The poor often receive food directly as a payment for *ganyu*.

Households may also receive remittances or support from within the village, in cash or in kind, usually from relatives or close family friends.

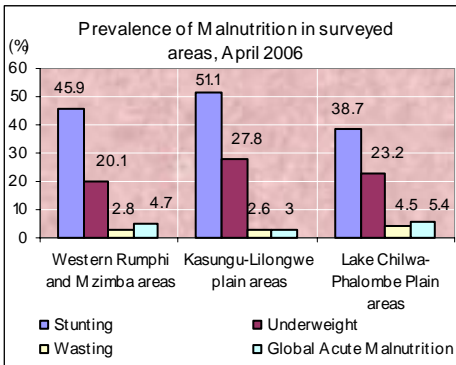
*... households do not get all their food just by growing food crops...*

This means that if we are to find out the number of households who are vulnerable, we must know first of all how they go about getting all their food. Some deliberately do not grow food because they can afford to buy all the food that they need. The sum of all the ways households can get their food is called their entitlements. When the entitlements of a population are insufficient to meet their food needs, they are said to have missing food entitlements. In this way, the MVAC looks beyond the state of "not having food in store" to "not being able to get food".

# Nutrition

Measures of nutrition status help us to understand how well food is utilised by households. These measures are usually taken on children. This year three nutrition surveys were conducted by UNICEF in parallel with MVAC field visits. This way, we know how people are doing at the start of the period under review.

Prevalences of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) among children 6-59 months of age was 3.0 percent in parts of the Kasungu-Lilongwe plain livelihood zone



(LZ), 4.7 percent in Western Rumpi and Mzimba LZ, and 5.4 percent in the Lake Chilwa-Phalombe Plain LZ. Kwashiorkor cases were very high in Western Rumpi and Mzimba LZ (1.9 percent) and were also high in the Phalombe areas (1.0 percent), contributing to high rates of severe acute malnutrition in those areas.

Fever with chills (proxy for malaria), diarrhoea and pneumonia were the more reported causes of death among children. Prevalence of fever with chills (proxy of malaria) was 37.2 percent, fever with difficult breathing (proxy of ARTI) was 21.8 percent, and diarrhoea was 17.9 percent.

In an analysis of nutrition data using household wealth groups (poor, middle and better-off), no significant relationship was found between acute malnutrition or underweight prevalence with wealth status. Apparently, malnutrition affects children independently of household wealth status during harvest time. This may change if forecast food shortages become severe.

Using this survey information as a base-

line, one might expect that areas with greater numbers forecast for people at risk of missing food entitlements would see earlier and in higher proportions of acute malnutrition and underweight children. That this is not so indicates that households are coping at this early stage. Information on further developments will come from the surveillance trends and the NRU admission figures. Also, the absence of nutrition survey data in other areas with a bad food security forecast does not mean that no nutritional problem can happen to children in the forthcoming months.

The under five mortality rate was highest in the Lake Chilwa- Phalombe zone (0.84/10,000/day), which is below serious levels of concern.

Measure	W Rumpi & Mzimba LZ	Kasungu-Lilongwe plain LZ	L Chilwa-Phalombe Plain LZ	
Mortality Rate	Under Five *	0.57 (0.25-0.89)	0.39 (0.21-0.57)	0.84 (0.57-1.12)
	Crude**	0.35 (0.17-0.53)	0.18 (0.11-0.25)	0.45 (0.32-0.58)

\* under five deaths/10,000/day ; \*\* total deaths/10,000/day  
 U5MR worrying levels=2/10,000/day. U5MR emergency level=4/10,000/day  
 CMR worrying levels=2/10,000/day.CMR emergency

# Markets and trade

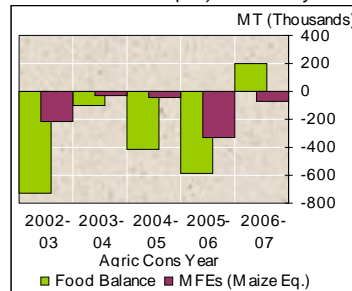
This year is different from the previous four years because there is a surplus in national maize production (see graph across). There is no need to import food into the country in order to supply the areas that are in deficit. There is need, however, for markets to function to their fullest potential in moving food from surplus to deficit areas.

The MVAC assessment included a component aimed at understanding markets.

The MVAC field teams found that market arrangements are quite complex; consisting of vendors who buy and sell in the village, to small local traders in the larger villages, to the larger traders and wholesalers in the towns. The biggest constraint for all but the few large traders is capital; many are unable to purchase more than

ten bags at a time. They then need to sell this quickly to recover their investment.

Comparison of Missing Food Entitlements (MFEs) and food balance sheet (FBS) deficits for 5 years



With such tight capital constraints, it appears unlikely that small traders buy food to hoard for six months and sell later in the year. Rather, they move food out to an area of known deficit earlier in the year and back in from another surplus area. Storing and hoarding is only possible with the few large traders.

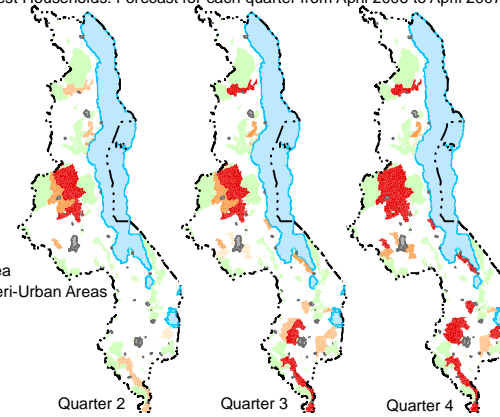
# Seasonality

The period to which this MVAC forecast applies is the agricultural consumption year 2006-2007. The agricultural consumption year starts at the beginning of the harvest and continues up until just before the next harvest. In South of the country, this is from April 2006 to March 2007. In most of the Centre and the North, the consumption year runs from May to April.

Vulnerability is usually not high within the first three months of a consumption year, but gets serious as the year drags on. This would be the second quarter for the Ka-

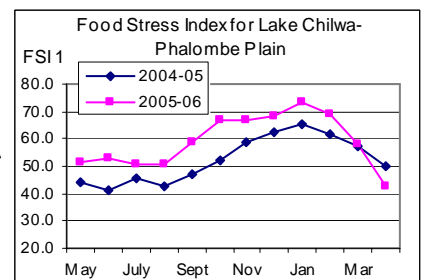
sungu area, parts of Rumpi and the basins in Nkhata Bay, while Nsanje would feel it a month earlier – in July. In the third quarter, all areas with people at risk will become severely vulnerable, although Nkhata Bay will be worst off in the third

Poorest Households: Forecast for each quarter from April 2006 to April 2007



quarter, not the usual 'hunger season'. This is due to the timing of their main staple food - cassava .

This seasonality of food insecurity, as well as seasonal variation in child malnutrition will be tracked on a monthly basis by the MoAFS/AAH surveillance project. These measures all get worse in a bad year and during the hungry period.





MALAWI

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**Also Available on Request:  
Livelihood Zone Maps &  
Vulnerability 2006-07 Maps**

The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee comprises Government, inter-government, academic and non-profit member organizations that seek to provide information to inform public action. Participating MVAC members include:



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Data from the following organisations were gratefully received and used:

1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (crop estimates, the food balance sheet and farm gate prices)
2. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (Economic data, inflation and GDP projections)
3. The Department of Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs (information on recently affected areas)
4. The National Statistics Office (Economic data, population figures and breakdowns)
5. Meteorological Service
6. United Nations Children's Fund (Nutrition assessment, nutrition-socio-economic correlations)
7. FEWS-NET (price data)
8. Nutrition and Food Security Surveillance System (Action Against Hunger/Ministry of Health/Ministry of Agriculture)

## How the MVAC carried out its analysis

The MVAC uses a technical methodology, called the Household Economy Approach (HEA), for modelling its forecasts. Readers seeking further information on this can contact the MVAC Secretariat.

This year's assessment began with training from 10 to 13th April, 2006, for staff who took part in the field survey. This was followed by field work and data analysis for two weeks. The teams visited the following districts: Balaka, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Dowa, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Machinga, Mangochi, Mzimba, Nkhata Bay, Nsanje, Ntchisi, Ntcheu, Phalombe, Rumphu and Salima. After visiting the District Assembly and the Agriculture Offices, teams visited the affected Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) where at least two villages per EPA were visited. In these villages teams met with elders and community leaders, as well as focus groups from each of the main wealth groups (poor, middle and better-off).

During the field visits, teams first met

Below: Focus group interviews



Photo: Sam Chimwaza

members or staff of the district assemblies, thereafter the teams met with EPA staff. After that, the teams went into villages and conducted semi-structured focus group interviews with farmers from different wealth groups. The interviews followed a basic structure but were not a questionnaire-type format. Interviewers were expected to cross-check their information as they went along and to probe anomalies or unexpected results. This meant that analysis actually began during the interviews and that interesting insights could be explored as well. This methodology saves on resources and time, making it affordable, sustainable and quick. It is an attempt to maximise the use of existing information and survey data (instead of replicating it), while ensuring that this data reflects the situation on the ground and is internally consistent.

The MVAC also used a range of secondary sources of data such as the second round crop estimates from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS), population projections from the National Statistics Office (NSO), surveillance data from the Nutrition and Food Security Surveillance System, inflation rates from NSO and price data from MoAFS/FEWS-NET. The field trips therefore acted as an opportunity to verify secondary source data with members from the District Assemblies and villagers.

In order to make a prediction, assumptions had to be made for indicators whose values would occur in the future, such as availability and wage rates for ganyu in the forthcoming farming season, or future staple purchase prices. Some of the critical assumptions made for this year's analysis include:

- The coming season will be normal
- The majority of households will maximise opportunities to meet their minimum food intake, given the option to do so
- Tobacco price will continue to remain at similar levels to those in early May, 2006
- No substantial devaluation of the kwacha
- Inflation will be (official forecast) 10.4 percent
- That the present maize surplus will not be sold off outside the country.
- Cereal prices in the lean season will track the compounded inflation rate, when comparing with previous years (resulting maize price approximately MK30 per kg)

Population figures are obtained from the official NSO projections for 2006.

The nutrition surveys were carried out using two-stage thirty-by-thirty cluster sampling; the clusters were based on the enumeration areas (EAs) defined by the NSO for the census. Since the MVAC has also classified EAs into livelihood zones, it was easy to select clusters from known affected areas. Questions were included in the survey on resource-status.