

Food Security

EU support to Food Security in Malawi

EU Partners

- Government of Malawi
- UN agencies – WFP, UNICEF and FAO
- Non-State Actors, including SHIMPA, Concern Universal, Story Workshop, CARE, Find Your Feet, Inter Aide, Oxfam, DAPP, Marys Meals, Action Against Hunger, Concern Worldwide, Dan Church Aid, COOPI.

Facts & Figures

- The EU has allocated €451 million to Malawi under the 10th European Development Fund 2008-2013.
- Agriculture and food security is one of two main focal areas for EU assistance, the other is Infrastructure.
- The EU has allocated €125 million to Malawi for agriculture and food security under the 10th EDF.
- In addition, Malawi has received a further €45 million, covering 2004-2014, from the food security budget line of the EU budget.



**EU Delegation to
the Republic of
Malawi**

"All people, at all times, should have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".

The 1996 World Food Summit definition of food security



Why is food security so essential in Malawi?

- Have you ever been hungry, really hungry? Missed a meal, eaten just once a day, or gone without eating for a few days? If so, you can appreciate the fundamental importance of food security and the perceptual narrowing that occurs where all else is forgotten in search for the next meal.
- The importance of food security is fully recognised by the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which highlights food security as a prerequisite for development. In short, unless you have food security in Malawi you will not have development.
- Food insecurity exacerbates malnutrition, which reduces people's ability to work and, in the case of children, to study as they cannot concentrate, or develop as they are missing essential nutrients and vitamins. Malnutrition also makes people more susceptible to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. These constraints have very significant effect on Malawi's productivity.
- However, malnutrition is not just a result of a lack of food but also arises due to poor diet, a result of over dependency on maize, which is why the EU is also supporting agricultural diversification (see agricultural sheet).
- The nutrition situation in Malawi has hardly changed over the past 40 years, with 46% of children under the age of five being too short for their age (stunted) and 20.5% weighing too little for their age (underweight). Furthermore, 3.5% of under-five children are thin and weigh too little for their height (wasted).
- Given that 95% of agricultural in Malawi is rain dependent, variations in either the amount or the distribution of rainfall can lead to a reduced domestic agricultural production. This in turn can lead to a reduced national availability of food causing food insecurity, as in 2004/05, the last major food crisis in Malawi.

The European Union's objective is to assist Malawi in achieving national and household food security. This is being achieved by:

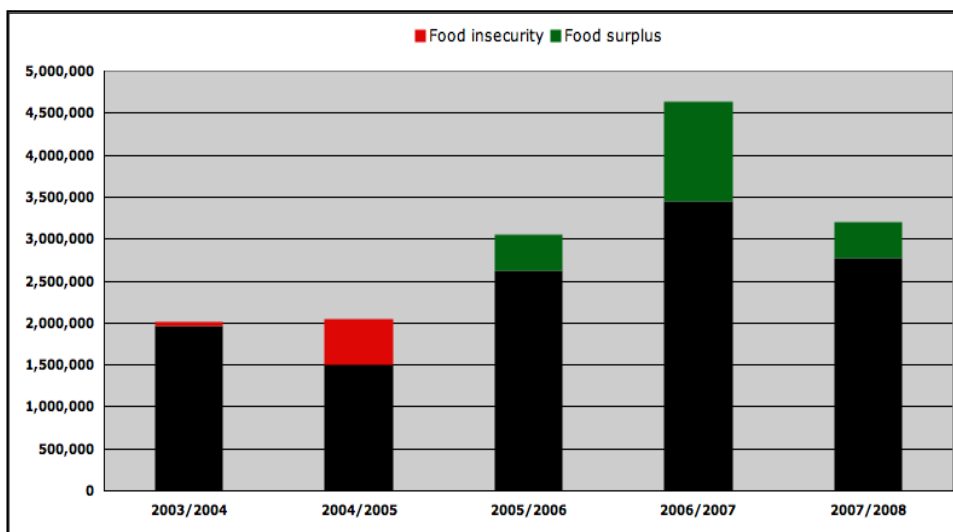
1. Increasing the availability of food by helping farmers produce more food. Normally, the more food that is available the lower the price of food.
2. Increasing Malawian's ability to buy food by increasing their incomes.
3. Ensuring that Malawians are eating a balanced diet including all six food groups in order to reduce malnutrition.

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What has been achieved?

- First and foremost **Malawi achieved national food security for the last years**, and even produced significant food surpluses that were exported to help food security in neighbouring countries, such as Zimbabwe. This was due to both the **input subsidy programme, which the EU supports**, and good rainfall. Malawi had previously suffered from cyclical food crises. The last major crisis, which occurred in 2004/05, was caused by a dry spell of 2–6 weeks and resulted in a shortfall of 335,000 MT of maize. Maize imports cost \$230 million and there were also significant social costs.
- Another major result was the **drafting and implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Security Policies**. The EU supported the drafting and continues to support the implementation and coordination of the two policies notably through funding the Joint Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security, a government lead body made up of a number of committees bringing together government ministries, development partners, NGOs and other stakeholders including the private sector. During the 2004/05 crisis the Joint Task Force was commended for playing an instrumental role in coordinating the response to the food crisis. Despite the situation being worse than during the previous crisis in 2002/03, the impact on Malawi was reduced due to mitigating actions coordinated by the Task Force.
- Even in years of national food security, however, many individual households have insufficient food to feed themselves, especially during the annual 'lean period' December–March. This is exacerbated due to significant post-harvest losses (see agricultural sheet on how the EU is helping to reduce such losses). Each year the **EU has supplied maize and other food stuffs to be distributed to needy households as food aid by the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP)**.
- The EU supported schemes to increase needy people's ability to buy food through **cash for work schemes**, where individuals are paid in return for creating assets that will help the community, such as roads or irrigation channels, or, if individuals are unable to work, through social protection cash-transfer schemes.
- The EU also funded the **establishment and running of a nationwide nutritional surveillance scheme**. This helps to detect and address malnutrition and refer individuals to EU-assisted nutrition rehabilitation units (NRUs). After 40 years of stagnation, malnutrition rates are starting to decline.
- EU funds **helped build the capacities of the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA)** who manage the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) – an emergency humanitarian stock of food – to ensure that it is managed in line with international standards and that losses are minimised.
- Lastly, the EU **supported numerous NGOs working to improve food security at community level**.



Government figures showing the 2004/05 food crisis, where food availability fell well short of Malawi's food needs, and the subsequent three years of national food security.