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MOZAMBIQUE

Food Security Outlook Update

Mozambique FSOU December 2019

Following erratic rainfall, planting is underway throughout most of the country

KEY MESSAGES

• Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes prevail in most southern and central areas as humanitarian food assistance continues to mitigate worse outcomes. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is present in Moatize district in Tete, due to low levels of food assistance, and in conflict affected areas in Cabo Delgado. These outcomes are expected to persist through the end of the lean season in March.

• Due to two consecutive years of below-average production in southern semiarid areas, most poor households were unable to keep some of their harvested grain to be used as seeds for this year as normal. Similarly, the devastating floods caused by cyclone Idai in the central region have reduced households’ ability to retain seeds for the current season. Certified seed distribution is taking place in the central and northern regions, however, remains well below the needs.

• Maize grain prices increased between 6 and 31 percent from October to November and were 40 to 75 percent above the five-year average. Above average maize grain prices persist due to below average market supply. Abnormally high prices of maize grain are constraining the purchasing power of the most poor households who were affected by this year’s shocks and lost much or all of their annual food production and are reliant on market purchases for food.

• Rainfall had a slow start in the semiarid areas, particularly in the interior of Gaza and Inhambane provinces and southern parts of Sofala and Manica provinces where cumulative rainfall for October 1 to December 10 is below average. Land preparation and planting is ongoing although at below average rates in the southern region and near average in the central and northern regions. Localized heavy rain in Maputo and Sofala provinces in November caused localized flooding in urban and peri-urban areas of Beira and Maputo cities, mainly caused by poor drainage systems.

• Emergency humanitarian assistance continues to be carried out in cyclone, drought, and conflict affected areas and is covering nearly 70 percent of the total needs throughout the country. Although food assistance is covering most households affected by cyclone Idai in the central region of the country, pellagra cases are still increasing, and this may partly be linked to inadequate intake of micronutrients, specifically Vitamin B3 (Niacin). Pellagra cases have been mainly reported in Sofala and Manica provinces.

CURRENT SITUATION

Rainfall had an erratic start in the semiarid areas of the country, including the interior of Gaza and Inhambane provinces and the southern part of Sofala and Manica provinces. The cumulative rainfall since October 1 to December 10, was 75 percent of average with some rainfall deficits as large as 50 percent of average (Figure 1). Heavy rainfall in early December....
decreased rainfall deficits. Due to the heavy rains in neighboring countries including Zimbabwe and South Africa, as well as in the southern regions of the country, the main river basins of the central and southern zone have had increasing runoff volumes. The increase in the runoff volumes has been occurring in Buzi, Pungwe, Zambezi, Ligonha and Licungo basins in the central region and the Maputo, Incomati, Limpopo, Mutamba and Umbeluzi basins in the southern region and are contributing to increased water availability for irrigation systems, particularly in the south. The localized heavy rains that have occurred in Maputo and Sofala provinces in November have caused localized flooding in urban and peri-urban areas of Beira and Maputo cities, mainly caused by poor drainage systems, particularly in Beira city.

Land preparation and planting activities are ongoing, however at below average levels in the southern region and average levels in the central and northern regions. At the end of November, only 30 percent of the planned area in the country had been planted due to atypically late planting in the southern region. Given the typically early cessation of rainfall in February or March in the southern regions, crops planted by late December may not be able to reach maturity and could result in below average yields. The planting process of staple food crops of the main agricultural season, namely maize, beans and groundnuts, is gradually progressing as rainfall is setting in and where there is seed availability. Planting started in most areas of Maputo Province and the central region in mid-November, most areas of Gaza and Inhambane in early December, and northern areas in late November continuing in early to mid-December.

Due to two consecutive years of below-average production in the southern region of the country, particularly due to last year’s drought, most poor households were unable to keep some of their harvested grain to be used as seeds for this year as they normally would. Similarly, the devastating floods caused by cyclone Idai in the central region have reduced households’ ability to retain seeds for the current season. Poor households are resorting to borrowing seeds from neighbors or relatives, and on distributions by the Government of Mozambique and NGOs to access seeds. The seed distribution for the main planting season is ongoing and the e-voucher program in Manica and Sofala provinces is expected to cover 50,000 households. The in-kind distribution of maize and farming tools has also started in Manica, Sofala, Zambezia, Tete as well as in Cabo Delgado covering 110,000 households. However, due to below average access to seeds, area planted in cyclone affected areas is expected to be below average.

In order to maximize income to purchase market foods, the majority of poor households are engaging in self-employment activities, such as the production and sale of charcoal. However, in areas where rainfall has started, this activity is reduced as households will likely engage in agriculture activities. Incomes from these activities is below average, given the reduced payment power by middle and better-off households that were also affected by the shocks. In parts of the central region, there is also an increasing number of young males engaged in artisanal mining at above-average levels. However, as more people are engaged in similar self-employment activities, especially at a time of year when these activities usually seasonally decrease, the opportunities to sell are lower, limiting incomes. Collection and consumption of wild foods is increasing to atypical levels, though in areas affected by the 2018 drought, the availability remains well below average.

In most monitored markets, prices of maize grain increased by between 6 and 31 percent from October to November. At a national level, prices of maize grain were trending at levels 48 to 100 percent above their respective 2018 levels and were above the five-year average by between 40 and 75 percent. Overall, maize grain prices are following seasonal trends; however, at above average prices due to below average market supply during the current consumption period. In Gorongosa, the national reference market, maize grain prices have been increasing since May and remain above average and well above last year’s prices. Maize grain prices in Gorongosa in November are trending at 100 percent above their respective 2018 levels and 51 percent above the five-year average. Abnormally high prices of maize grain are constraining the purchasing power of the most vulnerable households who were affected by this year’s shocks and lost much or all of their annual food production and are now heavily relying on market purchasing for food.
Emergency humanitarian assistance continues to be carried out in cyclone, drought, and conflict affected areas, covering nearly 1.4 million people. In December, food assistance is expected to expand in some southern districts including Guijá, Chibuto, Massingir and Chókwe. Although food assistance is covering most households affected by Tropical Cyclone Idai, field reports from central areas indicate an increasing trend of Pellagra cases. This may be partly linked to inadequate intake of micronutrients specifically Vitamin B3, Niacin. For instance, in Sofala and Manica provinces, nearly 3,500 cases of pellagra have been reported in all age groups so far according to the nutrition cluster.

Generally, in the drought- and cyclone-affected areas, the majority of poor households have long ago exhausted their food reserves and are relying on market purchases, wild foods, and humanitarian assistance to access food. Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes prevail in most southern and central areas as humanitarian food assistance continues to mitigate more severe outcomes. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes prevail in some conflict affected areas of Cabo Delgado where humanitarian access is limited due to insecurity and in Moatize district in Tete, where it is expected there are still households not receiving assistance or receiving very small amounts of assistance. In parts of Gaza and Sofala provinces, food assistance distribution starting in December has resulted in improved outcomes to Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!). In Nampula and Zambézia provinces the situation has not deteriorated as previously anticipated due to post-flood recovery in lowland areas where rice and cassava production was average. The rest of the country is facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food security outcomes.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Overall, the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET’s most likely scenario for the Mozambique October 2019 to May 2020 Food Security Outlook remain the same, except for the following:

- Between December 2019 and March 2020, there is an increased likelihood for an above average number of cyclone strikes.

MOST LIKELY PROJECTED OUTCOMES THROUGH MAY 2020

From now until the end of the lean season in March, poor households in areas affected by this year’s shocks will most likely be in Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) as the result of planned and likely food assistance. However, some of the conflict affected areas of Cabo Delgado province will continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes are expected to continue during this period in the rest of the country. Access to wild foods and seasonal foods will most likely gradually improve food consumption among poor households until the green harvest in February/March 2020. Overall, starting in March/April, food availability will increase as most poor households will be accessing green foods. As a result, household food security is expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) to None (IPC Phase 1). The main harvest in March/April 2020 is expected to restore food availability throughout the country; however, with the likelihood of a third consecutive poor season in the southern semiarid areas, many poor households are expected to face below average production and are most likely to continue facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3). In addition, in Cabo Delgado, some of the conflict-affected areas such as Mocímboa da Praia and Nangade, will continue facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Poor households in other districts in Cabo Delgado who are unable to adequately engage in normal agricultural activities for the 2019/20 season due to ongoing insecurity may also face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes.
MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. 🟢 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). 🟣 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2019 to January 2020

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2020

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.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE
This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET’s Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work here.