

Reference Date: 08-April-2015

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cropping season has started in southern part of the country amid concerns about continuing insecurity across the country
- Crop production recovered in 2014 from sharply reduced 2013 output, but still is 58 percent below pre-crisis average
- Food access severely constrained due to destroyed livelihoods, reduced own production and sharply curtailed market activity
- Food security situation continues to be of grave concern despite relative improvement following 2014 harvest

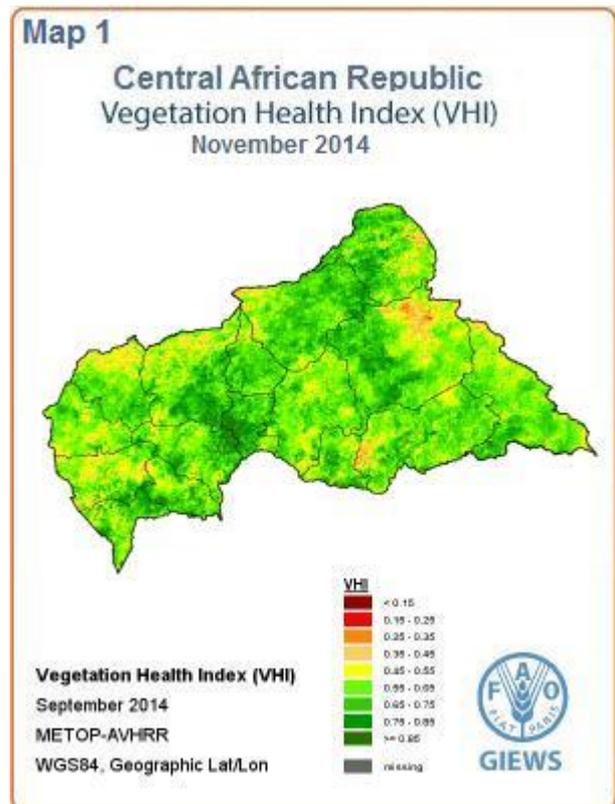
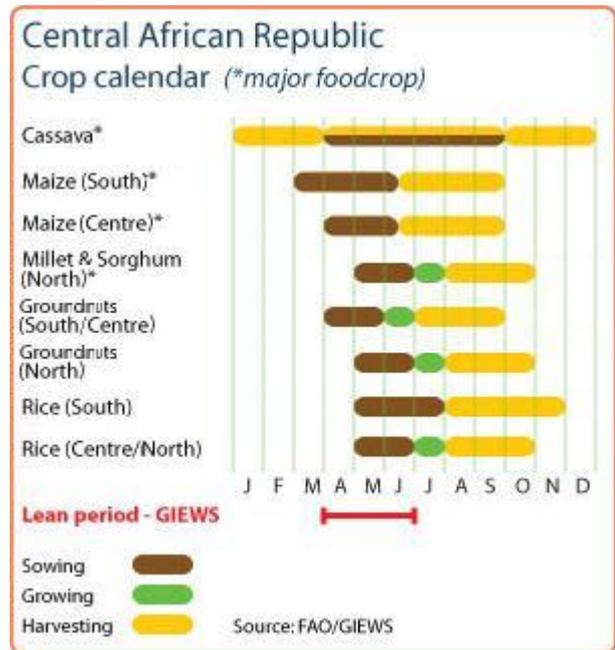
### Cropping season has started against a backdrop of continuing insecurity

Sowing of the 2015 maize crop began in March in some areas of the south while sowing of the other main cereal crops is expected to start in other parts of the country in April and May and continue until June. Despite the current favourable weather conditions, planted area and agricultural operations are likely to be negatively impacted by widespread civil insecurity. The significant drop in food crop production over the past few years has led to the depletion of the already inadequate household productive assets. The Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, WFP and NGO partners are providing crop production support to vulnerable households across the country. FAO plans to assist 150 000 households through the distribution of seeds and farming tools but so far has secured funding to assist only 86 400 households.

### 2014 crop production exhibits some recovery compared to 2013 but still at well below-average levels

Harvesting of the 2014 main cereal crops was completed in September in southern areas and in October in northern areas. In some areas of the south, harvesting of the secondary season crops was concluded in November. Despite favourable weather conditions during the secondary season cropping period in most southern provinces (see Map1), planted area and agricultural operations have been negatively impacted by widespread civil insecurity.

According to the findings of a joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), which visited the country in August last year, the 2014 aggregate production of food crops increased by 11 percent from the sharply reduced 2013 output, but still remains 58 percent below the pre-crisis five-year average (2008-2012). The 2014 aggregate outcome is mainly driven by a significant increase in cassava production (+45 percent), while cereal output declined by about 54 percent from 2013. The ongoing socio-political crisis and widespread insecurity severely disrupted agricultural and marketing activities and caused the depletion of the already inadequate household productive assets. This, coupled with erratic rainfall in



western parts of the country during the main season cropping period (see Map 2) and some pest attacks, led to a 23 percent reduction in the planted area.

The livestock and fishing sectors were also severely affected by the crisis. The decline in livestock numbers from 2013 due to theft, looting and mass slaughter of animals is estimated at 67 percent for cattle and 77 percent for small livestock and poultry, a daunting task for the future recovery of the overall agricultural sector. Fish supplies declined by about 40 percent from pre-crisis levels due to insecurity in fishing areas and loss of fishing equipment.

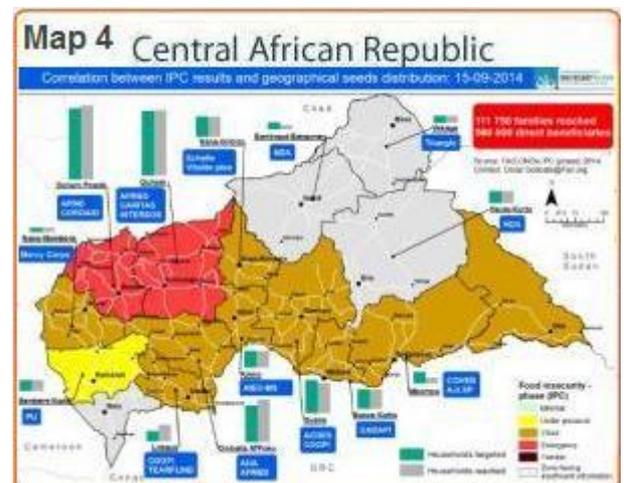
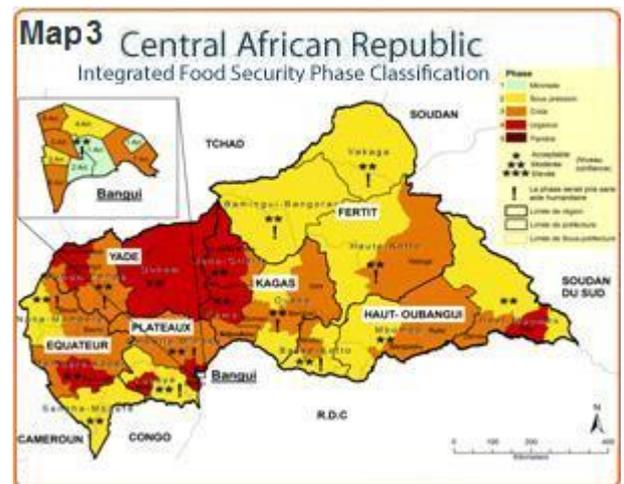
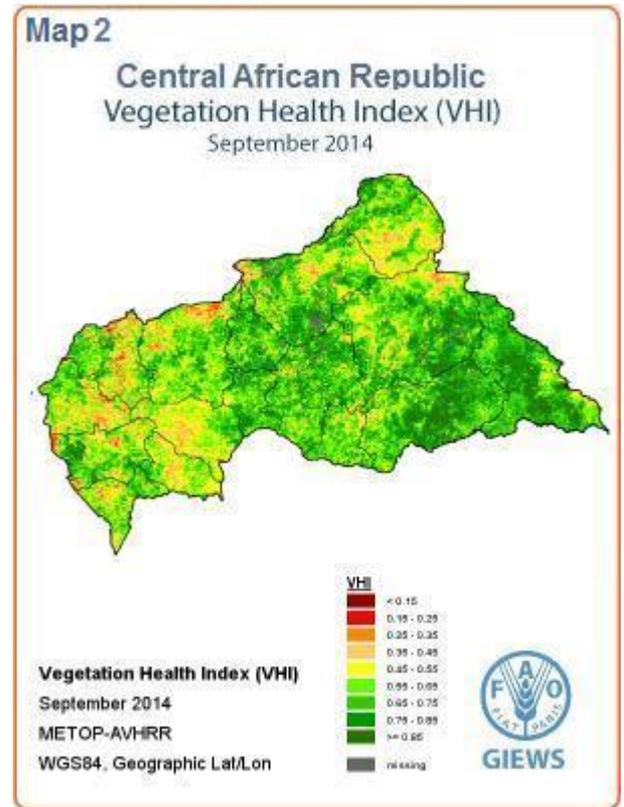
### Grave food security situation persists

The acute and complex emergency affecting the Central African Republic (CAR) has resulted in widespread disruption in agricultural and marketing activities and caused massive displacement resulting in a severe negative impact on both food availability and access. According to UNHCR, a new surge in violence reported since the beginning of the year is triggering new internal and cross-border population movements resulting in approximately 50 000 additional people being displaced since the beginning of the year. As of March 2015, the IDP caseload was estimated at 436 256, (representing about 10 percent of the total population), including about 49 113 in Bangui.

A large segment of the population of the CAR is facing serious and constantly deteriorating food access constraints, due to destroyed livelihoods, reduced own production, sharply curtailed market activity, food availabilities and access. In addition, not only the quantity of food intake is reduced, but the dietary diversity is also drastically diminished, with the substitution of more nutritious cereal and vegetable staples with more cassava and the sharp reduction of animal proteins intake. This widespread dietary deterioration raises serious concerns, having a dire effect in terms of nutrition and health.

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in October 2014 (see Map), about 1.5 million people (out of a total population of 4.6 million), are in need of urgent assistance (IPC Phase 3 “Crisis” and IPC Phase 4 “Emergency”) with 1.3 million of them located in rural areas and 200 000 in Bangui. The number of people in need of urgent assistance represents 32 percent and 25 percent, respectively, of the population in rural areas and in Bangui. The regions most affected by food insecurity (Phase 4 “Emergency”), are Ouham province and most of Nana Grebizi and Kemo prefectures in the northwest, Ngaoundaye, Bocaranga and Berberati sub-prefectures in the in west, Boda and Bimbo (located at the outskirts of Bangui) sub-prefectures in the south, Obo sub-prefecture in the east.

Additional food security indicators show a deterioration of the situation compared to a year earlier. For instance, the Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA), conducted by WFP in October 2014, indicates that the percentage of households with inadequate food consumption stood at 26 percent, compared to 15 percent in 2013. In addition, the number of households forced to recur to negative coping strategies increased over the past year: the percentage of households which had to sell domestic and productive assets increased from 27 percent to 30 percent and from 20 percent to 22 percent, respectively, while school dropout and illegal activities more than doubled, increasing from 5 percent to 11 percent and from 4 percent to 10 percent, respectively.



In response, the international community launched in December 2014 a Strategic Response Plan, which aims to assist 2 million beneficiaries for a total cost of USD 613 million. The food security cluster plans to assist 1 200 000 beneficiaries for a total cost of USD 195 million, providing immediate life-saving assistance through food aid distributions, supporting the agricultural sector by improving access to essential agricultural inputs, including seeds and tools, and contributing to strengthen the resilience of households through cash-for-work activities on the rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructures and the establishment of community-based credit systems that will allow reinvestment in productive activities.

### **Increased and strong livelihood support required**

Last year, FAO, WFP and NGO partners provided crop production support to a total of 111 750 vulnerable families across the country. The targeting of beneficiaries was based on the results of the IPC analysis conducted in April 2014 (see Map 4). For the main planting season, each of the 83 950 families was assisted with 25 kg of crop seeds (groundnut, maize and rice) and two hoes, as well as by WFP's provision of seed protection rations. In addition, FAO assisted 27 800 families with seeds (beans, maize, millet, niébé, sesame and sorghum), and tools as part of the short-cycle (secondary) season support.

In addition to emergency relief operations, FAO is engaged in resilience support operations and some 27 000 households would be assisted, with received funds so far, through resilience activities (caisses de resilience) that will help households to accumulate, diversify and protect assets by building their capacities in terms of agriculture techniques, financial abilities and governance structures at community level. Participating families will be engaged in contractual production of quality seeds and food, support to school gardening and feeding, nutrition surveillance and cash transfer initiatives to boost their community. These activities will be completed with the distribution of small processing machines and the constitution of food and seed reserves.