

MOZAMBIQUE

Food crisis deepens

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In a renewed appeal for international assistance, the government on 3 July warned that the food crisis will worsen dramatically in the coming months, unless donors take urgent action.

The call for help follows an assessment of the results of April's UN-backed appeal for \$382 million in assistance for the 1989-90 emergency programme. After the meeting in New York, it was announced that around \$352 million had been pledged for food aid, and logistical and other support for the near-5 million people estimated to be at risk as a result of the war and natural disasters.

However, a document presented to donor governments and agencies at the early-July meeting in Maputo said the real aid total was now known to be only \$252 million. The \$100 million discrepancy was due "in large part to double counting," it said. More than \$60 million to be channelled through the World Food Programme (WFP) was counted twice, once as donors' money and then as WFP assistance. The same happened with other channels, the document said. A UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) appeal for \$18 million, for example, was mistakenly counted as a pledge.

The new appeal also noted that \$133 million of the funds pledged had not yet been allocated to specific sectors. Until this is done, the money cannot be used. "These pledges must be immediately targeted... if we are to avert a serious crisis in the coming months," the document said.

It also noted a dramatic drop in pledges of food aid, as opposed to money, for this year. By the end of June, only 295,000 tonnes had been pledged, compared with 470,000 tonnes at the end of June 1988. The government and UN have appealed for 916,000 tonnes of food aid for 1989-90. Pledges of maize, in particular — the main staple — are inadequate. Only 50,000 tonnes, of the 195,000 tonnes required for distribution to famine victims, has been secured.