

UNITED NATIONS



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Botswana

News flashes from UN

UN envoy assesses humanitarian situation in Southern Africa

Gaborone: 30 May 2005: The UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa, Mr James Morris, on his fifth visit to the region visited Botswana this week.

Mr Morris observed that due to climatic changes the number of people in need of food supplies might double in a year's time as the subcontinent received very poor rainfall during the ploughing season.



Jim Morris (left) addressing UN Botswana staff members. Looking on is the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr Bjoern Foerde

"The impact of food shortages in the SADC region is considerable," he said.

Morris, who is also the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) noted that the UN has been feeding some three-and-a-half million people in southern Africa, a figure estimated to escalate to seven million in a year's time.



UN staff members listening to a briefing by the visiting Envoy

"HIV/AIDS is impacting severely on our professionals, teachers, nurses, agricultural workers and so forth", he said.

The Special Envoy stressed that the political leadership of presidents, members of parliament and councillors in the region is very crucial in understanding the magnitude of the problem.

He lauded the government of Botswana fiercely fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic through her anti-retroviral (ARV) programmes.

He also mentioned that the World Food Programme (WFP) started feeding school children in Botswana way back in 1966 but when they discontinued in 1996 the Botswana government took over the programme and continues to fund it.

Commenting on the Millennium Development Goals Morris said “the most powerful investment the world can make is to ensure that every child is fed and sent to school. And to eliminate hunger and poverty significantly.”

The Botswana visit was part of his southern African visit which took him to Malawi and Zambia before coming to Botswana.

The primary purpose of his visit to southern Africa is to gain an updated view of the situation regarding particularly food security, HIV/AIDS

and capacity for service delivery. He would also like to get a feel of how governments, donors and the UN are responding to these problems.

The envoy also visited Zimbabwe to understand the magnitude of the food insecurity shortages.

While in Botswana, Mr Morris met with government senior officials, SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Ramsamy, and UN Heads of Agencies as well as staff, among others.



UN Heads of Agencies also had the opportunity to brief Mr Morris

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