Namibia Food & Nutrition Security Monitoring
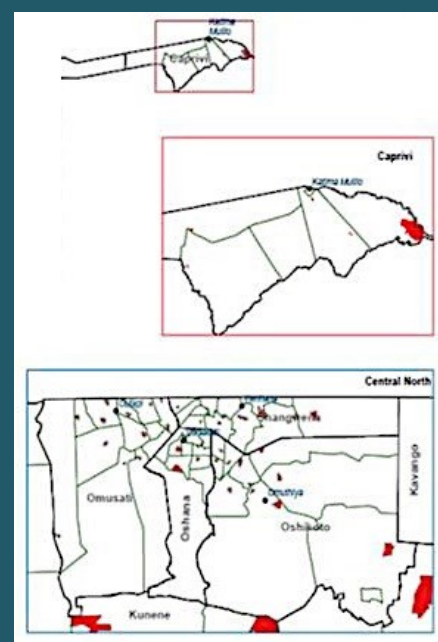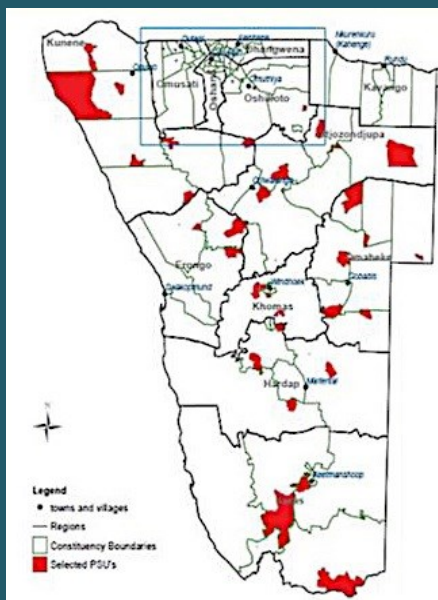
Office of the Prime Minister

Food Market - Omusati (Photo/WFP)

FNSM Sentinel Site Maps

Food Security Trends & Vulnerability

Highlights

- The 2014/15 rainy season performed poorly and was marked with a late onset of the season, prolonged mid-season dry spells and lower than normal rainfall totals.

- The 2014/15 crop production prospects was affected by the poor rainfall season perfomance. Provisional cereal production estimates were pegged at 89,000 MT, which is 33% below a 5-year average and 30% lower than last year. The Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry will provide more information on actual post- harvest production and commercial import estimates.

- Market purchases have dominated food sources across all six regions except for Omusati and Ohangwena where own production is the main source of food for most households. Meanwhile, monthly food prices continue to escalate above levels observed at the same time last year and in the preceding year.

- High levels of food insecurity exist among the assessed regions with Zambezi showing the highest percentage of population food insecure at 43.5%, followed by Kunene (40%), //Karas (38.5%), Omusati (36.7%) and Omaheke and Ohangwena at each.

- Favourable cattle/maize meal terms of trade (ToT) were registered in //Karas, while unfavourable Cattle/Maize meal terms of trade (ToT) were recorded elsewhere in the country. Poor/unfavourable livestock/maize meal terms of trade usually impact negatively on household food access for the livestock- based livelihoods.

- Food insecurity conditions exist across all the monitored regions as evidenced by the high levels of food insecure populations. About 4.8% of the total interviewed household were classified as severely food insecure and 27.4% as moderately food insecure.

World Food Programme
wfp.org

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FOOD SECURITY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

FOOD AVAILABILITY:
Food availability can be described as the extent to which food is within the reach of households (i.e. in local shops and markets), both in terms of sufficient quantity and quality. It is also strongly related to the overall availability of food, which is determined by domestic food production, commercial food imports, food aid, road and market infrastructure, the degree of market integration, and local market institutions.

MARKET PRICE INFORMATION:
Market price information provides an indication of household affordability given its income levels. Any food price increases can actually limit households' food access thereby compromising its food security.

FOOD ACCESS:
Food access is to a large extent determined by food prices and household resources. Important drivers of food access are household resources, food prices, food preferences and socio-political factors such as discrimination and gender inequality.

HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE:
Household food consumption was measured using the Food Consumption Score (FCS) technique, which is a composite of dietary diversity and food frequency measures. Dietary diversity refers to the number of different foods or food groups consumed, and food frequency refers to the food consumed over a 7-day period.

HOUSEHOLD COPING STRATEGIES:
The coping strategies are proxy indicators for food-access related food security. They can provide insight into how households cope with income and food shortfalls.

HOUSEHOLD PURCHASING POWER:
In food security terms, the household purchasing power is a measure of the quantity and quality of food products that a particular household can afford to buy with the available income. Purchasing power is analyzed by calculating the terms of trade (ToT) using for example wage rates, food retail prices, livestock prices, etc. ToTs are said to be favorable if the income obtained from the sale of one animal (say cattle) enables the household to buy a sizeable quantity of food, in this case maize meal.

MAIN INCOME SOURCES:
Income sources constitute a food-access indicator that identifies the reliability and sustainability of household income sources and levels of household earnings. Sources of income are thus directly related to the economic activities of household members. Hence, field data on income sources is collected from the sentinel sites to ensure that the basis for sustaining households is accurately reported.

FOOD UTILIZATION:
Food utilization refers to an individual's ability to absorb and metabolize nutrients. Monitoring the impact of disease, care quality, sanitation and the quality and composition of diet on nutritional outcomes is essential for a full understanding of food security.

Water and sanitation are also food utilization indicators. If not properly managed, improper water and sanitation practices can impact an individual's ability to utilize the nutrients appropriately, leading to malnutrition and consequently food insecurity.
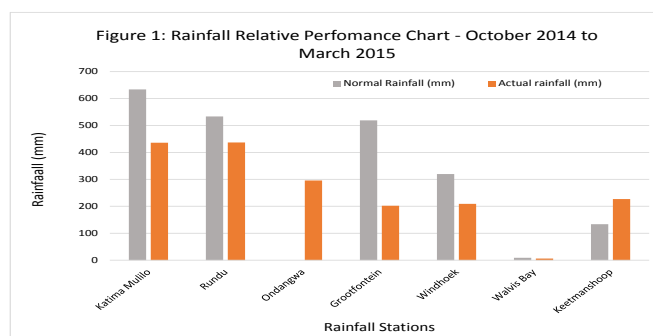
FINDINGS

1. HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

The March 2015 demographic analysis continue to show the dominance of male-headed households (55%) compared to female-headed households (45%). Omaheke region registered the highest proportion of male-headed households (67%), followed by Ohangwena (55%), Omusati (52%), //Karas (50%) and Zambezi (42%). Kunene region continued to register the highest proportion of female-headed households at 70% up from 62% recorded in November 2014. About 35% of the sampled households were elderly-headed. Only //Karas region recorded presence of child-headed households (4%). The majority of the sampled households were found to be in good health with only 4% and 3% of households reporting the presence of chronically ill and disabled individuals respectively. 88% of the children had both parents alive and 90% of all school aged children were said to be enrolled in schools.

2014/15 Seasonal Rainfall Performance

In contrast to a prediction of a normal to above normal rainy season, the 2014/15 rainy season perfomed poorly – marked with a late onset of the season, prolonged mid-season dry spells and below normal rainfall amounts. According to the Namibia Meteorological Services, only Keetmanshoop recorded rainfall amounts above its normal with the rest of the country receiving below normal rains (Figure 1). The poor rainfall perfomance is consistent with rainfall levels during El Niño years which are usually associated with drier conditions in Southern Africa.

Data Source: Namibia Meteorological Services

2. FOOD AVAILABILITY

The major cereals (maize and mahangu) were reported to be readily available in most markets, albeit at higher prices than those observed at the same time last year. In all six pilot regions, most commodity prices were confirmed to have risen due to increasing demand. Market supplies of mahangu, a cereal mostly consumed in Ohangwena and Omusati, was said to be unstable – a signal of looming shortages which could negatively impact food access. Major sources of cereals were cited as own production (46%), Market purchases (44%), and food assistance (10%). However, food assistance was only cited in Kunene, where the drought interventions continued following worsening food insecurity conditions caused by consecutive years of drought.

Market purchases was registered to be the main households' cereal source in //Karas (100%), Omaheke (100%) and Kunene and Zambezi at 67% each. It is only in Ohangwena and Omusati where 90% of communities cited own production as their main food source.

2014/15 Agricultural Production Prospects

Crop production prospects for the current year have been affected by the poor rainfall season perfomance. According to the NEWU report released by MAWF in March 2015, provisional cereal production has been estimated at 89,000 MT, which is 33% below a 5-year average and 30% lower than last year (Figure 2). Given the lower production estimate, commercial cereal imports remain crucial to cover the food gap.

Figure 2 presents a trend analysis of all cereal production from the 1996/97 season to the 2014/15 season. There has been a significant drop in the estimated crop production for the 2014/15 production season compared to last season.

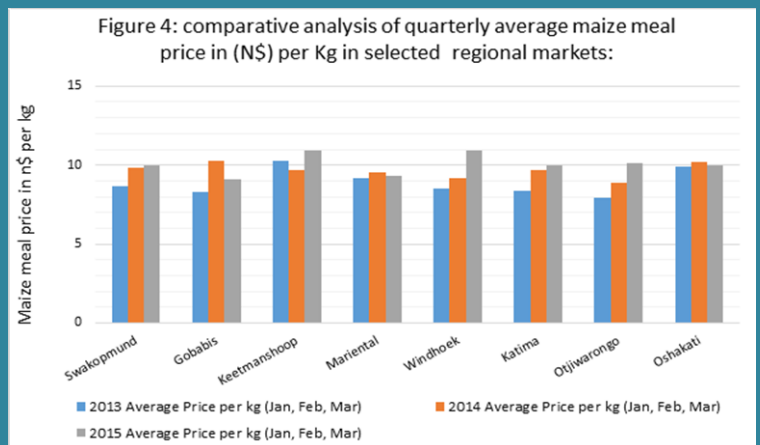Figure 2: Cereal Production (1996/97 - 2014/15 Agricultural Seasons):
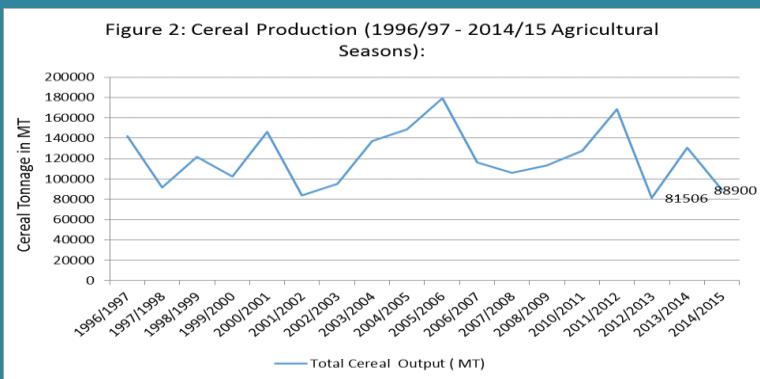
Market Analysis

A quarterly comparative analysis of average maize meal prices in selected markets indicates relative stability in food prices across the eight regions (Figure 3). However, there are price fluctuations recorded on a month to month basis.

Figure 3: Comparative Analysis of quarterly average maize meal price in N$ per Kg in selected regional markets
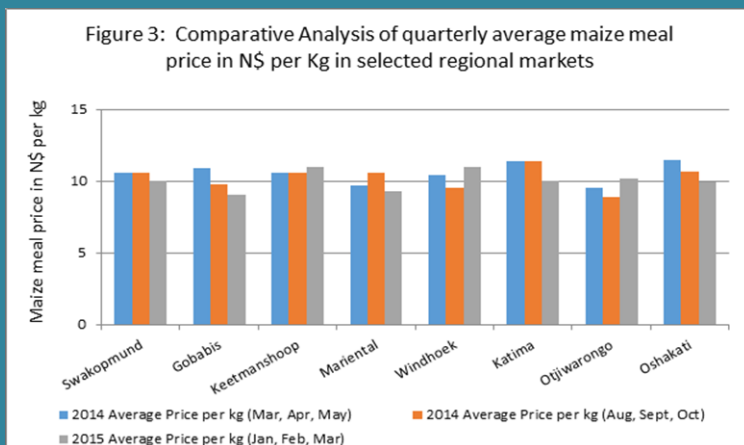
However, a three months comparative analysis (January to March) for 2013, 2014 and 2015 depicts an upward trend in maize meal prices in 2015 recorded in a number of selected markets (Figure 4). Although sampled communities attribute the price increases to increasing demand, this could also be market responses to international price fluctuations on the SAFEX and US markets.
(Data source: NSA websitehttp://www.tradingeconomics.com/namibia/inflation-cpi).

Figure 4: comparative analysis of quarterly average maize meal price in (N$) per Kg in selected regional markets:

Figures 5-10 show monthly price variations with most prices following seasonal trends. An exception is Windhoek and Otjiwarongo where maize meal prices have remained relatively high.
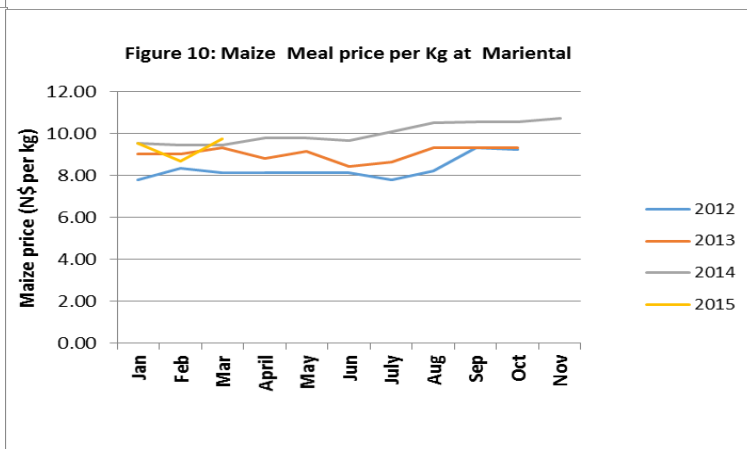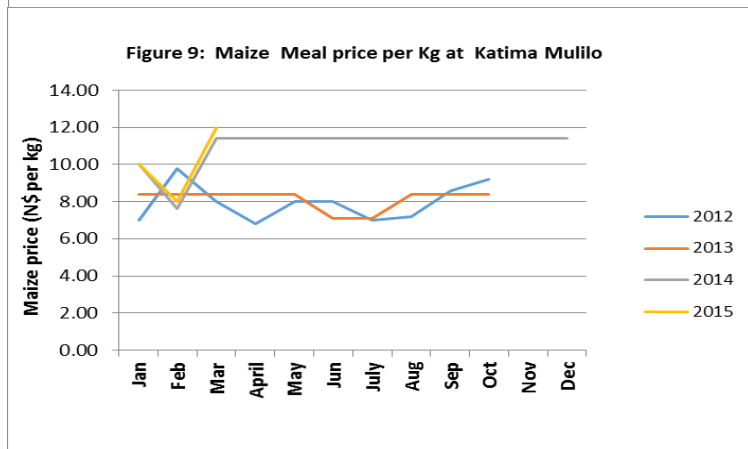
Figure 5: Maize Meal price per Kg at Windhoek

Figure 6: Maize Meal price per Kg at Otjiwarongo

Figure 7: Maize Meal price per Kg at Swakopmund

Figure 8: Maize Meal price per Kg at Gobabis

Figure 9: Maize Meal price per Kg at Katima Mulilo

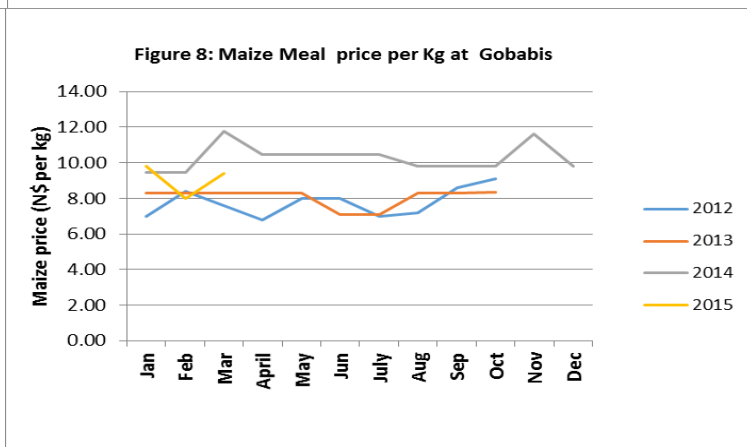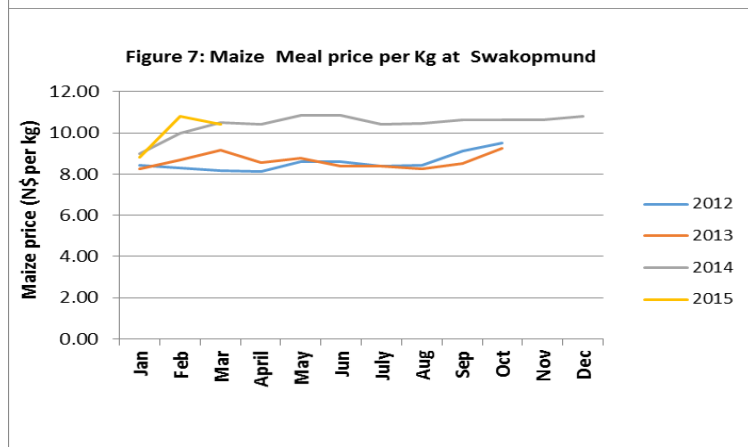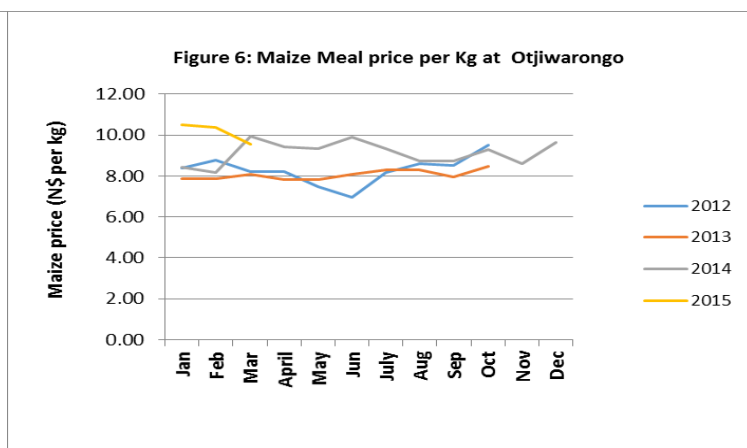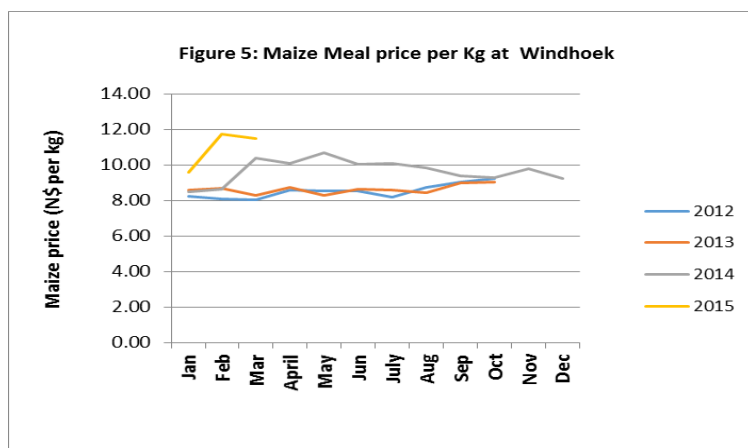

Figure 10: Maize Meal price per Kg at Mariental

Table 1 shows commodity price data (May 2014, November 2014 and March 2015) across sentinel sites in Omaheke, one of the livestock-based regions where most households are dependent on market purchases. Significant food price drops were observed in Epukiro, Gobabis, Kalahari, Otjinene and Okorukambe. Elsewhere commodity prices increased.

Table 1: Comparison of commodity prices across market (constituencies)in Omaheke region																	
	Epukiro			Gobabis			Kalahari			Aminius			Otjinene			Okorukambe		
	Nov14	Mar15	% change	Nov14	Mar15	% change	Nov14	Mar15	% change	Nov14	Mar15	% change	Nov14	Mar15	% change	Nov14	Mar15	% change
Maize meal/Kg	8	12	50%	6	6	0%	7	7	0%	7	8	14%	8	7	-13%	9.45	6	-37%
Sugar/Kg	15	15	0%	24	10	-58%	20	15	-25%	14	25	79%	16	13	-19%	12.47	12	-4%
Cooking Oil (750) ml	20	20	0%	38	16	-58%	26	25	-4%	17	25	47%	20	18	-10%	18	28	56%
Rice/Kg	25	17	-32%				8			14	20	43%	18	20	11%	24.4		
Fish/Kg	20	43	115%		20					17	19	12%		19				

3. FOOD ACCESS

Food Stocks and Sources

About 64% of the sampled households confirmed dwindling household food stocks with available stocks expected to last for less than a month. Market Purchases (56%) and own harvest (29%) were cited as the most common source of cereals in all six regions. Households citing food assistance as a major source of food reported a decline from 14% in November 2014 to 5% in March 2015. Only 18% of the households in Kunene confirmed food assistance as a source. Figure 11 shows the contributions of the various sources of cereals across the monitored regions for the May 2014, November 2014 and March 2015 assessments.


Figure 11: Major Sources Of Cereals
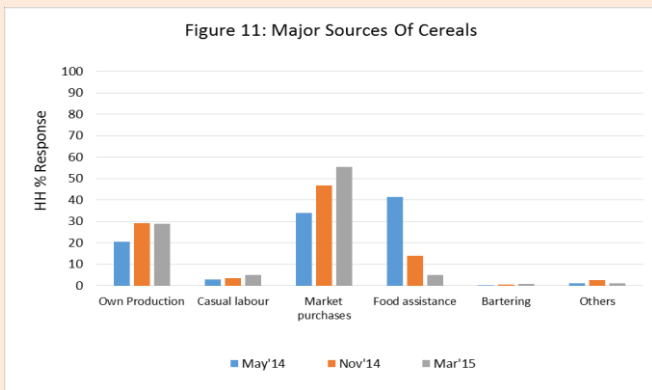
A breakdown analysis of the food sources by region (Figure 12) shows the dominance of market purchases across all the regions. An exception is Omusati where 71% of the sampled households confirmed availability of food stocks from their own harvest. This is consistent with results from November 2014 assessment due to improved harvests from last year.


Figure 12: Major Sources of Food by region
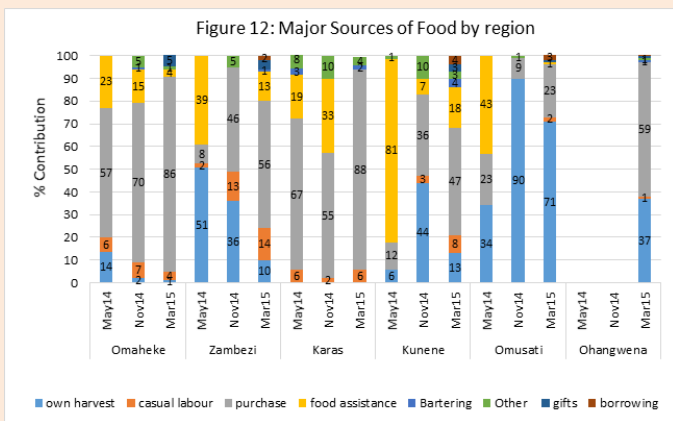
In Ohangwena, which was included for the first time, market purchases (59%) topped the list followed by their own production at 37%. With the majority of the households becoming market dependent earlier than normal, food prices are likely to rise much earlier than normal due to increased demand or pressure on the markets – a situation likely to further compromise food security .

Figure 13 shows a regional breakdown of availability and duration of household level cereal stocks.

Figure 13: Duration of existing stocks by region
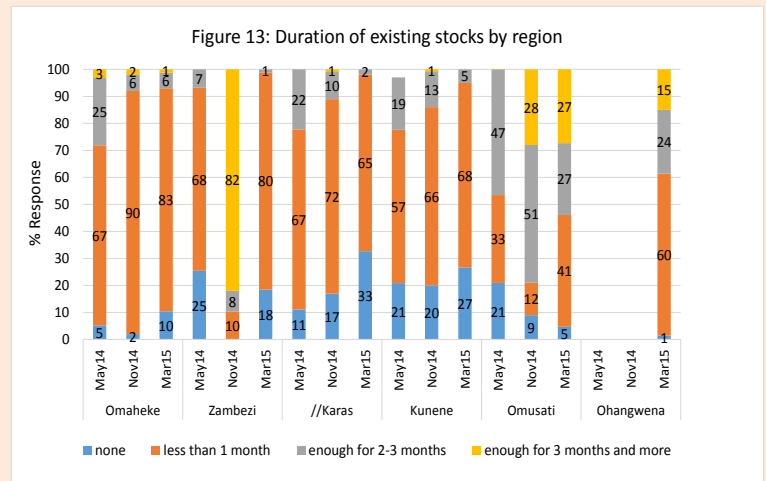
Household Food Consumption Patterns

Different foods and food groups were weighted based on their nutritional density. Households were then classified as having either "Poor", "Borderline", or "Acceptable" consumption based on the set cut-off points.

Figure 14: Overall Food Consumption Scores
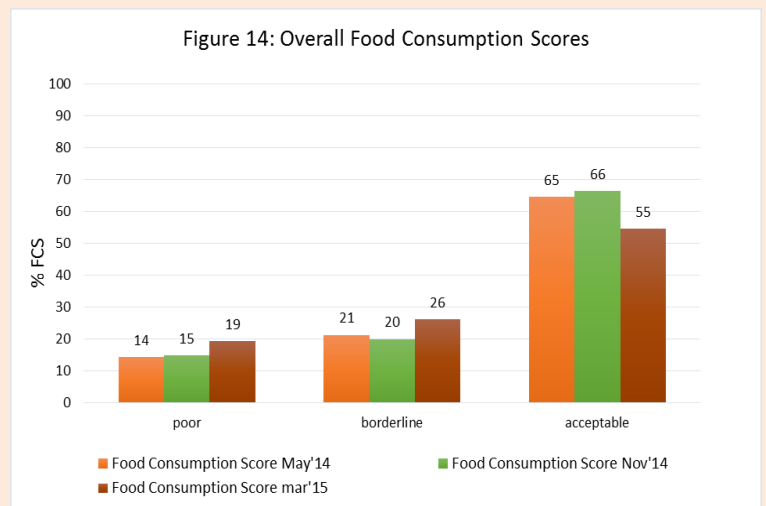
Classification of Food Consumption Scores

"Poor" food consumption is generally regarded as a sign of extreme household food insecurity. It refers to a diet composed mainly of cereals on a daily basis and vegetables for a maximum of 4 days per week. (FCS: 0.5 to 21.0: Poor)

"Borderline" food consumption is classified as a diet made up of cereals and vegetables on a daily basis plus oils/fats for 5 days and sugar/sugar products for 3 days per week (FCS: 21.0 – 34.5: Medium)

"Acceptable" food consumption is classified as daily intake of cereals, vegetables, oil and sugar, and at least one day consumption of foods rich in protein (FCS: 35 and above: Acceptable)

The March 2015 Food Consumption Scores (FCS) confirming acceptable food consumption patterns dropped 11 points from 66% in November 2014 to 55% in March. This drop translated into lateral increases in the moderate and poor food consumption scores – an indication of poor dietary diversity. This needs close monitoring as it may lead to serious and undesirable future malnutrition consequences (Figure 14).

Regional analysis of the FCS depicts poor dietary diversity across all pilot regions. The drop in acceptable food consumption scores across the six pilot regions is a cause for concern which requires an in-depth investigation to understand the underlyng causes. Ohangwena also shows a dominance of poor food consumption (Figure 15). Poor dietary diversity are associated with high levels of food insecurity which often leads to stunting and acute malnutrition.

Figure 15: Food Consumption Groups per regions
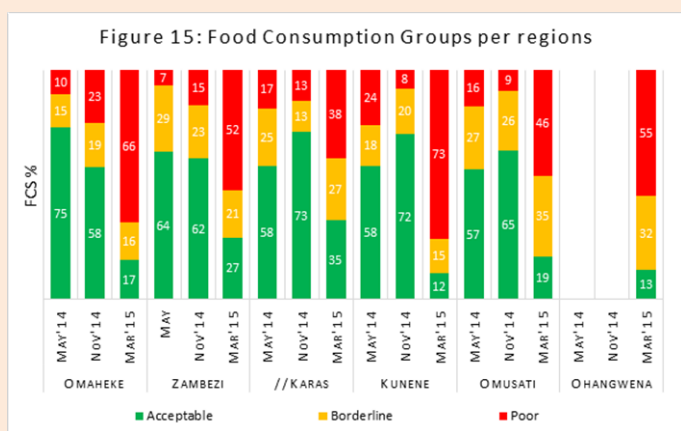
Household Coping Strategies

Coping strategies are analyzed using the Coping Strategy Index (CSI) – a technique which measures the frequency and severity of a number of common household coping strategies for addressing shortfalls in food supply. It combines the information into a single CSI score. With the CSI, a lower score implies reduced stress on the household's ability to meet its food needs and thus relatively better food security for the households.

The March 2015 overall mean Coping Strategy Index (CSI) registered significant rises in several regions, which is an indication of households' inability to meet their food requirements. This implies the existence of food insecurity at the household level. Zambezi, Omaheke and Kunene being the worst affected with CSI values of 72, 53 and 39 respectively (Figure 16). This situation needs close monitoring since high CSI values imply emerging/existence of food insecurity conditions.

The slight drop in the CSI value in Kunene could be attributed to the extension of the food assistance programme in the region. The CSI value for Ohangwena region is also very high and needs further investigation. The NamVAC indepth assessment will provide insights on the underlying causes and drivers of food insecurity in all the regions.
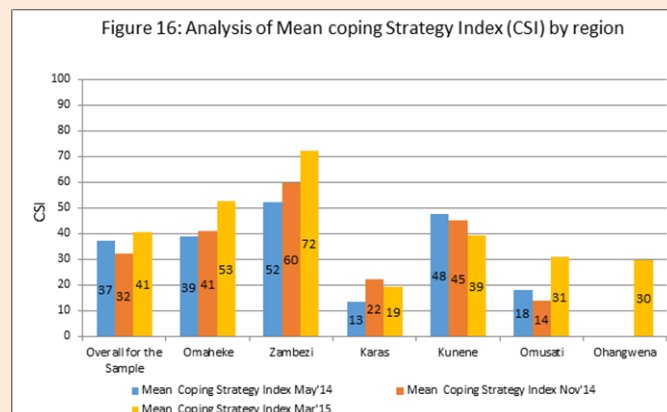

Table 4 presents a summary of the most common coping strategies for the round of assessments undertaken so far.

Table 4: Most Common Coping Strategies of the Quarter		
May 2014 Quarter	**November 2014 Quarter**	**March 2015**
Reduce Number of meals	Reduce Number of meals	Reduce adult consumption
HH sharing of food	Limit portion size	Rely on less preferred foods
Distress sale of livestock	Rely on less expensive foods	Reduce Number of meals
Rural to urban migration	Borrow food or rely on friends	Borrow food or rely on friends
Rely on less preferred foods	Reduce adult consumption	Gathering of Wild foods

**Household Purchasing Power**

The purchasing power of sampled households in this analysis was measured using average maize and livestock prices in order to assess terms of trade (ToT). Using the commodity prices recorded at the sentinel sites, an average price for each commodity and livestock type was calculated for each region monitored. The income from the livestock sales was then used to determine the quantity (in Kgs) of maize meal that could be bought at the prevailing market maize meal prices.

Table 3 shows variations in cattle/maize meal terms of trade (ToT) by region. Favourable cattle/maize meal ToT were registered in

| Table 3: Number of Kgs of maize meal that can be purchased by selling one animal/ bird																	
	Omaheke			//Karas			Zambezi			Kunene			Omusati			Ohangwena		
	May14'	Nov14'	Mar15'	May14'	Nov14'	Mar15'	May14'	Nov14'	Mar15'	May14'	Nov14'	Mar15'	May14'	Nov14'	Mar15'	May14'	Nov14'	Mar15'
Catle ToT	278	388	268	321	294	331	338	431	361	397	412	285	900	883	848			819
Goat ToT	48	79	65	45	52	58	50	49	46	71	93	42	108	117	129			75
Sheep Tot	35	61	48	44	43	55	0	0		58	59	33	128	167	220			110
Pig Tot	69	10	0	0	0	207	82	0		67	12	78	102	167	158			72
Chicken Tot	6	6	6	5	3	4	6	8	12	7	4	4	9	11	11			7

//Karas (Figure 17), while unfavourable Cattle/Maize meal ToT were recorded elsewhere. These unfavourable TOT could be the result of the deterioration of animals' physical conditions brought on by poor grazing due to drought conditions experienced this year. Poor/unfavourable livestock/maize meal terms of trade usually impact negatively on household food access for the livestock-based livelihoods.

Figure 17: Comparison of Cattle/Maize Terms of Trade (ToT) by region
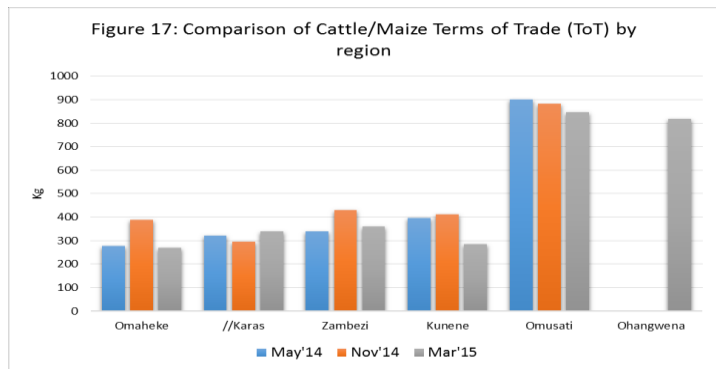
Sources of Income

Diversification of sources of income is quite evident in all the food and nutrition security monitoring assessments undertaken so far. Pension, formal employment, crop sales and casual labour were the most dominant sources of income cited by both male and female headed households. The number of households accessing income from pension rose significantly compared to last year (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Comparative analysis of sources of Income
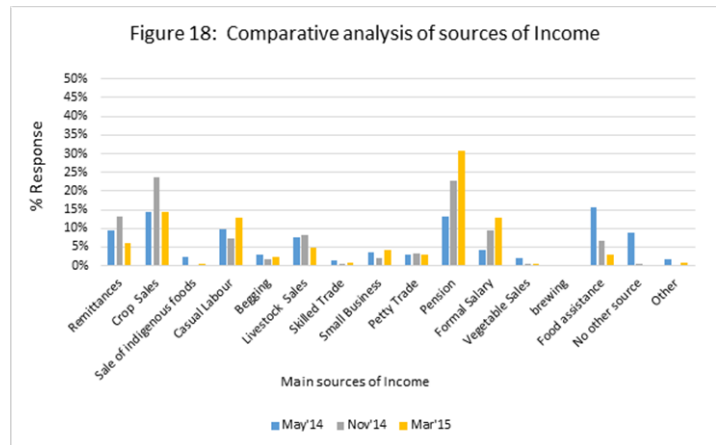
A regional-based analysis on sources of income depicts diverse variations across income sources and by regions. Significant drops on food crop sales as an income source are quite evident in Omusati and Zambezi. A significant shift has also been observed in //Karas from pension to formal employment (Figure 19). Livestock sales dropped across all sampled regions – an unfavourable situation for livestock-based livelihoods as this is likely to impact negatively on food access. This could be contributing to the poor dietary diversification observed earlier on. The majority of these indicators point to the existence of food insecurity and hence close monitoring is required to mitigate against advese food insecurity conditions.

Diversification of sources of income is good in order to spread the risk during a negative shock, as not all sources will be susceptible to one single shock.

Figure 19: Analysis of sources of income by region
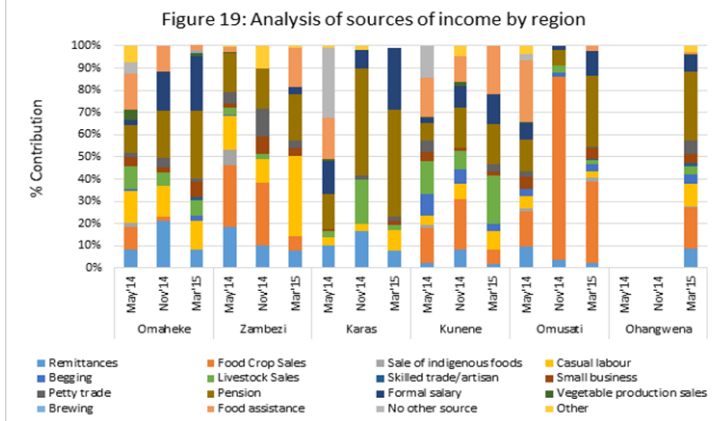
Livestock Ownership

Livestock ownership (cattle, goats, sheep, pigs and poultry) in sampled households remains relatively high at above 50%. However, there has been significant drops observed in Zambezi, //Karas and Kunene, which needs further investigation through a detailed in-depth annual NAMVAC assessment. The high levels of food insecurity in these regions could be driven by poor livestock restocking following the 2013 drought – an undesirable situation for the majority of households dependent on livestock. Poor ownership of livestock could compromise household income levels presenting food access difficulties.

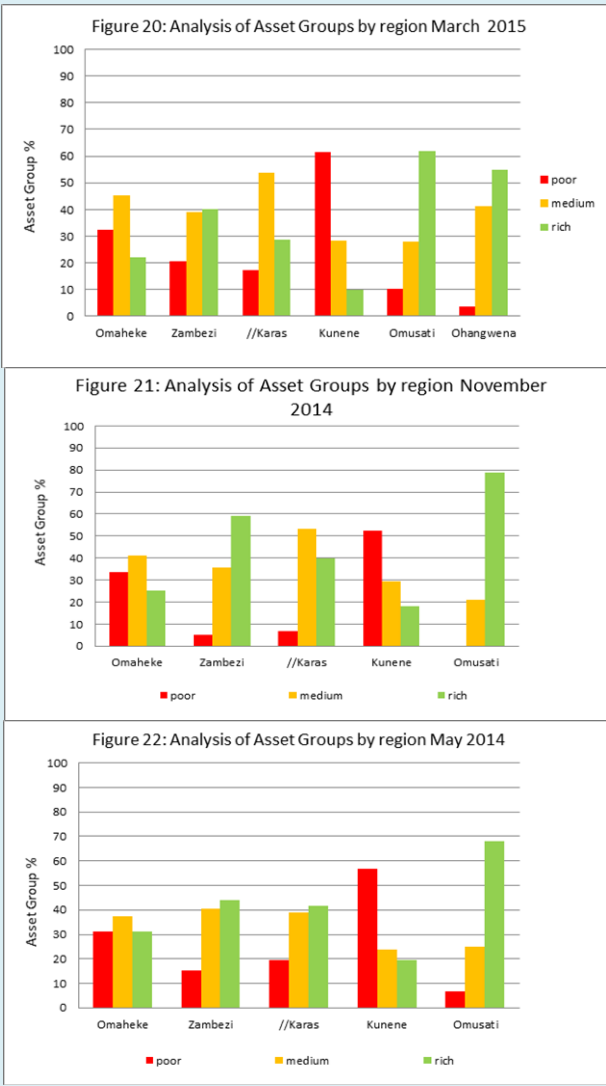| Table 4: Livestock Ownership by Region					
	Omaheke	Zambezi	//Karas	Kunene	Omusati	Ohangwena
May'14	75	86	81	88	98	
Nov'14	72	80	85	79	98	
Mar'15	81	66	52	70	97	94

A livestock ownership analysis by gender continue to show a gender balance in livestock ownership in the monitored regions. A notable increase in female livestock ownership was registered between November 2014 and March 2015, rising from 75% to 81%.

Table 5: Livestock Ownership by Gender		
	Male	Female
May '14	85%	83%
Nov '14	86%	75%
Mar'15	82%	81%

Asset Ownership

Data on asset ownership was collected from each household on a total of 21 different assets classified as productive (plough, hoe, tractor, oxcart, etc.) and non-productive (TV, bed, bicycle, radio, etc.). The data was analysed considering the number of assets owned by households. Households were then classified as asset poor: having 0-4 different asset types, asset medium: 5-9 assets or asset rich: with 10 or more assets.

Figures 20 to 22 summarizes the region-based asset ownership (typical assets owned by rural households) analysis for the May 2014, November 2014 and March 2015 assessment periods. Omusati region has been consistent in depicting the largest asset-rich wealth group. Meanwhile, Kunene remains the region with the lowest percentage of asset-rich wealth group. Poverty alleviation measures need to be put in place to address this disparity in asset ownership. Poverty could be also contributing to deepening food insecurity in Kunene since the region is one of the poorest regions in the country (NPC: Poverty deprivation in Namibia 2015).

Figure 20: Analysis of Asset Groups by region March 2015

Figure 21: Analysis of Asset Groups by region November 2014

Figure 22: Analysis of Asset Groups by region May 2014

A comparative analysis of the asset groups by gender of head of household revealed a gender balance with male asset-rich ownership pegged at 42% and female pegged at 41%.

CARI stands for Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security - a standardized approach for assessing and reporting on household food insecurity. It culminates in a food security console which supports the reporting and combining of food security indicators in a systematic and transparent way. Central to the approach is an explicit classification of households into four descriptive groups: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure. The classification provides an estimate of food insecurity within the target population whether it is calculated at the national or sub-national level. The food security console is the final output of the CARI. It combines a suite of food security indicators into a summary indicator –called the Food Security Index (FSI) expressed as a percentage - which represents the population's overall food security status.

Table 6 presents the overall results obtained using CARI approach for the 6 pilot regions. The analysis was based on three main derived indicators which are Food Consumption Scores, Food Expenditure Share and Livelihood Coping Strategies. A mean food security index for the sampled regions was derived as presented in table 6. For the assessed population: 32.2% of the households are assessed as "food secure"; 35.5% as "marginally food secure"; 27.4% as "moderately food insecure"; and 4.8% as "severely food insecure". Hence an overall of 32.2% are assessed as food insecure for the total assessed population in the 6 regions.

Table 6: CARI Console for Namibia March 2015			Food Secure (1)	Marginally Food Secure	Moderately Food Insecure	Severely Food Insecure (4)
Domain		Indicator				
Current Status	Food Consumption	Food consumption group	54.7		26.2	19.2
Coping Capacity	Economic Vulnerability	Food expenditure share	55.9	20.5	8.1	15.4
	Asset Depletion	Livelihood coping strategy categories	56.1*	23.8	0	20.1
Food Security Index			32.2	35.5	27.4	4.8

In the above analysis, food expenditure share was computed to measure households' economic vulnerability (ratio of total food expenditure and total household expenditure). The food expenditure share is an indicator which classifies households with different food-acquisition patterns. The greater the importance of food within a household's overall budget the more economically vulnerable the household is. 15.4% of the interviewed households were found to be extremely economically vulnerable. Livelihood coping/asset depletion is an indicator describing households' engagement in stress, crisis and emergency coping strategies. In this analysis, 23.8% and 20.1% of the total interviewed household engaged in stress and emergency livelihood coping strategies respectively.

Table 7 presents the regional CARI food security index for the four descriptive groups: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure including the combined food insecure. Zambezi shows the highest percentage of population food insecure at 43.5%, followed by Kunene (40%), //Karas (38.5%), Omusati (36.7%) and Omaheke and Ohangwena at 22.1% each.

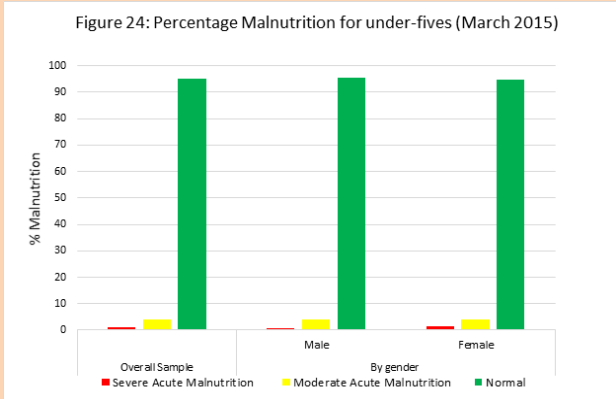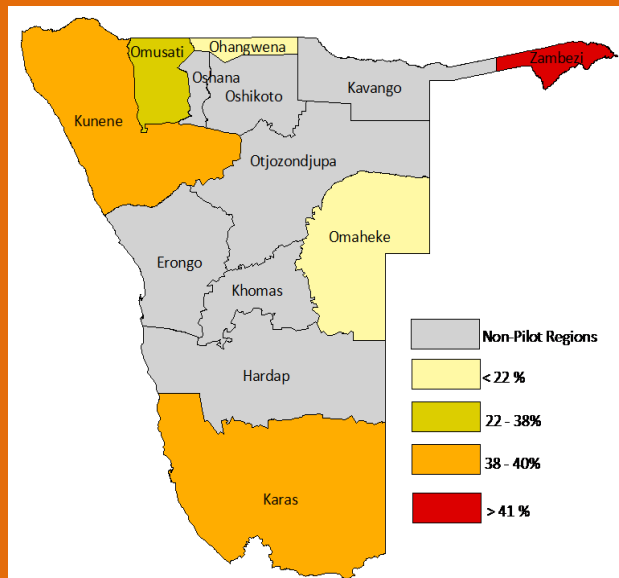| Table 7: Food and Nutrition Security Index by region March 2015					
Food Security Index	Food Secure (1)	Marginally Food Secure (2)	Moderately Food Insecure (3)	Severely Food Insecure (4)	Food Insecure
//Karas	26.4	35.1	36.5	2	38.5
Omaheke	51.2	26.7	15.1	7	22.1
Omusati	28.9	34.4	32.8	3.9	36.7
Ohangwena	39.3	38.6	20	2.1	22.1
Zambezi	16.3	40.2	32.6	10.9	43.5
Kunene	25	35	35	5	40

Stress strategies, such as borrowing money or spending savings, are those which indicate a reduced ability to deal with future shocks due to a current reduction in resources or increase in debts.
Crisis strategies, such as selling productive assets, directly reduce future productivity, including human capital formation.
Emergency strategies, such as selling one's land, affect future productivity, but are more difficult to reverse or more dramatic in nature.

FINDINGS

Figure 23: Percentage Population food Insecure

4. FOOD UTILIZATION

Nutrition

MUAC measurements for the children under-5 (6-59 months) were conducted during the March 2015 FNSM assessment. A total of 400 children were measured (219 females and 181 males) and 20 children were found to be malnourished (5%). The remaining 380 children (95%) are within the normal range of MUAC measurement (Table 8). Of the 20 children, 16 were found with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and 4 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). The majority of the children with MAM and SAM are from Ohangwena (11 out of 20 children). This is a red flag for further investigation to determine possible causes in Ohangwena.

Table 8 : Percentage of Malnutrition for the 6-59 months by gender and by region (MUAC measurement)									
		By gender		By region					
MUAC Categories	Overall Sample	Male	Female	//Karas	Kunene	Ohangwena	Omaheke	Omusati	Zambezi
Severe Acute Malnutrition	1	0.6	1.4	3.8	2.2	1.7			
Moderate Acute Malnutrition	4	3.9	4.1	3.8	4.4	7.7	1.7	1.9	2.1
Normal	95	95.6	94.6	92.3	93.3	90.6	98.3	98.1	97.9
Number of cases observed and total number of children assessed									
Total Cases observed	20	8	12	2	3	11	1	2	1
Total number of Children	**400**	**181**	**219**	**26**	**45**	**116**	**59**	**106**	**48**

Figure 24: Percentage Malnutrition for under-fives (March 2015)

The MUAC analysis indicated a low prevalence of Malnutrition (Figure 24).

Children observed with malnutrition were referred to the nearest health facilities for further assessment and treatment.

> **Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC):**
> MUAC can be measured easily and quickly allowing health workers to quickly determine if a patient is acutely malnourished.   Values below the cut-offs of 12, 5 mm and 11, 5 mm are used to define moderate and severe acute malnutrition. It measures the circumference of a patient's arm at the midpoint between his or her shoulder and elbow.

Water and Sanitation

Overall, there has been a great improvement in access to safe drinking water from boreholes and piped water across the six regions, as confirmed by the communities. However, a significant proportion of the population still accesses water from unprotected wells in Ohangwena (34%), Omusati (33%), Zambezi (25%), Kunene (12%), and //Karas and Omaheke regions at 8% each.

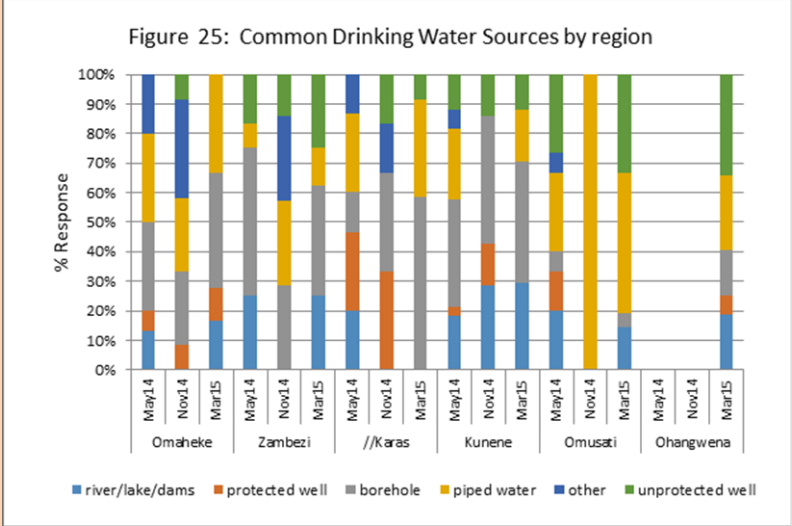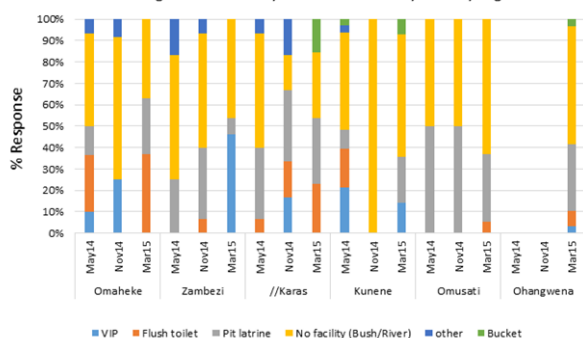Figure 25 summarises the various sources of drinking water by region.

Figure 25: Common Drinking Water Sources by region

Figure 26: Sanitary facilities commonly used by region

Sanitation by region

Of concern is the high proportion of communities confirming use of the bush for sanitation across all six regions (Figure 26). Omusati tops the list with 63% followed by Kunene (57%), Ohangwena (55%), Zambezi (46%), //Karas (45%) and Omaheke (37%). Poor sanitation facilities leads to poor hygiene, which ultimately impacts food utilisation due to disease outbreaks and poor health. Relevant local authorities need to take appropriate action to ensure proper hygiene and consequently food security.

6. FOOD SECURITY OUTLOOK

Overall food security conditions are expected to deteriorate further due to a combination of factors which include poor harvests, rising market food prices, poor livestock/commodity ToT, the drop in households owning livestock, depleted household food stocks, continued use of stressful coping strategies, poor dietary diversification among many others referred to earlier on. The high CSI values, detected by cases of moderate malnutrition and increasing poor food consumption scores, are indications of emerging food & nutrition insecurity that needs close monitoring.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the high percentages in the Food Security Index across the monitored regions, the identified food insecure groups need to be supported. Food assistance can be provided to the severely food insecure while other interventions such as food for work or cash for work among others can be designed to target the moderately food insecure population.

- Food and Nutrition Security and Vulnerability situations in the country have been consistently, negatively, impacted by natural shocks and poverty. There is a need to scale up programmes in favour of resilience building and poverty alleviation.

- Considering the many assessed households that are now dependent on market purchases, interventions set to promote access through markets could go a long way to contributing to improved food security conditions in the country.

- Given the low levels of the populations with acceptable food consumption patterns, there is a need to promote dietary diversification in order to eliminate cases of malnutrition.

- It would be desirable to have food and nutrition security monitoring information for all 14 regions in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the food security situation in the country.

- The confirmation of the absence of food stocks at household level, by the majority of households across the pilot regions at harvest time, is of great concern given the low production estimates. This calls for decision-makers to put in place measures to scale up safety nets programmes or interventions that increase households' purchasing power to mitigate and reduce vulnerability to food insecurity.

- Given the observed cases of malnutrition, it would be helpful to promote consumption of fortified and supplementary foods as well as promoting dietary diversity within households to prevent further deterioration of nutritional status among the under-fives.

- Community projects earmarked for improving access to safe drinking water need to be promoted in order to achieve the government's vision of ensuring that everyone has access to safe drinking water.

- The June 2015 NamVAC assessment should investigate further the underlying causes of food insecurity in the six pilot regions.

Background information on the Namibia Food & Nutrition Monitoring System (NFNMS)

Food and Nutrition Security monitoring is a tool that is used to detect and track changes in people's food security and nutrition situations over time and space. It can also be used for early warning in order to alert the government and its partners when a situation deteriorates in order to ensure that assistance can be provided in a timely and appropriate manner. Food and nutrition security monitoring information, in many instances, trigger early responses averting disastrous outcomes while at the same time fulfilling the needs of programmes that aim at building resilience of the affected communities.

The Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System (FNSMS) is being established under the auspices of the Namibia Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NAMVAC) in the DDRM in the Office of the Prime Minister. This is in line with its (NAMVAC's) long term strategic plan to strengthen its livelihood and food security monitoring component (NAMVAC Strategic Plan 2012 – 2017, National Disaster ACT). This is further supported by the 2013 Cabinet Decision, No # 7th /07.05.13/001, which was established following the Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) recommendation in 2013.

This information is currently being collected in 6 regions (Kunene, Omaheke, Omusati, //Karas, Zambezi and Ohangwena) and the monitoring will be expanded to cover other regions with time, depending on the availability of resources.

Data is collected using the sampling framework designed by the National Statistics Agency in order to align the findings to those of other national surveys and NamVAC annual assessments. NAMVAC is a multi-stakeholder platform that coordinates annual food security and vulnerability assessments- providing an integrated analysis on food availability, food access and food utilization within the country.

A stratified two stage cluster sample design was used based on the 2011 Census enumeration areas. A total of 100 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs)/sentinel sites were randomly selected from 71 rural constituencies. A total of 15 households were interviewed per each site bringing the total household sample size to 302 households. A total of 20 community interviews were administered across the monitored regions.

Only data relevant to the food and nutrition security indicators listed below were collected:

- Food Availability (agricultural production, market supplies, food prices, etc.)
- Access (market commodity and livestock prices; food and income sources, Food consumption patterns, coping strategies, etc.)
- Food Utilization: (malnutrition cases, diseases outbreaks, water and sanitation etc.).

A multi-sectoral task team was composed in 2013 to spear head and oversee the implementation of the food security monitoring activities. The task team comprises of the following institutions:

- DDRM in the Office of the Prime Minister
- Ministry of Agriculture, Water and forestry
- Ministry of Health and Social services
- Namibia Agronomic Board
- National Statistics Agency
- World Food Programme