



## Food security: Student worksheet

### Case study Malawi

We know that, for whatever reason, the world's climate is changing, and temperatures are rising. There will be more extreme weather events, particularly those related to hotter oceans – such as tornadoes and hurricanes.

We also know that about half the world's people are *subsistence farmers*, living on what they can grow themselves. How will climate change affect them?

### Malawian staple foods

Throughout most of the 20th century Malawi's main food crop was maize. At the end of that century, 90% of Malawi's grain was maize which provided 56% of all calories consumed. Malawi was the world's most maize-dependent country, except for Zambia. Late last century the maize harvest became unpredictable, from producing 1.5 million tonnes in 1980 to 0.6 million tonnes in 1994. If the long wet season comes on time the crops grow, but sometimes the rains fail and the people go hungry.



Maize is mainly ground to make flour which is used to make a porridge called *nsima*. In this photo, Anne is cooking nsima in pot over a charcoal fire outside her home. It is during the dry season; during the long wet season she uses a small outdoor 'kitchen' to keep dry and keep the fire going.

At Blantyre Girls Primary School classes start at 7 am. Many pupils will have left home by 6 am. This photo shows pupils lined up for their school's free lunch. They will receive a small bowl of nsima. For many it will be their first food for the day, eaten at about 11 am.



Here is a quote from the Oxfam Country Director in Malawi.

“Despite the fact that Malawi’s greenhouse gas emissions are minuscule, climate change is hitting poor countries like Malawi first and worst and people are suffering...”

The increasing food insecurity caused by climate change has also limited the number of casual jobs available on commercial farms. In the past, nearby small-scale sugar and tea plantations were sources of employment for many people in Nsanje. However, farmers say that flood-induced migration means that there are now many more people seeking work on the plantations than there are jobs available.

### **Find out more about Malawi**

- Where is it?
- Apart from maize, what else do Malawians eat?
- How many people does it have? How does Malawi’s population compare to your own state?
- What is its area, and how does it compare to your own state?
- What is the name of their currency? How does it compare to the dollar?
- What are the biggest health problems in Malawi?
- What is the main language spoken in Malawi? What percentage of the people speak it?
- What will happen in Malawi if the rains on which their maize crops depend do not start on time?