Media Release

The Online Vulnerability Atlas will provide credible historical and current food security and vulnerability data and information to support evidence-based emergency response and sustainable developmental programming in the SADC Region.

16 SADC Member States launch Online Vulnerability Atlas

Gaborone-Botswana 09 July 2021. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) today launched a new Online Vulnerability Atlas designed to store and share data relating to food, nutrition and livelihoods security from 16 SADC Member States. The Online Atlas developed by the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme aims to provide easy access to quality Vulnerability Assessments and Analysis data to inform evidence-based policymaking and programming.

The SADC Synthesis Report on the State of Food and Nutrition Security and Vulnerability in Southern Africa (Dec 2020) projected a rise from 41million (2019/20) to 51.3 million food insecure people in both urban and rural areas at peak lean season. Latest figures are expected to be published end of July following the just ended 2021 Annual Dissemination Forum. These numbers are likely to increase with the extended impacts of COVID-19 that has worsened the situation that has been predominantly caused by climate shocks (drought, floods, storms), climate stressors (land degradation, pests and diseases) and economic shocks.

"The high levels of vulnerabilities that characterise the SADC region highlight the critical need for generating and providing decision makers with credible information to facilitate informed decisions to address emergency food and nutrition insecurity and development planning" emphasized the Director, Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Domingos Zefanias Gove, officially launching the Online Vulnerability Atlas.

Deputy Regional Director, WFP Southern Africa Region Office, Margaret Malu, said "the Online Atlas comes at a critical time when there is increasing complexity and demand of food and nutrition insecurity information to inform responses. In essence, the Online Atlas will deal with the mounting food security challenges by providing credible and comparable trend data on food and nutrition security."

To address vulnerability, it is important for decision-makers to have access to credible information. This applies to both emergency response as well as longer-term development planning. Quantifying the situation on the ground and tracking changes in conditions is critical because without comparable data it is difficult to achieve efficiency, accountability and transparency.

Today's launch of the Online Vulnerability Atlas marks a key milestone since the RVAA project evolution in 2005. Over the years the programme generated a wealth of data and information on food, nutrition, and livelihoods security from SADC Member States. However, that data was shared and stored using unreliable tools which could easily be corrupted or misplaced.

"The idea of an Online Atlas came out of the need to respond to the strategic need to consolidate the gains of the RVAA Programme and add-value by making food and nutrition security information generated by 16 Member States easily accessible to a wide range of users working to improve the well-being of people in the SADC region", said Andrew Odero, the Head of Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM)/RVAA Technical Support Team which developed the Online Atlas.

While acknowledge the critical role played by the National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs) from the SADC Member States for the contributions to defining the user requirements and providing the data needed to run the system Magret Malu also appealed for maintenance of Quality Assurance (QA) in all aspects of vulnerability assessments and analysis processes.

The Online Atlas runs from a server hosted at the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone, Botswana. It is freely accessible from any location in the world where there is internet connectivity. Users can find data, analyse trends across space and time, compare food security behaviour between and amongst different countries in the region and generate maps. To ensure sustainability of the system, measures which include a service agreement with the Atlas developers and training (skills transfer) of the Secretariat IT personnel to ensure they have the capacity to maintain both the server and the Online Vulnerability Atlas.

The SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme developed the Online Atlas through technical support from the WFP and financial support from UK - Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

………..End…………

To access the SADC RVAA Online Vulnerability Atlas, click here   https://rvaaatlas.sadc.int/

Contact:

Barbara Lopi, Head of Communications and Public Relations, SADC Secretariat, Email: blopi@sadc.int

Caroline HUNGWE: Communication and Policy Advocacy Adviser. Gaborone. Botswana. Email: caroline.hungwe@wfp.org

Follow us on Twitter #SADCRVAA

About SADC

SADC is an organization of 16 Member States established in 1980. The Mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation, and integration, good governance, and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy.

The SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme was established in 2005 to support Member States (MS) monitor the attainment capacity of rural communities to overcome food and nutrition insecurity in the face of pervasive poverty, low economic growth and climate change. The RVAA Programme seeks to provide timely credible vulnerability information at; the same time strengthen capacities to meet the ever-increasing information needs of governments and partners for developmental programming and emergency response.

Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) is the regional monitoring system applied by the National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs) established in 14 SADC Member States.