KEY MESSAGES

- Many areas throughout Mozambique continue to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, though in many central and southern areas humanitarian food assistance is preventing more severe outcomes and Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes exist. In parts of Cabo Delgado, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is expected to expand by April. After March, when food assistance is no longer anticipated, many central areas will maintain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with increased food from the harvest. In southern areas, though, where very poor production is likely, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected by April.

- In the south of the country, drought has driven crop losses and will result in significantly below average harvests. Although rainfall in January encouraged additional planting, heavy rainfall in February was too late for further planting. The rains did provide much-needed water for humans and animals, increased availability of pasture, and will be beneficial for the second season planting of vegetables in April.

- Heavy rainfall and subsequent floods since December in the northern zone have resulted in deaths and destruction of infrastructure including bridges and houses. Heavy rainfall in February in Maputo, Gaza, Manica, Sofala and Tete provinces caused further damage. According to the Technical Council of Disaster Management (CTGC), nearly 200,000 hectares of crops have been total or partially lost.

- The price of maize grain is approximately 25 to 75 percent above 2019 prices and 25 to 55 percent above average due to below average market supply. Maize grain prices are expected to decline from March with increased stocks from the harvest, but gradually increase from July/August onwards. Overall, abnormally high staple food prices will lower purchasing power among poor households, driving acute food insecurity in areas where households rely heavily on markets, including southern region.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

Source: FEWS NET
NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

The 2019/20 rainfall and agricultural season has progressed well in most surplus-producing areas of the country, namely in the interior of the northern region of Mozambique, northern Tete Province, Zambezia Province, and the highlands of the central region in Manica and Sofala provinces. According to the Water Requirements Satisfaction Index (WRSI), and field reports, estimates for maize grain production (Figure 1) as of February 20, 2020 indicate crops are receiving 95 to 100 percent of water requirements, and crops are in good condition. Conversely, in the central semiarid areas of southern Tete Province, northern Manica Province, and southern parts of Manica and Sofala Provinces, the 2019/20 season has been characterized by erratic rainfall, dry spells, and abnormally high temperatures that resulted in the loss of early planted crops. In southern Mozambique, households are facing a third consecutive season of dry or drought conditions. Many households planted at least twice between mid-November and early December, but the dry conditions resulted in the wilting of crops. Widespread, heavy rains in early to mid-January supported another round of planting however, due to previous multiple planting attempts, most of these households had less seed to plant. Among crops currently in the field, most are still in early vegetative stages, much delayed from what is typical for crops in February. In most of the southern region, WRSI and field reports agree that cropping conditions are ‘mediocre’ to ‘failure.’ Most households have abandoned their farming activities and engaged in non-farming activities for alternative sources of income.

In most areas affected by cyclones Kenneth and Idai in 2019, crop production is progressing favorably due to adequate moisture. In these areas, particularly at higher elevation, most crops currently range from vegetative to reproductive stages and suggest an average crop production. However, torrential rainfall and flooding in the lowland areas of Maputo, Gaza, Manica, Sofala, and Tete have affected more than 160,000 people, according to the Technical Council for Disaster Management (CTGC), and resulted in death, displacement of people, damaged of planted crops, and total or partial destruction of infrastructure, as shown in Table 1 below.

Across the country, nearly 200,000 hectares of various crops and more than 150,000 farmers have been affected by the combination of heavy rains, localized floods and drought during the current season. In the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Zambezia and Sofala, excessive rainfall associated with floods since mid-December 2019 has caused total or partial loss of more than 32,000 hectares of maize, beans and peanuts. In contrast, drought conditions in the southern zone affected more than 160,000 hectares in Gaza, Inhambane and Maputo. In the drought stricken southern region, the heavy rainfall in February arrived too late for additional planting. The rains have provided much-needed water for humans and livestock and have increased the availability of pasture, minimizing the need to travel to distant areas. According to estimates by the Crop and Early Warning Unit (DCAP) from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MASA), at the end of January 2020 about 80 percent of total planned area of 6.4 million hectares was planted with crops for the main agricultural season. The remaining planned land is reserved for second season planting that will take place from April to September in lowland areas with sufficient residual moisture.
The majority of poor households continue to earn average incomes through typical means including the sale of own crops and livestock. In the southern semiarid areas and in parts of central semiarid areas where the lean season started atypically early, many poor households are expanding self-employment activities including collecting and selling natural products such as grass and firewood, building poles and reeds, brewing and selling traditional drinks, and increasing the production and sale of charcoal. However, increased competition is leading to below-average income from these activities, and constraining households’ ability to buy food on the market. In addition, households with available livestock and poultry are selling them off as needed, at average market prices. Young men from poor households in the southern region are continuing to migrate to South Africa, often illegally. However, due to difficulties in finding stable work, most of these migrants are unable to send remittances to their relatives.

The level of food access throughout the country is good as most households can access foods from their own production or from the markets. Exceptions include the southern region affected by drought, the conflict areas in Cabo Delgado and the recent flood-affected areas, where food access is constrained due to lack of conditions for production or low production. Many households who were affected by this year’s shocks and lost much or all of their annual food production began relying on market purchases for basic foods atypically early. However, below-average production due to multiple shocks in 2019 and 2020 are causing above average prices of staple goods and constraining household purchasing power. The price of maize grain, the primary staple food, is roughly 25-75 percent above last year and 25-55 percent above the five-year average. Above average levels of maize grain prices persist due to below average market supply during the current consumption period. According to the latest Agriculture Market Information System (SIMA) weekly bulletin, the southern markets continue to be largely supplied by maize grain from the central region. As typical, the central and northern regions’ markets have been largely supplied by maize grain from within the respective regions.

For nearly two months, the normal flow of essential products to the northern districts of Cabo Delgado was interrupted following the collapse of the main bridge that connects the southern and northern zones of Cabo Delgado. The result was a steep increase in the prices of staple products, further reducing the purchasing power of many poor households who were already affected by Cyclone Kenneth in 2019, the ongoing conflict situation and the floods that occurred in December and January in the same areas. Although an alternative passage was recently established, the flow of commodities is still slowed by poor road conditions.

Maize meal prices were stable from December 2019 to January 2020, except in Pemba and Maputo where maize meal prices have increased by 20 percent and 12 percent, respectively. Prices of maize meal were trending at levels up to 20 percent above their respective 2019 levels and were above the five-year average by between 10-40 percent in most markets, except in Maputo and Chimoio where they were similar to average (Figure 2).
Rice prices were also stable in most markets and was similar to last year except in Maputo, Nampula and Pemba where rice prices were between 10-25 percent below last year, and in Beira where rice prices were 12 percent above last year’s prices. When looking at the five-year average, rice prices were roughly 15-30 percent above average in most markets, except in Pemba where it was close to average and in Maputo where it was below average by 25 percent.

According to the Food Security Cluster (FSC), ongoing humanitarian food assistance is covering between 1 million to 1.3 million people throughout the country and mitigating the Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes caused by last year’s tropical cyclones, the ongoing drought in the southern region, and the displaced peoples due to the conflict in Cabo Delgado and this year’s heavy rains and localized floods. However, this assistance is planned to end in March.

Despite the below average food stocks from the 2018/19 agriculture season and above average staple food prices, most poor households throughout the country have employed a variety of typical livelihood strategies and are able to meet their minimum food and non-food needs and are facing None (IPC Phase 1). However, with a prolonged lean season in most southern semiarid areas and the exhaustion of food stocks two to three months earlier than usual in central semiarid areas, many households started to adopt coping strategies including reducing the frequency and quantity of meals, relying on less expensive foods, borrowing food from relatives or better off households, and consuming less preferred and non-recommended wild foods in excess. Humanitarian food assistance is mitigating Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes in areas of Manica, Sofala, Tete, Zambézia, Gaza, Inhambane and Maputo provinces. The continuation of the attacks by “malefactors” in localized rural areas of northeastern Cabo Delgado, is causing more displacement and disruption of livelihoods and preventing agricultural activities for the ongoing season. Field information on the prevailing situation is scarce, but available information indicates an increase in the number of displaced people who may be facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes and requiring humanitarian food assistance. The most affected districts including Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia, Palma, Nangade and more recently Quissanga district, are estimated to be facing either Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.

A Technical Secretariat of Food Security and Nutrition’s (SETSAN) led SMART survey carried out in November 2019 in Cabo Delgado Province recorded an “Alert” GAM prevalence of 6.5 percent in Ibo district but an “Acceptable “GAM prevalence of 2.1 percent in Namuno district. Prevalence of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) was less than one percent in the two districts. The prevalence of acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women was 8.96 percent in Ibo and 5.7 percent in Namuno. In addition, nutrition screening of a total of 2,378 children aged less than five years carried out by the Early Warning Alert and Response System (EWARS)/WHO in three districts in Sofala Province in January 2020 identified less than five percent of the children as being acutely malnourished (MUAC<12.5cm). Specifically, 2.87 percent, 3.77 percent and 3.98 percent in Nhamatanda, Buzi, and Beira districts respectively were identified as acutely malnourished. Pellagra cases, first reported in May 2019, continue to be registered. As of the end of January 2020, a total of 3,767 pellagra cases, up from 3,666 in December 2019, were identified in the districts of Beira, Buzi, Dondo and Nhamatanda. Nhamatanda district presents the highest number of cases of pellagra accounting for 2,551 of the cumulative cases in January 2020. Pellagra cases were registered in all age groups, but adults were the most affected group.

Assumptions

The February to September 2020 most likely scenario is based on the following national-level assumptions:

- Cumulative rainfall for the remainder of the rainfall season (February to March 2020) is most likely to be above average in northern Mozambique where heavy rains and localized floods have already occurred and are still possible to occur. Rainfall in southern Mozambique will most likely be significantly below average and drought conditions are expected to continue in these areas.
- Above average temperatures are expected to persist throughout the remainder of the rainfall season, which combined with the dryness in the southern and semiarid areas of the central region, will adversely affect crop production.
Water supply will be average at a national level. Rivers and dams in the north and central regions will continue to remain well supplied at average to above average levels. Most of the southern region’s rivers and dams will remain well below their average levels, forcing the dam authorities to continue imposing water restrictions for irrigation and water supply to the major cities of southern Mozambique including Maputo, Matola and Boane.

Maize grain production is expected to be close to average. However, large deficits are expected in the southern and central semi-arid areas where production may be less than 50 percent of average and in some areas affected by conflict in Cabo Delgado where households have been displaced and lost their chance to produce own food. In flood-affected areas in northern and central Mozambique, though a post flood recovery is possible, the respective harvest will be late.

Rice production is expected to be average. The average national production of rice is estimated at 255,000 MT. With estimated average of consumption needs of 560,000 MT, this will result in a typical deficit of more than 300,000 MT to be covered by imports, mainly from Asia.

Second-season production is expected to be below average given below average rainfall in the southern regions. Due to three consecutive poor seasons in southern regions, the amount of retained seeds will be below average and consequently the planted area is expected to be below average. In flood-affected areas, households with retained seeds will replant following the recession of flood waters.

International maize imports are expected to be average, at around 175,000 MT coming mostly from South Africa through existing commercial channels.

Internal flow of commodities is expected to take place as typical with the major staples, including maize grain, moving from the traditional producer areas to the deficit areas. Informal trade will continue being the major driving factor for the flow of food commodities from surplus areas to deficit areas.

Cross-border trade with Zimbabwe will likely continue to increase, as an increasing number of middle and better-off households from Zimbabwe will be crossing the border into Mozambique to purchase processed foods. The typically significant trade with Malawi, particularly for maize grain, will likely remain at average levels.

Maize grain prices are expected to follow the typical yearly trend, while remaining above the five-year average and significantly above last year’s prices. Maize grain prices will begin to decrease in April in anticipation of the increased supply due to the harvest and will continue to decrease until demand gradually increases in July when poor households will start gradually to exhaust their food stocks and gradually start relying to market purchases for food.

Other food sources such as wild food and green foods are expected to be available as usual. Exceptions include parts of southern and central semi-arid areas, where availability is expected to be below average.

Rangeland resources will be average, except in southern semi-arid areas where they are expected to be below average.

Livestock body conditions are expected to be average in the northern and central regions, where water and pasture remain available. However, in southern semi-arid areas, though during the first half of the scenario period the situation will be slightly better thanks to recent heavy rains, the overall livestock body conditions will remain below average as livestock will migrate in search of pasture and water sources.

Livestock prices are anticipated to be average. However, prior to the harvest in southern semi-arid areas, households with exhausted food stocks and with livestock will increase livestock sales in order to make market purchases. Increased supply of livestock on the market will drive down prices. In June/July, the prices will again decrease due to the expected poor body conditions of the livestock.

Agricultural labor opportunities are expected to be close to normal in the central and northern regions. However, in the southern semi-arid areas and some areas of central Mozambique affected by dryness and pests, agricultural labor will be limited.

Household income is expected to be average, but below average in southern semi-arid areas and in some parts of the central region where agricultural wages are below average as the middle and better-off households face a reduced payment capacity following the drought. Self-employment activities such as the production of charcoal, handicrafting, brew making, and brick making are expected to intensify through September 2020, however in southern regions, increased competition will reduce income earned.
• Migration to urban centers and to South Africa will decrease between February and April as households focus on their farming activities. As prospects of the poor season become evident, an increasing number of young people are likely to migrate to major urban cities.

• Current humanitarian assistance in cyclone, drought, and conflict affected areas is expected to end in March.

• Insecurity is expected to persist in parts of Cabo Delgado, further disrupting farming activities. Affected households will be unable to access their fields and produce food. As the attacks continue and intensify, further displacement may occur, and the food security conditions and outcomes may deteriorate.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

From February to May, the majority of households throughout the country will most likely face None (IPC Phase 1) outcomes, as they will rely on their own production for food, including carryover stocks, green foods in February and March, the main harvest in April and May and market purchases for food if needed. However, in the southern region and parts of northeastern Cabo Delgado, with humanitarian food assistance expected to end in March in most places, the very poor and poor households will most likely not be able to meet their minimum food needs and are anticipated to face food consumption gaps starting in April, equivalent to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. These poor households are anticipated to engage in consumption-based coping including reducing the frequency and quantity of meals, relying on less expensive foods, borrowing food from relatives or better off households and consuming less preferred and non-recommended wild foods in excess. In the central zones affected by cyclone Idai last year, poor households will gradually access green foods until March when they will begin accessing their own harvests. Households will be facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, as they continue to recover from the effects of the cyclone and from this year’s flooding in the lowlands. These households will be selling more animals than usual, switching expenditure away from non-essential items, or opting for less preferred foods. In the semiarid areas of southern Tete Province, consumption of wild foods is likely to continue during this period to compensate for deficits in own food, and therefore, most districts in this area will still be facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes. In Cabo Delgado, areas affected by cyclone Kenneth last year such as Mocimboa da Praia, Macomia and Quissanga, are experiencing increased conflict and displaced people and will likely be facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Other areas also affected by the conflict are likely to be facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes as households have been displaced and lost opportunities to produce their own food. The seasonal deterioration of nutrition outcomes is most likely to occur due to decreased food access through the end of the lean season. However, starting in March 2020, the overall GAM prevalence in the country is expected to improve to Acceptable (GAM<5%) due to increased food access after the main harvest.

From June to September, most poor households throughout the country are anticipated to continue to experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes as they will be accessing their own food and benefiting from the seasonally low prices during the months of June and July. However, in the southern region, most poor households will continue facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the absence of humanitarian food assistance. During this period, some vegetables will be available from the second season, but will not be enough to meet minimum food needs. In much of the central areas affected by cyclones last year, most poor households will now be accessing their own food stocks and these areas will be facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes. Southern Tete Province will continue facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes as most poor households will have a below average harvest. All other areas will remain unchanged from the scenario described during the previous period.
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>Area</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Impact on food security outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flood-prone areas of central region</td>
<td>More torrential rainfall in February and</td>
<td>This may likely increase the scale of crop damage, displacement, loss of livestock, and destruction of infrastructure. Crop and livestock losses would result in reduced food availability and a loss of income at the household level. Displacement would also result in a significant loss of assets and lack of food and shelter. Flooding would also further increase the risk of both vector- and waterborne diseases. Disruptions to trade flows and market infrastructure would result in food commodity scarcity, driving additional price increases. These reductions in food availability and access would likely lead to an increase in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Manica, Sofala, Zambézia and Tete provinces)</td>
<td>possibly in March may worsen the flooding in the lowlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict areas of Cabo Delgado</td>
<td>Intensification and expansion of the conflict in Cabo Delgado</td>
<td>This will likely increase the level of displacement, resulting in livelihood disruption including, significant loss of assets, and lack of food and shelter. This situation would likely lead to an increase in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclone Prone Areas in Nampula, Inhambane, Zambézia and Sofala provinces</td>
<td>Major tropical cyclone (Category 3 or higher)</td>
<td>A cyclone’s high winds, heavy rains, and storm surges on the coast may cause potential loss of life and damage to property, communications, and infrastructure. High winds can impact the area with flying objects, damage to structures, damage to power and telephone lines, destruction of standing crops, damage to orchards and trees, and transportation blockages due to fallen trees or debris. A cyclone will induce flooding that could cause the drowning of humans and animals, flood damage to structures, possible landslides, damage to crops (especially tubers), and erosion. A cyclone is also associated with the occurrence of storm surges which can cause rapid flooding near the coastline, scouring and erosion of topsoil, and increases in the salinity in sub-surface water which destroys most crops. The poorest households in particular may face acute food shortages. Necessary interventions would likely include provision of shelter, food, water, and sanitation services and facilities for at least until the next harvest in 2021. Self recovery will play a crucial role but the most vulnerable will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.</td>
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AREAS OF CONCERN

**Southern Semiarid Cereals and Cattle (Livelihood Zone 22)**

*Current Situation*

The zone is currently experiencing its third consecutive season of drought. The cumulative rainfall from November 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020 was less than 50 percent of average in most of the areas within the zone. In addition, the rainfall distribution was erratic (Figure 4), and the air temperature was abnormally high during the entire period.

The two previous seasons were also affected by infestation of pests, including Fall Armyworm, which combined with drought, reduced crop yields or led to generalized crop failure across the zone. Last year’s second season from April to September 2019 did not bring any improvement due to below average residual moisture in the lowland areas where this secondary season is normally practiced.

In early December 2019, widespread and significant rainfall occurred in the zone, prompting many households to plant as much of their available seed as possible. Most households planted at below average levels, due to shortage of seeds caused by previous poor seasons and failed attempts at planting in November 2019. On average, households have attempted to plant two to three times with no success due to long dry spells that followed each attempt, combined with abnormally high temperatures that caused widespread loss of crops even before germination. In most areas there are no planted crops or planted crops are wilting. Where
crops have survived, it is unlikely for them to reach maturation given that rainfall typically ends in March. Most households have abandoned farming activities and have been engaged in self-employment activities such as charcoal production for sale.

Below-average availability of seasonal green food is reducing households’ ability to meet their food needs, except in lowland areas along the rivers where crops are being grown through irrigation. Households are increasingly consuming wild foods, though their availability remains limited due to prolonged dryness.

During the El Niño drought in 2016, households had to atypically move their livestock due to dryness. However, the significant rainfall in December 2019 and early February 2020 increased the availability of pasture and water and improved livestock body conditions to average, allowing households to reduce migration distances this season.

Household food stocks at the beginning of the lean season were below average due to two previous below average seasons and are now exhausted. According to SETSAN’s data gathered during last year’s harvest in April/May 2019, in Gaza Province, 90 percent of households had no food reserves and only 9 percent had food reserves that could last 1 to 3 months. In Inhambane Province, 81 percent of households had no food reserves, 17 percent had food reserves that could last 1 to 3 months and only 2 percent had food reserves that could last 3 or more months.

The level of supply in local markets is below average for this time of the year, particularly for staple foods from household-level farming, such as maize grain, cowpeas, and beans. Other staple foods that are usually imported or processed, such as maize meal, rice and cooking oil, are adequately available. In Chokwe, current maize grain prices are 72 percent above the 5-year average and 80 percent above last year’s prices due to below average maize grain supply from the 2018/19 agriculture season caused by the dryness and infestation by pests including FAW. To date, the direct substitutes of maize grain, namely maize meal and rice, have been less impacted and those prices have remained relatively stable since last year.

Agriculture labor opportunities and in-kind payments are below average due to decreased production. Middle and better off households, who were affected by two previous drought seasons, are currently facing a third consecutive poor season. With no chance to fully recover, these households are facing reduced payment power and are limiting opportunities for labor for poorer households.

Despite reduced purchasing power, poor households have been solely relying on markets as the main source of food for the last two years due to the consecutive poor seasons. Poor households are atypically selling poultry and small to medium sized animals such as goats, pigs and sheep, depending on availability. Based on the current prices, if they sell one chicken, they can buy a little more than three kilograms of maize meal, which is roughly enough to meet the kilocalorie needs of a household of five for only one day. Apart from the sale of poultry and other animals, households are managing to get cash through casual labor activities, such as the production and sale of charcoal, gathering and the sale of firewood, brewing, thatching, cutting and the sale of construction poles, cutting and the sale of reeds, and handcrafting. However, with more and more people engaged in similar activities, opportunities to sell are reduced, and the amount of cash earned is likely less than average. Gathering of wild foods, mostly for consumption, but also for sale, is taking place wherever possible. However, its availability is lower than average for this time of the year.

Due to the remoteness of most of the areas in the zone, poor households that can sell chickens or produce charcoal for sale have had to transport their wares to far-away markets. However, take-home income is low after paying for the cost of transportation and food costs during the days spent on these long trips. These households that are able to travel longer distances are the only ones able to access maize grain, as it is only available at larger reference markets in the district capitals or other major markets within or outside the zone.

According to SETSAN’s data gathered during the harvest in April/May 2019, when most households are expected to be consuming own food, the Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), an indicator of consumption-based coping, indicated at least 24 percent of the households in Gaza and 10 percent in Inhambane, were engaging in consumption-based coping that would
be indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse. Based on this, it is expected that currently the level of households engaged in consumption-based coping, are likely higher than last year given the level of severity in the current season.

According to the Food Security Cluster (FSC), out of 353,000 people projected by SETSAN in April/May 2019 as people in need from October 2019 to February 2020, in this livelihood zone (Gaza and Inhambane provinces), the World Food Programme (WFP) is covering 193,000 people, representing 55 percent of the total needs in the two provinces. The remaining 45 percent of the needs are being covered by World Vision and INAS (National Institute of Social Action)/World Bank. However, planned and funded humanitarian assistance is anticipated to end in March, while needs will extend into the harvest season.

Thanks to the ongoing food assistance, complemented by the purchases of food and increasingly the consumption of wild foods, most poor households are able to meet the minimum basic food needs without engaging in unsustainable coping strategies. However, they cannot afford some essential non-food expenditures such as clothes, school fees, health services, agriculture inputs, charcoal, construction materials, and other household items. According to the Food Security Cluster (FSC), nearly 80 percent were covered in January. As a result of this assistance the Chibuto, Chigubo, Mapai, Guijá, Chicualacuala, Mabalane, MAssingir, Massangena in Gaza Province and Mabote, Funhalouro, Govuro and Panda in Inhambane Province are facing Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!).

Assumptions

In addition to the National level assumptions, the following assumptions apply to this area of concern:

- **Below average 2019/20 crop production.** The amount of staple food expected from the 2019/20 season, will be well below the average.

- **Late 2019/20 harvest.** Due to multiple failed planting attempts, any expected successful harvest will be delayed by more than a month. While the harvest is normally expected in March, this season, any possible harvest is only expected to start after May.

- **Poor second season prospects.** Residual moisture levels for second season cropping (April-September) will be below average through the end of the second season in September. As a result, the level of production is expected to be less than 50 percent of the five-year average.

- **Below-average agricultural labor availability and wage rates.** Agricultural labor opportunities are expected to be below average for second season production from June to August as well as during the remainder of the season (February to April), due to the expected below average crop production. The wages or in-kind payments are expected to be below average due to prospects for poor harvest, and the below-average income and food reserves by the middle and better off households, who had not fully recovered from the shocks during the last three years.

- **Pest infestations.** During a typical agricultural season, this zone experiences various pest infestations. The two primary pests of concern for current and the second season production are Fall Armyworm (FAW) and rodents. During the remainder of 2019/20 season, and with the prospect of suppressed rains, the FAW remain a major threat for maize and other crops in the zone but given the loss of most crops to drought, the relative impact will be minimal. For the second season, the infestation by the FAW may be localized as this season is practiced in lowland areas with residual moisture or with irrigation. Infestation by rodents will likely occur during the remainder of the current season and the second season, further reducing crop production.

- **Agricultural inputs.** With multiple planting attempts during the 2019/20 main season, and the last two poor seasons, poor households have exhausted much of their seeds and are facing difficulties to access seeds for additional planting including the second season. With no planned seed distributions, total planted area for 2020 is likely to be below average.

- **Increased self-employment.** With prospects of poor harvest from the 2019/20 season, poor households have started to atypically intensify their self-employment to above-average levels to earn needed cash for food market purchases. This trend is expected to continue throughout the entire scenario period. However, due to competition, the level of income will be below average.
• **Abnormally high maize grain prices.** Maize grain prices are expected to remain well above the 5-year average by 75 percent on average and above last year’s price by 65 percent on average. In addition, prices are expected to be above the El Niño drought prices of 2015/16. Based on FEWS NET’s integrated price projections for the zone’s reference market of Chókwe (Figure 5), from February to April 2019, maize grain prices will reach their peak before they start decreasing in May when the market will be supplied by newly harvested maize grain from the local producer areas and from the central region. Maize grain prices are expected to reach the lowest level in June, but will slightly increase in July before stabilizing until September due to the second season harvest and inflows from the central region.

• **Household food stocks.** Until the late harvest in May 2020, poor households, except the small proportion whose early planted crops have survived, will have no household food stocks. From May, those who will harvest, will have some food stocks for one to two months until June/July 2020, when most poor households will have exhausted their food stocks much earlier than usual.

• **Availability of wild foods.** The quantity of wild foods is expected to be below average throughout the scenario period.

• **Livestock prices.** From February to June, livestock prices are expected to remain close to average. From July, with the rapid exhaustion of any existing food stocks at household level and seasonal deterioration of pasture and water availability, livestock prices are likely to decrease slightly to below average levels, as owners may be tempted to sell their animals for income.

• **Above-average maize grain flows into the zone.** During the entire scenario period, informal and formal trade flows from the central region are expected to atypically increase to make up zonal market supply shortfalls. Regardless, the overall maize grain availability will remain below average.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

From February to May 2020, the impacts of the drought will cause below average crop production in most of the region. Very poor households reliance on their own crops will be limited due to total or near total crop failure and most will have to rely on markets to purchase food. The significantly above average food prices for staple foods such as maize grain, which are projected to increase to 90 percent above the 5-year average in May, along with below average income will limit the purchasing power of these households. To obtain extra money, households will intensify their typical income generating activities. However, the combination of increased number of people engaged in such activities and the reduced market opportunities will not allow for substantial increase of incomes. Another strategy among the poorest households includes migration of the male members out of the livelihood zone to urban areas and neighboring South Africa in search of temporary casual labor. The most vulnerable, unable to engage in these activities, will engage in more severe strategies including skipping meals, consuming wild foods and less preferred foods, withdrawing children from school, and reducing expenditures of non-food items.

Very poor households will not be able to cover their minimum food needs and will begin facing survival deficits in April, once humanitarian food assistance is exhausted. Without the humanitarian food assistance, expected to end in March, this zone will deteriorate from Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.

From June to September 2020, the most vulnerable poor households will continue facing food gaps and more poor households will also gradually start facing some food gaps as their coping capacities become weaker. The additional households that had below average harvest will exhaust their food reserves in June. The expected abnormal increase in staple food prices at a time when they are typically at seasonal lows, will constrain food access from markets. Poor households’ income is expected to remain below average, as most engage in self-employment to earn some money for food purchases. An increasing number of poor households are expected to start forgoing essential non-food needs during this period as they expand their coping capacities to attempt to cover their minimum food needs. From June, an increasing number of poor households will be facing food gaps, particularly in the remote semiarid areas, and the number will keep increasing in July, August and September when the majority of these poor households will have less opportunities to find wild foods and the opportunities for self-employment
will already have fallen due to increased competition. This is typically the period where seasonal rains are minimal or with no rains, and most of these semiarid areas are unfavorable for second season cropping. To obtain extra money, households will continue intensifying the typical income-generating activities. However, the income earned and the opportunities for such activities will remain relatively close to average due to the increasing number of people engaging in same activities and increased competition over the same or reduced market (buyers). Migration to major urban cities and neighboring South Africa in search of temporary casual labor will continue. The most vulnerable, unable to engage in these activities, will increase consumption of wild foods that are normally eaten later in the year from October, including less preferred varieties and also reduce the quantity and skip meals.

During this period, particularly from the end of July onwards, the food gap will increase, and emergency food assistance will be required to cover very poor and poor households’ minimum food needs. Household food gaps are expected to continue to worsen after September. Without the humanitarian food assistance, this zone will continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.

**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>Area</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Impact on food security outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern semiarid areas</td>
<td>• Prolonged rainfall beyond March 2019 and/or off-season rains.</td>
<td>• The rainfall could provide enough moisture for late planting and harvest. This would improve food availability and income, reducing some food gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Traders do not respond as anticipated, and no additional stocks flow to the deficit areas.</td>
<td>• Local markets would be undersupplied, thus pushing food prices higher than current expectations. Food deficits, especially for poor households, would be larger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. 🛑 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). 🚨 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2020

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020

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.

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.