GIEWS Country Brief
The Congo

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Planting of 2020 main season maize crop finalized under favourable weather conditions
- Import requirements in 2020 forecast slightly below-average level
- About 700 000 people estimated food insecure in Brazzaville as of July 2020

Planting of 2020 main season maize crop finalized under favourable weather conditions
Agriculture only contributes to a small portion of the national Gross Domestic Product. The main food crop is cassava, which is cultivated throughout the year, alternatively in northern and southern regions, depending on the rainy season. A limited quantity of cereals is cultivated in the country, mainly maize, which is largely used for the production of livestock feed.

Harvesting of cassava is underway in the northern regions, while planting of the 2020 main season maize crop finalized in early October under favourable weather conditions and harvesting is expected to take place from mid-December.

Import requirements in 2020 forecast slightly below-average level
Domestic crop production covers a small portion of the consumption requirements and imports account for approximately 90 percent of the total cereal utilization.

With a population of about 5.5 million people, the total cereal import requirements for the 2020 marketing year (January/December) are forecast at 320 000 tonnes, slightly below the average level, including 200 000 tonnes of wheat and 110 000 tonnes of rice.

About 700 000 people estimated to be food insecure in Brazzaville as of July 2020
Between October 2019 and January 2020, heavy rainfall triggered flooding that affected approximately 170 000 people, including 30 000 refugees from the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in northern and eastern areas. Flooding caused displacement and serious crop, livestock and fisheries losses in the affected areas, where prices of staple
foods, particularly of cassava and bananas, increased in the first months of 2020 due to low supply.

In addition, the negative impact of the restrictive measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic on informal labour and on food supply chains, resulted, on one side, in the loss of income and, on the other, in low food availability and consequent price increases. These factors further limited the access to food for the most vulnerable population. In Brazzaville, as of July 2020, about 700 000 people (35 percent of the city’s population) were estimated to be food insecure as a consequence of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action and the World Food Programme.

The country also hosts about 43 000 refugees from neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic. The refugees mostly reside in northern and eastern areas of the country, where host communities face food shortages and livelihood opportunities are limited. The refugees’ food security is essentially guaranteed by continued humanitarian assistance.

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