Humanitarian assistance to ease Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in Beloha District in January 2019

KEY MESSAGES

- The first rains favorable for agriculture fell in November across most of Madagascar allowing farmers to start the new cropping season on time. Below average rainfall was recorded across the western half of the country between October and November 2018 but it will likely not affect staple crop production.

- The macroeconomic context of the country is currently characterized by a declining exchange rate (-38 percent in 5-years) and a rising fuel prices (+38 percent in 5 years). This increases the cost of transportation of food products from agricultural production areas and ports to consumer locations, where these costs are passed to consumers. Public transportation fees, as well as inter-regional transportation fees, have also increased which affects households’ access to food.

- Levels of humanitarian assistance are low in the most food insecure parts of the country although the situation is worse than last year. Between 10 and 30 percent of the total population in these areas are currently covered. Humanitarian stakeholders, led by OCHA, have launched a fund-raising campaign for Beloha and Ampanihy for the period of November 2018 to May 2019.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

Source: FEWS NET

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.
NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current situation

- **Ongoing rainy season:** The eastern half of Madagascar received normal to above normal rainfall between October 1st to 28th, particularly in livelihood zone MG 23 and in a few scattered localities in the north, east and southern highlands. Conversely, the western half of the country received well below normal rainfall in the same period, particularly in livelihood zones MG 05, MG 09 and M10.

- **Agricultural campaign:** Apart from the below normal rainfall recorded in Western part of Madagascar, the SADC Agromet Bulletin also reported a 1 to 2-decade delay of rain in central and middle west Madagascar. The affected areas produce, on average, more than half of maize production in Madagascar, and more than 35 percent of rice national production. Nevertheless, this delay will not likely disturb the current cropping seasons for maize and rice, which is currently in its development stage and cropped areas are near normal. Currently, MG 05 is in an inter-season with no rice crop on the field while MG 10’s first season crops are at fructification stage and will likely be harvested in January/February 2019. In MG10, sowing for the second season has also just started. In MG 20 cassava was planted as usual in October and December.

- **Livestock herd size and health:** Poor pasture conditions during the 2017-18 season resulted in: well below normal herd sizes (for cattle, 30 percent of normal among better-off households, 20 percent among poor; for small ruminants, 10-15 percent of normal), below-average conception rates, and 50 percent of normal milk production.

Markets and trade

- **Macroeconomic context:** The recent macroeconomic context of the country is characterized by a declining exchange rate and rising fuel prices - current fuel prices are 10 percent higher than last year at the same period, and 25 to 30 percent higher than they were five years ago in 2013. The Ariary lost 7 percent of its value between September and December 2018, 11 percent compared to last year, and 38 percent in the past five years. Prices of fuel have increased the cost of transportation from food producing areas and ports to consumer locations. Public transportation fees, as well as inter-regional transportation fees, have also increased, adding to the costs passed onto consumers who purchase the food. Overall prices for goods have increased by 38 percent over the last 5 years.

- **Rice imports:** According to OdR, 473,151 MT of rice were imported between January and October 2018, which is 16 percent above last year and 71 percent above the 5-year average. Rice imports during the first quarter of 2018 were larger than usual to fill the gap from last year’s below normal production. Rice imports decreased between April and July 2018 during the national rice harvest that was better than last year. Imports increased again from September to October, with a surplus around 60,000 MT. This excess may be a sign of prudence vis-à-vis the current lean season as the production of substitute staple foods was also very low in deficit areas, though it may also be linked to the presidential election during which time some
candidates expect to distribute rice to poor households or to sell it at subsidized prices.

- **Prices of staple food:** Imported rice prices are above last year’s prices and the five-year average because of the high fuel prices and depreciating exchange rate. Prices of local rice also are above the 5-year average, except in Farafangana and Vondrozo in the southeast where the production is increasing. Compared to last year prices have been stable except in deficit areas of the South where prices increased and in the southeast where prices decreased. In the past month maize prices increased in the southeast and in the south due to poor production resulting from poor rainfall and impacts of Fall Armyworm. Maize prices throughout the rest of the country remained stable. Dried cassava prices stabilized in recent months but are still higher than last year in the South due to lower production, where markets are currently supplied by neighboring regions. Sweet potatoes prices remain stable overall compared to last month, except in the south where prices remain above average due to poor production.

**Other factors**

- **Political tension:** The presidential elections will be decided during a second-round vote scheduled for December 19th when two former presidents of Madagascar, Andry Rajoelina and Marc Ravalomanana, will face each other. They were both barred from participating in the last election in 2013, as the country was recovering from a political crisis that had involved them since 2009 when Mr. Ravalomanana - the democratically elected president at the time - was deposed by Mr. Rajoelina in a military-backed coup.

- **Humanitarian Assistance:** Levels of humanitarian assistance are below normal in the most food insecure parts of the country, despite the results of the October 2018 national IPC indicating Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity in Beloha and Ampanihy. Approximately 45,000 beneficiaries, about 13 percent of the total population of Ampanihy, are currently receiving assistance from ADRA and WFP. In Beloha, the FIAVOTA safety net program of FID/WORLD BANK/UNICEF is continuing and covers around 8,000 households (32 percent of the population) in 4 communes with lower amount. CRS also targeted 4,000 households until September 2018 with Havelo program phase I. WFP is undertaking activities in two communes of Beloha with lower coverage. Humanitarian stakeholders, led by OCHA, are currently preparing a flash appeal for Beloha and Ampanihy targeting 460,000 beneficiaries (about 54 percent of the population) for food security assistance programming from November 2018 to May 2019.

**Current Food Security Outcomes**

Households in **Mahafaly Plain: Cassava, Goats and Cattle (MG 23),** including Ampanihy, have depleted food stocks and are highly dependent on markets. With high food prices and few opportunities for income generating activities, food access is difficult for poor and very poor households. Few households hold livestock, but their prices are also very low. Most households are using wild foods to fill consumption gaps. Humanitarian assistance is geographically limited and is covering less than 20 percent of the total population of the district. Therefore, very poor and poor households in the zone are experiencing **Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity in December 2018.**

**Androy Semi-Arid Cassava, Maize and Livestock (MG 24) will also face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity** for this lean season month, except in Beloha where the situation is more severe because households have depleted their food stocks and are highly reliant on markets. Food prices are above-average and income generating activities are few. Few households hold livestock and their prices are low. Wild foods, like cactus leaves, mangos and tamarind, are commonly consumed to fill consumption gaps, and often replace staple foods. Humanitarian assistance is geographically limited and is covering less than 20 percent of the total population of the district. Therefore, very poor and poor households in Beloha are experiencing **Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity in December 2018.**

In the **Southeast: coffee, litchis, cassava (MG 19),** recent harvests were near normal and prices remain stable, and the majority of households are experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1), except in the districts of Farafangana and Vangaindrano, which are in **Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity in December 2018.** The same is true in **Rice and lima bean - Tulear II (MG20),** which is also experiencing **Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity** due to below normal production. For households **throughout Madagascar,** increasing fuel prices is the main driver that affects household food access, particularly in urban areas. Despite instances of high food prices, **Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity is expected outside of the areas of concerns in the South and the Southeast.**
Assumptions

The most likely scenario for the December 2018 to May 2019 period is based on the following national level assumptions:

- **Remaining rainy season:** The National Meteorological Department of Madagascar forecasts normal to slightly below normal rainfall along the eastern half of Madagascar and parts of the central-west from December 2018 to February 2019; well below average in the northwest and above average in the southwest and southern central highlands. Elsewhere, rainfall will be average to slightly above average. This National Forecast aligns with the SADC seasonal rainfall forecast released at the Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) in August which predicted that most parts of the region are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall between October 2018 and March 2019. The NOAA NMME probabilistic forecast does not predict any severe rainfall deficits for the next 3 months although an El Nino event is expected between December 2018 and May 2019. According to the National Meteorological Department of Madagascar, the risk of cyclone hits will likely be below-average in the coming months. Forecasts from NOAA call for a normal cyclone season.

- **Agricultural production and cropped areas:** With the improved rainfall conditions, cropped areas will likely increase although they will remain below normal. Particularly in the South, according to Agricultural Meteorology Unit, rainfall during October was generally above normal and favorable to maize, sorghum and cowpea sowing. Farmers started laboring fields and sowing, but seeds stocks were insufficient and inaccessible for poor farmers due to last season’s poor production. Around 75 percent of normally planted land is expected to be cropped, and sowing will likely continue until January.

- **Main staple production:** The first harvest of rice is expected to take place in December and January. Production is likely to be similar to last year, even though cropped area has increased, because some rice and maize fields in the central highlands (Vakinakaratra and Analamanga regions) were damaged by hail in November.

- **Cash crop production:** From December to January, Madagascar exports will mainly be composed of litchi. According to the Horticultural Technical Center, the 2018-2019 litchi season will be better than the previous one thanks to favorable rainfall. The green vanilla season in the vanilla producing regions in MG02 of Madagascar opened on the 15th of July. Initial output figures point to an estimated volume of 2000 tons available for export in the 2018-2019 season, particularly in Sava and around Ambandia, according to Eurovanille, the largest international trader. A price decrease of around 20 percent is expected during the first trimester of 2019 once the first batches of vanilla become available on the European market.

- **Labor demand and income:** Labor demand will increase with the rice planting and maize/pulse sowing and related agricultural labor in main producing areas. Upcoming harvests of cash crops such as litchi will also likely give more labor opportunities. Because of the below-normal cropped area, there will be less demand for labor in the south.
- **Macroeconomic context and imports**: Prices of imported products, including rice and fuel, will likely remain stable until January and will then steadily increase within the rest of the outlook period due to the continued depreciation of the Ariary, which lost 15 percent of its value in the past year. The volume of imported rice will also likely increase due to the combined effects of the elections and the lean season. Total rice imports this year will likely reach 497,000 MT, about 12 percent lower than last year, but 38 percent above the five-year average.

- **Cereal prices**: Overall prices of staple foods in Madagascar will likely increase during the next months because of the lean season and will continue to decrease toward the end of the outlook period because of the upcoming harvests.

- **Livestock prices**: According to SISAV data, prices of small ruminants have remained stable at MGA 200,000 since May 2018; and are currently higher than last year and the 5-year average. Because of higher decapitalization during the lean season and the depletion of food stocks, prices will likely follow the seasonal trend and decrease until February and then will increase again. Cattle prices are still below last year’s level, except in Beloha where higher decapitalization was noticed due to the more severe food insecurity situation.

- **Humanitarian Assistance**: According to the humanitarian plan developed by government and the food security stakeholders led by OCHA, near half of population in Beloha and Ampanihy will likely receive unconditional food or cash distribution in January 2019. Households with labor (around 435,000 individuals) will likely benefit from food or cash for work from February to April 2019 while households without labor force (around 23,020 individuals) will likely benefit from unconditional food and cash distribution from February to April 2019. In Beloha and Betioky, the FIAVOTA safety net program of FID/WORLD BANK/UNICEF will likely continue. CRS will likely increase their caseload of food for work within their Havelo Program Title II to more than 7,000 in the two communes of Beloha and three communes of Tsihombe for 6 months. ADRA will also likely deliver food for work to 16,000 households in Ampanihy and Betioky (around 80,000 individuals) for 3 to 4 months. They will also likely continue supporting livestock breeding and vegetable cropping this year though a FFP program, which allows households to earn additional income.

- **Livestock herd size and health**: Herd sizes will continue to reduce until March and then may stabilize. Animal health is currently poor but may improve within the next months with the availability of improved pastureland if rain continues. Transhumance to higher-altitudes areas of the Mahafaly plateau and the districts of Betioky and Bekily are expected during the outlook period.

**Most likely Food Security Outcomes**

Access to income generating activities in **Mahafaly Plain: Cassava, Goats and Cattle (MG 23)** will slightly improve with the return of agricultural labor opportunities in January and February. Food prices will continue to increase, and people will likely not easily meet their food needs. The situation will be maintained in **Crisis (IPC Phase 3)** between January and February 2018. From March onwards, food availability will improve thanks to maize, pulse and sweet potato harvests that will likely take place in March/April thanks to the promising rainy season. Nevertheless, production is still expected to be below normal as not all fields will be cropped. Prices will start decreasing but remain above normal during this period. During this period humanitarian assistance will begin to arrive and the situation will likely be in **Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) acute food insecurity until May 2019.**

**Androy Semi-Arid Cassava, Maize and Livestock (MG 24)** will also face **Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity** for the rest of the lean season month, except in Beloha where the situation is more severe, but humanitarian assistance will relieve the...
situation. From March onwards, food availability will improve thanks to maize and pulse harvests that will take place in March/April particularly in Tsihombe and Ambovombe, which will likely supply Beloha and surroundings areas with maize and pulses. Nevertheless, the production will likely be below-average. Prices will start decreasing but remain above normal. Therefore, the most of the zone will likely be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) acute food insecurity between March and May 2019 except for Beloha that will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) acute food insecurity due to humanitarian assistance.

In the Southeast: coffee, litchis, cassava (MG 19), and in Rice and lima bean - Tulear II (MG20), the situation will remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. For households throughout Madagascar, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity is expected outside the areas of concerns in the South and the Southeast.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Androy Semi-Arid Cassava, Maize and Livestock (MG 24) - Beloha district

Beloha was located at the epicenter of the drought-related food crisis between 2015 and 2017. It is no longer a surplus growing area due to water shortages, crop losses from insect attacks, and the lack of animal traction. Although current herd sizes are low and have yet to recover from the 2015-2017 drought, this dryland region is nonetheless known for its cattle, the zebu.

Current Situation

- **Staple crop production:** During the 2017/2018 agricultural campaign, farmers in Beloha planted cassava in July/August 2017 that were harvested in July/August 2018; maize and pulses in October/November 2017 that were harvested in March/April 2018; some sweet potatoes planted in June 2018 that were harvested in August 2018; and sorghum planted in October 2017 that was harvested in March/April 2018. Much of this campaign failed, and production was largely below-normal and less than previous years due to the erratic rainfall since February 2018.

- **Ongoing rainy season:** Rains began in Beloha in the last week of November. According to the second monthly agrometeorological bulletin published by the National Unit for Agricultural Meteorology with the support of FAO, recorded rainfall in November was 20 to 50 percent above normal which was favorable for maize, sorghum and millet sowing. However, while WRSI indicates a satisfactory level of water for maize sowing, the soil moisture balance shows 10 to 50 percent of index which indicates a stress. This is due to many successive years of drought in the area.

- **Cropped areas:** Fields are currently planted with cassava from cuttings from the last harvest, but they suffered from dryness and heat damage before the rains began at the end of November. Cereal planting occurred in November once rain arrived. Although rain may be favorable to maize sowing, planted areas remain below normal because poor households cannot afford to purchase a sufficient amount of seeds and last year’s below average harvest did not allow farmers to stock enough seeds for this season.
- **Prices of staple food**: Prices of dried cassava have more than doubled since last year in Beloha because markets are being supplied from the districts of Tsilhombe, Betioky, and Ankaramena, and Haute Matsiatra region since local stocks are depleted. These prices are 57 percent above the five-year average, which is inaccessible for poor households. Imported rice sold in Beloha is cheaper than last year and near average. Maize prices are also higher than last year and are 39 percent above average.

- **Sources of food**: Households are highly dependent on markets, with most consumed staple foods currently purchased from markets and only very little from own production. However, most other consumed foods, such as pulses and fruits come from own production.

- **Water availability and pasture conditions**: Water remains in very short supply in the districts and water access affects both production and consumption. Pastures are currently dry but will likely begin to improve if rainfall continues. Pastoralists have moved to other districts that received more rain than Beloha. Meanwhile, the pipeline constructed under UNICEF funding, from the Linta river to Beloha Chief of District and surroundings communes (more than 20 km) will feed the villages with underground water starting this rainy season.

- **Livestock herds and prices**: Livestock sales are one of the most important income sources for households in Beloha, but herd sizes are still depleted after years of drought. Prices are currently less than half of last year’s prices, as most animals are in poor condition after only eating cactus leaves. Low prices are also driven by the high supply on the market and lower demand from surrounding districts. These livestock prices are unfavorable to household incomes, especially with the increasing prices of staple foods and the higher dependence on markets.

- **Labor availability and prices**: Agriculture-based casual employment is still low since less land than usual was prepared and planting didn’t begin until November. Most people are laboring on their own land because they do not have money to hire workers. In December, casual labor opportunities may improve because of cereal and pulse sowing. Labor wages have increased since last year according to SISAV data from 2,500 Ariary in late 2017 to 3,000 Ariary this year. Labor migration also is ongoing - although this normally occurs only between August and December, with people returning home in January where they stay until the end of the harvest. Remittances from those who migrated is limited and only contributes to minor parts of the incomes of local households.

- **Current food consumption**: Households are currently eating tubers and cereals, but these staple foods are rarely eaten with pulses or cassava leaves. Dairy consumption is low since cattle do not give milk during the dry season.

- **Wild food consumption**: A higher than usual amount of household food consumption is composed of wild foods (mangos, tamarind, cactus leave. According to the 2017 Baseline 27 to 19 percent of household food consumption is made up of wild foods at this time of year for very poor and poor households respectively.
Livelihood change: As incomes for many households become more and more strained because of the poor agricultural production, reduced livestock herds and prices, and limited opportunities for agricultural labor, households are participating in atypical activities to fill their income gaps. These include selling firewood (MGA 500/piece), selling wild mangos (MGA 100 to 200), selling charcoal (MGA 1,500/bag), and selling water to medium and better-off households.

Humanitarian assistance: Humanitarian assistance remains low in Beloha. The FIAVOTA safety net program of FID/WORLD BANK/UNICEF is covering around 8,000 households (32 percent) in 4 communes. Each beneficiary receives 20,000 ariary which is 20 percent of the total need ratio to stabilize their incomes against drought and to support the recovery of households’ assets. The first phase of the Havelo program implemented by CRS, covering 4,000 households ended in September. The new phase will target more households and is expected to start in January. WFP is undertaking activities in two communes of Beloha with lower coverage.

Nutrition: The results of exhaustive screenings by the Government of Madagascar (National Office of Nutrition and Ministry of Health) show signs of a deteriorating situation compared to the second quarter of 2018 in 4 out of 8 communes of Beloha: Kopoky, Tranoroa, Ambatosola and Tranoroa. These communes are classified in a nutritional alert situation with MAG levels higher than 10 percent. The trend of CRENAS admissions for the Beloha district for the third quarter (312 cases) are down from the second quarter (448 cases) and in the same quarter of 2017 (412 cases).

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for the December 2018 to May 2019 period is based on the following zone level assumptions:

- **Agroclimatology**: Rainfall will likely be average to above-average from December until February, and average to below-average from January until March. This will be favorable for the planting of maize, millet, peas and sorghum if farmers have seeds. NOAA NMME probabilistic forecast does not predict any severe rainfall deficit between March and May 2019.

- **Staple production**: The next harvests normally concern cereals and pulses in March/April. However, normal to above normal rain will likely allow getting some production. However, it will likely be below normal depending on seed availability. Then will start in April, sweet potato plantation to be harvested in June.

- **Market supply of staple foods**: Markets in Beloha will likely be supplied with poor quality cassava from a farther source (Ankaramena) in December and January. Cereals will be available but in small quantities and the rainy season will likely make procurement difficult as transportation costs will increase as road quality decreases resulting in longer delivery time. Imported rice supplied from Fort-Dauphin will likely continue to flood the markets in December and January.

- **Staple food prices**: According to FEWSNET price projections, prices of maize in Ambovombe, the reference market for LHZ 24 will be above average. They will likely increase from December to January and will decrease from March through May.
A maximum of 1,280 ariary per kilo (equal to 320 per cup) will likely be reached in January/February. The prices in Beloha will likely follow Ambovombe’s trend and will likely reach 2,000 Ariary per kilo (equal to 500 per cup) by the end of January and then will decrease. Dried cassava prices will slightly increase from December to January because of the lean season and will remain above average, at MGA 1,000 per kilo, until the end of May.

- **Availability of wild foods**: Consumption of cactus leaves and mango will continue throughout the scenario period. Prickly pear cactus will start to be available in January and its consumption will likely increase to above-average levels throughout January due to staple food shortages. Wild foods may contribute to nearly half of the food needs of very poor and poor households. With the harvest of maize and pulses in March/April, the consumption of cactus will decrease. Red cactus will be available after January, but consumption will likely be limited after the April/March harvests.

- **Nutrition**: During the normal lean season from October to March, acute malnutrition in Beloha will likely continue to deteriorate. Acute malnutrition will likely begin to improve starting in April due to the maize and pulse harvests. No major increase in mortality is expected.

- **Livestock conditions and prices**: With the low demand, livestock prices will likely decrease to their lowest level, between 200,000 to 250,000 Ariary for cattle and 10,000 to 20,000 Ariary for goats, in February 2019. Pastures will likely improve with the rainy season, and thereafter livestock body conditions are likely to remain stable throughout the scenario period.

- **Income sources**: Labor opportunity will slightly increase in January during cereal and pulse crop planting. However, opportunities will likely remain below-average because of lack of seeds and the limited abilities of richer households to hire labor after the recent failed harvest. Opportunities will increase again during main season planting. Wages will likely follow the normal seasonality by decreasing in January/February and increasing again from March to May. Charcoal and firewood sales will likely slow during the ongoing rainy season. However, wild food sales will increase through January and then decrease by May when locally grown crop sales begin.

- **Humanitarian Assistance**: The FIAVOTA safety net program provided by FID/WORLD BANK/UNICEF will continue. Food assistance within the Havelo II program will be delivered in January 2019 and distribution will likely target more than 8,000 households, more than 80 percent of the population in Marolinta and Tanovaho communes. WFP will add more communes to their ongoing distribution from December through February.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

Households in Beloha do not have much remaining food stocks and are highly reliant on markets. Food prices are also above normal and income generating activities are few. Few households hold livestock and livestock prices are low. Wild foods, like cactus leaves, mangos or tamarind, are commonly consumed to fill food gaps. Humanitarian assistance is geographically limited and is covering less than 20 percent of the total population of the district. Therefore, very poor and poor households in Beloha are experiencing **Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity in December 2018**.

In January and February, access to income will improve slightly with opportunities for agricultural labor. Food prices will continue to increase because of farther market sources and poor road conditions, making procurement difficult. People will not easily meet their food needs and wild food consumption will remain important. Emergency humanitarian assistance is expected during this period and will likely contribute to relief of the situation. Therefore, very poor and poor households will be in **Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between January and February 2018**.

From March onwards, food consumption availability will improve thanks to maize and pulse harvests that will take place in March/April. Nevertheless, production is still expected to be below-average as not all fields will be cropped. Prices will start decreasing but remain above normal. Some humanitarian assistance, like CRS’s Havelo program and the FIAVOTA government safety net will continue while other emergency programs will likely stop. **Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity outcomes are likely between March and May 2019**.
**Mahafaly Plain: Cassava, Goats and Cattle (MG 23) - Ampanihy district**

This zone is the most arid in the country and between 2013-2017, it experienced a severe and prolonged drought. The zone supports small land holdings of mixed farming, principally cassava, maize and sweet potato for consumption; and legumes and groundnuts as cash crops. The zone has suffered from insufficient food production 4 out of 5 years and is recognized as a chronically food deficit zone.

**Current Situation**

- **Main crop production:** During the 2017/2018 agricultural campaign, farmers in Ampanihy planted cassava in July/August 2017 that were harvested in July/August 2018; maize and pulses in October/November 2017 that were harvested in March/April 2018; some sweet potatoes planted in June 2018 that were harvested in August 2018; and sorghum planted in October 2017 that was harvested in March/April 2018. Much of this campaign failed, and production was largely below-normal and less than previous years due to the erratic rainfall since February 2018.

- **Ongoing rainy season:** Rainfall began in October and according to the National Department of Meteorology, the district of Ampanihy received average to above-average rainfall between October and November, except in the communes of Beahitse and Ejeda. This was favorable for peanut, maize and cowpea sowing but also favorable for cassava crop development.

- **Cropped areas:** Like in Beloha, fields in Ampanihy are currently planted with cassava with cuttings from the last harvests and plants are at their developmental stage. Farmers started preparing their land in October for cereals, pulses and peanuts but waited for sufficient rain to sow. Planted areas remain below normal because seeds are lacking.

- **Prices of staple foods:** Prices of dried cassava doubled compared to last year in Ampanihy due to the low local production. Markets are supplied by farther sources like from the districts of Ankaramena, a district located in Haute Matsiatra region 570 km away. These prices are 64 percent above the five-year average which is inaccessible for poor households although it is the main staple food in the area. Imported rice from Tulear is 20 percent more expensive than last year and 22 percent above average. Maize prices are also more than the double of last year, which was near normal, due to the lower production in nearby areas.

- **Sources of food:** Households are highly dependent on markets. Most consumed staple foods currently come from market purchases and some from gifts.

- **Water availability and pasture conditions** Water is in very short supply in the district and water access affects both production and consumption for human and animals. Pastureland is still dry but livestock conditions in most part of the district are moderate. This situation will likely improve with the arrival of rain. Pastoralists migrated to southern communes of the district where more rain fell, to water their animals. Some boreholes constructed with previous WFP projects help people access water for cooking and for watering vegetable crops that are promoted by ADRA.
Livestock herds and prices: Livestock sales are normally the most important income sources for households in Ampanihy. This year, herds of only 4-5 animals are common (~10 percent of normal) because households have not yet recovered from previous droughts. Prices are currently 20 percent lower than in May 2018, and below average due to low demand, even though livestock are in acceptable shape. The Malagasy zebu currently costs MGA 400,000 in Ampanihy; goats/sheep cost MGA 50,000. These livestock prices are unfavorable to household incomes, especially with the increasing prices of staple food and the higher dependence on markets.

Labor availability: Some agriculture-based casual employment was observed in coastal areas of Androka and Itampolo where rain recently started. Cassava was planted in October. Plantating of peanuts, maize and pulses has also just started. Most people worked and sowed their own land because they do not have enough money to hire workers. Labor migration is also continuing to place like Tulear, Majunga, Ambanja or Nosy be to do petty jobs like rickshaw driving. Remittances from those who migrated is limited and contributes little to local household income.

Current food consumption: According to ground information, current household’s food consumption is not diverse. Households mostly eat tubers and some cereals. Staple foods are sometimes eaten with pulses or cassava leaves. Dairy consumption is near zero as cattle do not give milk during the dry period. Consumption of sugar is also low, however oil is consumed in very small quantities.

Wild food consumption: Households are consuming wild foods, including tamarind, mango and cactus leaves, but less than is indicated in the 2017 Baseline (20 percent of household consumption for very poor and poor).

Livelihood Change: Households are undertaking atypical activities to fill their income gaps. Households are selling wild foods such as mangos (MGA 100-200 the pile), and tamarind (MGA 500 the kilo). They are also selling charcoal by the bag (MGA 1,500), bundles of firewood (MGA 100-200), water (MGA 5000 per jerrycan) and green vegetables (promoted by NGOs like ADRA). Medium and better-off households who still have cattle to sell are doing so at very low prices.

Humanitarian assistance: ADRA and WFP are expecting to do food distribution in all the communes in the district starting in mid-December. An ADRA emergency project will likely target 13,000 beneficiaries, which is 4 percent of the total population of the district. ADRA is also supporting livestock breeding and vegetable cropping this year, which allowed households to gain additional income.

Nutrition: The results of exhaustive screenings conducted by the Government of Madagascar (National Office of Nutrition and Ministry of Health) show an ongoing deterioration of the nutritional situation in Ampanihy since the beginning of 2018. Twelve communes out seventeen are classified as emergency where MAG levels were between 11 and 39 percent. Three communes were in alert and only two communes were considered under control. CRENAS admissions in Ampanihy for the third quarter (412 cases) are higher than in the second quarter (213 cases) and in the same quarter of 2017 (150 cases).
Assumptions

The most likely scenario for the December 2018 to May 2019 period is based on the following zone level assumptions:

- **Agroclimatology**: According to the National Department of Meteorology, the district of Ampanihy will likely receive above average rainfall from December to February 2019. This will be favorable for the development of peanut, maize and cowpea crops but also favorable for cassava growth.

- **Staple production**: Peanut and cowpea harvests will happen in March and will give some income to farmers. Maize and sweet potatoes will also be harvested in March/April and will be an important source of food for poor households. All production is expected to be below normal.

- **Market supplies of staple foods**: Markets in Ampanihy may be badly supplied through January with cassava from more distant sources like Ankaramena. Cereals will be available from harvests in Betioky along the Onilahy River and also from Tulear. Transportation costs will increase with the rainy season and the higher price of fuel. Imported rice supplies from Tulear will likely continue to flood markets through January, particularly during the election campaign.

- **Staple food prices**: According to FEWS NET price projections, prices of imported rice in Tulear, the reference market for MG 23 will be above average, but will likely stabilize within the outlook period. Prices in Ampanihy will likely follow Tulear’s trend and will likely reach 2,170 Ariary per kilo (equal to 620 per cup) by the end of January, and then it will decrease. Dried cassava prices will likely remain above-average and stable during the outlook period.

- **Availability of wild foods**: Consumption of cactus leaves and mango will increase until January when the prickly pear cactus will likely start to be available. Its consumption will likely increase in January and will be above average due to staple food shortages. Watermelon, wild tubers and other fruits will also be consumed. With the harvest of maize and pulses in March/April, the consumption of wild food will decrease. Red cactus will be available beginning in February, but consumption will likely be limited by March/April harvests.

- **Nutrition**: During the normal lean season from October to March, rates of acute malnutrition in Ampanihy will likely remain stable and the district will likely stay in “emergency”. Levels of acute malnutrition will likely decrease starting in April and will likely continue until the May 2019 harvests. No major increase in mortality is expected.

- **Livestock conditions and prices**: With low demand, livestock prices will likely decrease to low levels, between 250,000 to 300, 000 Ariary for cattle and 20,000 to 30,000 Ariary for goats, in February 2019. Pastureland will likely improve during the rainy season and livestock body conditions will likely remain stable throughout the scenario period.
• **Income sources:** Labor opportunities will slightly increase in January during cereal, pulse and sweet potato planting. However, opportunities will likely remain below-average because of lack of seeds and cuttings, and the limited abilities of richer households to hire labor. Wage will likely follow normal seasonality by decreasing in January-February and increasing again from March to May. Charcoal and firewood sales will likely decrease during the ongoing rainy season. Wild food sales will increase in January and will then decrease in May and will be replaced by locally grown crop sales. People will also continue selling handicrafts.

• **Humanitarian Assistance:** Food assistance will likely reach all of the communes of Ampanihy after mid-December and coverage will likely be more than 20 percent of the population. ADRA will also likely continue supporting livestock breeding and vegetable cropping this year though a FFP program, which allows households to earn additional income.

*Most Likely Food Security Outcomes*

Households in Ampanihy have depleted food stocks and rely heavily on markets. Food prices are above-average and income generating activities are few. Moreover, few households hold livestock and their prices are at their lowest levels. Wild foods, like cactus leaves, mangos or tamarind, are consumed to fill consumption gaps and replace staple foods. Humanitarian assistance is geographically limited and is covering less than 20 percent of the total population of the district. Therefore, very poor and poor households in Ampanihy are experiencing **Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity in December 2018**.

In January and February, access to income generating activities will slightly improve with the return of agricultural labor opportunities. Food prices will continue to increase because of farther market sources and poor road conditions. People will likely not easily meet their food needs and wild food consumption will remain important. Fortunately, emergency humanitarian assistance will likely be delivered and will contribute to maintaining the situation in **Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between January and February 2018**.

From March onwards, food availability will improve thanks to maize, pulse and sweet potato harvests that will likely take place in March/April thanks to the promising rainy season. Nevertheless, production is still expected to be below normal as not all fields will be cropped. Prices will start decreasing but remain above normal during this period. **Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity is expected between March and May 2019.**
EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table 1: Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Impact on food security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Fall Armyworm (Spodoptera Frigiperda)</td>
<td>FAW is present in the country, but still not endemic in the areas of concern. However, the risk of its introduction within maize stocks traded from the Central-West of Madagascar, where it was found in April 2018, is high. In addition, agro-climatic conditions in the areas of concern would be favorable for S. Frigiperda's larval development and adult breeding. In case of infestation in the South of Madagascar, maize and pulses would be most at risk, as cassava and rice are less often consumed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MG 19</td>
<td>Cyclone</td>
<td>Cyclone season extends between January and March, which likely affect the planting of main season rice in the cyclone prone areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.