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The Food Aid Organization of the United Nations

Video News Release – DR Congo Airdrops

Length: 03:00

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Language: English

SHOTLIST:

Location: Katanga Province

00:00 – 00:53 (Shot 13/04/06) WFP Airdrop around Sampwe, Katanga, DRC

00:53 – 01:15 (Shot 13/04/06) Villagers in Sampwe carry bags from airdrop zone

01:15 – 01:37 (Shot 13/04/06) Bite: Stephanie Savariaud, WFP Spokesperson

"The WFP had to resort to airdrops in DRC, in Katanga, because the logistics conditions to get the food by road to this area is very difficult, it can take up to 4-5 weeks because it's the rainy season at the moment. There were also some security issues. Some transport companies didn't want to use the roads for fear of attacks."

01:37 – 01:43 (Shot Feb.2006) WFP beneficiaries, Mitwaba, Katanga, DRC
(Courtesy Monuc)

01:43 – 02:09 (Shot Feb.2006) Children in health center in Mitwaba, Katanga, DRC
(Courtesy Monuc)

02:09 – 02:28 (Shot 13/04/06) Bite: Stephanie Savariaud, WFP Spokesperson

"There are thousands of displaced people in the Katanga area and it's very difficult to help them on a regular basis. Usually these people come to the camps because their villages have been burned, they've lost all their belongings, they have to start all over again from scratch. So we have to help them as quick as possible and this time the only way to do it was to use airdrops."

02:28 – 03:00 (Shot 13/04/06) WFP Airdrop around Sampwe, Katanga, DRC



WFP COMPLETES AIR DROPS OF FOOD INTO DR CONGO'S KATANGA PROVINCE

KINSHASA – The United Nations World Food Programme said today that its airdrops into Katanga Province, south-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, had provided enough food aid for some 34,700 displaced people, but a severe lack of funds was preventing many more needy from being reached.

“We are very pleased to announce the success of this first airdrop into DRC,” said Felix Bamezon, WFP’s Country Director in the DR Congo. “But we are not content with what has been achieved. We need to reach many more people in the next few months, particularly in North Kivu.”

Although expensive, WFP chose to airdrop because the rainy season, rising overland transport costs and insecurity have made it difficult to use roads. Food trucks were taking up to eight weeks to reach distribution sites from the provincial capital of Lubumbashi.

To provide food aid to people who had fled to the towns of Dubie, Sampwe and Mitwaba, an Antonov-12 aircraft has spent just over three weeks dropping 336 metric tons of commodities, using a triple bagging technique which is cheaper than airlifting food and slightly less than twice the cost of road transport.

“Our village was totally destroyed by armed men. I feed my child with what I have – some cassava – but I am really happy that aid has arrived,” said Claudine Kambemba in Sampwe after seeing food being airdropped not far from her camp.

WFP has very little funding to assist as many as possible of the estimated 220,000 IDPs in Katanga and another 80,000 IDPs in North Kivu Province, where WFP was forced to cut rations during the last distribution because of a shortage of contributions to its operations in the DRC.

WFP’s partner non-governmental organisation last week completed distributing cereals, pulses, oil and salt to more than 8,750 people in Sampwe. Distributions of air dropped food aid is taking place in the next few days for 9,972 people in Mitwaba and 16,000 people in Dubie.

North Kivu was ravaged by war in 1993 and many people are still trapped in the middle of fighting between armed groups. A volcanic eruption in 2002 added to the province’s problems.



WFP is struggling to provide food for displaced people, malnourished children, former child soldiers, victims of sexual abuse and more than 30,500 school children in the province.

The DR Congo is one of the most difficult environments for humanitarian agencies and NGOs in the world because of its size, continued insecurity in the East and the lack of funding from donors.

In March, WFP Executive Director James Morris led a mission with his UNICEF and UNHCR counterparts, Ann M. Veneman and António Guterres, to the DRC to urge the international community to step up its support.

But with just three months left of its two-and-a-half year Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation in the DR Congo, WFP still has a critical shortfall of 36 percent or US\$69 million of the total of US\$191 million needed to help up to 1.6 million internally displaced and other vulnerable people.

Major contributors to WFP's relief and recovery operation in DRC include: the United States (US\$57 million), Canada (US\$10 million), Belgium (US\$6.9 million), the European Commission (US\$6 million), Germany US\$4.9 million), Italy (US\$3.7 million), Japan (US\$3.5 million), Ireland (US\$3.5 million), France (US\$3.1 million) and the Netherlands (US\$2.7 million).

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Recent footage of the airdrops into Katanga (a VNR) is available; for further information contact Jonathan Dumont on 39 06 6513 3152 or jonathan.dumont@wfp.org.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency: each year, we give food to an average of 90 million poor people to meet their nutritional needs, including 61 million hungry children, in at least 80 of the world's poorest countries. **WFP -- We Feed People.**

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