A mild lean season is expected due to good second season production and stable food prices

KEY MESSAGES

- As the lean season (October to March) sets in, the majority of rural households across the country are currently facing Minimal acute food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 1). The overall favorable food security conditions are due largely to existing food stocks from the main 2012/13 cropping season, the availability of diversified food crops from the second season, and adequately supplied markets.

- From October to December, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes will continue among poorer rural households, including the areas of concern. Households in the southern areas affected by flooding earlier this year will still be able to meet their basic food needs through post-flood production and market purchases.

- Between January and March, food insecurity outcomes will remain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) across the country. As the lean season progresses during this period, households will expand their typical livelihood strategies in order to meet their food needs.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. Visit [www.fews.net/IPC](http://www.fews.net/IPC) for more on this scale.
NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

Minimal acute food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 1) are found across the country, as the majority of rural households meet their basic food requirements through access to a variety of foods from the 2012/13 main and second season harvests. Households continue to have reliable food access through market purchases and the expansion of typical livelihood strategies. In some areas where agroclimatic conditions allowed for a second cropping season, this harvest is an important source of the food and income. In areas in the Limpopo Basin affected by floods earlier this year (including Bilene, Chibuto, Chokwe, Guija, and Xai-Xai Districts) current food security outcomes remain stable due to the late harvests. Overall, as the lean season (October to March) progresses the levels of acute food insecurity are lower this year in comparison to previous years, although chronic food insecurity continues to affect several households through the country.

- This year’s second season cropping was above average in areas that typically do not have a second season thanks to the heavy rains and/or flooding that occurred earlier this year. This above average harvest was the case in several districts in the remote semi-arid areas that were affected by extended dry spells early on during the 2012/13 main cropping season.

- Poor households that were severely affected by flooding in the lower Limpopo districts of Chókwe, Guijá, Chibuto and Xai-Xai in January are currently recovering and reestablishing their livelihoods. While the majority of the households still have food stocks, those with dwindling stocks are turning to markets for food purchases as prices continue to be favorable.

- Targeted food assistance from the World Food Program (WFP) is reaching approximately 60,000 beneficiaries in Chókwe, Guijá, Xai-Xai, Chibuto, and Bilene, through Food for Work in order to assist the recovery process of households affected by floods. This food assistance is expected to continue until November 2013. In addition to this, from September to December, under the productive safety net program, WFP is assisting about 21,000 households in selected districts of Gaza, Inhambane, Manica, Maputo, Sofala and Tete and the program will run from September to December.

- Most of the main monitored markets are adequately supplied with staple food and commodities. Trade flows around the country are following the usual seasonal pattern and staple food prices are following seasonal trends. Changes in supply levels from August to September have influenced some maize prices behavior, specifically in Nampula where prices have been increasing very rapidly. The rapid decline of maize stocks in the province caused by low availability from this year’s production. The main factors contributing to rising maize prices in...
Nampula include price increases in the surplus areas (including Alto Molocue district, Zambezia Province) coupled with high demand.

- Throughout most of the country, prices are stable and these stable staple prices are beneficial for the majority of vulnerable households that depend mostly on markets to purchase their food to meet their food requirements during this time of the year. However, close monitoring of prices during the lean period is strongly recommended.

- Following the release of the seasonal climate outlook in September, the Crop and Early Warning Department (DCAP) of the National Directorate of Agrarian Services (DNSA) from the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) has produced an agricultural outlook for the 2013/14 and suggested that for the first half of the 2013/14 agricultural season (October to December), there is a 70-90 percent (moderate) chance for crops in the southern zone (Maputo, Gaza, and Inhambane provinces) to meet their water requirements. In the central zone (Sofala, Manica provinces) the probability of crops meeting their water requirements is higher (90-100 percent), while in the northern and parts of Tete and Zambezia provinces, chances are very low (>50 percent). Given the low chances of fulfilling water satisfaction requirements, the DCAP recommends that planting starts during the first and second weeks of December in the northern region.

- For the second half of the season (January-March), the agricultural outlook shows significantly improved probabilities compared with the first period for the most of the productive areas in the country (central and northern zones). The probability of crops meeting their water requirements during this period is high to very high (100 percent) for the whole country. Based on this outlook a good 2013/14 cropping season is expected.

Assumptions

The Food Security Outlook for October 2013 to March 2014 is based on the following national-level assumptions:

Agroclimatology

- The seasonal forecast for Mozambique for the period of October 2013 to March 2014 suggests that normal or above normal rainfall is expected for most of Mozambique throughout the upcoming cropping season. During the October to December period, the bulk of the country will receive near-normal to above-normal rainfall, except Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula, where normal to below normal rainfall is expected. For the second half of the season (January-March), most of Mozambique has an increased chance of receiving near-normal to above-normal rainfall, while the coastal strip of Cabo Delgado and Nampula Provinces has an increased probability of receiving near normal to below normal rainfall.

- The recently released forecast suggests that normal or above normal rainfall is expected for most of Mozambique throughout the upcoming cropping season. Thus, favorable agroclimatic conditions will increase the availability of income-generation opportunities from agricultural labor and will also increase the availability of water for both human and animal use.

- Normal rainfall patterns according to climatology are assumed for the outlook period. Thus, seasonal rains are expected to start initially in the south, moving towards the north between November and December. The start of the rains will enable the majority of households to be engaged in planting for the main agriculture season of 2013/2014. These initial rains will also provide access to wild foods, which are typically consumed during this time of the year.

Markets and Trade

- Generally, since July most food prices have started rising in most markets due to the gradual dwindling of household food stocks from own production. It is assumed that rice prices will continue to remain stable based on recent trends, however it is assumed that other food prices will follow a normal seasonal trend during the outlook period, but will generally remain above the five-year average.

- Between October and December, the flow of food commodities will continue following the normal pattern and no disruption is anticipated throughout the outlook period. From January to March any heavy rains or flooding that could
make roads impassable causing a temporary disruption of markets that could affect household food access, pushing up price levels.

**Agricultural Labor**

- Throughout the outlook period agriculture labor opportunities are expected to remain at normal levels. From October to December, opportunities are expected to start increasing with the start of the main agricultural season and will include land preparation and planting. From January to March opportunities for labor will increase, particularly for weeding and harvesting.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

- Humanitarian assistance needs are expected to be below the five-year average and the food assistance pipeline is expected to meet the immediate needs of those currently receiving targeted support until November.

- Distribution of seeds and other agriculture inputs will be completed in October. Distribution of these inputs is important for assisting households for the upcoming main cropping season, especially those affected by flooding back in January.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

Based on the national-level assumptions stated above, the food security situation is expected to remain stable for the whole country, and acute food insecurity outcomes will generally be Minimal (IPC Phase 1) for the majority of the rural poor households during the outlook period. During the October to March period, food availability and access is expected to remain stable and adequate. Households will meet their food requirements through carryover stocks from their main season harvest, along with harvests from post-flood planting and the second season. Generally, the poorer households will exhaust their food stocks and will start expanding their livelihood strategies to meet their food needs. Some of these strategies that poor households will start to use during this period include, intensification of brewing and the sale of traditional drinks for income, cutting and selling of poles and natural products such as grass, firewood, charcoal, and seeking casual labor (i.e. land preparation and planting). It is expected that the typical onset of rains in November will provide a variety of wild and seasonal food that gradually improve food access among poor households until the green food becomes available in January or February, and by the time the main harvest begins in March.

**AREA OF CONCERN**

**Lower Limpopo Baixa Non Irrigation Scheme livelihood zone**¹ in Gaza Province (covering parts of Chokwe, Guija, Chibuto, Bilene and Xai-Xai districts)

**Current Situation**

Generally, the food security conditions are stable throughout the area, including parts without access to lowlands that are located far away from rivers. Here income generating livelihood strategies include self-employment and casual labor. The post-flood planting brought extraordinary results and maize and pumpkins are currently being harvested. These harvested crops could last up until the next harvest for the majority of the households.

Markets are adequately supplied and staple food prices have decreased significantly since their peak in March, following the floods. Normally at this time of the year the flows of food commodities into basin markets comes from the productive central region. However, the reference markets in the basin (Chokwe and Xai-Xai) are being supplied mostly by local surpluses. In surrounding districts maize is also widely available in the local markets. Since July, the prices of maize in Chokwe have been decreasing and currently the price of maize grain varies between 7.7 and 8.3 Meticais per kilogram.

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¹ For a description of the Lower Limpopo Baixa Non Irrigation Scheme livelihood zone, please visit: [http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/mz_baseline_rural%20limpopo_en.pdf](http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/mz_baseline_rural%20limpopo_en.pdf)
The current maize prices, for instance, are below those of last year and are close to the five-year average. These lower maize prices are improving food access for the majority of households, especially the poorer households that experienced reduced production during the previous harvest. Generally, food prices are expected to remain close to the five-year average and should follow the seasonal trend throughout the rest of the consumption period. Crops including maize, rice, groundnuts, seasonal vegetables, cassava and beans are available in markets.

In September, WFP continued assistance through Food for Work and reached 60,400 persons through post-flood recovery activities. This program will run for until November. Readjustments in the assistance plan will be made upon the reevaluation of needs.

Overall, households are facing Minimal food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 1). The majority of rural households throughout the livelihood zone are able to meet their basic food needs thanks to the availability of diversified food crops from the post-flood planting, the ongoing second season plantings, and purchases from the market. Some households are harvesting and selling high valued crops such as tomatoes, and selling their labor through land preparation, as well as participating in self-employment activities, including the sale of forest and traditionally made products such as firewood, charcoal, and construction poles. Households are also selling small domestic animals at minimal levels in order to generate income to meet other discretionary needs. So far there is still no evidence of consumption of wild foods, and livelihood strategies and assets are being maintained.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions described earlier, the following assumptions have been made about the Lower Limpopo Baixa Non Irrigation Scheme livelihood zone (LHZ 39) located in the Gaza Province:

• According to the seasonal rainfall forecast although there is 40 percent probability for occurrence of normal rains, there is also a 35 percent chance of above normal rains during the 2013/14 rainfall season.

• Local informal and formal trade flows will continue to be active in the zone and will play an important role in circulating food from surplus to deficit areas from October to March. Flow of food from the surplus areas of the lower Limpopo (Massingir, Guija, Chokwe, districts) and from the central provinces (such as Gorongosa, Nhamatanda, Sussundenga) to the Lower Limpopo Baixa Non Irrigation Scheme livelihood zone (Chokwe, Xai-Xai, Chibuto) will likely behave normally throughout the scenario period.

• Staple food prices are expected to remain close to the five-year average and an analysis of the market fundamentals shows that the prices will follow the seasonal trend during the scenario period. The prices are expected to vary between 9-10 Meticois, a minimal increase, if compared to current prices.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

During the first half of the scenario period (October-December), households will be able to meet their basic food requirements through food stocks from the second season production, combined with market purchases. These primary sources of food will be complemented by typical coping strategies to meet their basic food needs. Additionally, the onset of rains in October/November normally provides a variety of wild food that gradually improves food access. Casual labor including land preparation and planting will also play an important role during this period. During the second half of the scenario period (January-March), green food availability will gradually increase and food intake will start improving before the onset of the harvest in March. The seasonal increase of staple food prices will continue until reaching its peak in Dec/January, but because the expenditure on staple food is low and prices are expected to be close to average, households will be able to access food through market purchases. Rice is the immediate substitute and the price has been quite stable and close to last year’s prices.

Overall the livelihood strategies will be maintained and households will refrain from depleting their productive assets as well as resorting in irreversible livelihood strategies. Households will ensure that income generated by expanding their livelihood strategies will be adequate to cover food and other discretionary expenses. Agriculture input assistance will help households to mitigate some of the large costs usually associated with planting.
Although some very poor households (less than 20 percent) may be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) during the peak of the lean season period (October to December), the majority of poor and very poor households in this livelihood zone will face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes throughout the entire scenario period (October 2013-March 2014).

OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN

Cyclone Prone Areas\(^2\) in Inhambane, Nampula, Sofala, and Zamabézia Provinces

The current food security situation for the majority of rural households living along the coastal areas is generally stable, and households face Minimal food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 1). Households are able to meet their basic food requirements without major changes in their food consumption, and they are able to maintain their normal livelihood strategies and asset preservation. Households living along the coastal areas are typically food secure throughout the year. Compared to the areas in the interior, these areas have more income earning opportunities, allowing for market purchases to supplement basic food needs. Factors contributing to more stable food security conditions throughout the year include access to fisheries, and own crops (especially cassava, maize, and cashew) and improved access to markets.

Casual labor is widely available given the trade dynamic along the major corridors, including the main national road where large volumes of traded goods circulate throughout the year. The tourism industry is also concentrated along the coastal areas which provide a variety of employment related opportunities (including fishing) to many residents of the coastal zones.

Assuming that the timing of lean season, seasonal forecasts, and food price behavior are normal during the scenario period, in the event of strong winds and/or category 1 cyclone between November and March, households in this areas are not expected to face income or food deficits. This is the case because households in these areas grow a combination of crops. This crop diversification also allows for income diversification, which would sufficiently allow households to meet their food needs throughout this scenario period. The majority of the households will face Minimal food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 1) and will be able to maintain their livelihoods through typical strategies. In the occurrence of a cyclone the poorer households could expand their typical livelihood strategies without having to resort in assets depletion in order to generate income for market purchases.

\(^2\) For a description of some of the livelihoods zones located in the coastal areas, please visit Southern Nampula Coastal, Zambezia Coastal, and Northern Nampula Coastal livelihood zones.
EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Impact on food security outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entire Country</td>
<td>Late on-set of rains</td>
<td>The late start of rains will delay availability of seasonal wild foods that typically minimize the severity of the acute food insecurity levels during the lean season (October to March), as well as the availability of opportunities for casual labor for tilling activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traders do not respond as anticipated and no additional food stocks flow to the deficit areas</td>
<td>Local markets would be undersupplied, pushing food prices higher than currently projected. Food deficits, especially for poor households, would emerge and be larger, particularly late in the peak of the lean season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inadequate input supply for main season planting</td>
<td>Will prevent households from benefiting from the expected favorable agro climatic conditions with the on-set of seasonal rains. Inadequate supply of seeds and input will delay and affect the availability of green foods (food source) in January and February.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>Given the forecast for 2013/14 above normal rainfall in country and countries upstream, could cause a severe and widespread floods, that would led cause significant reduction in the production or totally destroyed in the affected areas especially near the river banks; trees be destroyed by the strength of moving waters; and roads, bridges and other infrastructure including poorly constructed houses partially or totally destroyed, and interruption of essential livelihood activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclone Prone Area (Coastal Mozambique)</td>
<td>Category 2 and above cyclone hits the coast</td>
<td>A cyclone’s high winds, heavy rains and storm surges on the coast cause potential loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure. High winds could cause damage to structures, power and telephone lines; destruction of standing crops; damage to orchards and trees; transportation blockages due to fallen debris; high risk for ships and boats.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes over a six-month period, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes those assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to develop scenarios estimating food security outcomes. Typically, FEWS NET reports the most likely scenario.