Issue 7

Food & Nutrition Security Working Group

August 2014 Monthly Update

Picture Courtesy of SwaziVAC

Regional Update (updated 15th of August 2014)

An early outlook indicates that there is an 80% chance of an El Nino developing this upcoming season. However, the patterns of rainfall during the last 10 events of an "el Nino" show little consistency in either increased or reduced rainfall, therefore immediate concern about negative impacts on crop productions cannot be justified.

Most rural households across the region will maintain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes between July and September. However in localized parts of Lesotho, DRC, Swaziland, Malawi, and Madagascar poor households are projected to face mainly Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and some Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes from October through December due to high prices of food and low incomes in addition to low production.

The 2014 national vulnerability assessments findings released in July 2014 point to an improvement in food security across the region. As is reflected in Table 1 below, the total number of food insecure households has declined significantly (10 million) as compared to last year (21 million) and the five-year average (18 million), mostly attributed to increased production across the region. DRC has the highest number of food insecure population (7.3 million) and the remaining nine countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) account for a total of 2.7 million.

Table1: NVAC estimated numbers of food insecure populations 2014/15 consumption year. (FEWS NET)

Country	5 year AVG 2009-1013	Last year 2013/14	Current 2014/15	Comparison to last year	Comparison to 5-year AVG
Angola	533,595	700,000			
Botswana	1,500	1,500	1,500		
DRC	5,257,001	6,356,722	7,318,699	-15%	-39%
Lesotho	422,515	223,055	447,760	-101%	-6%
Malawi	898,138	1,461,940	640,009	56%	29%
Mozambique	271,660	212,000	150,000	29%	45%
Namibia	272,717	778,504	117,662	85%	57%
South Africa	7,212,528	7,031,870			
Swaziland	203,629	289,920	223,249	23%	-10%
Tanzania	1,681,072	1,615,445	213,379	87%	87%
Zambia	113,429	209,498	351,267	-68%	-210%
Zimbabwe	1,612,985	2,206,924	564,599	74%	65%
SADC	18,159,412	21,087,378	10,028,124	52%	45%

** Madagascar, South Africa and Angola population for current consumption year are not included in the regional total

Source: *SADC RVAA results summary*

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Lesotho

Winter planting is ongoing in the lowlands for wheat and peas. There is a high likelihood of El Nino conditions which are expected to result in dry conditions over the country.

Although food prices are expected to remain stable, they will be significantly higher compared to the 2010 "normal" year and the four-year average. Combined with low production and reductions of income from typical sources, purchasing power of poor households will be reduced particularly from October to December, with poor households expected to face livelihood protection deficits and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity outcomes.

The Government intends to continue the subsidy programme and has therefore earmarked M166.0 million to support subsidies to farmers. This year's focus will be on crop production as well as other sub-sectors to support diversification. M11.0 million will support irrigated agriculture and procurement of agricultural machinery. Livestock production will be supported through the construction of wool and mohair shearing sheds and support for smallholder agriculture development. For the latter, an allocation of M56.0 million is proposed, of which M43.1 million will be sourced from development partners.

Malawi

Estimates by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development indicate that 2013/14 maize production is approximately 9% higher than the previous season and 12% higher than the five-year average. Overall, a 1.5 million MT surplus in maize is expected with some increases ranging from 7% to 10% among other food crop production. Extended periods of dryness, poor rainfall distribution, and an early cessation of rainfall affected localized production in parts of the Middle Shire and Central Karonga livelihood zone. Currently poor households in Karonga, Balaka, Neno, and Mwanza districts are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and outcomes are expected to deteriorate to Crisis level (IPC Phase 3) between August and December.

Preliminary results of the annual food security vulnerability assessment has been released and the estimated figure of food insecure population is 640,000, representing about 5% of the total population.

Mozambique

The Food Security Monitoring conducted in April and May 2014 indicates that floods and dry conditions are the main shocks on food security, except for the Gorongosa district in Sofala Province that was hit by the armed conflicts. About 150,000 people were assessed as food insecure and their conditions may recover from September, at the time of the second harvest. The food insecurity is considered moderate in Namacurra and Maganja da Costa (Zambezia), Inhambane and Cabo Delgado provinces; in Zumbu (Tete province) and Gorongosa (Sofala province) some communities are in severe food insecurity.

From July to September, food insecurity outcomes will be Minimal (IPC Phase 1) among poorer rural households. Households in the central and southern areas affected by mild flooding earlier this year will be able to meet their basic food needs through consumption of food harvested from the 2013/14 cropping season and market purchases. Between October and December, food insecurity outcomes will remain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) for the majority of poor households. As the lean season begins during this period, households will expand their typical livelihood strategies in order to meet their food requirements.

Tanzania

Many parts of the country face high stunting levels, including those areas considered to have satisfactory food availability. The national average of stunting at 42% among children under five according to the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of 2010 is among the highest in Sub-Sahara Africa. In some regions like Dodoma, the stunting is above the national average, recorded at 56%.

Harvesting, drying, and marketing of crops are ongoing across the country, as a few households are still selling their stocks from the 2013 season to prepare for storing the new harvest. The estimated surplus from the recent Masika and Msimu seasons is between 500,000 to 600,000 MT of maize. Maize-producing areas in the South are supplying the maize-deficit northern areas.

Staple food prices are almost at their seasonally lowest point. Low maize prices throughout the country are allowing many households to access food from markets. Despite high demand from traders for domestic and export markets in the maize-producing areas of Mbeya and Songea, prices continued to decline as the harvesting period continues.

Zambia

The 2014 Zambia Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZVAC) has shown that 14 districts were adversely affected by the flash floods and/or prolonged dry spells and have population which is in need of food relief. A total of 351,267 people will require relief food amounting to 21,074 MT of maize equivalent for eight months. Most of the relief support will be implemented through a conditional transfer mechanism (labour based).

The prices for the main food commodities still remained fairly low though higher than the last two years, largely due to high fuel, electricity tariffs and transport cost which tend to be transferred to the consumers as part of processing costs.

In view of the likelihood of an El Nino developing by the start of the 2014/15 season and based on past El Nino years, there is a 40% chance of southern Zambia experiencing below-normal rainfall in the early part of the season (November to December). Farmers will need to prepare for this to mitigate effects of possible reduced rainfall.

Zimbabwe

Households are currently accessing adequate quantities of staple food from own production and experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes. Minimal outcomes are expected to continue through December, however by November some very poor households will start complimenting own production with market purchases in some parts in the south (Matobo, Mangwe, and Zaka districts) and north (Mudzi, Mbire, Mutoko districts) of the country.

The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC) rural livelihoods assessment completed in June 2014 estimates that 5.8% of the rural population will be food insecure during the peak lean season (January-March 2015). This estimate has decreased by about 70% from the peak figure of 2.2 million in the 2013/14 consumption year.

Important Events in 2014

Event	Dates	Venue	Contact Organization
SARCOF	27-29 August	Namibia	SADC RVAA
IPC Level 1Training and Acute Analysis	27 Aug-4 Sept	Swaziland	SADC RVAA
Regional IPC Level 2 Training	15-19 September	South Africa	SADC RVAA
Urban Assessment Lesson Learning Workshop	September	Lesotho	SADC RVAA
RVAC Technical Meeting	September	South Africa	SADC RVAA
Regional Conference on VAA and Climate Change	October	Seychelles	SADC RVAA
Annual Organizational Meeting	December	Zimbabwe	SADC RVAA

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