

Southern Africa

# Lesotho

## Key Message Update

# The start of the rainy season increases poor household access to labor and income




### November 2020 - January 2021



### February - May 2021



#### IPC v3.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase

-  1: Minimal
-  2: Stressed
-  3+: Crisis or higher

**!** *Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance*

*FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.*

*FEWS NET Remote Monitoring countries use a colored outline to represent the highest IPC classification in areas of concern.*

## November 2020

### Key Messages:

Poor household food access remains limited as most households are dependent on market food purchases. Below-average incomes and slightly above-average staple food prices are constraining household purchasing power. Food consumption gaps are expected to persist through March 2021, along with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. The start of the green harvest in March 2021 is expected to begin improving household food access. The dry harvest is expected to start in April 2021. Household food security is expected to improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in April 2021, and Minimal (IPC Phase 1) in May 2021 as household food and income access improves.

The 2020/21 rainfall season has started on time, with much of the country receiving above-average cumulative rainfall since October 1, 2020. Most farmers are continuing to plant staple food crops, including maize, sorghum, beans, and potatoes. Early planted crops are expected to be at the emergence crop stage. Based on local and international forecasts, average rainfall is expected through the 2020/21 season and expected to drive average crop performance through the 2020/21 agricultural season, improving household food stocks with the start of the harvest in April 2021.

The increase in agricultural activities, particularly planting, is improving poor household access to labor and income. However, wage rates remain below-average constrained by the compounding economic impacts of COVID-19 and the poor 2019/20 harvest, which reduced better-off household incomes. Following the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in early October, poor household access to income from off-farm labor, petty trade, domestic work, and remittances has improved as local economic activities return to near-normal levels.

As of November 23, Lesotho has 2,086 confirmed COVID-19 cases. The government encourages the general population to wear masks, socially distance, and follow COVID-19 guidelines. Following the relaxation of restrictions in October, economic activity across the country is at near-normal levels. The opening of the borders has stimulated other sectors of the economy, including hospitality and recreation. Migrant workers are crossing the border into South Africa, but at below-average levels due to pre-travel requirements, including proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of crossing. However, tests are costly and likely limiting border crossings. Remittance flows are expected to improve to near-normal levels through the lean season.

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