



Government of the  
Republic of Malawi



MALAWI  
Vulnerability  
Assessment Committee



SADC FANR  
Vulnerability  
Assessment Committee

# MVAC Institutional Structure

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Technical Support



Save the Children®

FEWS



# MVAC – What is it?

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- Committee, Members comprising
  - Government: MEP&D (Chair), MoAFS, MoF, NSO, MoLG, DoPDMA, OPC, MoH
  - UN and IGOs: UNDP, FAO, WFP, UNICEF, FEWS-NET
  - NGOs: SC, CRS, Concern WW, WVI, AAH, Oxfam, CARE, Concern U, Red Cross
  - Academic: Chancellor College, Bunda CollegeVoluntary; contribute time, resources
- Secretariat in MEP&D
  - TA & Admin support
- Funding: variety of sources → info does not represent one point of view

# Some History...

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- The Malawi 'VAC' began life in 1996 as the Malawi 'VAM'
- Collaboration of FEWS-NET, WFP, FAO, MoA, NEC
- Approach: collect a comprehensive range of indicators, weight them, combine them into indices and map them
- The result was...

...a Quilt or Patchwork

Different indicators did not match nor did they compare, e.g. malnutrition was worst in areas with better production, etc.

The quilt would change completely with different weightings

# History, continued...

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- 'Quest for Causality' → identified leading factors behind vulnerability :
  - Asset holdings
  - Income
  - Dependency ratios
- VAM Zoning –different weights on the indicators
- Study on household income was recommended → Integrated Household Survey (IHS)
- VAM lapsed...

# History, continued...

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- Consumption Year 2001-2002: extremely high prices and unexpected hunger
- VAM resurrected as Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) with links to SADC-RVAC
- After 2003 harvest, newly-constituted MVAC (chaired by the Ministry Economic Planning & Development) decided to adopt present LBVA using HEA (TA from FEWS-NET, SC)

# What does the MVAC do?

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Measures the impact of agricultural, Socio-economic and environmental (e.g. rainfall) conditions on the lives and livelihoods of the poor

Much as an economic study may measure the effect of certain conditions on the performance of a company

# Scope of Work

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Relief

- Measure vulnerability to acute hunger – forecasting
- Measure long-term poverty-induced “chronic” vulnerability
- Continue with Institutionalisation
- Training (users, practitioners)
- Information management & presentation

“Predictable”  
Transfers

# What the MVAC Does: Hunger

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Socio-economic status

■ Says **what kind of people** do not have enough food

Seasonality

■ **When** they will not have enough

■ **Where** those people are.

Geography

■ **How much food** they are missing

■ **Why** they are missing it

Compare with threshold

Suggest ways to best deal with it

# What the MVAC wants to do: Poverty

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## ■ **General Requirements:**

- Greater discrimination between households.
- Provide household characteristics useful for targeting interventions.
- Demographic information: age and gender.

## ■ **Information on Sectors/ Information topics relevant to:**

- Social protection/ cash transfers.
- HIV/AIDS.
- Urban poverty.
- Market information.

## ■ **Improved presentation/ technical quality**

- Present output in terms relevant to poverty rather than food.
- Greater local involvement in the VA.

# What the MVAC does **NOT** do

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- Say what a commodity price should be
  - Says what the *effect* of a certain price is for the poor
- Measure how much food there is in the country  
OR
- Say how much food should be imported/exported
  - Already done 

MoAFS' Food Balance Sheet
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# Vulnerability

In Malawi, we concentrate on people's inability to meet their basic **food** needs

- What is it?

People's inability to meet their basic needs

Caused by a combination of two things:



Lack of resilience



Exposure to hazard (shock)

# The Existing System: EW

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- Baselines completed in 2004. Exhaustive look at how people:
  - Meet their food needs
  - Get their incomes
  - Spend their money
  - Meet other basic needs
- Enables the MVAC to model the impact of hazards on people's entitlements
- Construct scenarios to forecast missing entitlements
- Expressed in food terms or in cash terms

Hunger




Poverty

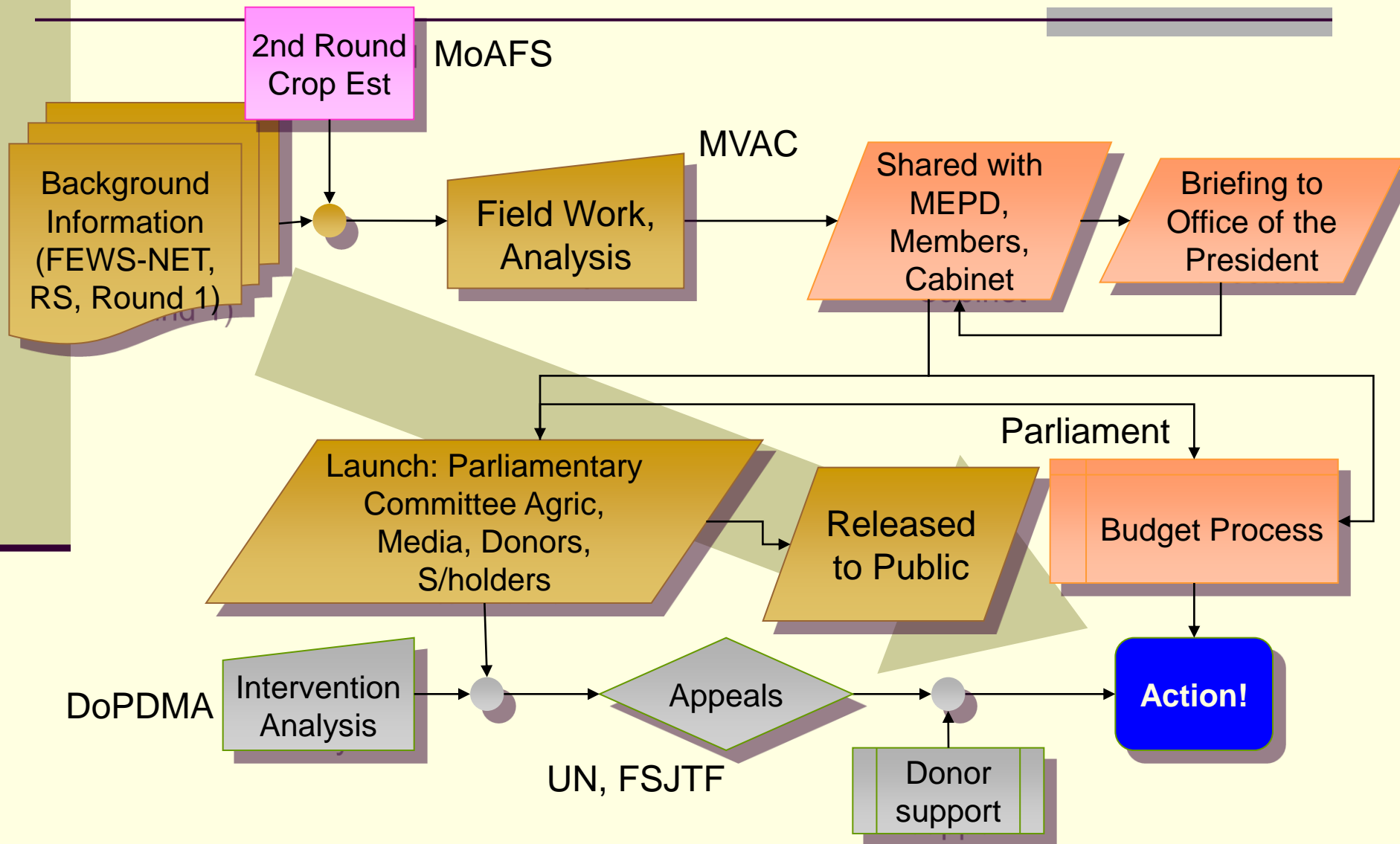


# MVAC Calendar

Lean season Harvest

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- Jan: Annual Work Plan
    - Feb: members busy
      - Mar: training (pre-analysis)
        - Apr: EW Fieldwork + Analysis
          - May: EW Analysis, results dissemination (members, parliament, etc.)
            - June/July: RVAC meeting/dissemination
            - June/July/August: Other work, e.g. baselines, chronic vulnerability studies
              - September: Finalise above studies, meetings on response to EW
                - October/November: EW Update
                - November: Finalise update (nutrition survey)
                  - December: Members gearing up responses

# MVAC Process: EW Assessment



# MVAC Products

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- EW Brief (2006, 2007)
- EW Technical Report (2004, 2005)
- Update reports (2004, 2005, 2006)
- Scoping study on measurement of chronic vulnerability
- Assorted Maps
- Comprehensive map layers (geodatabase)
- Analysis software (MS Access)
- Website
- Riskmap software (alpha version – known issues)

# Improvements in Food Security Analysis

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- Market information collected in Annual Forecast Assessment
- Inclusion of Nutrition Survey with Forecast Assessments
- Tighter integration with on-going surveillance systems (e.g. FEWS-NET, MoAFS / MoHP / AAH)
- Presentation, training, sensitisation work (better understanding → feedback to analysis)

# Decentralisation

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- MVAC draws on district (& sub-district) technical staff
  - Agriculture staff
  - District M&E staff
- Training at district level
  - Conducted by MVAC members
  - Starting with technical officers – move to other interest groups
- ‘Outsourcing’ of more detailed assessment and analysis to district-level bodies
  - More training
  - Supervision (quality control)



# The End



Thank you!