

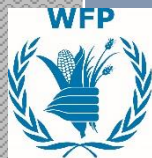
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Food & Nutrition Security Update

March 2017

A report by the Food and Nutrition Security
Working Group



Key Messages

- Good performance of the current growing season (Oct 2016 – April 2017) is critical for Southern Africa, after suffering from two consecutive droughts induced by a long lasting El Niño event which led to unprecedented levels of food insecurity.
- Humanitarian assistance has played an instrumental role in stabilizing the food security situation in the region, particularly for the most vulnerable. Good coverage was realized with intense response from government and humanitarian community. However, the peak of the lean season compromises household food security, combined with the rains which are associated with higher disease instances (Malaria and Diarrhea).
- Countries in Southern Africa are battling several hazards with potentially detrimental effects on food security. Madagascar experienced a cyclone, which was also partly responsible for flooding in Mozambique and Zimbabwe and the effects are still to be determined. Concurrently, a fall armyworm outbreak is causing considerable crop damage in seven countries.
- While the nutrition situation remains volatile in the region, most recent surveys still characterise acute malnutrition levels below emergency thresholds. However, pockets with higher malnutrition remain, e.g. in southern Madagascar and some parts of Zimbabwe. A number of countries including Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Mozambique are currently undertaking or planning SMART nutrition surveys to determine the nutrition status of people affected by the El Niño during the current peak of the lean season.
- An improved harvest is expected in the South African Development Community (SADC) region, due to the good rains received during the current production season. The only exceptions are mainly in Tanzania and parts of Madagascar and northern Mozambique. Regional maize prices are also forecast to be low because the price observed in December 2016 was 24 percent lower than the high reached in February 2016 when it was ZAR 5,000/MT (USD 320) (SAFEX Prices).
- The expected improved harvest and low prices will create post-harvest management challenges at household and national level which could result in high levels of post-harvest losses.
- The revised area planted estimate and first production forecast for summer crops for 2017, in South Africa, was released by the Crop Estimates Committee (CEC) on 28 February 2017. The expected commercial maize crop for 2017 is 13,918 million tons, which is 78, 9% more than the 7,778 million tons of the previous season (2016), which was a drought year.

A. Current Regional Food And Nutrition Security Situation

Rainfall & Agricultural season

After a somewhat slow onset in October and November, rainfall improved significantly in December and has been well above normal till mid-March. The high rains provided good growing conditions in most countries, excluding parts of Tanzania, Madagascar and Angola. South Africa and Malawi have already released preliminary production forecasts showing high expectations for the upcoming crop harvests.

The Fall Armyworm also negatively affected 7 countries in the region, however, the impact may have been mitigated at national and regional level by the abundant rains which allowed for very good crop growing conditions. Water balance models based on rainfall and related parameters indicate above average rainfall-related crop performance in most areas, except Western Angola, eastern Madagascar, parts of northern Namibia, parts of northern Mozambique, parts of Tanzania, and parts of eastern South Africa. Low rainfall was received in the north east of the region, particularly Tanzania, and parts of northern Mozambique), as well as eastern Madagascar, western Namibia, and western Angola. The poor rains particularly affected the first-season bimodal rains in Tanzania, while the unimodal areas have been faring better since late January.

The very high rains in the southern half of the region, that were in part exacerbated by Cyclones Dineo and Enawo, resulted in floods, waterlogging, infrastructure and agricultural damage and increased river levels above flood alert levels reported in some areas. Levels of many dams also increased significantly, and some dams filled up. However, some dams failed as a result. Two cyclones in February and March negatively affected Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The relatively low temperatures associated with the persistent rains resulted in a lengthening of the crop cycle length, which puts some areas into risk of frost damage. Crops in many areas are currently ranging from reproductive to maturation stage in most areas. Satellite images of vegetation indicate that vegetation conditions have improved significantly in most parts of the region, and are much better than average. This however excludes the same areas that have been affected by low rainfall as described above.

Floods and cyclones

Tropical cyclone ENAWO hit Madagascar on 7 March near the north-eastern district of Antalaha and Antananarivo on 8 March. As of 13 March, at least 100,000 people have been directly affected by the cyclone, approximately half of whom are in Antalaha district. At least 50 people have been killed, and 183 wounded, mainly in Analanjirofo and Sava regions. Over 110,000 people have been displaced by flooding and storm waters, particularly in Antalaha and Maroantsetra districts¹.

Communication with the affected areas in the north east has been completely cut off and the information flow is very sparse. According to CARE International, 80 percent of the city of Antalaha has been affected with lot of damage to housing and access roads. Based on experience of previous cyclones and the contingency plan, an estimated 750,000 people are likely to be affected (of those at least 200,000 displaced), with major damages expected at a national level including in the Antananarivo region and the north-west. A multi-sector team for rapid assessment composed of WFP, CARE International, UNICEF, WHO, Malagasy Red Cross, UNDAC, MEDAIR, OCHA, BNGRC and Telma has been put in place and is expected to conduct field visits in Antalaha and Sambava from mid-March.

Recent flooding in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar has resulted in an increased risk for waterborne disease outbreaks. In Mozambique, the Ministry of Health has reported 216 suspected cases from four sites: Maputo city, Matola city (neighbouring Maputo) and Namialo and Monapo districts located in Nampula province in the north of the country (as of February 16). The Humanitarian Country Team in Mozambique has issued a Flash Appeal for US\$ 10.2 million for the Cyclone Dineo response. Of this, the Food Security Cluster (FSC) is requesting for US\$ 3.31 million to provide food assistance to 89,000 people through unconditional transfers and food for assets/work as well as seed distribution to farming households who have lost their crops.

Fall Armyworms

An outbreak of fall armyworm has been reported in seven SADC countries (see **Annex 1**).The pest was first detected in Southern Africa in December 2016 (Zambia), Malawi and Zimbabwe in January 2017, Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland in February 2017. The remaining SADC mainland countries are at risk due to the fact that they share borders and also the pest is known to fly long distances.

Though the pest has preference for maize, it is hosted by a wide range of plant species (over 80) some of which are the main cultivated crops such as sorghum, sugarcane, cotton, Irish potato, tomato, tobacco, spinach, crucifers, chrysanthemum, cucurbits, cucumber, sweet potato, common bean, cowpea, soya bean, groundnut, banana, ginger, grass pastures etc. With this it has potential to remain active and to cause damage throughout the year. In maize the pest affect the crop at different stages from early vegetative to physiological maturity. It damages leaves, feed inside whorls on growing plants which destroys developing tassels and also feed on developing kernels, all this will ultimately have an impact on yields (**Pictures below**).



¹ <http://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/acaps-briefing-note-madagascar-tropical-cyclone-enawo-13-march-2017>

Zambia reported that as of mid-February almost 223 000 hectares were affected, of which almost 90 000 hectares of these is maize, requiring farmers to replant their crops. In Malawi some 17 000 hectares have so far been affected while in Namibia, approximately 50 000 hectares of maize and millet has been damaged and in Zimbabwe up to 130 000 hectares could be affected thus far. In Botswana, about 70 hectares was affected in two districts assessed to date.

In Southern Africa, management of the fall armyworm is still mainly trial and error, the management is being informed by experiences in managing the African armyworm and stem-borers. As a result some countries managed to suppress the pests although at high cost. In Zambia and Zimbabwe chemical spraying was effective on early vegetative crops and variable results have been observed on maize from tasselling to maturity. Due to the complexity of the infestation and gaps in technical capacities, countries are still struggling to properly scout and quantify the full extent of the damage.

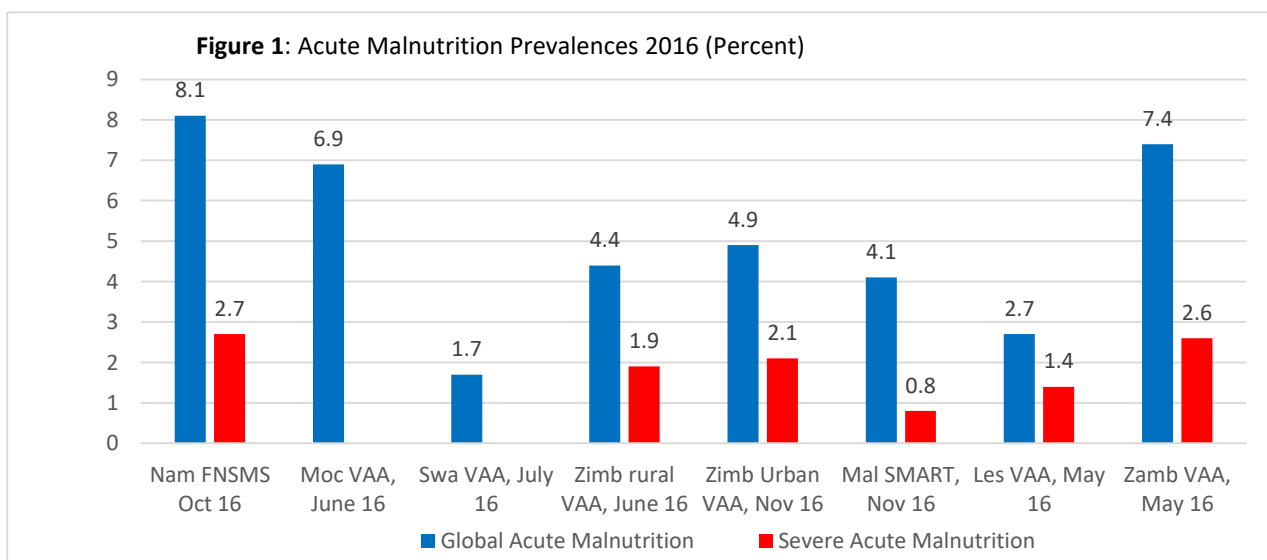
Market performance

Staple prices in several countries remain high during this peak lean season and across the region prices of maize grain remained higher than the five- year average. However, humanitarian assistance helped improving availability of staple to very poor households and therefore helped to stabilize month on month staple prices in several countries like Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Lesotho. Malawi and Mozambique prices remains the highest in the region and are over 150 percent above five - year average. With the anticipated improved harvest in most countries in the region, these prices are expected to start decreasing from April and May when most households will start consuming maize from own production.

Trend analysis of maize prices from 2011 to 2016 shows that real and nominal price of white maize in South Africa has dropped below the five-year average prices. If the downward trend continues in South Africa, the expectation is that this price decline will spill over to Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland (BNLS) that rely heavily on South Africa’s export.

Nutrition, HIV and Health

While the nutrition situation remains volatile in the region, most recent surveys still characterise acute malnutrition levels below emergency thresholds. However, pockets with higher malnutrition remains e.g. in Southern Madagascar and in some parts of Zimbabwe. A number of countries including Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Mozambique are currently undertaking or planning SMART surveys to further determine the nutrition status of people affected by the El Niño as we are entering the peak of the lean season. Mozambique is conducting assessments on whether the drought response addressed needs for PLHIV. Malawi already conducted this assessment as results expected soon. Regular large scale MUAC screening is also ongoing in Malawi and Madagascar. The most recent assessment information available from certain SADC member states is outlined in **Figure 1**.



* Please note that surveys/assessment have used varying methodologies and comparison has to be made with caution.

PLHIV/TB remain at higher risk for malnutrition, in Malawi 191,521 People Living with HIV AIDS and TB received nutrition support from January to November 2016 while 4,111 (2.1%) were admitted as Severely Undernourished and 17,184 (9.0%) as Moderately Undernourished². In the Zimbabwe Urban Livelihoods Assessment it was found that HIV/AIDS was the most frequently reported illness and that 3% of households had one or more of their members suffering from TB³.

Recent flooding in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique from heavy rainfall has resulted in an increased risk for waterborne disease outbreaks. In Mozambique, the Ministry of Health has reported 216 suspected cases from four sites: Maputo city, Matola city (neighbouring Maputo) and Namialo and Monapo districts located in Nampula province in the north of the country (as of Feb 16)⁴. The current outbreak in Maputo is the first in the capital for three years. In Angola, cases have been reported in the capital Luanda and in the South. A typhoid outbreak in Zimbabwe, Harare is still ongoing. During the period January 2016 to date, 2,310 typhoid cases have been reported in the country out of which 85 have been laboratory confirmed with 8 typhoid related deaths reported⁵. Education on hand washing and proper handling of food should be intensified to curb the magnitude the spread of the typhoid outbreak.

At the same time, insecurity in Mozambique and Burundi has resulted in internal displacement and refugee outflows. At the end of January 2017, 3,455 refugees fleeing clashes in Mozambique between government forces and Renamo were registered in Malawi and a total of 645 in Zimbabwe. Arising from the Burundi emergency, Tanzania hosts the largest population of new Burundian refugees including 230,018 refugees who have arrived since April 2015.

B. Food and Nutrition Security Outlook (March - May 2017)

Food consumption: The region is still within the lean season and households from some communities in countries like Zimbabwe (mostly Southern), Mozambique (South to Central) and DRC (parts of East) are still facing large food consumption gaps leading to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes. However, there is significant humanitarian assistance on the ground which is mitigating the situation, otherwise worse-off conditions could prevail in the absence of assistance.

In countries like Malawi, Lesotho and parts of Zimbabwe, the impact of assistance has improved the situation from Crisis (IPC Phase 3) to Stressed (IPC Phase 2!). Without any assistance, chances of IPC Phase 4 were high in some of these areas.

Nonetheless, the season is progressing well and the majority of communities are now consuming green crops from their fields. This is improving food access which is slowly marking the end of the lean season. Given the prevailing seasonal conditions, most crops are in average to good condition which is increasing prospects of an average harvest, despite other shocks like fall army worms, cyclones and floods. With these production prospects, the lean season is expected to ease-off leading to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes in most of the region from May.

Seasonal Forecast:

A recent forecast update released by SADC Climate Services Centre (CSC) for the February to April 2017 period suggests continuation of average to above average rainfall in the southern and central parts of the region, while normal to below normal rainfall is forecast for the northern parts of the region. This forecast favours a good likelihood of crops reaching maturity with sufficient water supply in the southern and central parts of the region. Short term forecasts however indicate some drying out is expected in the same areas from mid to late March, which will facilitate crop development, on condition that the dryness is not prolonged, especially for crops in the reproductive stage.

The 2016/17 agricultural season was marked by a La Niña event. The La Niña signal has however been dissipating slowly over the last couple of months, with warming gradually occurring over the central equatorial Pacific Ocean

² Unicef, Malawi, Nutrition Response in Emergency Situation in Malawi, Issue #7 January 2017.

³ Zimbabwe Urban Livelihoods Assessment, ZIMVAC September 2016.

⁴ Joint Cholera Initiative for Southern Africa (JCISA) Sub-regional up-date on Cholera; 2017 – Week 6

⁵ Zimbabwe Humanitarian Situation Report No.11 – 31 December 2016

(one of the areas monitored for tracking the El Niño Southern Oscillation, or ENSO). ENSO is always in one of 3 phases: (1) La Niña, (2) Neutral or (3) El Niño. Conditions are currently in cool-neutral phase (neutral, but closer to La Niña state). Most major international climate centres are forecasting a continued warming of the sea surface temperatures in the area monitored for ENSO, and are projecting either El Niño or neutral conditions by the start of the 2017/2018 season. La Niña is usually associated with above normal rains in many southern and central parts of the region, and below average rainfall in the north-east of the region. The reverse applies for El Niño.

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The Food Security Update is jointly produced by the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group – Southern Africa. The overall mission of the Group is to contribute to enhanced programming for improved Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods in southern Africa.

SOUTHERN AFRICA: Armyworm Outbreak (March 2017)



Situation Overview

Southern Africa is under threat from a new pest in the region, the Fall Armyworm, which could have severe impacts on crop production, food security, nutrition and livelihoods in the region. This follows a devastating drought episode associated with the 2015/2016 El Niño event, which negatively affected food security in the Southern Africa region. FAO held an emergency meeting in Zimbabwe from 14 to 16 February 2017 with regional experts from 13 countries, in order to co-ordinate emergency responses to the armyworm threat in the region. The Fall Armyworm is classified as a quarantine pest and countries could therefore be affected by import bans on agricultural products. The problem is reportedly compounded by the newness of the pest to the region (originally from South America) and its resistance to common pest control chemicals.



8 Countries with Fall Armyworm Present



4 Countries with African Armyworm Present

Zambia

The Fall Armyworm has been confirmed in all Provinces in Zambia, with 94% of districts affected. The area infested was reportedly 222,586 Ha (about 20% maize). The area totally damaged that required re-planting was 87,152 Ha (approximately 6%).

Zimbabwe

Reports of Fall Armyworm have been received from all provinces in Zimbabwe, attacking maize and millets amongst other hosts. As much as 70% of maize crops have been destroyed in some affected areas. Approximately 1.3 million Ha of maize crops are at risk. In addition, an African Armyworm outbreak is present in Manicaland and Matebeleland North Provinces.

Malawi

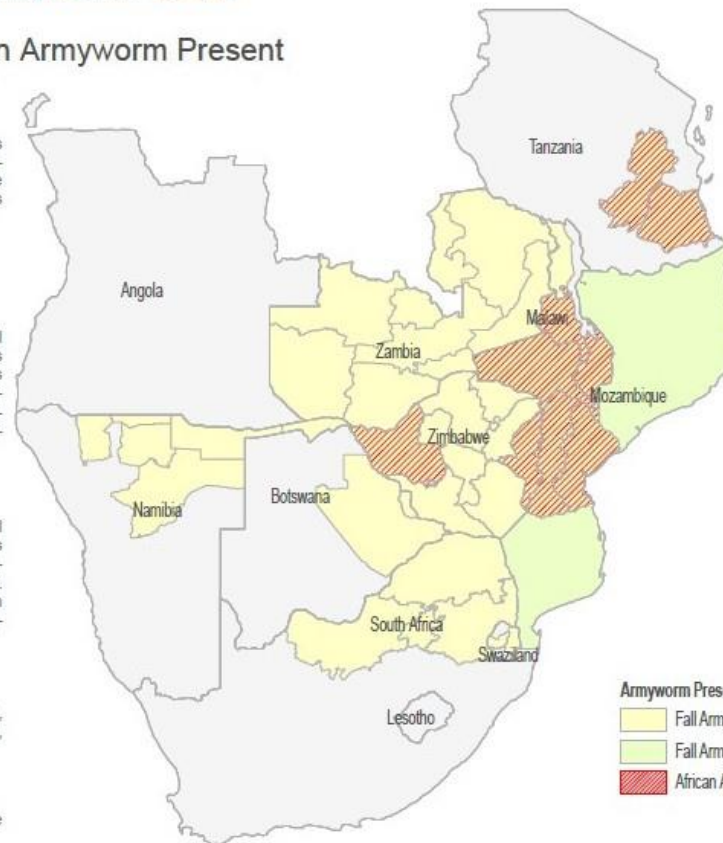
Fall armyworm is present in almost all Agricultural Development Divisions (ADD) in Malawi. Currently it is estimated that 17,000 ha of maize and 70,132 households have been affected. Recording is still underway. In addition, the African Armyworm has been reported in the Shire Valley ADD (8ha of crops affected) and Lilongwe ADD (5.5ha of crops affected).

South Africa

Fall armyworm is present in Free State, Limpopo, North-West, Gauteng and Mpumalanga Provinces, threatening maize and staple crops.

Swaziland

The Fall Armyworm has been positively identified in the Lubombo and Manzini Regions in Swaziland.



Armyworm Presence:

- Fall Armyworm Present
- Fall Armyworm (Unconfirmed)
- African Armyworm Present

Namibia

Fall Armyworm has been reported in Zambezi, Kavango, Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshikoto and Otjozondjupa Regions in Namibia. The affected hectareage under Maize production is 12,172 Ha of communal land, 6,500 Ha of commercial land and 3,000 Ha of the Green Scheme Irrigation Project. Hectareage affected under Millet production is approximately 12,400 Ha-16,000 Ha (communal land). Approximately 20,673 households have reportedly been directly affected.

Tanzania

Fall armyworm has also been confirmed in Tanzania, although areas affected are still to be determined. In addition a mild African Armyworm outbreak is present in Morogoro & Lindi Regions in Tanzania.

Botswana

Fall armyworm has been found in most of Botswana's north eastern region. Areas such as Moroka, Nlphwane and Zwenshambe have reportedly been affected. A total of 70.34 Ha of maize fields were infested.

Mozambique

There are also reports suggesting the presence of the Fall Armyworm in Mozambique, although these are yet to be confirmed. There is currently an African Armyworm outbreak in the Provinces of Manica, Sofala and Tete, damaging maize, rice and grass pasture.