

FNSWG

Food and Nutrition Security Working Group (Southern Africa) Monthly Update



This bulletin is being piloted to summarise the various issues related to food security in the southern Africa region in order to present a concise update on a monthly basis. Information comes from Government, UN, NGOs and other Partners.

Issue 01

October 2012

Regional Food and Nutrition Security Update

In October, food security conditions continue to range between Stressed and Crisis conditions (IPC Phases 2-3). Most parts of Lesotho, central and southern Malawi, southern and central Zimbabwe, central and southern Mozambique and parts of Angola continue to experience constraints in accessing food. With the beginning of the lean season, the number of people facing recurrent acute food insecurity in the southern Africa region is expected to increase even though the overall food security in the region remains fairly stable.

Therefore, food security conditions are expected to deteriorate in all areas over the next six months. The most likely scenario is that there will be an increase in the prevalence of acute malnutrition mostly in children, and increasing use of consumption and livelihood coping strategies, some of which may be irreversible. Ultimately, there will be a further decrease in the resilience of households and loss of production capacity.

The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) update assessment (October 2012) reveals that the number of vulnerable population is projected to increase from 1,630,007 to 1,972,993 people, representing a 21% increase (342,986 additional people between November 2012 and March 2013). There is a total maize requirement of 84,811 MT, equivalent to a cash value of MK 6,7 bln (about US\$ 21,269,271) up to March 2013. The main factors contributing to the increase in the food insecure population include: poor rainfall performance; increase in food prices and essential non-food items; poor cash crop production and sales; devaluation of the local currency and instability in the supply of fuel products. Maize prices are higher in the southern parts of Malawi and on average they range from MK 65 to MK 85 per kg followed by the central region ranging from MK 60 to MK 80 per kg. The northern region has the lowest average price range of MK 50 to 60 per kg. Humanitarian assistance has been slower than expected and further delays could worsen the situation (MVAC, October 2012 Update, Bulletin No. 8, Volume 2).

In Zimbabwe, maize prices are higher in deficit areas (US\$ 0.44/kg) compared to the national average of US\$ 0.30/kg. Supplies are also limited in grain deficit areas, forcing households to purchase maize flour (US\$ 0.57/kg). 1.33 million cattle are affected by the drought and declining pasture conditions.

Food security conditions have also significantly declined in Angola since September, particularly in Cuanza Sul, Benguela and Namibe.

While in Southern Africa staple food prices were generally stable during the month of September, projected demand for South African maize is expected to exert pressure on the country's maize supply this year; overall, maize prices could still increase in the coming months as local supplies begin to dwindle. Maize grain prices on the South African Futures Exchange (SAFEX) fell in September averaging R2,419/MT compared to R2,679/MT in August in line with current global maize price trends, which are currently stable.

Highlights

Malawi

The number of vulnerable people is projected to increase from 1,630,007 to 1,972,993 people, representing a 21% increase from the figures reported in the MVAC June 2012 Assessment (342,986 additional people between November 2012 and March 2013).

Zimbabwe

The number of food insecure people will increase in the lean season, from 1,184,071 (October to December) to 1,667,618 (January to March 2013). This is an increase of 483,547 food insecure people (ZimVAC, July 2012).

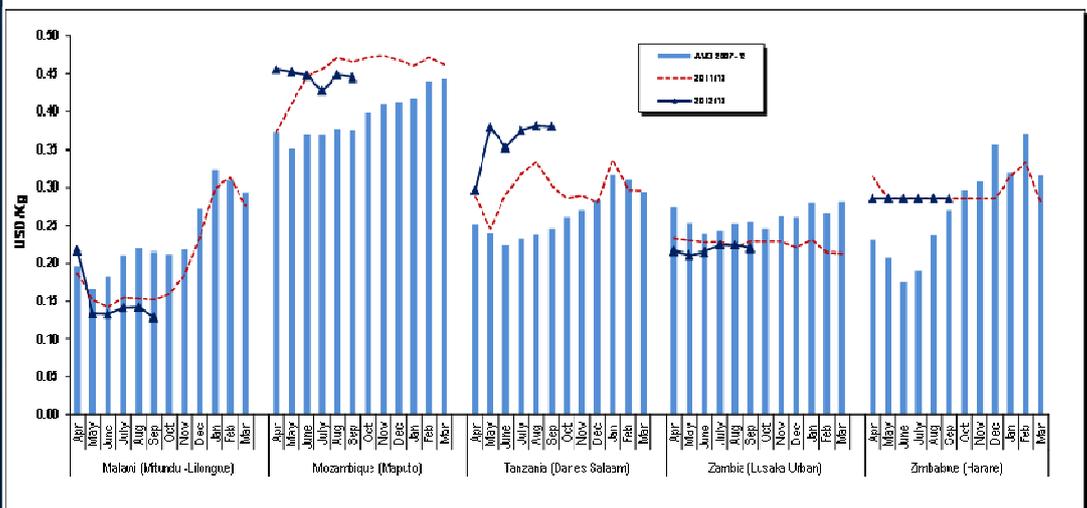
IPC Classification

Stressed (Phase 2)

"Even with any humanitarian assistance, at least one in five households in the area have the following or worse: Minimally adequate food consumption but unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in irreversible coping strategies" (IPC Reference Manual, FAO 2012).

Crisis (Phase 3)

"Even with humanitarian assistance, at least one in five households in the area have the following or worse: food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition, OR marginally able to meet food needs only with accelerated depletion of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps" (IPC Reference Manual, FAO 2012).



Maize Grain Retail Prices in Key Markets

MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSES TO DATE

LESOTHO

- WFP - Emergency food assistance to vulnerable households affected by severe crop failure has started in October. The Emergency Operation (EMOP) will address the food needs of 210,000 most vulnerable people from October 2012 to April 2013. Under WFP's existing development projects, assistance is also being provided to 110,000 primary school students through a school meals programme and to 53,000 people under its nutrition programme, located mainly in the mountainous areas as part of a food security safety net.
- UNICEF will provide cash transfers to vulnerable children, improve nutritional status for women and children, and promote access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.
- WHO will strengthen disease surveillance and facility based management of acute malnutrition.
- FAO Lesotho's strategy is to restore crop and vegetable production capacity to 21,000 households through conservation agriculture and home gardening; support productive safety nets for 4,000 households; support 6,000 households with animal disease control, technically support the management of crop-livestock interactions; and integrate of food security, agriculture and DRR actions into programmes and policies.
- FAO is implementing a US\$ 1.1 million CERF funded project, complemented by US\$ 964,000 (ECHO and Belgium), to immediately aid 10,800 most vulnerable households.
- A funding gap of US\$ 3.4 million has been identified to achieve the objectives stated in the Flash Appeal.

MALAWI

- WFP is continuing the relief operation and two additional districts will be targeted in October adding up to a total of 10 districts that are receiving food assistance. The operation started in August and is gradually increasing to reach a total of 1.6 million people with missing food entitlements in the 15 affected districts throughout the country until the end of the lean season in March 2013 as per MVAC recommendations.
- The funding gap remains at US\$ 32million to provide assistance to food insecure people in the current MVAC response after securing US\$ 28 million. The secured funds included Government's in-kind contribution of 25,000 MT of maize valued at US\$ 5.5 million. Maize shortfall currently accounts for 80% of the commodity shortfall (44,845 MT out of 56,138 MT).
- FAO Malawi's strategy is to restore crop production capacity to households in the southern region affected by prolonged dry-spells; support productive safety net and livelihood strategies for small-scale farmers; support the integration of small livestock into livelihood strategies, where appropriate, for small scale farmers and technically support the management of crop-livestock interactions; and support the government of Malawi to integrate of food security, agriculture and DRR actions into programmes and policies.

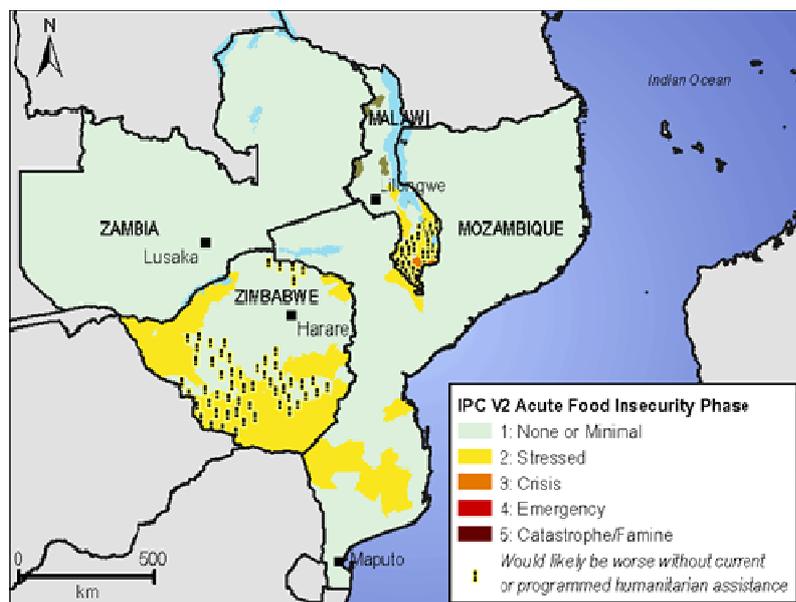
ZIMBABWE

- The WFP Safety Net Programme (rural & urban) will reach out to over 240,000 beneficiaries this October. The Seasonal Targeted Assistance (STA) plans to assist about 550,000 beneficiaries in October, rising to over 1.5 million by March 2013.
- The Government continues to implement the Grain Loan Scheme in rural areas though its coverage is limited by stock and logistical challenges. Beneficiary households receive a 50kg bag of maize each time; the rotational beneficiary system in most communities reduces impact. Other government programmes are the Drought Relief Programme in 12 rural districts through a voucher system and the Child Protection Fund in 10 districts (US\$ 10-25/household/month).
- FAO will support approximately 80 000 households with crop and livestock inputs for the 2012/13 cropping season using vouchers and a minimum 20% contribution by farmers. FAO will also implement a livestock emergency drought mitigation programme targeting 35,370 households in the drought stricken areas in the extreme south of the country. The livestock rescue programme, will provide supplementary animal feed, vaccination against Anthrax and FMD, and rehabilitation of boreholes and water points.
- There has been a considerable reduction in donor support towards the provision of agricultural inputs for the 2012/13 cropping season (US\$ 28 million) compared to approximately US\$ 44 million for the 2011/12 cropping season.

Recommendations:

- To meet the survival deficit of food insecure households, cash transfers and food assistance should continue to provide food access in the short term.
- However, in the medium to long term investment is needed in agricultural activities to support restoration of food production capacity in the next season, to build livelihood assets and increase resilience to shocks.

Regional Food Security Outlook October to December 2012



Projected food security outcomes, October - December 2012 (FEWSNET, October 2012)

Food security conditions are expected to deteriorate (as is typical) with the advent of the lean season, partly owing to the erosion of production capacity and waves of natural shocks. A rapid decline in conditions could occur in the localized areas already experiencing Stressed and Crisis levels of acute food insecurity, if poor households are not sufficiently meeting their basic food needs under current levels of humanitarian assistance and if this assistance is discontinued or delayed.

Regional supplies of exportable maize grain surpluses are expected to tighten over the next six months. With the largest surplus, South Africa, has already exported 53 % of its available surplus; and Zambia, with a projected surplus of just over 1 million has increased its strategic grain reserve (SGR) requirement by 50%, which will essentially cut in half available exportable supplies. This action in Zambia is likely to temper expected price increases domestically over the lean season as the Government will off-load stocks

from the SGR to markets countrywide in an attempt to contain price increases. SAFEX prices of maize in South Africa will continue to mirror global trends which are currently stable; responding to the latest global demand/supply projections.

If normal to below normal rains occur, as is currently the case in many of the southern parts of the SADC region during the 2012/13 agricultural season, the same areas impacted by prolonged dry spells during the 2011/12 agricultural season could be affected. This will again result in reduced harvests in 2013.

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Sources of Information: FAO , WFP Country Offices and FEWSNET. Photo: FAO-Regional DRR/M Office for Southern Africa