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SOUTH AFRICA



GM FOOD AID

AFRICA DENIED CHOICE ONCE AGAIN?



GM Food Aid: Africa Denied Choice Again?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Controversy over the shipment of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) as food aid has erupted once again in Africa. In March 2004, Angola and Sudan introduced restrictions on genetically modified (GM) food aid, with Sudan requesting that food aid be certified “GM free” and Angola accepting GM food aid only on condition that whole GM grain is first milled. Both decisions were strongly criticized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Food Programme (WFP), and constant pressure has been applied in both countries to remove the restrictions.

In March despite the Sudanese government having put in place an interim waiver on the GM food restrictions until July 2004, the USAID cut off food aid. The US Government then continued to exert enormous pressure, urging the government of Sudan to provide formal, written notification of a change in GMO certification requirements or a third extension for the current waiver to this policy. The government of Sudan relented, and ended up extending the waiver for six additional months, allowing the distribution of GM food to continue until January 2005.

The WFP responded to the Angolan government by saying that the country would face a significant decrease in the provision of food aid if it continued to insist that GM grain is first milled. The scenario presented by the WFP and USAID to these African countries, is that either they accept GM food aid or face dire consequences.

USAID and the WFP’s actions are unacceptable. The experience of the Southern Africa GM food aid crisis during 2002/03 shows that alternatives to GM food aid exist, even under circumstances of emergency. In October 2002 Zambia faced overwhelming pressure to accept GM food aid. At that time, 2.4million people were estimated to have been at risk of starvation. Zambia was presented with a scenario of no choice – USAID and the WFP said that GM food aid was necessary to prevent starvation. But Zambia overcame its food crisis without GM food aid, and the country went on to produce bumper harvests of GM free maize the following year. Ironically, since 2003, the WFP has purchased 100,000 tonnes of food from Zambia, which it sent to Zimbabwe, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Namibia.

In the current case of Angola and Sudan the WFP had advanced warning that such a situation might arise. The WFP knew as long ago as May 2003 that the Sudanese government intended to impose restrictions on GM food aid. The WFP must also have been aware of the August 2003 recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and Biosafety of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Angola is a member, that its member states mill all GM grain before accepting it as food aid.

It is difficult to disassociate the pressure on Angola and Sudan to accept GM food aid from the on-going, aggressive US efforts to promote GM crops in

developing countries. Food aid programmes are closely tied to the well being of US farmers. The opening of new markets and surplus disposal is one of the major objectives of the biggest US Food Aid Programme: the US Public Law 480 (PL 480). With the US as the world's number one producer of GM crops and with a growing list of countries rejecting or restricting GM food imports, the food aid programme has therefore become a vehicle for opening markets for US GM food surpluses. USAID, which runs the US food aid programme, is also tasked with a mandate to promote GM technology by working to "integrate biotech into local food systems" and "spread agricultural technology through regions of Africa."

An appropriate system of food aid is where cash is donated for the purchase of food locally or regionally, since this also contributes to the development of local markets, reduces costs, and improves timing for food delivery. In contrast, over 40% of US contributions to the WFP are in kind. 60% of the global cereal food aid shipment and 70% of the non-cereal originated from the US in 2002/3. Angola was the fifth largest recipient of cereal food aid in the world in 2002/03, after Iraq, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Korea, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

Angola and Sudan should never have been presented with the stark choice between accepting GM food aid or facing dire consequences. The WFP and FAO have both officially recognized that Sudan has an abundance of food available in the country. Indeed, they have already recommended the purchase of food available on the domestic market. In Angola local non-GM alternatives need to be fully explored such as cassava, beans and sweet potato, which are also staple foods in that country. Regional and international non-GM alternative sources already exist and these must be fully investigated by the WFP.

The controversy over GM food aid in Sudan and Angola was unnecessary. The WFP could and should have prevented the controversy from arising in both countries by putting in place adequate mechanisms to avoid a repetition of the controversies that arose during 2002. Overall, non-GM alternatives exist at national, regional, and international levels, and donors should make these available to Sudan and Angola.

I. INTRODUCTION: FOOD AID AND GMOS

Controversy over genetically modified (GM) food aid arose in 2000 in Latin America, and Asia, and exploded in 2002, when several southern African countries refused GM food aid during a food crisis.ⁱ Now, in 2004 the controversy has erupted again after Sudan and Angola imposed restrictions over GM food aid.

Food aid has been heavily criticized in the last fifty years, because it serves the interests of certain countries, particularly the US Government, as a tool to *inter alia* facilitate export surpluses and/or capture new markets. The use of GM food aid by the US has added a new dimension to the debate, because the provision of GM food aid is seen as providing an important back- door entry point for the introduction of genetically modified organism (GMOs) in developing countries.

1. US food aid serves interest of US farmers and Agribusiness

Food aid programmes are closely tied to the well being of US farmers. A report for the US Congress presented in 1994 showed that food aid has been an important tool for the spreading of commercial markets for US agricultural products.ⁱⁱ

Food aid is used in times of over-supply to clear surplus production from the market, stabilize declining US commodity prices and capture new markets.ⁱⁱⁱ The opening of new markets and surplus disposal is one of the major objectives of the biggest US Food Aid Programme: the US Public Law 480 (PL 480).^{iv} USAID recognizes that food aid Programmes "have helped create major markets for agricultural goods, created new markets for American industrial exports and meant hundreds of thousands of jobs for Americans".^v OXFAM America describes that "eighty percent of the funds for the goods and services provided through Public Law 480 do not go to meet needs in developing countries; rather they are spent in the US".^{vi} US agribusiness such as Cargill and Arthur Daniel Midlands (ADM), which control US maize exports, have been the main beneficiaries of US food aid Programmes.

US food aid also serves to facilitate the penetration of GM food. USAID states that it intends to "integrate biotech into local food systems" and "spread agricultural technology through regions of Africa."^{vii} USAID's close links with biotech corporations and pro-GM grain companies such as ADM is well documented.^{viii}

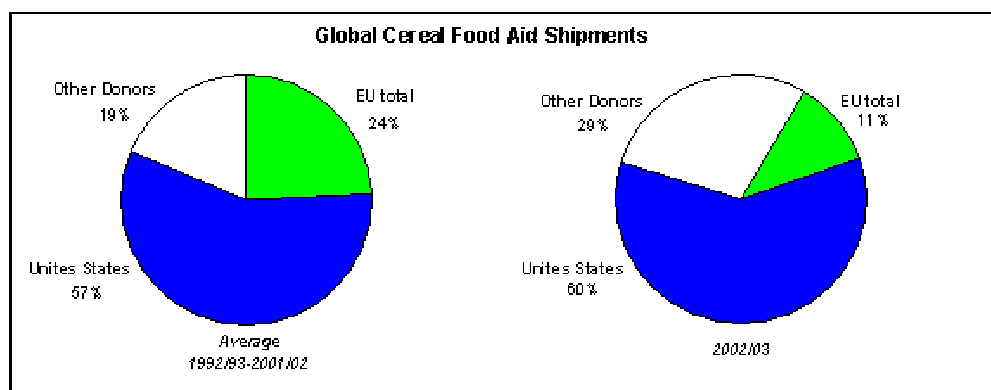
2. Global Food aid shipments in 2002/3

The US government makes large contributions to the WFP in the form of in kind donations from US farms. By contrast, international best practise regarding emergency aid, is cash donations to the WFP - to enable it to buy grain from the most appropriate sources.

Cereals constitute the bulk of food aid shipments in the world. Total cereal food aid shipments in 2002/03 amounted to 8.6m tonnes. Wheat accounted for almost 6m tonnes, rice 1.6m tonnes, and coarse grains, for 1.1m tonnes. The US cereal food aid shipment amounted to a staggering 5.2m tonnes, representing 60 percent of the total share.^{ix}

The cereal food aid shipments to the Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDCs) was of 7.4m tonnes in 2002/03. This means that the share of food aid shipments as a percentage of exports to the LIFDCs is around 9 percent. The top five recipients of

cereal food aid were Iraq (1.3m tonnes), Ethiopia (1.2m tonnes), the Democratic Republic of Korea, (975 000 tonnes), Bangladesh (353,000 tonnes), Afghanistan (388,000 tonnes), and Angola (217,000 tonnes).^x



Source: FAO. 2004. Food Outlook

Non-cereal food aid (pulses, vegetable oils, dry fruits, skim milk, etc) shipments reached almost 1.4m tonnes in 2002. The US is the largest donor , 70 percent of the total share comes from the US.

The US is the largest contributor to the WFP (63%), followed by EU Commission (7.5%), Japan, (5.6 %) and the UK (4.7%). In 2003 the US contributed to WFP with US \$1,243,268,371. Behind is the European Commission with \$160,599,966, Japan \$119,291594, UK, \$100297848. The US provides over 40% of food aid in cash (in cash 733,400,110, in kind 509,868,261), while the European Commission provides over 95% of its food aid in cash (in cash 155,072,684, in kind 5,527,282).^{xi}

3. International best practice of food aid

The Food Aid Convention^{xii} (to which the US is a signatory), obliges members to ensure that the provision of food aid is not tied directly or indirectly, formally or informally, explicitly or implicitly, to commercial exports of agricultural products or other goods and services to recipient countries. The Convention also stipulates that in order to promote local agricultural development, strengthen regional and local markets and enhance the longer-term food security of recipient countries, members shall give consideration to using or directing their cash contributions for the purchase of food for (i) for supply to the recipient country from other developing countries ('triangular purchase') or in one or part of a developing country for supply to a deficit area in that country (local purchase).^{xiii}

Donors such as Japan, Norway and EU, provide most of its aid for food in cash - not in kind - in order for the WFP to buy food locally and regionally. The EU's policy is to "source food aid regionally, thus ensuring that the countries in need receive the foodstuffs to which they are accustomed as well as helping local economies."^{xiv}

Indeed, the ability to use local and regional food available primarily depends on the availability of cash from donors. Hence, the huge amounts of in kind food aid donated by the US severely limits the WFP 's ability to buy locally and regionally.

4. Concerns over GM crops

The concerns over GM crops are serious and the threats real. Every country has the sovereign right to take precautionary measures to address the risks involved.

Regulatory systems in GM producing countries have not been able to ensure the safety of GM crops. For example, a 2003 report by the US Center for Science in the Public Interest concluded that the US regulatory process does not enable the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that GM crops are safe to eat. Toxins and anti-nutrients that may affect food safety and nutrition are not always evaluated; the methods to determine allergenicity are inadequate; data summaries often lack sufficient detail or information to determine safety”^{xv} and so forth.

In the context of GM food aid, many stakeholders have underlined specific risks. Norway’s Minister of International Development, for example, has said: “There might also be a probability of a higher risk when one is in a food crisis situation, consuming only one GMO product over time”.

The US government has often said that US citizens have been consuming GM foods for years and have never had any problems. However, Zambian scientists came to the conclusion that this argument is not valid in the African context: “While it is often said that GM maize is consumed by millions of Americans, it was noted that it is eaten in highly processed form and is not a staple food in the USA. In Zambia maize is the staple food and is usually the only carbohydrate source.”^{xvi}

Many organizations in developing countries believe that populations fed with food aid, especially children, are particularly vulnerable due to malnutrition and lack of food, and that any potential danger presented by GM foods might increase when they are consumed by an immune-depressed population. According to the UK Chief Scientific Advisor Professor David King, forcing GM foods into Africa as food aid is “a massive human experiment”.^{xvii}

Moreover, shipments of whole corn kernels as food aid poses a real risk of genetic contamination and ‘gene flow’ because GM grain could be planted and cross pollinate in countries where there are no adequate biosafety frameworks and little, if any, capacity to deal with the risks posed to the environment and biodiversity.^{xviii}

II CONTROVERSY OVER GM FOOD AID ERUPTS IN AFRICA IN 2004

1. Sudan requests GM free certification and US challenges decision

1.1 Sudan ceased food aid shipments temporary in March 2004

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), food shortages in Sudan are due to the civil conflict, which has resulted in the displacement of more than 1m people.^{xix} The US is the major donor of food aid to Sudan, providing 70 per cent of WFP total pipeline for the country.^{xx}

In May 2003 the government of Sudan issued a memorandum requiring certification that food aid brought into the country must be free of GM ingredients.^{xxi} The WFP received a letter from the Sudanese Standards and Meterology Organization (a government agency) informing the WFP that new regulations would require food

commodities, including grains, pulses and blended foods, entering the country to be certified as “GM free”.^{xxii} In this regard, Sudan was complying with WFP Guidelines on Handling Biotech Food Aid, by providing the WFP with adequate advanced warning.

The current WFP policy is that once the agency becomes aware of the existence of a regulation limiting the imports of GM food aid it should take steps “in cooperation with the regional bureau and Rome headquarters to adjust rations, food procurement procedures, and food pipeline plans to ensure that all WFP food is imported in full compliance with the changed regulatory environment for GM/biotech foods”.^{xxiii}

The US government responded to Sudan’s decision by taking punitive retaliatory action. On March 11 2004, Roger Winter from USAID testified before the US House of Representatives that USAID had since March 7 summarily cut off all further food aid shipments to Sudan because of the Sudanese government insistence that US commodities be certified free of GM organisms.^{xxiv} Winter further claimed that USAID was prepared to make additional food commitments to Sudan, but could not do so as long as the problem with GMO certificates was outstanding.

1.2 Constant US pressure on Sudanese Government

The US has since been putting the Sudanese government under relentless pressure. As a result the government of Sudan issued a six month suspension or waiver of its GE free certification requirement in July 2003, in order to ensure food assistance at Port Sudan.^{xxv}

US Senator Danforth raised the issue with Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir during a visit in July 2003 and emphasised the importance of resolving this problem soon. USAID then affirmed that President Bashir had issued a statement that confirmed the six-month suspension of the GMO-certification policy.^{xxvi} The US administration also sent a team of scientists to Khartoum to reassure them of the soundness of the US regulatory system and to discuss Sudan’s health and scientific concerns.^{xxvii} Buckling under this pressure, the government of Sudan issued an extension of the waiver in October 2003 on their earlier decree that required certification that food aid brought to Sudan is free of GM ingredients. This extension was due to expire on July 8 2004.^{xxviii} However, after stopping the food aid imports the US administration pressured Sudan again to provide formal, written notification of a change in GMO certification requirements or a third extension for the current waiver to this policy. The government of Sudan relented within two days and has extended the waiver for six additional months, allowing the distribution of GM food from the US to continue until January 2005.^{xxix}

2 Angola requests GM food to be milled-the US and WFP reacts

Angola’s civil war ended in 2002 and food insecurity is felt hardest by the large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees from neighbouring countries.^{xxx} According to the WFP, approximately 1.5 m people are dependent on food aid in Angola. On 1 April 2004 it was estimated that Angola requires over \$100m to cope with its food needs.^{xxxi} US in kind food aid assistance for Angola constitutes 70 per cent of the contributions to the WFP.

The Angolan government announced in March 2004 its decision not to accept GM food aid, unless it is milled.^{xxxii} In taking the decision to refuse to accept whole GM grain, Angola was complying with the recommendations of the SADC Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and Biosafety on GM food aid. These

recommendations, (approved by SADC in August 2003) state : “Food aid consignments involving grain or any propagative plant material should be milled prior to distribution to beneficiary populations.” Furthermore, its decision was not different to that taken by several other southern African countries during the 2002 food crisis.

The Angolan government’s initial announcement to ban GM food aid outright, immediately prompted the WFP into action. It publicly expressed its concerns at this decision and advised Angola that the WFP would have serious difficulties in providing adequate assistance to the returnees if there was any restriction on the current food in-kind existing, or expected to come to the country.

Angola’s decision to require that the GM food first be milled did not sit well with the WFP. It expressed serious concern about milling the GM grain. WFP regional director Mike Sackett said that while the WFP respected Angola’s wishes, but milled grain was far more expensive, and took about four extra months to arrive.^{xxxiii} In his opinion the GM question is... “a further blow to the achievements of the objectives set out by WFP in Angola”. However, the WFP was careful, having perhaps learnt from the Zambian experience, in not painting an exaggerated scenario of death by starvation, by stating that the WFP doubted that people will starve: “We don’t think people will starve. However...a newly resettled family will face an even more precarious existence”.^{xxxiv}

Shortly after the announcement of the Angolan decision, the US announced that it planned to cut its funding to WFP by 20 per cent for 2005, which would be around US \$400m?^{xxxv} Days later the WFP made the decision to halve the food rations given to the majority of the 1.9m people it assists in Angola. WFP blamed the GM ban and a funding crisis as the reason for that decision.^{xxxvi} The WFP announced in March 2004 that almost 2 m Angolans face food shortages following a government decision to ban GM food aid from the US and a general shortfall in donor contributions.^{xxxvii}

3. Is it better to go hungry than to eat GMOs? The Southern Africa controversy in 2002

During 2002/3 several countries in Southern Africa faced severe food shortages. Of these countries, Zimbabwe was the first to reject US GM food aid outright. Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe requested that all US imported GM maize was milled before distribution in order to prevent its inadvertent use as seed. Lesotho and Swaziland authorised the distribution of non-milled GM food aid but warned the public that the grain should be used strictly for consumption and not cultivation. After a few months, Zambia decided to impose an outright ban on GM food aid.

In October 2002 the Heads of States from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) declared that its member states had a right to accept or reject GMO food aid grain.^{xxxviii} Notwithstanding, this right to choose was in fact, seriously impaired. The US and the WFP told those African countries that imposed restrictions or bans that they should accept some GM content. Often in this context the question was put “It is better to die than to eat GM food?” which is misleadingly presented a stark choice between starving or eating GM food donated from the US. An unnamed US official was even quoted as saying “Beggars can’t be choosers.”^{xxxix}

This lack of choice was nothing less than political ‘arm twisting’. Alternative non-GM stocks of food aid could have been made available to those countries. Research from the FAO at the time showed that enough non-GM maize and non-GM cereals were

readily available from the African region itself. Food was also available from India and Mexico. Indeed, non-GM maize was also available from the US itself.

It must be noted that at the time of the crisis, the WFP/FAO Mission to Zambia in May 2002 only assessed the 2002 cereal production.^{xi} The “need assessments” and food deficit calculations did not take into account available supplies of non-cereal foods despite the fact that 30 per cent of the population in Zambia eats cassava as staple food.

The WFP failed to take into account surplus supplies of cassava in the country. Civil society groups estimated there were around 300,000 tonnes of surplus cassava available in northern parts of the country. A member of the National Association of Peasants and Small Scale Farmers in Zambia, Charles Musonda, said there was a long history of using cassava as a key crop for food security in Zambia as it was drought resistant, easier to grow and had a host of other commercial uses. Mr. Musonda said that “This is a win-win situation, people are fed and happy, our produce is bought, we are solvent and able to grow food for the next season. What could be better?”^{xii}

4. Zambia produces bumper crop in 2003 and exports food to the region

Despite the dire situation it faced in 2002, Zambia managed to cope with the crisis without GM food aid. In 2003, Zambia even produced a bumper crop of non-GM maize. Production of maize (a staple food) was estimated at 1.16m tonnes - almost double compared with 2002 and about 28 per cent above the average for the past five years.^{xiii}

Last year Zambia was even able to export food; the WFP purchased 100,000 t of food from Zambia. Zambia was even able to send food to Zimbabwe, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Namibia.^{xiii} The WFP said that it had spent more than US \$18m since January 2003 for the purchase of food commodities from Zambia, including maize grain and fortified blended foods such as corn-soya blend.

The WFP/FAO report ascribes the main reasons for Zambia’s recovery to favourable rainfall in 2003, effective fertilizer distribution programmes implemented by the government, and the combined effort of various national and international civil society organisations and the government in providing farmers with seeds of various crops.^{xiv}

5. Crop situation in Sudan and Angola

5.1 Sudan produces ample food for 2004

This year Sudan has produced ample harvests to feed its population and even for export to its neighbours. WFP/FAO reports show that Sudan has produced a record cereal harvest of 6.3m tonnes, of which 82 per cent comprises sorghum.^{xiv} The reports underline that the “overall food situation is therefore highly favourable”. The reports even estimate that “large quantities of grain could also be exported, provided that export markets are secured, particularly in some neighbouring countries”.

The WFP/FAO report concludes that “in view of the ample domestic cereal availability, local purchases for food aid requirements are highly recommended to support markets and ensure locally-acceptable varieties of cereals”.

Food insecurity in Sudan would best be addressed by using surpluses available in Sudan in the first instance, to deal with the food shortages in the affected areas in the country.

5.2 Crop situation in Angola 2003/4

Maize, sorghum, millet and cassava are the main staple food in Angola. Maize is the main food staple in the central highlands, while millet and sorghum are more important cereals in the southern regions. Cassava predominates in the north.^{xlvi}

The major component of the food insecure population is based in the central and southern areas where cereals are staple food. Food insecurity levels are “moderate” in northern areas (where cassava is a staple).^{xlvii} A 2003 Angola Food Security Update reports that the food security outlook would be “adequate for those in the north of the country because in general it will have adequate access to cassava. New returnees, recently displaced, and asset-poor residents in most central and southern provinces will be the ones affected by serious food and nutritional problems from December 2003 to April 2004.”

The WFP/FAO assessment mission in July 2003 estimated that the cereal import requirement for 2003/04 was 709,000 tonnes. 490,000 t would be imported commercially and 219,000 t would be covered through food aid. WFP planned to assist 1.03m people, and the food aid requirements of this population amounted to 161,000 tonnes of cereals, 17,800 tonnes of pulses and smaller quantities of oil, corn-soy blend, sugar and salt.^{xlviii}

The assessment of food deficit calculations was primarily based on cereals. Staple foods in Angola, such as cassava, estimated to be 5,699,331 t (in fresh weight) was not taken into account. The assessment does not furnish any figures for existing surpluses and the possibility of using such crops to cope with the crisis. Nevertheless, WFP/FAO estimates that the use of cassava in Angola is growing in areas that have not been traditionally cultivating maize: “Cassava is the main staple food in the Northern provinces and its consumption is increasing in the Central and Southern provinces”.^{xlix}

6. What alternatives to GM food aid for Angola and Sudan?

Alternatives to GM food aid may be found at national, regional and international level.

6.1 Local level

As discussed above, the most favoured option for a country in terms of coping with food shortage would be to use their existing food at the national level. In some instances, food resources exist in the same country, but it cannot reach affected areas because of bad roads, lack of other infrastructure and financial support to move food to areas in need. Sudan has ample surpluses available in the country and this should be used as the primary source of food to cope with the current emergency. Angolans consume plenty of other crops apart from maize, and the

Angola: Crop production in 2002/03 (Metric Tonnes)

Maize: 545,150
Sorghum/Millet: 97,402
Rice: 27,697
(Total Cereals: 670,249)

Cassava (fresh): 5,699,331
Sweet Potato (fresh): 438,508
Beans: 66,121
Groundnut: 61,821
Irish Potato: 301,804

Source: FAO/WFP. 2003. Special report crop and food supply assessment Mission to Angola

availability of sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, irish potatoes, beans should be fully explored by the WFP.

Cropping systems in Angola

Angolan agriculture is almost entirely rain-fed. There are three main agro-ecological zones. The Northern Region is characterised by a humid tropical climate, with an annual rainfall over 2000 mm. The main crop is cassava, which occupies about 77 per cent of the area planted (or 493 202 hectares); the remaining 24 per cent is taken by other traditional crops such as maize, beans, millet, groundnuts, and sweet potato, all of them intercropped.

The Central region has a temperate tropical climate modified by altitude, which ranges from 1000 to over 2500 meters above sea level. This high plateau is characterised by an annual rainfall from 1250 mm to 1500 mm. The main crops are maize (677 070 hectares), mostly planted together with other traditional crops such as beans, sorghum/millet, groundnuts, sweet potato, and Irish potato. Upland rice is cultivated in small areas, as part of a government-sponsored production campaign. At the household level, livestock mostly consists of a few heads of cattle, goats, sheep, pigs and chicken.

The Southern region is largely characterised by a dry climate, ranging from tropical desert (Namib) to tropical dry (Cunene), with low annual rainfall (20 mm average). The predominant crop is sorghum and/or millet, which cover about 80 percent of the total area planted (about 222 000 hectares). The remaining 20 per cent of land utilisation includes maize, inter-cropped with beans, groundnuts, and sweet potato. Livestock rearing is a parallel activity, with families usually keeping a few heads of cattle, goats and/or sheep, pigs, and chicken.

FAO/WFP. 2003. Special report Angola July.

6.2 Regional level

Another option is to buy food available on the regional markets from neighbouring countries. This option depends on the availability of donor funding, adequate surpluses in the region, and the efforts on the part of the national governments affected.

At the regional level alternatives are available. In South Africa, According to the Grain Silo Industry of South Africa and SANWES, there is approximately, 600 000 tons of GM free white maize available for export.ⁱ The WFP announced in April that they will be looking to purchase white maize in South Africa for its food aid programme in Angola, because it was encouraged by the recent fall in local white maize prices.ⁱⁱ Germany has also confirmed a donation of 1 m euros for the regional purchase of maize that is accompanied by non-GMO certificates, which will be probably bought in South Africa.ⁱⁱⁱ

6.3 International level

A third option is to use internationally available food aid. This is operationalised primarily through USAID and the WFP. However, it is highly probable that all food aid in kind provided by USAID or through WFP deliveries of food originating from the US, which consists of corn and soy, may contain GMOs. However, not all food supplied by the US is GM. The US has non-GM corn available, but does not

segregate for food aid purposes. The US also uses non-GM crops like wheat, millet, pulses, and others as food aid. The USAID was able to provide non-GM sorghum to Zambia after Zambia rejected GM maize.^{liii} Likewise, in Angola in 2004, the US has offered the WFP non-GM sorghum after the Angolan government rejected GM maize. The use of food outside the local and regional context is an option that should only be used as a last resort. In any case GM food as aid should not be given to any country, which expressly refuses to accept such aid.

III CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusions

- a) Every country has the right to choose either to accept or reject GM food aid. Sudan and Angola's decision to impose restrictions on GM food is a sovereign decision, which should be respected by donors.
- b) The controversy over GM food aid in Sudan and Angola should have never have arisen. The WFP could and should have prevented the controversy from arising in both countries. Taking account its experience during the 2002 southern African food aid crisis, the WFP should have put in place adequate mechanisms to avoid similar situations from recurring. In the case of Sudan, the WFP was aware of the intention of the Sudanese government to restrict GM food aid since May 2003. The agency had 10 months to take adequate measures to provide real non-GM alternatives to Sudan. In the case of Angola, the government's refusal to accept whole GM grain is no different to the stand taken by other southern African in the 2002 food crisis. Furthermore, Angola's position is in accordance with the recommendations of the SADC Advisory Committee. The WFP's reaction to the Angolan decision was highly inappropriate. The WFP and USAID should have never have presented a scenario of no choice to Angola and Sudan.
- c) Overall, non-GM alternatives exist at national, regional, and international levels, and the WFP and donors should make these available to Sudan and Angola.

2. Recommendations

- a) The WFP and all donors must respect international law, regional guidelines and national regulations and restrictions imposed on GM food. The WFP and donors should not question sovereign decisions to impose restrictions on GM food aid.
- b) The WFP and USAID must immediately stop exerting pressure on the governments of Angola and Sudan and presenting these countries with a misleading scenario of No Choice.
- c) The WFP and all donors should provide real choices to any country that imposes restrictions on GM food aid. Failure to do so renders the WFP's recognition of the "the Right to Choose" as redundant. The WFP in the case of Sudan and Angola has a duty to actively seek all possible options for the provision of non-GM food that are in fact available.

- d) The WFP should put in place, mechanisms that enable it to respond in an appropriately to situations where recipient countries impose restrictions on the acceptance of GM food aid.
- e) WFP should encourage donors – particularly the US - to provide cash instead of in kind contributions. WFP and all donors should seek to guarantee and support local purchases of staple foods in recipient countries. Traditional crops such as cassava, groundnuts, beans should be included within the food deficit calculations and if surpluses available at the local and regional level should be also used as food aid.

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ⁱⁱⁱ OXFAM International. 2002. Oxfam condemns the distribution of food aid contaminated with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Press Release June 12 2002.

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^{iv} Paggi, and Rosson. 2001. International Food Aid.

http://www.farmfoundation.org/2002_farm_bill/paggi.pdf

^v Greenpeace. 2002. USAID and GM food aid. <http://www.Greenpeace.org.uk>

^{vi} OXFAM America. 2003. US Export Credits: Denials and Double Standards

^{vii} USAID Announces International Biotech collaboration, US Department of State, June 2002

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^x FAO. April 2004. Food Outlook.

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^{xi} WFP. 2003. Consultation on resources. Rome, Friday 24 October 2003

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^{xiv} EU Commissioner Pascal Lamy, Franz Fischler, Poul Nielson, David Byrne, Margot Wallström, Chris Patten. 2003. EU Doesn't Tell Africa GM Foods Are Unsafe - Letter to the Editor of The Wall Street Journal Europe 21 January 2003.

^{xv} FoEI. 2004. GM Crops: A decade of failure. <http://www.foei.org/publications/gmo/index.html>

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^{xvii} FoEI. 2003. Playing with Hunger. <http://www.foei.org/publications/gmo/index.html>

^{xviii} FoEI. 2003. Playing with Hunger. <http://www.foei.org/publications/gmo/index.html>

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USAID affirms that a result of the new policy was the blockage at Port Sudan of 2800MT of US Government (USG) humanitarian assistance and made uncertain the delivery of an additional 32700 MT of USG food assistance already in the pipeline.

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