

19 November 2002

Highlights

- During the last ten-day dekad of October and the first ten-day dekad of November, above normal rains in central and southern Mozambique marked the onset of the rainy season.
- The entire southern region (except for Maputo Province) and a large part of central region registered significant above normal rainfall, whereas in most of the northern region the observed rainfall was below normal values although the season does not normally start until December.
- The weak tropical depression "Atang" provoked moderate rain in Cabo Delgado Province when it made landfall near the border between Mozambique and Tanzania on 12 November 2002. The affected districts were Ibo, Palma, Mocimboa da Praia, Mueda and Macomia in northern Cabo Delgado.
- "Boura," the third tropical cyclone of the season, dissipated in Indian Ocean before threatening Mozambique.
- The newly adopted Cyclone Warning System came into force on 1 November 2002. This system, which was developed by INAM and INGC in collaboration with FEWS NET MIND, is comprised by a cyclone severity category system and a color alert system and was first used for cyclone Atang.
- The National Vulnerability Analysis Group in Mozambique is leading the second round of assessments on Food Security and Nutrition in November and December 2002. The objectives of this assessment are to evaluate the current food security situation through nutritional analysis and food security monitoring.
- Food insecurity in urban areas is likely to increase due to the following factors: (a) rapid urbanization, (b) lack of access to land and rural transfers, especially in Maputo (c) high prices for staples, (d) changes in relative prices and availability of key commodities consumed by the poor, (e) regional dynamics such as the impact of changes in Southern Africa on urban food security and (f) other factors including HIV/AIDS, unemployment and declines in remittances.

This monthly bulletin is produced by FEWS NET in collaboration with its partners, including the Early Warning Department (DAP) and the Agricultural Market Information System (SIMA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADER), the National Institute of Meteorology (INAM), and the World Food Program (WFP).

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Above normal rains mark the start of the season in southern and central Mozambique

During the last ten-day dekad of October and the first ten-day dekad of November, above normal rains in central and southern Mozambique marked the onset of the rainy season. Figure 1(a) shows satellite estimates of rainfall distribution during the first dekad of November 2002.

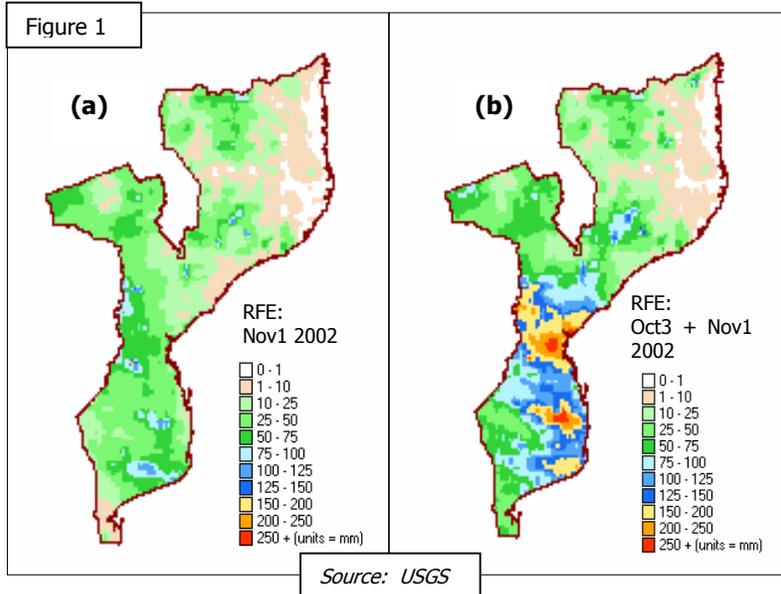
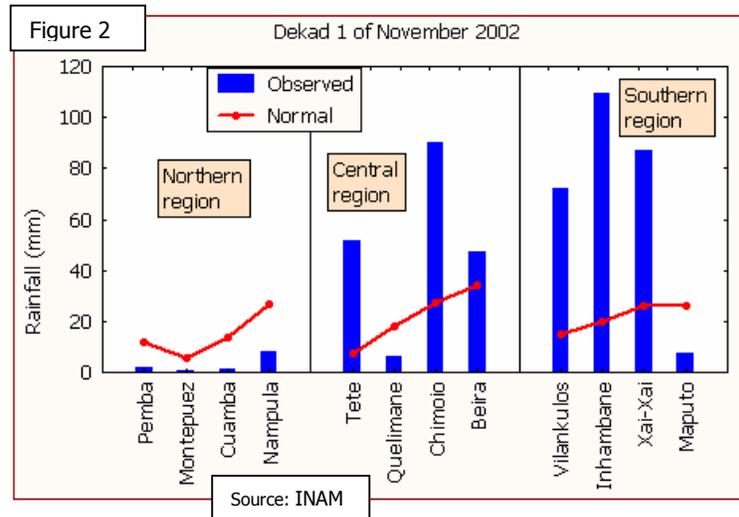


Figure 1(b) shows the cumulative rainfall for the last dekad of October (Oct3) and the first dekad of November (Nov1). This image illustrates the large amounts of rain that fell during this period in the southern and central region.

Ground station data from INAM corresponds well with the satellite image (compare Figure 1 (a) and Figure 2). The observed data shows that in most of the central and southern region, rainfall has exceeded the normal values whereas in the northern region the observed rainfall was below normal. Rains normally start last in the northern region, in December.

A sequence of active cold fronts and localized stormy weather due to intensive heating were the meteorological causes for the rains in the south and central region.

These rains did not cause any serious flood threats for the affected areas due to the low level of the rivers, the good infiltration capacity as result of the prolonged drought and the large amount of storage capacity in dams. Looking to the whole southern Africa region, rains were concentrated along the coast of Mozambique, while floods in Mozambique are often caused by the upstream waters from the neighboring countries.

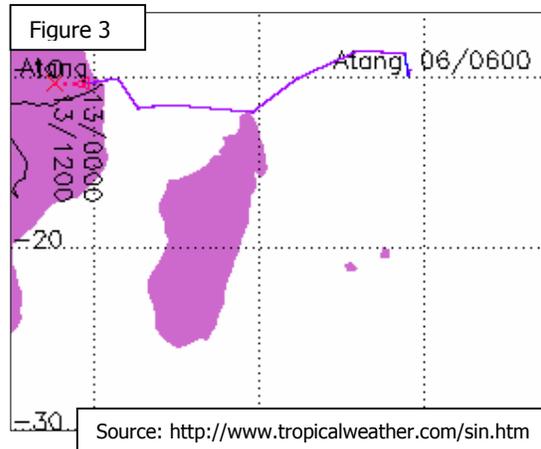


From 11 November 2002, the weak tropical depression "Atang" influenced the normal weather pattern of the northern region, especially in Cabo Delgado Province where it provoked moderate rain. As already stated in previous reports, the effective rains for that region is only expected by early December.

The much-needed rain over the drought-stricken southern region brings hope to farmers who have already started planting. According to the climate outlook from SARCOF, for the October–December 2002 period, Mozambique will have normal to above normal rains.

Moderate activity marks the beginning of 2002/2003 cyclone season

The 2002/2003 cyclone season in the southwest Indian Ocean basin officially started on 1 November 2002. During the first twenty days of the new season, three tropical depressions formed, two of which reached the mature state of a tropical cyclone. "Atang", the first named storm of the season, hit Mozambican coast, and "Boura" the second name cyclone of season dissipated in Indian Ocean.



Tropical Cyclone "Atang" hit the Mozambican coast

A tropical disturbance formed on 4 November 2002 and developed into a tropical depression. On 6 November 2002, this tropical depression was officially called "Atang" by La Réunion Tropical Cyclone Warning Center; at this point it was weakening as it moved towards the southwest at a speed of 9 Km/hr. On 10 November 2002 it intensified when it moved into the warm waters of the Mozambique Channel, but on the following day again weakened. It was in this weakened stage that it made landfall at the border between Mozambique and Tanzania on the evening of 12 November 2002. According to the National Institute of Meteorology (INAM), the wind gusts

observed in the affected areas were up to 70 Km/h. Moderate rain occurred in some places of Cabo Delgado Province. The affected districts were Ibo, Palma, Mocimboa da Praia, Mueda and Macomia. With exception of moderate off-season rains in those districts no damage was reported due to this storm. The figure above (Figure 3) shows the entire unusual path of the cyclone "Atang". Historically and statistically, northern Cabo Delgado is not a cyclone prone region.

New Tropical Cyclone Warning System now in force

The newly adopted Cyclone Warning System came into force on 1 November 2002. This system, which was developed by INAM and INGC in collaboration with FEWS NET MIND, is essentially comprised by a cyclone severity category system and a color alert system.

Categories of cyclone severity range from 1 for a moderate tropical storm to 5 for the most severe tropical cyclones. ("Atang" was less than a Category 1 storm when it hit the coast.) This severity scale is consistent with the World Meteorological Organization's operational plan for the South West Indian Ocean, and the practice of other countries in the region. The risk of property and crop damage, shore erosion and danger to life increases from low to moderate for a category 1 to extreme for a category 4 cyclone. A category 5 cyclone is rare and is likely not to have impacted Mozambique before.

The Color Alerts included in the Watch or Warning message provide communities with an indication of the time available to prepare for the onset of high winds as follows:

Blue A tropical cyclone may affect the area within 24 to 48 hours. High winds are not yet a threat but communities should start to take precautions. The advised precautions include: Check the safety of objects that may be carried by wind – for example roofs, fences, scaffolding, flower pots, aerials, outdoor furniture. Factories may begin precautionary shutdown procedures. Some ships may leave harbor. Check fishing boat moorings.

Yellow A tropical cyclone is moving closer and is highly likely to affect communities within 24 hours. Here, communities are advised to start taking actions quickly. Check the safety of doors and

windows, or if the houses are potentially unsafe, seek safe shelter. Store emergency water and food. Close schools – send children home. Move quickly from flood plains to safe refuge. Factories may close. Make ships and fishing boats safe. Listen for cyclone advice updates.

Red The high winds are imminent (within 6 hours) or may be happening. In this critical stage, communities are advised to take final safety measures before the onset of high winds. Ensure doors and windows are safely secured. When high winds occur, communities should stay indoors. Roads and bridges may close. Radio will broadcast warning messages around the clock.

Food security assessment update underway

The regional SADC FANR Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) is supporting a series of follow-up emergency Food Security Assessments in the six countries most affected by drought and production shortfalls. In Mozambique, the Vulnerability Analysis Group is leading this second round of assessments on Food Security and Nutrition in November and December 2002. The objectives of this assessment are primarily to: (1) analyze and evaluate the current food security status of the population; (2) update the assumptions made in the August assessment, and (3) provide detailed information to adjust the current emergency response at national and sub-national level.

This assessment has two components: (1) health, nutrition, water and sanitation and HIV assessment, led by the Ministry of Health with support from UNICEF and participation of INE (National Institute of Statistics), and (2) food security update led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and INGC (National Institute for Disaster Management) with support from WFP, FEWS NET and the participation of FAO. The results of both components will be released by the mid December.

The geographic coverage is based on the results of the July/August National Vulnerability Assessment Committee assessment and the criteria used to select the districts are:

Nutritional Component

Districts with more than 10% of the population prioritized to receive food aid in the July/August assessment and HIV/AIDS prevalence of more than 10%. The respective provinces and districts are as follow:

- Maputo: Magude, Marracuene, Matutuine
- Gaza: Chicualacuala, Chigubo, Mabalane, Massangena and Massingir
- Inhambane: Funhalouro, Mabote, Govuro, Inhassoro and Panda
- Sofala: Chibababva, Machanga, Maringue and Muanza
- Manica: Guro, Machaze, Macossa and Tambara
- Tete: C. Bassa, Changara, Chiuta, Magoe, Moatize and Mutarara

Food Security Component

Other food insecure districts identified in July/August assessment, which will not be covered by the Nutrition component including:

- Maputo: Magude and Moamba
- Gaza: Chibuto, Guija and Mandlakazi
- Inhambane: Homoine, Massinga, Inharrime and Vilanculos
- Sofala: Chemba
- Manica: Tambara
- Tete: Magoe and Zumbo
- Zambezia: Inhassunge, Maganja da Costa, Mopeia, Namacurra.

Food Prices and Urban Vulnerability: Six Reasons for Concern

The high prices for staple commodities have been highlighted in past monthly reports. As shown on the graphs below, retail maize prices continue to be much higher than normal for the time of year. The Agricultural Market Information System (Sistema de Informação de Mercados Agrícolas, SIMA) reports that quantities of maize available in main supply zones are dwindling, so market prices are expected to continue to rise between now and the next harvest beginning in February/March.

These high prices should create strong incentives for rural producers to expand their area planted in the new season, but short-term negative impacts may be increasing for rural households who purchase food at this time of year when their own stocks are exhausted. The sustained high prices of basic food may be having an especially severe impact on poor urban households who purchase most of their food throughout the year. Other factors may compound the impact of high prices on the urban poor. Starting with this report, FEWS NET will begin a more in-depth look at urban vulnerability.

Several recent analyses indicate that food insecurity in urban areas may be increasing, due to long-term structural changes (urbanization and HIV/AIDS, for example) and transitory factors (high food prices and the disappearance of key commodities consumed by the urban poor.) FEWS NET will coordinate with various partners working on aspects of urban vulnerability in coming months, including the Ministry of Health, SIMA, the Institute of Statistics, the World Food Program and NGOs, to monitor this topic in more detail. Based on recent analyses by several organizations, six factors that contribute to the concern about urban vulnerability are identified:

#1 Urbanization. The urban population in Mozambique is expanding rapidly, from 4% in 1960 to 13% in 1980 to an estimated 29% in the 1997 census. Demographic projections estimate 1 in 3 Mozambicans will live in urban areas by 2010. The overall rate of urban poverty (60.2%) is lower than rural poverty (71.2%) according to the Household Survey of 1996-97. However, these aggregate figures may hide the depth of urban poverty and mask the fact that urban households are much more dependent on market purchases for their food than rural households. Vulnerability in urban areas is closely tied to market prices of food – which have been high and increasing sharply as shown below.

#2 Lack of land access and weak rural linkages, especially in Maputo. More than 1.5 million people, or nearly a third of the urban population, live in Maputo and neighboring Matola. Due to population pressures, a smaller portion of the urban poor in Maputo have access to land for growing their own food. In most other cities and towns in Mozambique, many households have access to nearby land for growing some of their own food. Even if households do not grow their own food, those with strong linkages to rural areas tend to have lower levels of poverty, according to the 2001 Urban Vulnerability Report carried out by the University of Eduardo Mondlane for the World Food Program. These linkages with rural areas around Maputo may be strained, given the high costs of transport and the current drought-induced drop in production in the southern provinces. This could reduce access of Maputo's poor to production from friends and family living in rural areas.

#3 High Prices for Staples

The nominal price for maize grain in Maputo's urban markets has been significantly higher than in recent years, as shown on Figure 4. Current prices are nearly as high as the peak prices reached in February

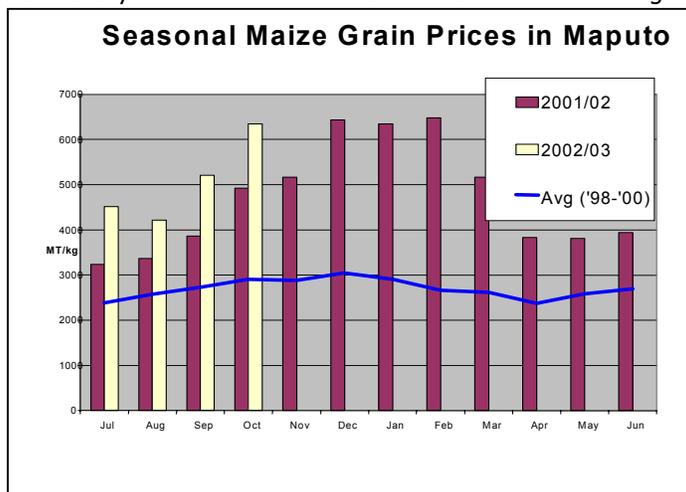


Figure 4 - Data from SIMA

2002, when maize sold for 6473 meticaais per kilogram. If prices follow normal seasonal trends, they are expected to continue increasing through February, when the first produce of the new season becomes available. As shown in previous monthly reports, Maputo maize prices remain higher than normal even when the effects of inflation are removed.

The Ministry of Health is updating statistics designed to compare the relationship between the minimum household food basket and minimum wages. The Institute of Statistics (INE) is planning to disaggregate the consumer price index by income group next year, to refine its analysis. Food already makes up more than 60% of the total consumption basket in the INE monthly survey of consumer prices, and this percentage is likely to be even higher for the poorest group. A consumption basket disaggregated by income group will allow more detailed monitoring of the effects of price increases urban households' access to all products purchased by the poor, not just food.

#4 Changes in Relative Prices and Availability of Key Commodities Consumed by the Poor

Another unique dynamic in the urban food security picture are the *relative* prices of different staple foods. In most years, one of the lowest priced commodities for poor consumers in Maputo is whole grain maize. However, many urban households do not have the time or labor to hand-pound whole grain maize into flour, as is the custom in many rural areas. The cheapest alternative for these households has been whole meal maize flour – maize run through a small mill with no extraction losses. More costly cereal options include packaged maize flour (from local mills or imported from South Africa or Swaziland), rice and bread. Although bread is costlier than other commodities based on the calories it provides, it is a 'fast food' that requires no cooking and this characteristic makes it attractive to many busy urban residents.

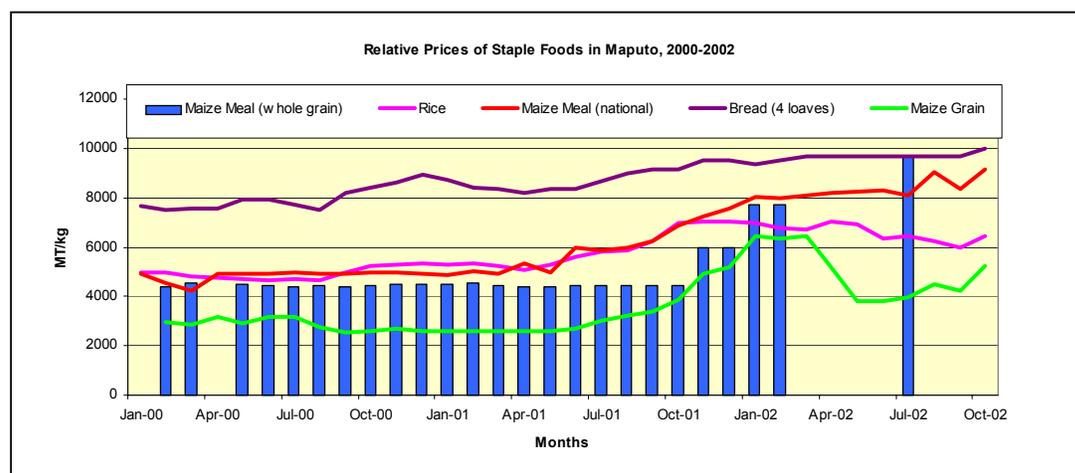


Figure 5 – Data from SIMA and INE

As shown on Figure 5, from the beginning of 2000 to the end of 2001, prices were relatively stable across all commodities. The poorest households were likely to purchase either whole maize grain for home pounding, or whole grain maize meal if they faced time or labor constraints. But at the end of 2001, the relative prices began to change. Most notably, whole grain maize meal disappeared from the Maputo market while at the same time, the price of all other maize products increased sharply. Unusually, the price of rice fell below the price of maize flour even though internationally, rice is nearly always more expensive than maize. At present in Maputo, it has been suggested that poor households – especially those with labor shortages - are consuming more rice than maize given the small price differential between the two commodities. Regional shortages of maize, high international prices, and Mozambican government taxes on some types of imported maize may be contributing to these distortions although these factors require more analysis.

#5 Regional Dynamics: The Impact of Changes in Southern Africa on Urban Food Security. A number of regional factors may alter the urban food security situation in Mozambique. Before the current Southern Africa food crisis, a significant amount of maize consumed in Maputo came from South

Africa. The Southern African crisis has led to a stronger than normal regional demand for South African maize. Combined with signs of a long-term reduction in maize planting in South Africa as farmers turn to more lucrative crops, this could mean higher prices and an insecure supply. Other structural factors, such as the impact of the crisis in Zimbabwe and the current demand for Mozambican maize in Malawi, require further analysis.

#6 Other Factors: HIV/AIDS, Unemployment, Declines in Remittances. Levels of urban vulnerability are also affected by factors other than the price and availability of food. The Ministry of Health's sentinel site survey in 2000 showed very high HIV/AIDS prevalence in some urban areas, such as Beira (28%), Chimoio (24.7%), Tete (22.3%) and Xai-Xai (18.3%). Remittances from Mozambicans working in South Africa have reportedly declined and some of these people move back to urban areas, contributing to rising unemployment rates. The 2000 floods resulted in severe short-term disruptions in most southern cities, but some effects have been longer-term, such as those related to the loss of small business assets and changes for households resettled to peri-urban areas.