



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE

JANUARY 21ST 2010

Countries updated

- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: LESOTHO

Updated – 18 January 2010

Highlights

- In general, rainfall received has been normal to above normal during the reporting period.
- Preliminary area planted estimates indicate that 123,051 ha of land had been planted to crops by end of December 2009 and crop condition is reported as satisfactory.
- The government is experiencing the reduction in the Southern Africa Customs Union revenue and this has negative impact on the government budget. About 65% of government revenue used to come from the SACU revenue. This figure declined from 35% in 2009/10, and will further reduce to 17% in 2010/2011, putting much pressure on the government.

Actions

Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to last year, the onset of rains was on time (October). According to Lesotho Meteorological Services, as of the third dekad of December 2009, cumulative rainfall was reported to be above normal in most areas of the country. • Temperatures were reported to have been normal to above normal. • Crops are reported to be in satisfactory condition at late vegetative stages with weeding in progress. • Government has instituted a 30-50% subsidy on seed and fertiliser, while FAO availed a range of inputs for 22,551 vulnerable farming households • Preliminary information from the MoAgFS indicates 123,051 ha of land had been planted to crops by end of December 2009. This represents a decrease of 41,532 ha (25%) over the previous season. However, area planted has increased in Berea and Thaba Tseka District. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It appears that Lesotho was the only country in the region with reduced production in 2009 and this could be the result of the impact of the financial crisis where households could not afford inputs for better production as well as repeated poor rainfall performance • If cereal production figures are accurate, the government will again have to import cereals from South Africa. 	<p>According to the LVAC, between 400,000 and 450,000 people will require some form of humanitarian assistance before the next harvest in April 2010. The LVAC found that the increasing cost of essential items coupled with reduced opportunities for casual on assistance. labor (such as weeding etc) had exacerbated the food security situation for many vulnerable households, leaving them dependent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOHSW with technical support of UNICEF is mandated to identify causes of chronic undernutrition and work on strategies of how to reduce the critically high levels of stunting. The Task Force will be to immediately hold a meeting to prepare for conducting the Landscape Analysis to identify the gaps, constraints and opportunities that could help to scale up high impact nutrition interventions. • WFP conducted a Food Consumption Survey in collaboration with the Food and Nutrition Coordinating office, UNICEF and National University of Lesotho in December 2009. The main objective of the survey is to establish the food consumption patterns and correlate them with the anthropometric indices. Data was collected on food consumption, anthropometry, demographic and socio-economic indicators. The study was conducted in two livelihood zones; the mountains and the northern lowlands. Data analysis is planned for February 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government is experiencing the reduction in the Southern Africa Customs Union revenue and this has negative impact on the government budget. This figure declined from 35% in 2009/10, and will further reduce to 17% in 2010/2011, putting much pressure on the Government.



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: MADAGASCAR

Updated – 18 January 2010

Highlights

- The food security situation remains stable or seems even to improve in the Capital most affected by the political and economic crisis.
- The country is monitoring the cyclone season which will last until April 2010.

Actions

Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The series of incentives, including financial support (subsidized fertilizers and seeds) and technical extension assistance, provided in the previous years by the Government, was suspended. This may have negative impact on the on-going farming campaign. • An increase of 5 to 10% is observed on the prices of fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural inputs between 2008 and 2009. • In the South, the rains were low but sufficient enough for agricultural activities to be implemented. Farmers have spread the planting over several months to reduce risk and make the most out of the little available rainwater. • The cyclone season began in December 2009 and the island will remain under climate threat until April 2010. The IASC Contingency Plan has been finalized along with a National contingency plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice supplies are adequate and market arrivals remained high. The abundance of rice in the market, due to the good harvest, accounts for the low market prices. • Imported rice is found in markets in only 9 out of the 22 Regions, due to the abundance of low price domestic rice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results from the 3rd round of UN Inter-agency Multi-cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism (McRAM) showed that the proportion of food insecure among the poor vulnerable households was 65% (about 18% of the total population of the Capital) in November 2008 prior to the crisis but had fallen to 40% (about 12% of the total population of the Capital) in November 2009. • This can be explained by a good harvest in 2009, falling prices of the country's main staple food and stable and falling prices of basic food products, including milk and dairy products, due to the liberalization of the previously monopolized food industry complex. • The local market rice prices are stable to a level below last year at the same period. However, in 2009 alone, more than 200,000 jobs (at least 1 million individuals) were lost as a result of the economic and political crisis, and it is estimated that 500,000 more will be lost in early 2010 due to the non-renewal of Madagascar AGOA membership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madagascar consistently has the highest levels of acute malnutrition (15%) and chronic malnutrition (53%) in Southern Africa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UN Country Team raised concern over the approaching cyclone season in November 2009, when it appealed for US\$6 million in urgent funding to pre-position emergency supplies in the most vulnerable regions of the country. • Cyclone season usually starts in December and runs through April, affecting some of the poorest regions of the country



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: MALAWI

Updated – 18 January 2010

- Highlights**
- Long dry spells were experienced in most districts in the country causing maize to reach permanent wilting point and requiring re-planting in most fields, a situation that will potentially reduce yield.
 - Army worms have destroyed crops such as maize and pulses in some districts.
 - Food security situation for the whole country is stable except for some households in four districts; Nsanje, Balaka Chikwawa, and Zomba where humanitarian food assistance is provided.

Actions

Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rainy season started in late October which promoted land preparation and planting. • Since December, a significant reduction in rainfall has been observed across most areas in the southern region which reported cumulative rainfall of less than 10 mm. • In the southern region the maize crop is reportedly reaching permanent wilting point and there will be a need to replant provided there is an improvement in the rainfall situation. In general, seasonal rainfall deficits and insufficient soil water conditions are likely to impede local cropping. • Poor returns on cotton have diminished the need for casual farm labour which in turn has affected the ability of poorer households to generate income and purchase food. • An armyworm attack was reported in all the Agriculture Development Divisions in Malawi and affected maize, rice, millet and sorghum. The pest was controlled through chemical sprays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security situation of the country remains favorable except for some households in Chikwawa, Nsanje, Balaka, and Zomba districts. In general, food is available for most households from own production or procurement from the market. • Small and medium size traders and ADMARC have adequate stocks of maize which is sold at various markets throughout the country. • Households are able to access maize apart from some households in the four districts named above who require food assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The projected total number of people missing food entitlements from November 2009 – March 2010 is 275,200. Chikwawa has the highest at 141,500 followed by Nsanje, 62,150, Balaka, 55,300 and finally Zomba, 16,200 people. • The government has released 6,678 MT of maize from the SGR to distribute to people affected and requested WFP to coordinate the response. Food distributions started in November 2009 and will continue up to mid April 2010. • The majority of the markets are recording slight increase in maize price. In December 2009, there was no significant increase in the average selling price of maize between November and December 2009. Maize was sold at \$0.29 per kg. However, when compared with the previous year same month, maize price for December 2008 was at \$0.44 per kg. This shows that the price decreased in December 2009 by 34% compared to December 2008. • The current maize price is below the Government's set maximum selling price of maize, K52.00 (\$0.36) per kg. Maize is therefore affordable and accessible to people in the country. • Some ADMARC markets have not opened so that farmers are buying from private traders who are found at every local market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A National Micronutrient survey was conducted in July-August 2009 and the report is yet to be released. The survey is expected to shed light into the effect of the various interventions implemented to address problems of micronutrient deficiencies in Malawi. • The CFSVA study conducted by the MVAC with WFP support found lower levels of wasting in the North (2.6%) compared to Central (3.9%) and South (3.6%) similar pattern were observed for underweight (9.6%). Prevalence of underweight was highest in the South (12.2%) followed by Central (10.7%) regions. The prevalence of stunting, however, was highest in the North (65.3%) compared to the Central (57.6%) and Southern (59.1%) regions. • For women, 9.2% of the women had a BMI less than 18.5 kg/m², 9% were underweight (< 45 kgs) and 4% were stunted (< 145 cms). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District of Karonga has experienced a series of earthquakes, beginning on 6th December 2009. The strongest earthquake, at 6.2, occurred on 20th December, and minor tremors have been reported through the 24th December. • There is no immediate unmet food need for affected households. Food is available and accessible to Karonga inhabitants. Local markets are functioning, food is available, and prices are in line with seasonal trends.



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: MOZAMBIQUE

Updated – 18 January 2010

Highlights

- Food security situation is apparently stable with pockets of food insecurity
- Poor rainfall distribution and abnormally high temperatures have dampened prospects for the main maize harvest in much of southern and central Mozambique.
- Staple food prices registered slight decrease with harvest season, but remain higher than the five year average

Actions

Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rainfall in Nov/Dec allowed the planting process to begin. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the planting process started in mid November in the southern and central provinces and in December in the Northern provinces. • The irregularity and poor distribution, aggravated by very high temperatures (32-42°C) registered during the 2nd and 3rd dekad of December 2009, has affected crop development, mainly in the south and central provinces of the country. • A dry spell situation can be observed in the southern provinces (Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo) and crops are facing some water stress, except for those located in low land areas. • In the central region, much of the maize planted in November is now starting to wilt, while maize and other crops planted mid December are still in good conditions. • FAO was granted USD \$423,000 of CERF funds to address agricultural input needs for 5,000 vulnerable smallholders in the highly food insecure provinces of Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala, and Tete. The funding will be used to support these vulnerable families who have been impacted by the drought situation in parts of the country to plant a second crop and improve their household food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food commodities prices have been stable since the beginning of the marketing year as a result of the good 2008/09 agriculture season. • However, the food security situation in Mozambique may become more critical in dry spell areas if rain does not occur in January 2010, particularly in the southern provinces of Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane and central provinces of Tete, Manica and Sofala. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The (Vulnerability Analysis Group) GAV in August 2009 refers to 267,000 people of 32 districts in 8 provinces (mainly in Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala and Tete) who will face acute food insecurity and in need of humanitarian assistance until the harvests in April 2010. • These findings are confirmed by WFP last round of CHS and Post distribution monitoring. • The maize prices increased from October to December 2009 in several markets. December 2009 maize prices are still higher than prices recorded in the same period of 2006 and 2007 (this trend does not hold for 2008, when prices were exceptionally high). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, acute malnutrition levels are low ranging from 8.9% (Nampula) to 1.4% (Gaza) according to the multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) of 2008. However, the levels of stunting/chronic malnutrition in the country are very high: 44% (MICS 2008) with seven provinces having rates above 40% (56% in Cabo Delgado and 41.5% in Sofala). • Child mortality is still high in the country although the 2008 MICS indicate a decline from 153/1000 live birth (DHS 2003) to 138/1000 live birth. This decline was found to be higher in rural areas than urban. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Directorate of Water (DNA) has produced its forecast of flood/inundation risk in the river basins. For the period between January to March 2010, the following is expected: <u>Low Risk (Green Alert)</u> for Maputo, Umbelúzi, Incomáti, Limpopo, and Save basins. <u>Moderate Risk (Orange Alert)</u> for Buzi, Púngoè, Licungo, Ligonha, Ligonha, Lúrio, and Rovuma basins. <u>High Risk (Red Alert)</u> for Messalo and Zambezi basins.



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: NAMIBIA

Updated – 18 January 2010

Highlights

- Heavy rainfall in the north could again lead to floods and destroy crops in the Caprivi
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Actions

Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Early Warning and Food Information System (NEWFIS) December 2009 report highlights that rainfall performance has been erratic and insufficient in the regions and that only a few farmers have started ploughing their crop fields. • African swine fever is reported in Ohangwena region and there are delays in transportation of agricultural inputs in Kavango region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking into account the estimated grain production of about 139,000 MT in 2008/09, no planned stock draw-down by millers and virtually no household food stocks at the farm level due to a succession of disasters, as well as an estimated national utilization requirement of about 289,000 MT of grain, it is projected that the country will need to import 150,000 MT of grain during the 2009/10 marketing year (FAO/WFP). • However, according to the Namibia NEWU report (July 09) that shows a grain import need of 156,000 MT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most households interviewed during the National Early Warning and Food Information System (NEWFIS) December 2009 agricultural inputs and household food security situation assessment indicated that they have depleted their harvest in August 2009 and are now dependent on the markets and/or government drought / flood relief foods to meet their food needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2006 Demographic Health Survey (DHS) found that 29% of Namibia's children were stunted, 17% were underweight and 7.5% were acutely malnourished. • Approximately 77% of acutely malnourished children found in the north-eastern part of the country. • In Namibia, overweight and obesity are more common than underweight. The 2006 DHS reported 28% of women were overweight or obese (BMI > 25.0), while at the other end of the spectrum, 16% were considered thin (BMI < 18.5), with 6% moderately or severely thin (BMI <17). • The National Alliance for Improved Nutrition in Namibia has developed a concept note for a food consumption/micronutrient deficiency survey and plan to move forward with the design of the survey tools with technical assistance from GAIN and DSM. • The 2008 DHS is currently being finalized while the 2010 DHS is being planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic food insecurity (food access) compounded by transitory shocks – droughts/floods in the northern communal crop producing areas. • Namibia is a net cereal importing country. A strong commercial sector assures good availability of staple cereals to cover effective demand. Vulnerable households' needs are usually addressed through Government intervention programmes.



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: SOUTH AFRICA

Updated – 18 January 2010

Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial farming will lead to another surplus production despite forecasts of El Niño-related drought conditions. Between October 2008 and October 2009, prices of maize products decreased in urban areas but increased in rural areas.
Actions	

Agricultural Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) forecasts continue to show enhanced probabilities of weak to moderate El Niño conditions to occur during the 2009/10 summer rainfall season. While rain showers across the major maize areas of South Africa are favourable for soil moisture prior to the planting season (SAGIS), El Niño related drought conditions are expected to occur over the larger parts of the summer rainfall regions of South Africa (especially central and western parts) for the remainder of the season. As of mid-December 2009, the production forecast for winter wheat was 1,979 million tons, which represented a downwards revision of about 20,000 tonnes due to the wet conditions that prevailed in the Western Cape at harvest time. Available estimate figures show that producers intend to plant 1,644 million ha of white maize, about 10 percent more than last year. In the case of yellow maize, expected planting is about the same as the previous season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projections for the 2009/10 marketing season indicate that the country will have a surplus of 2,626 million tons of maize at the end of April 2010 and 523,000 tons of wheat at the end of September 2010. However, based on previous drought experiences during El Niño conditions in the region, the predicted likelihood of the normal to below-normal rainfall for most of the summer rainfall areas in South Africa is expected to result in a much-reduced maize harvest and possible shortages of maize in the 2009/2010 cropping season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Africa's food inflation compares favorably with that of other African countries, but is still higher than in most developed countries. The cost of a basic food basket increased by R35 to R376 in nominal terms between October 2008 and January 2009 after which it remained relatively stable until Oct 2009. In the urban areas, the prices of maize products decreased, on average, by 2.01% between October 2008 and October 2009. During the same period, the prices of maize products in the rural areas increased by 4.48% - this is lower compared to 9.08% reported in August 2009 FPM. Price trends for local grains from September 2008 to September 2009 followed the decrease in input prices in the same time with White Maize SAFEX spot price decreasing by 25.8% and Wheat SAFEX spot price decreasing by 31.5% (NAMC, 2009). Bread prices (brown - 700g) decreased slightly by R0.06 to R7.04 from September to October 2009, while maize meal (5kg) increased 0.52% (from R22.88 to R23.00) in the same period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The infant mortality rate was 49/1000 live births in 2009 (State of the World's Children report, 2009). The main cause of under-five mortality is AIDS, representing 35% of all deaths in that age group. UNICEF has supported Vitamin A campaign. Food stables fortification with vitamin A & B, iron and Zinc. Vitamin A supplementation is provided in health facilities through doses targeting 90% of 6-11 months, 80% of 12-59 months and 90% postpartum women. 8,600 individuals living with HIV/AIDS are targeted with nutritional supplements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government is partnering with agriculture and health institutions such as FAO, ARC, UNICEF, and other stakeholders to improve the existing food security initiatives e.g. Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), community seed production schemes and nutrition interventions e.g. national vitamin A campaign.



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: SWAZILAND

Updated – 18 January 2010

Highlights

- The Swazi VAC finds more than 260,000 people are facing a food deficit in the 2009/10 marketing year.
- There is a lack of information on the progress of the current agricultural season in the country.

Actions

Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government announced a plan to subsidize agricultural inputs to boost food production, starting in the 2010/2011 season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swaziland's annual maize harvest in 2009 was estimated at 70,000 tons, which was slightly more than the previous year. However, Swaziland will still need to import around 90,000 tons during the current consumption year (April 2009 - March 2010) to fill the national cereal gap (WFP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings of the Swazi VAC indicate that 256,000 people are facing food deficit - 114,000 with acute food insecurity and 148,000 chronically food insecure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnutrition in young children (< 5 years) was most recently measured in the National Nutrition Survey which took place in 2008. Overall, only 1.1% of the children are wasted (low weight-for-height) and was slightly higher in rural areas compared to urban. • Stunting or chronic malnutrition was found to be around 40 percent and was also slightly higher in children from rural areas. • The Swazi VAC has been collecting information on maternal nutrition for four years and it's clear that there is a problem with over-nutrition rather than under-nutrition. Consistently, at least half of the women sampled are found to be overweight or obese. This can be a reflection of the poor quality diet which consists mostly of cereals/carbohydrates with little diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Swaziland UNCT is in the process of completing and sharing its report with Government, which will include food security and nutrition as a core pillar for UN support to the Swaziland Government. • The Ministry of Agriculture is registering farmers under the input subsidy programme in order to close the production deficit. • Trend analysis of nutrition information shows that increasing levels of stunting in recent years could be a reflection of both economic decline and continued high HIV prevalence rates.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY SITUATION UPDATE: ZAMBIA

Updated – 18 January 2010

- Highlights**
- The Government recorded surplus production in the 2008/09 agricultural season, thus requiring no commercial or humanitarian imports.
 - Conservation agriculture is being promoted by the Government.

Actions

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Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crops cultivated under irrigation, particularly wheat are mature or nearing maturity. • Government increased the number of beneficiaries to the Fertiliser Support Programme to 500,000 from last year's 250,000 by reducing by 50% the amount of fertilizer per beneficiary household from eight to four bags (of 50 kg each). • An outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) has been reported in some parts Mazabuka district in the southern province. MACO responded by providing 1500 doses of the FMD vaccine in order to contain the disease. • FAO started distributing agricultural input vouchers in support of the Conservation agriculture (CA) programmes (CASPP and FISRI projects). A total of 8120 beneficiaries will benefit from the voucher scheme. • According to the national meteorological forecasts, most of Zambia is expected to receive normal rain fall from October to December 2009, except for the north eastern part which is expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall. From January to March 2010, Southern, Central and Lusaka provinces are expected to receive normal rainfall, while the rest of the country is expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The food balance sheet for the 2009/10 marketing season, released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO), indicated that Zambia had surplus production in the 2008/09 season. No commercial or humanitarian imports will be required during the 2009/10 consumption year. Total cereal production is estimated at 2.2 million MT, which is 34 % higher than last year's total of 1.6 million MT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maize prices were relevantly stable up until the end of 2009 yet remain high when compared to other surplus years, most likely due to high input costs. • Although the overall annual food inflation rate dropped by 0.3% recording 14.6% in August, 2009 when compared to the previous month of July, the price of white maize grain recorded a 4% increase in the retail price. • The substantial increase in the price of maize grain in Mongu will negatively affect low income households that depend on purchase for the food requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stunting rates for assessed under-five children in affected areas were found to be 45.5% while wasting and underweight were at 3.6% and 15.2% respectively. • Acute malnutrition levels have remained within acceptable levels and are slightly lower than last season's VAC estimates. • The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection in Zambia has attributed high levels of child malnutrition in rural areas to food insecurity triggered by recurrent floods whilst in urban areas, the high levels of child malnutrition is attributed to poverty compounded by high food prices affecting low income households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Contingency Plan from DMMU indicates that food has been pre-positioned in the 3 most flood-prone districts in the country in preparation for the current rainy season. • Review of the data collection tools and sampling frame for the Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment and analysis (CVAA) is on going. The launch of the CVAA survey is expected by end January

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY UPDATE: ZIMBABWE

Updated – 18 January 2010

- Highlights**
- More and more households are depending on food aid and purchases to access cereals. Own harvested stocks have dwindled or are already exhausted.
 - Over 742,000 households (57% of communal households) have received crop input support humanitarian agencies for the 2009/10 agricultural season.

Actions

Agriculture Situation	Food Availability	Food Access/Prices	Nutrition, Health and Food Utilization	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 742,000 households (57% of communal) had received agricultural input support from humanitarian organizations for the 2009/10 planting season by mid-December 2009. • The Government crop input schemes are faced with critical shortages of commodities especially Ammonium Nitrate which is compromising crop quality for affected farmers. Imports are being reported as coming from South Africa and Malawi after most contracted local companies failed to deliver. Open market prices for crop inputs are inhibitive for many households. • Most parts of the country have experienced extended dry spells from December 2009 to date which are affecting cropping activities and crop condition. In some cases crops are a completely lost and farmers are replanting. • Hailstorms in December 2009 affected crops in a few districts (e.g. Mt. Darwin). Army worm attacks were reported in Mashonaland Central Province. An anthrax outbreak has been reported in a number of districts in Mashonaland West Province. All these had localized effects. • Area planted under most crops in the current agricultural season as of mid-December 2010 has greatly increased as compared to 2008/09. Maize (+93%), small grains (+290%), cotton (+150%) and groundnuts (+360%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own harvested stocks have been exhausted or are drying up for an increasing number of households. Food aid and purchases are now the major sources of cereals. • Maize meal is generally unavailable in rural markets. The commodity is easily available in urban areas. • Basic food commodities are easily available on the market. Locally produced brands are increasing becoming available as industrial capacity utilization increases. Imports of food commodities still continue but at relatively low levels. Tax-free imports of food commodities were extended up to 31st July 2010. • FEWSNET reports that The Ministry of Agriculture estimates a shortfall of about 370,000 Mt of cereals to the end of the consumption year down from the 500,000 estimated by CFSAM in May 2009. • Un-established amounts of cereals are still being withheld from the market by farmers and traders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maize grain prices have begun to increase in some sites from an average US\$0.23/kg up to U\$0.34/kg. • Price increases in grain are largely attributable to falling supplies on the market. • Unrefined maize meal is selling at an average US\$0.43/kg. Prices range from as low a US\$0.31 to US\$0.8/kg depending on availability and proximity to urban centers. • ZimVAC's October 2009 assessment estimates some 1.6 million people (18% of rural population) to be food insecure between January and March 2010, about 2% higher than the May 2009 projections of about 1.4 million people. • Close to 1.9 million people are receiving food aid from mainly WFP and C-SAFE pipelines (general feeding and safety nets). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the 2009 MIMS report, 35% of children < 5 years are stunted (37% rural, 30% in urban areas); 2% are wasted; Underweight is 12% in rural areas and 9% in the urban. • The Government, UNICEF and other partners are currently conducting the 2010 National Nutrition Survey which will include around 50,000 children < 5 years of age and will provide nutrition and food security information for 60 rural districts. • Measles outbreaks have been reported in 16 out of 62 districts (but mainly in Manicaland) by the 3rd of Jan. 2010. • A few suspected and confirmed cholera cases have been reported in 10 districts by 3 Jan 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central Statistical Office reported a drop of 0.9 percentage points in monthly inflation in November to -0.1 percent. The fall, from 0.8 percent in October, was due to falling consumer prices as retailers slashed prices to woo Christmas shoppers. Year on year inflation is -7.7% • The amount of foreign currency in circulation is still limited and some rural households are still relying on barter trade. • Economic recovery has been slow with industrial capacity utilization improving slightly from 10% to around 20%. Critical challenges are still being faced in the provision of basic services and utilities such as power, health, and education. • The 1st Round Crop Assessment will take place towards the end of January (AGRITEX)



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