



## Effects of the El Nino phenomenon

The 2015/16 agricultural season has been extremely poor across the Southern African region, largely due to a devastating El Nino that has been classified as one of the strongest on record in the last 35 years.

Generally, the on-set of planting rains was on time in the Northern Region but delayed for a period of about 3 weeks in the Central Region and 4 weeks in the Southern Region. The assessment established that as of end March, 2016, the country had received below normal cumulative rainfall across the country, with the exception of the Northern Region, which received about 30 percent of cumulative rainfall. The Central and Southern Regions, on the other hand, received only about 25 percent and below in some parts, compared to same period last year. All the three regions experienced some episodes of dry-spells due to the effects of the El Nino. On average, the Northern Region experienced dry spells for a period of about 2 weeks while the Central and Southern Regions experienced dry spells for a period of about 4 and 7 weeks, respectively. The dry spells resulted in permanent wilting of crops in some districts such as Chikwawa, Mangochi, Nsanje and Neno.

### MVAC Food Security Forecast for 2016/2017

The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) conducted the 2016 Annual Assessment and Analysis (VAA) using a Household Economy Approach (HEA) from 8th to 28th May, 2016. The results of the assessment shows that a total of **6,491,847** people, out of the total projected population of **16,832,910**, will not be able to meet their annual minimum food requirements (using the survival threshold) during the 2016/2017 consumption period, representing **39 percent** of the total population. This represents **129 percent** increase over last year's vulnerable population of **2,833,212**. The affected people are in all the districts of the country except Chitipa, Karonga, Likoma and Nkhata Bay. The affected districts have annual food deficits ranging from 3 to 9 months and require **375,393 MT** of food assistance with a cash value of about **MK113 billion**.

MVAC also used an Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) to classify the severity of acute food security during the current (April to June, 2016) and projected (July to September, 2016) food security situation using data from the southern region districts. The IPC analysis projected that by

| District           | Affected Population | Deficit Months | Maize Requirement (MT) | Cash Equivalent (MK'000 000) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Balaka             | 333,943             | 8              | 26,715                 | 8,015                        |
| Blantyre Rural     | 326,360             | 6              | 19,582                 | 5,874                        |
| Chikwawa           | 498,988             | 8              | 39,919                 | 11,976                       |
| Chiradzulu         | 241,214             | 6              | 14,473                 | 4,342                        |
| Chitipa            | -                   | -              | -                      | -                            |
| Dedza              | 223,681             | 5              | 11,184                 | 3,355                        |
| Dowa               | 228,709             | 5              | 11,435                 | 3,431                        |
| Karonga            | -                   | -              | -                      | -                            |
| Kasungu            | 232,578             | 5              | 11,629                 | 3,489                        |
| Likoma             | -                   | -              | -                      | -                            |
| Lilongwe Rural     | 427,627             | 5              | 21,381                 | 6,414                        |
| Machinga           | 456,225             | 6              | 27,374                 | 8,212                        |
| Mangochi           | 657,585             | 5              | 32,879                 | 9,864                        |
| Mchinji            | 170,541             | 4              | 6,822                  | 2,046                        |
| Mulanje            | 354,306             | 4              | 14,172                 | 4,252                        |
| Mwanza             | 39,656              | 6              | 2,379                  | 714                          |
| Mzimba             | 113,594             | 3              | 3,408                  | 1,022                        |
| Neno               | 80,308              | 7              | 5,622                  | 1,686                        |
| Nkhata Bay         | -                   | -              | -                      | -                            |
| Nkhatakota         | 58,134              | 5              | 2,907                  | 872                          |
| Nsanje             | 236,028             | 9              | 21,243                 | 6,373                        |
| Ntcheu             | 315,589             | 7              | 22,091                 | 6,627                        |
| Ntchisi            | 82,679              | 3              | 2,480                  | 744                          |
| Phalombe           | 244,297             | 6              | 14,658                 | 4,397                        |
| Rumphi             | 32,218              | 3              | 967                    | 290                          |
| Salima             | 259,737             | 7              | 18,182                 | 5,454                        |
| Thyolo             | 404,353             | 5              | 20,218                 | 6,065                        |
| Zomba              | 473,497             | 5              | 23,675                 | 7,102                        |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>6,491,847</b>    |                | <b>375,393</b>         | <b>112,618</b>               |

Table 2: Production and Consumption Trends: 2008 – 2016

| Consumption Year | Maize Production (million MT) | Maize Surplus (million MT) | Vulnerable Population | Maize Equivalent (MT) | Cash Equivalent (MK'000) |
|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 2007/08          | 3.2                           | 1.2                        | 63,234                | 610                   | 81,000                   |
| 2008/09          | 2.9                           | 0.5                        | 613,291               | 16,806                | 942,000                  |
| 2009/10          | 3.6                           | 1.2                        | 275,168               | 10,984                | 573,000                  |
| 2010/11          | 3.2                           | 0.53                       | 508,089               | 28,602                | 1,138,000                |
| 2011/12          | 3.9                           | 1.2                        | 272,500               | 6,756                 | 405,000                  |
| 2012/13          | 3.6                           | 0.5                        | 1,630,007             | 75,394                | 6,031,500                |
| 2013/14          | 3.6                           | 0.19                       | 1,855,183             | 68,071                | 8,510,000                |
| 2014/15          | 3.98                          | 0.98                       | 1,312,376             | 112,141               | 14,017,625               |
| 2015/16          | 2.78                          | (0.223)                    | 2,833,212             | 124,183               | 18,627,362               |
| 2016/17          | 2.43                          | (0.769)                    | 6,491,847             | 375,393               | 112,618,000              |

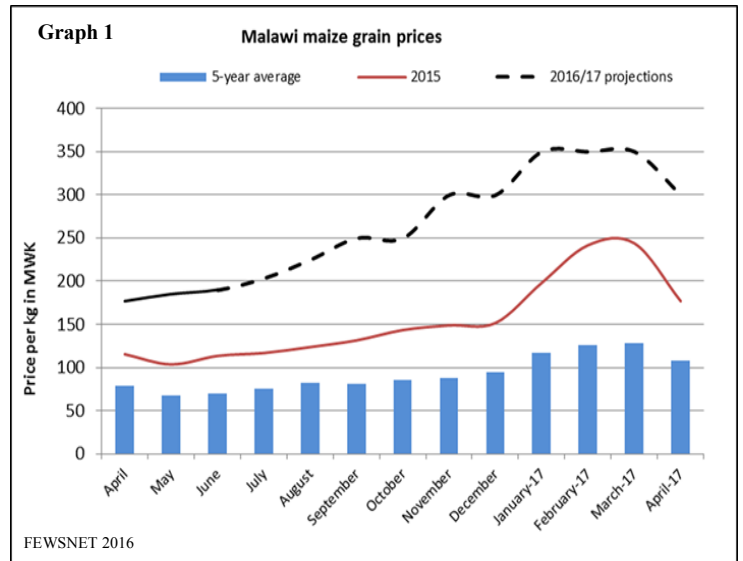
September, 2016 the population that will be in phase 3 and 4 (in crisis and emergency situation) and therefore requiring immediate assistance to save lives and livelihoods would be 4.5 million (69 percent of the total affected population).

### Maize Price Trends during 2016/2017 Consumption Year.

Nominal maize prices at the start of the 2016/2017 consumption obtained from the Agro-economic Survey of the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Water Development in April, 2016 show a record high price of MK177/kg compared to MK115/kg same period last year. If this trend continues, it is

expected maize prices will be generally high in 2016 compared to the previous marketing season. Should this be the case, vulnerable households may find it difficult to access maize from the markets and the number of people who would not be able to meet their food entitlements may increase .

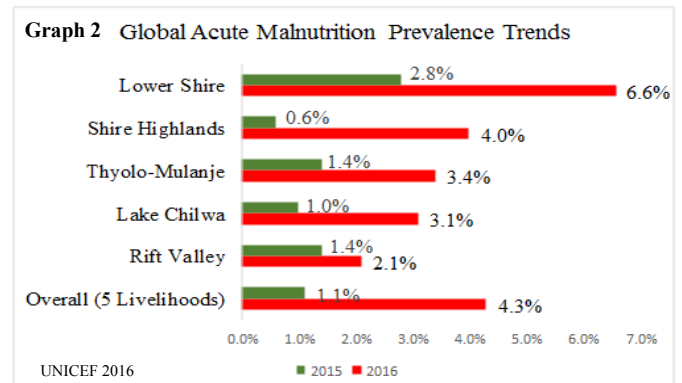
Availability and continuous maize supply on the market will determine the price at the peak of demand. FEWSNET trend analysis so far shows that the grain price may increase up to K350/kg during the lean period. Spot checks in some markets already show above normal price trends For example the WFP nVAM report for second week of June showed that maize prices continue to rise in all the 17 monitored districts. The overall average nominal price of maize was MK211/kg, an increase of 20 percent compared to the same period in May, 2016. According to WFP, the highest district average prices per kg of maize were observed in Nsanje (MK250), Phalombe (MK240), and Chikwawa (MK233), while the lowest prices were recorded in Chitipa (MK150) which is 33 % higher than the official ADMARC prices, and 63% higher than the three year national average prices.



### Nutrition

Seven nutrition surveys were conducted in May 2016 covering nine Livelihood Zones (and 25 districts) using the SMART Survey Methodology. The following livelihood zones were covered (including the districts in each zone): Lake Chirwa Phalombe Plain Livelihood Zone (covering: Phalombe, Zomba and Machinga); Lower Shire Livelihood Zone (Chikwawa & Nsanje); Thyolo Mulanje Tea Estates Livelihood Zone (Thyolo and Mulanje); Rift Valley Escarpment Livelihood Zone (Balaka, Ntcheu, Mwanza, Neno, Salima, Nkhotakota); Shire Highlands Livelihood Zone (Blantyre Rural, Chiradzulu and Mangochi); Kasungu-Lilongwe Plain Livelihood zone (Lilongwe rural, Dedza, Mchinji, Dowa, and Kasungu); and Chitipa– Millet Livelihood Zone (Chitipa,) Western Rumpi and Mzimba Livelihood Zone (Rumpi and Mzimba) and Central Karonga Livelihood Zone (Karonga). The 2016 SMART Survey was the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Nutrition Survey to be conducted in Malawi within a period of one year, where the first round was implemented in June 2015 in five livelihood zones (Lake Chirwa Phalombe Plain, Lower Shire, Thyolo-Mulanje Tea, Shire Highlands and Rift Valley Escarpment).

Overall, Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) was estimated at 2.5% which is classified as *normal* using the WHO Classification of malnutrition. Nevertheless, the results show that there is significant difference in the nutrition situation across the livelihood zones, with Lower Shire recording the highest GAM Prevalence of 6.6% which is classified as *poor*. The GAM prevalence in Shire Highlands is 4.0%, Thyolo-Mulanje-3.4%, Lake Chirwa Phalombe Plain - 3.1%, Rift Valley Escarpment - 2.1%, Kasungu-Lilongwe-1.3% and Central Karonga-Chitipa Maize & Millet -1.1%. Based on the findings of the surveys, it is estimated that **129,653** children under five years of age will be affected by severe acute malnutrition requiring lifesaving treatment and **357,699** children below five years will be affected by moderate acute malnutrition requiring supplementary feeding. However, comparison of the current nutrition



situation with the same season in 2015 show that the overall nutrition situation in the five livelihood zones surveyed in 2015 and in 2016 has *deteriorated* with significant *deterioration* observed in three livelihood zones i.e. Lower Shire, Shire Highlands and Lake Chirwa Phalombe Plain. Given that the survey was done during the *post-harvest season*, then the situation is likely to *deteriorate* further with the on-set of the lean season from August. Therefore intensive surveillance should continue alongside delivery of health and nutrition services.


**Morbidity:** Almost six in ten (58.8%) children nationally were sick two weeks prior to the survey with the prevalence of diarrhoea being 22.0%.

**Vitamin A:** About seven in ten (71.3%) children are supplemented with Vitamin A; with Shire Highlands registering the highest coverage (77.2%) and the least coverage was recorded in Lake Chirwa Phalombe Plain (65.8%).

**Food Consumption Score:** Overall, one in three (33.0%) households are classified as having inadequate food consumption i.e. they consume limited or insufficient nutritious foods to maintain an active and healthy life. The most affected livelihood zone is Lower Shire where almost half of the households are classified as having inadequate food consumption .

**Main Conclusions and Recommendations**

- ⇒ Government and partners should immediately implement targeted humanitarian assistance to address immediate food and nutrition needs of affected households and communities.
- ⇒ Government through NFRA and ADMARC should purchase enough maize to address the humanitarian needs and to stabilize supply and prices on the markets.
- ⇒ Government should provide life-saving nutrition treatment to all children, pregnant and lactating women who are malnourished.
- ⇒ Areas with potential for irrigation should be supported with required inputs and extension services.
- ⇒ MVAC should regular monitor the food security situation as the consumption year progresses.



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*The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee comprises Government, Inter-government, academic and non-profit member organizations that seek to provide Information to inform public action. Participating MVAC member institutions include:*



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Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development  
Department of Climate Change  
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