Field update on the status of the summer crops

This update reflects the situation on the recent harvest of summer crop (paddy, maize and millet) in 38 districts covered by the field surveillance of the WFP’s Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System (FSMAS).

Various reports and estimates from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC) suggest a considerable increase in the national production of summer crops compared to last year (which was the lowest recorded in the past ten years). In spite of a generally good situation at the national level, information from WFP’s field surveillance has revealed that there are a significant number of people affected by poor crop harvest in the Mid and Far Western development regions, due to localized problems. As of mid-January, this poor crop harvest combined with the lack of access puts at risk of acute food insecurity an estimated 150,000 people (Table 1). Moreover, about 50,000 people (IDPs, landless and with very little land) are likely to face acute food insecurity in western Terai district of Kapilbastu, which was affected by recent violence.

### RAINFALL

The rainfall was late, and or insufficient during the cultivation of main crops maize (April-May), and paddy (June-August) in some areas. Maize plantation was delayed, and farmers even had to re-plant maize in some areas of Mid-western districts like Jajarkot, and Dailekh. Likewise paddy plantation was also delayed in Terai; farmers in Saptari and Siraha could plant paddy crops only in about 65% of the area until mid-July. Eastern Terai districts received about 90% of normal rainfall during the month of June, but it was erratic and sparsely distributed in areas, which was of little help for the plantation of paddy in rain-fed fields. However the monsoon rain was continuous and excessive (more than 100%) in most of the Terai districts during July-August, which caused heavy floods in the eastern and western Terai districts. The flood inflicted damage not only to houses, infrastructures, human lives, and livestock, but also to crops in the low land areas. On the other hand, it helped the growth of the paddy crop in the rain-fed fields, and the re-planted crop grew well due to abundant moisture. The rainfall remained continuous and intense in most of the hill and mountain districts during July-September; some areas saw landslides and flood due to incessant rainfall thereby causing crop losses. Overall, the monsoon precipitation in Nepal in 2007 was above normal1, except in the month of June. (Chart 1, maps 1 and 2).

### Table 1 Population at risk of severe food insecurity due to poor summer crop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>VDCs affected</th>
<th>Population at risk (Estimated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dailekh</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jajarkot</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalikot</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humla</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajura</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rukum</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>111,875</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Weather reports, Department of Hydrology and Meteorology.
CROP SITUATION OVERVIEW

Paddy, maize, and millet are the major summer crops cultivated in the country. Across the three agro-ecological belts, paddy is the main crop widely cultivated in Terai, likewise maize and millet are grown mostly in hill and mountain belts.

The estimates from the MOAC show increase in paddy, maize, and millet by 16.80%, 3.23%, and 2.21% respectively compared to last year, though the report does not discuss in detail the production status at the micro-level (VDCs level). Data from WFP's FSMAS has revealed that in some areas in the Mid- and Far-Western districts of Dailekh, Jajarkot, Kalikot, Humla, Mugu, Rukum, and Bajura, the crop production has been highly affected by different factors such as excessive rainfall, hailstorms, land slides and insufficient/late rainfall at the time of crop cultivation. Thus the production in these areas is estimated to have decreased by more than 40%

PADDY PRODUCTION

Paddy is the most important cereal crop in Nepal contributing to 55% of total cereal production. Despite some adverse impact of flood and inundation due to a month long incessant rain in the Terai districts during July-August, the production of paddy has been reported better compared to last year. The area was hard hit by drought last year, and the paddy production there had decreased by 14.40% from the previous year, which led to a fall in the national paddy production by 12.55%2. Likewise the production of millet had also decreased by 2.1% last year.

Terai districts contribute around 72% to the national paddy production. Last year the paddy production loss was highest in Terai (14.40%) followed by Mountain (7.70%), and Hills (6.60%) respectively3. However the production, this year, is reported to have been better, except in a few areas in Mid- and Far-Western Terai. The MoAC estimates of this year indicate an increase in paddy production by about 20% in the Terai compared to last year; likewise the production is expected to increase by 8.47% and 4.47% in the hill and mountain districts respectively.

However the situation in some areas in the Mid- and Far-Western districts is not as promising; and our reports suggest considerable decrease in production in these areas.

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2 National Crop and Food Security Assessment (December 2006), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

3 National Crop and Food Security Assessment (December 2006), MoAC
Paddy Crop Condition
Eastern Nepal - December 2007

Legend
- Paddy

Crop Condition
- Normal or Good
- Moderate (10 - 20% less than normal)
- Poor (20 - 40% less than normal)
- Very poor (40 - 60% less than normal)
- Failure (> 60% less than normal)
- No Data
- National Parks/Wildlife Reserve/No Population Area
- District Boundary

Map 4 - Paddy Crop Condition, East Nepal
World Food Programme
Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System

December, 2007
Rukum – Kholagaun and Arma VDCs were hard hit by landslides and the crop production has been estimated to have decreased by 40-60%. Nepal Red Cross Society is supporting the people with some non-food items. The production is better than last year in the rest of the areas.

Surkhet – Excessive rainfall and landslide significantly affected the crop in Dharapani, Taranga, Ratu, and Lekhparajul VDCs. However the production is reported to have been normal in most of the areas.

Banka – The flash flood damaged the crops in low land and river bank areas; the impact was higher in Gangapur and Hollia VDC in terms of crop damage. About 20-40% of crop reduction is estimated in these VDCs.

Bardiya – Rajapur, Bhimapur, Suryapatuwa, Mohammadpur, and Neulapur VDCs were highly affected by flood and pest disease. The crop production is estimated to have decreased by 20-40% in these VDCs. The production is expected to be normal to moderate in other areas.

Kapilbastu – Even though the total paddy production in this district has reportedly increased by about 20% compared to the last year, some VDCs in the south had their crops affected by the pest disease and as many as 50,000 people consisting of internally displaced persons, landless and those owning very little land (<0.5 ha per household) living in the areas affected by the riots in September are likely to face a situation of acute food insecurity.

Central and Eastern Region

Overall the paddy crop harvest has remained normal in most of the areas in Eastern and Central districts. The production has decreased between moderate to very poor levels only in some flood affected low land areas of Terai districts.

MAIZE PRODUCTION

Maize is the second most important cereal crop in Nepal. It occupies around 23% share in total cereal grain production, and is cultivated mostly in hill and lower belts of the mountain districts. This year the national production of maize is estimated to have increased by 3.23%\(^1\) with mountain districts having the highest level of increase (12.01%), followed by hills (3.07%). This is due to regular rainfall during the month of July-August. The production slightly declined (by 0.02%) in the Terai districts due to the excessive rainfall and flood.

Despite an overall good production of maize in the hills and mountains, considerable loss in crop production has been reported in several areas where the crop was highly affected by landslide, flood, strong winds, hailstorms, and diseases.

DISTRICT UPDATES - MAIZE

Far-western Region

Kailali – South-eastern belt was heavily impacted by the August flood; the crop plants were washed away in most of the areas. The production is estimated to have decreased by about 40-60% in Khailad, Laibojhi, Bhajani, Thapapur, Dhansinghpur, and Manuwa VDCs. Likewise a decrease of about 20-40% is estimated in eastern belt VDCs. Since maize is not the main cereal crop in the Terai districts, there will not be a significant impact on food security with the decrease in maize production.

Darchula – Sufficient and timely rainfall helped farmers plant the crop. The production of maize is very high this year in Darchula. However, excessive rainfall during the months of June-July affected the crop. In Khandeshwor VDC, the production decreased by about 40-60% in 108 hectares of land due to landslide. Similarly the production has declined by about 20% in Iyarkot, Khar, Rithpatachaur, Boharigaun, Bhagawati, Hunainath, Shankarpur, Kharkada, Uku, Lali, Sarmali, Dandakot, Tapoban, and Gwani VDCs.

Overall the maize production has decreased by about 18% compared to last year.

\(^1\)Preliminary Estimate of Paddy, Maize and Millet (2007/08), MoAC

Mid-western and Western Regions

Dailekh – Excessive rainfall, strong winds, hailstorms, and disease (blast and Gabharo) affected the crop in northern and eastern belt VDCs. Salleri was the hardest hit by this disaster, and the crop failed in this VDC. A production decrease of about 40-60% is estimated in Badabhairab, Baluwarata, Jagannath, Kashiundh, Kalika, Kusapani, Mehetoloi, Pagnath, Raniban, and Toll VDCs.

Jajarkot – Like in Dailekh, the crop was affected mostly in the northern belt of this district. Around 20-40% crop loss is expected in Dasera, Daha, Bhagawati, Suwanauli, Salma, Rokayaagau, Ramidanda, Ragda, Paink, Nayakbada, and Kortang VDCs.

Rukum – Strong winds and wild animals’ encroachment have affected crops in some VDCs. A production decrease of 20-40% is estimated in Pwag, Sisne, and Ghetma VDCs.

MILLET PRODUCTION

Though it has very little contribution to the national cereal grain production (~4%), millet is one of the main summer cereal crops in some of the hill and mountain districts.

The MoAC estimate indicates an increase in production by 2.21% compared to last year.

The increase in millet production is mostly observed in the eastern hill and mountain districts. The production, however, is affected by hailstorms, pest, and insects in Mugu and Humla districts. The crop is estimated to decrease by 40-60% in Rowa, Ruga, and Bhe of Mugu; and Jaira, Chhipra, Barai, Shrimasta, Raya, Gothi, and Syada VDCs of Humla districts.

Chinu (minor millet) is one of the main summer crops in Dolpa cultivated in lower and in the middle belt of this district. This year the production decreased by about 35% compared to normal years due to insufficient and late rainfall at the time of plantation, and excessive rainfall at the harvesting time.

Map 5: Chinu crop condition in Dolpa

CONCLUSION

At the national level, the production of summer crops, especially that of paddy, has increased compared to last year. However there are significant geographic variations within the country and certain remote and poor areas in the Mid- and Far-Western districts such as Dailekh, J jajarkot, Kalikot, Humla, Mugu, Rukum, and Bajura are suffering from a production loss as high as 40% or higher. This is likely to adversely affect the food security situation of these poor and vulnerable communities, including poor and landless people in Kapilbastu affected by the recent violence. WFP will continue to monitor the situation of these communities. The situation of the ongoing winter crop will have an impact on the food security situation of the communities after April/May. WFP is closely monitoring the winter crop situation and its likely impacts, and this will be reported in the next update.
Crop Situation Update

Crop Situation Updates are produced by WFP Nepal as part of the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System.

For more information please contact the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis Unit
United Nations World Food Programme
Patan Dhoka Road, Lalitpur
PO Box 107
Tel 5542607 ext 2420-5

Map 7: Maize / Millet Crop Condition, Eastern Nepal

Legend
Crop Type
- Maize
- Millet

Crop Condition
- Normal or Good
- Moderate (10 - 20 % less than normal)
- Poor (20 - 40 % less than normal)
- Very poor (40 - 60 % less than normal)
- Failure (> 60 % less than normal)
- No Data
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December, 2007