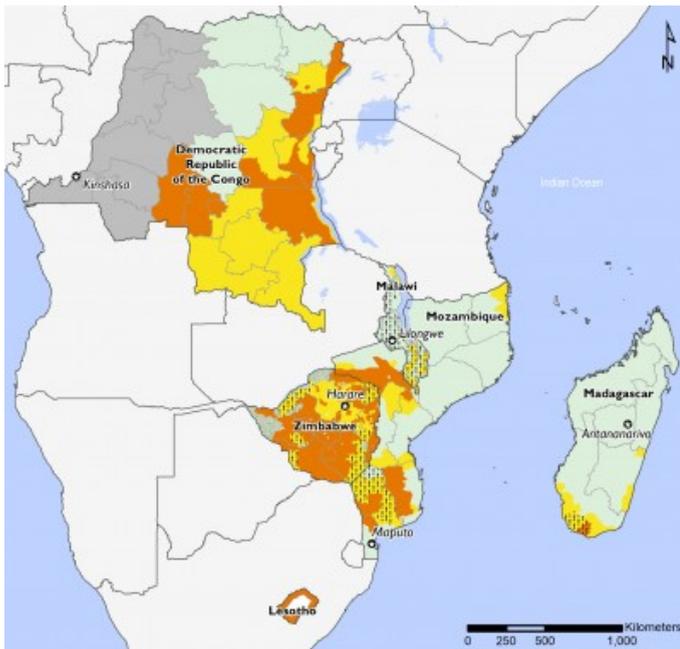
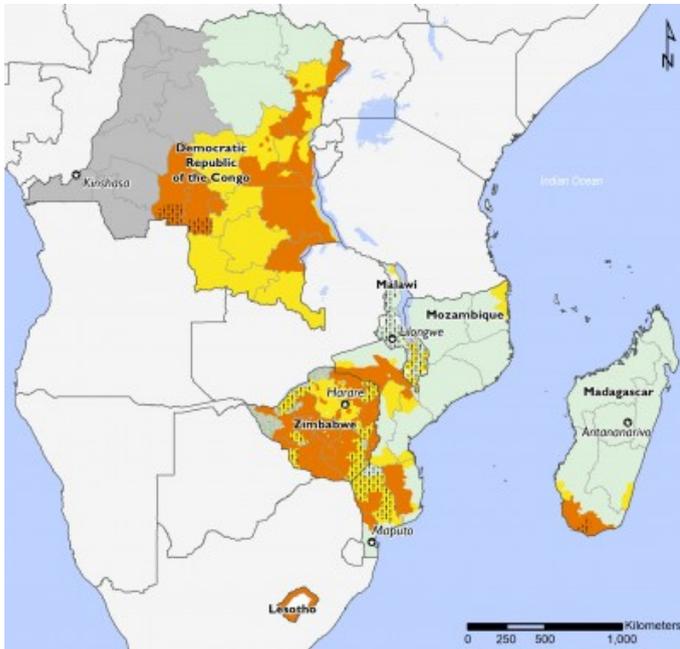


Southern Africa

Key Message Update



Heavy January rainfall decreased moisture deficits, though cropping conditions unlikely to recover

February 2019

Key Messages:

Despite moderate to heavy rainfall in early and mid-January, poor rainfall at the end of the month led to soil moisture stress, causing some maize crops to wilt. As below-average rainfall is likely to continue, cropping conditions are not anticipated to recover in most areas and staple food production across Lesotho, Angola, southern Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, central South Africa, and northern Namibia is expected to be below-average. However, cropping conditions across Malawi, Madagascar, and northern Mozambique are favorable most likely leading to an average to above average harvest.

Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are widespread due to limited incomes and agriculture labor opportunities to purchase food. Also, continued conflict in DRC and poor economic conditions in Zimbabwe are driving acute food insecurity. Humanitarian assistance is improving outcomes to Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) in Malawi and parts of Mozambique and Zimbabwe and Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) in parts of DRC and Madagascar. Outcomes are anticipated to improve with the harvest in March. However, the harvest is anticipated to be delayed in Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and southern Mozambique due to the delayed start of the season.

Tropical cyclone Desmond, a category 1 storm, resulted in flooding in southern parts of Madagascar and central provinces of Mozambique. In most affected areas, flooding only destroyed infrastructure, but had minimal impact on crops. The forecast for above-average rainfall in February is likely to cause some isolated flooding in the low-lying areas of Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi. Households in flood-affected areas are anticipated to experience crops losses and disruption of food availability in markets, however the affects will be limited.

Staple food prices continue increasing across the region as market demand is somewhat higher than normal driven by atypically high household reliance on markets to access food. Maize grain prices in both Malawi and Madagascar are above average and more than 20 percent above last year's prices. In Zimbabwe prices increased significantly due to the high inflation rate linked to policy changes and increase in fuel prices. Similarly, prices in conflict and Ebola affected areas of DRC are also likely to be above average due to limited market access. Prices will most likely remain above-average in many areas through the harvest.

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<http://fews.net/southern-africa/key-message-update/february-2019>

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