

UK aid to help hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans on the brink of starvation

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- Zimbabwe is facing a chronic food crisis and without support more than 5.5 million people will not have access to the food they need by 2020
- International Development Secretary Alok Sharma announces UK aid support to help malnourished children, families and communities following a UN appeal
- He also urges Government of Zimbabwe to act on its promise to deliver fundamental political and economic reforms

Hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans will receive life-saving access to food and water thanks to UK aid as the country faces a potentially catastrophic famine.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma today (Friday 9 August) announced £49 million of UK aid. This will be given to trusted partners to help malnourished children, families and communities following a UN Zimbabwe appeal.

He also urged the Zimbabwean Government to act on its promise to deliver fundamental political and economic reforms.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

“The Government of Zimbabwe must do more to deliver the promised fundamental political and economic reforms and take responsibility for the humanitarian crisis affecting its people.

“The UK stands with the people of Zimbabwe at a time when millions are at risk of starvation and disease. Through trusted partners we will continue to give families access to food and clean water, and support children to gain a decent education.”

Zimbabwe is facing a chronic food crisis as crops have been devastated by the effects of drought, economic crisis and a powerful cyclone. Without support, more than 5.5 million people in Zimbabwe will not have access to the food they need by 2020.

The food crisis is closely linked to the economic challenges in Zimbabwe which has led to high unemployment and high inflation.

Having already experienced outbreaks of cholera following the devastation of Cyclone Idai earlier this year, water shortages are also leaving the country

more susceptible to further outbreaks as people struggle to find clean sources of drinking water.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. No DFID money is given directly to the Government of Zimbabwe.
2. Today's announcement of UK aid support will help:
 - Up to 440,000 Zimbabweans who face potential starvation in rural and urban areas get access to food and water via the World Food Programme (WFP) through small cash transfers.
 - Support 300,000 vulnerable people to prepare for a potential cholera or typhoid outbreak by providing disease surveillance, essential medicine to treat water-borne diseases and training for local health workers to rapidly respond to outbreaks.
 - Strengthen disaster planning in Zimbabwe and help get financing in place before disaster strikes so they can better manage the economic impact of emergencies and build their resilience.
 - Discover ways to build the resilience of vulnerable people to economic and climatic shocks. This involves increasing support to a WFP pilot to provide 100,000 vulnerable people in urban communities with assistance so they get the food they need through access to mobile money.
1. Reducing poverty, hunger and providing clean water and sanitation is at the heart of what UK aid does, but our investment is also about tackling disease and conflict – ultimately creating a safer, healthier and more prosperous world.
2. The £49 million announced today will fund a new humanitarian and resilience programme that will start in October 2019 and run until September 2022 in Zimbabwe. This includes £25.5 million of new funding for DFID Zimbabwe from reallocations within DFID's budget, and £23.5 million funding from DFID Zimbabwe's existing budget that will now be focused on humanitarian support.
3. DFID's total UK aid support to Zimbabwe for 2019/20 is £113.5 million.