Southern Africa

Madagascar

Key Message Update

Increased availability of sweet potatoes slightly improves food security in the South

**July - September 2019**

The main rice harvest ended in June and production is expected to be greater than last year particularly in the Southern Highlands. Rice fields are now fallow or being used for off-season crops like vegetables. Meanwhile, cassava harvests are at their peak in July in the South, with overall production expected to be greater than last year and likely near average because of the favorable rainy season. Sweet potato production is expected to be above-average.

In most of the country, staple food prices have continued to remain the same or decreased in recent months, which has helped households access food following the end of the lean season in June. Both imported and local rice prices are similar to last year but above the 5-year average in the south. Maize prices in most of the south remain largely higher than last year and the 5-year average, due to below-average local production resulting from pests and lack of seeds, despite the favorable 2018/2019 rainy season. Dried cassava prices are higher than last year but below the 5-year average. Sweet potato prices are significantly lower than last year, and the 5-year average, in the south as a result of the ongoing above-average harvest.

**October 2019 - January 2020**

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The 176-kilometer drinking water pipeline from Ampotaka/Beloha to Faux Cap/Tsihombe has been operational since the end of June 2019. Six communes (Marolinta, Beloha, Tranovaho, Marovato, Nikoly and Faux Cap) will benefit from this project, with about 30,000 direct beneficiaries who are expected to get access to water points in their villages. Another 40,000 people living in surrounding areas will be able to source from distribution networks or pumping and storage stations. A 20-liter can will be sold at 120 Ariary, about 40 percent lower than current price. This water will be mainly used for human and animal consumption and not likely used for irrigation.

According to the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) conducted by UNICEF, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children under five in Madagascar reduced by 2.2 percent in 5 years, from 8.2 percent in 2012-2013 according to the 2012 MDG survey to 6.0 percent in 2018-2019. Improvements are mainly observed in 9 regions in the North, West, Central Highlands, and around the Capital region, and some reduction was also observed along the east coast. However, the nutritional situation deteriorated in Vatovavy Fitovinany, Menabe, Analanjirofo, and Betsiboka, and remains above 10 percent. The situation stabilized in 8 regions of the South, the Southern highlands, the middle west, and middle east of the country.

The 2018/2019 rainy season was favorable to locust development in some parts of Madagascar due to the alternation of rain and heat. Locust swarms have been reported in the South, in Plateau Bara, and in the Center-South during the second quarter of 2019. Fortunately, the locusts had little impact maize since the amount planted during the first quarter was below-average and locusts do not eat cassava and sweet potatoes. Most damage was seen on rice and pulse crops. The National anti-Locust Center started treatment at early stage of the locusts’ development, which lessened their impact. Damage to crop production is estimated to be less than 5 percent.

Food insecurity has reduced in vulnerable zones of Madagascar due to the harvests period. Poor and very poor households in Mahafaly Plain: Cassava, Goats and Cattle (MG 23) are experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2). In Androy Semi-Arid Cassava, Maize and Livestock (MG 24), poor and very poor households are also in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) expect in Beloha, as a result of a more severe lean season, and in southern Amboasary and Talagnaro, where rainfall was below normal and unequally distributed. Some poor and very poor households in these areas may be experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Other households throughout Madagascar are experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity.

**Region Contact Information:**
Email: fewsinquiry.madagascar@fews.net

http://fews.net/southern-africa/madagascar/key-message-update/july-2019

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