



ZCBC Zimbabwe Food Appeal

27 February 2020

Southern Africa is experiencing a severe drought, with up to 45 million people expected to suffer from food shortages.¹ The World Food Programme (WFP) in Zimbabwe has reported that in 2020, more than 7.7 million people in Zimbabwe will face food insecurity. This means that half the population of Zimbabwe in 2020 will not have enough food. The rains have been poor, but one also acknowledges that Zimbabwe is a low income country with an economy which has been underperforming. There is already a food deficit in Zimbabwe. This food insecurity will affect urban and rural communities. Millions of school going children, refugees, and the poor, will suffer from the severe effects of this drought.² The Famine Early Warning Systems Network has categorised this as a 'Phase 3' food crisis, which will affect most of the country. This is just two stages before a fully blown famine.³ We are experiencing the effects of the El Nino induced drought which affected the 2019 harvest and which will now have a severe impact on the 2020 harvest as the rains have come late.

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops are aware of the terrible situation that lies ahead of us. The World Food Programme and other International Organizations have already raised alarm and have started to respond to the situation which is unfolding. The government of Zimbabwe has already announced that the stocks of grain are low and so those who can, are being encouraged to import grain and other basic commodities.

Our appeal and response is on behalf of the people of every race, culture, gender, and religion in Zimbabwe who are and will soon be in dire need. We will endeavour to reach out to the most vulnerable. We therefore join the voices of all those who have seen and are responding to this unfolding catastrophic and

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africa-hunger-idUSKBN1XA25G>

² <https://www.wfp.org/countries/zimbabwe>

³ <https://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimbabwe-drought-food-crisis-likely-to-run-into-2020-warns-famine-systems-network/>

devastating situation which will affect millions of lives. We acknowledge our moral duty to respond to this situation and to ensure that distribution of drought relief is open to all, in spite of religion, political affiliation or culture.

Following the teaching of the Gospel: 'I was hungry and you gave me food to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me water to drink...' (Mt 25:35), we invite all Zimbabweans, locally based and those abroad, and all people of good will throughout the whole world, to join hands in responding to this catastrophic and devastating situation which is unfolding.

Caritas Zimbabwe has launched an Emergency Appeal. At the same time, as Catholic Bishops, we have agreed that each diocese will set up fundraising structures in order to mobilize food aid in cash and in kind. Our target is to reach out to as many victims of the drought as possible. Our goal is to mobilize sufficient food aid in order for us to make a difference to the lives of the many millions who face starvation, including, children, women and those living with HIV/AIDS. All donations will be handled in a transparent manner and all distribution will be monitored closely so that there will be transparency and fairness.

Whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do unto me...(Mt 25:40). We the Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe cannot over emphasize how dire this situation is; we therefore urgently plead with the whole world for help on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe.

- +Robert C. Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare (ZCBC President)**
- +Alex Thomas, Archbishop of Bulawayo (ZCBC Vice President)**
- +Paul Horan, Bishop of Mutare (ZCBC Secretary/Treasurer)**
- +Michael D. Bhasera, Bishop of Masvingo & Pontifical Administrator of Gweru**
- +Albert Serrano, Bishop of Hwange**
- +Rudolf Nyandoro, Bishop of Gokwe**
- +Raymond Mupandasekwa, Bishop of Chinhoyi**