

FAO and WFP in Zimbabwe warn of food crisis

More than a third of Zimbabwe's population will need food aid by March 2008, according to the latest joint report by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Harare - The report estimates that around one million people in urban areas will face food shortages in the coming months. The report said drought, the worsening economic crisis and government policies are to blame for the latest food crisis.

'Because of crop failures in southern provinces and escalating poverty in both rural and urban areas, around 2.1 million people will face serious food shortages as early as the third quarter of 2007,' the report said.

'The number of people at risk will peak at 4.1 million in the first three months of 2008 – more than a third of Zimbabwe's estimated population of 11.8 million.

'Matabeleland North, and Midlands, where many families harvested nothing and could run out of food as early as July. Cereal harvest in Manicaland and Masvingo was also about half last year's.'

The report said an estimated 352 000 tons of cereals and 90 000 tons of other food assistance will be required to avert hunger.

The government's uneconomic prices were said to have discouraged many farmers from producing surplus cereals for sale.

FAO quoted Amir Abdulla, WFP's Regional Director for Southern Africa as saying: 'Zimbabwe's looming food crisis is the result of another poor harvest, exacerbated by the country's unprecedented economic decline, extremely high unemployment, and the impact of HIV/AIDS.'

Article courtesy of [New Zimbabwe](http://www.newzimbabwe.com)