

## U.N. food agency launches \$250 million Zimbabwe plan to end hunger

First posted on <http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-hunger-idUKKBN1751OB?feedType=RSS&feedName=healthNewsMolt>

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) on Monday pledged \$253 million to fund a five-year plan to end hunger in Zimbabwe, which is emerging from a devastating drought that left more than 4 million people in need of food aid last year.

An El Nino-induced drought scorched crops and killed livestock in the southern African nation, forcing the government to launch an emergency appeal for food from donors.

On Monday, the WFP representative in Zimbabwe, Eddie Rowe said the agency would move away from short-term food handouts to technical assistance to improve food security in the country.

"While maintaining strong humanitarian assistance, the WFP Zimbabwe's new country strategic plan focuses on supporting longer-term national social protection and resilience efforts, strengthening the systems and institutions needed to help achieve zero hunger," Rowe told reporters.

Rowe said the WFP planned to spend \$53 million of the \$253 million budget in 2017.

The WFP says recurrent climate-related disasters, poverty, poor access to water, a fragile economic environment, liquidity challenges, low agricultural output, limited

access to markets and HIV and AIDS are the major causes of hunger in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe expects to produce 3 million tonnes of grain this year following above normal rains and now expects higher economic growth than initial forecasts, Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa said last month.

(Reporting by MacDonald Dzirutwe; Editing by Stephen Powell)