

This bulletin is being piloted to summarise the various issues related to food security in Lesotho in order to present a concise update on a quarterly basis. Information comes from Government, UN, NGO and WB/IMF reports. Partner's logos are on the back page.

# Lesotho Food Security Monitoring System Quarterly Bulletin

1st Quarter 2011

March 2011

## Updates

- The Nutrition Baseline Survey conducted in *Thaba-Tseka, Qacha's Nek, Mokhotlong and Berea* in November 2010 by the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office and UN shows poor food consumption especially in *Thaba-Tseka* and *Mokhotlong* districts.
- A Government-led rapid assessment was conducted in February following the heavy rains, showing negative impacts on health and nutrition, agriculture and food security, infrastructure as well as water and sanitation.
- The Government will conduct the Post Disaster Needs Assessment to understand the impact of the heavy rains with support of World bank and UN.
- DMA plans to update baselines for the vulnerability assessments in April. The annual assessment will be undertaken in May/June.

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## Summary for 1st Quarter 2011

- In Lesotho, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is leading the CAADP Process and is preparing for the launch of the CAADP Implementation Plan on May 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Meteorology Services indicates that normal to above-normal rainfall was received across the country from the beginning of the rainy season in 2010.
- Following the heavy rains received between December 2010 and February 2011, the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) estimated the number of people who will be food insecure in the second half of the year at 250,000. This is an increase from 200,000 people estimated by the May 2010 Vulnerability Assessment.
- Prices of fuel increased significantly in March 2011 compared to the previous quarter. Petrol prices increased by 24%, diesel prices by 28% and paraffin prices by 31%.
- The nutrition baseline survey (January, 2011) results show that *Thaba-Tseka* and *Mokhotlong* districts had the highest proportion of households with poor food consumption at 19% and 18% respectively, while *Qacha's Nek* and *Berea* had the lowest proportion of households at 9% and 5% respectively.
- The 2009 Demographic Health Survey estimated the prevalence of **stunting** in children 6-59 months at 39 percent.
- The Lesotho Agricultural Census was carried out in July 2010 and data analysis is still ongoing. This census is carried out once in ten years and will provide updated agricultural data. It is also expected to provide some indication of progress in implementation of the agricultural priorities in the Poverty Reduction strategy.
- The SACU revenue which has been the main revenue source for the Government dropped significantly in 2009-2010 from an estimated 35% of GDP to about 14% of GDP in 2010/11. The status of the SACU revenues is however expected to improve.

## Update on Policy

- FAO is supporting the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office to finalise the nutrition policy. In addition, WFP provided support to FNCO to develop the national food fortification policy.
- The Lesotho Government launched the process of preparing for the National Strategic Development Plan in February 2011. Nine clusters have been formed to undertake the process of the NSDP, namely; i) *Investment Climate, Manufacturing and Trade cluster*, ii) *Financial Services cluster*, iii) *Infrastructure (and related Services) cluster*, iv) *Skills Development and Innovation cluster*, v) *Productive Sectors cluster*, vi) *Health, HIV&AIDS and Social Protection cluster*, vii) *Environment and Natural Resource management cluster*, viii) *Governance and Institutions cluster*, ix) *Media cluster*.

Projected % Change		
	2010	2011
Real GDP growth	2.4	3.1
Consumer Prices	3.8	5.4

Source: World Economic Outlook, April 2011

**“The unemployment rate for Lesotho, estimated at 31.0 per cent, is also high. In recent years, unemployment has worsened among the youth, including university and other tertiary institutions graduates.”**

*CBL Economic Review, No 126, Jan 2011*

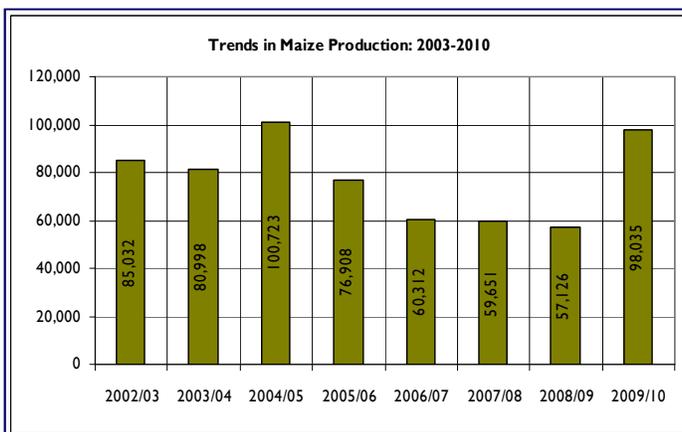
## Economic Conditions

- Inflation was fairly stable at the end of December, 2010. The annual inflation rate, measured by a change in the consumer price index (CPI) remained at 3.1% for three consecutive months; October to December. However, at the end of February, it was estimated at 3.3% which was slightly higher than 3.2% recorded in January. The food inflation rate, which makes the biggest share of the average consumer basket is also increasing. It was 3.9% in December and this was an increase from 3.8% in November. But in February it stood at 4.7% from 4.5% in January (*Bureau of Statistics, December 2010 to February 2011 CPI Reports*).
- The 2011/12 Budget Speech revealed that total domestic revenue declined by 30% with 50% reduction in South Africa Custom Unions (SACU) receipts. However, it is expected that SACU revenue will increase from M2,161.9 to M2,752.6 million next year. In 2012/13 and 2013/14 the SACU revenue is expected to be M4,287 million and M4,480.1 million.
- At the end of the third quarter of 2010, manufacturing employment increased by 5.2% compared to the previous year and provided jobs to over 45,000 people, mainly women. However, the contribution of textile industry to GDP fell from a high of 20.6% in 2002/3 to 14% in 2009/10. In the first to third quarters of 2010, the number of Basotho mineworkers declined by 1.9 percent from 43,092 to 42,252 (*Budget speech, February 2011*).

## Agricultural Production

- About 77% of total population make a living from subsistence agriculture. Agriculture contributed 10% to GDP in the last decade, and it has now declined to 7.9% in 2009/10.
- Crop production is the main contributor to the decline as its contribution fell from 4.8% in 2000/01 to only 1.8% in 2009/10.

- Livestock contributes 4.5% to GDP.
- The chart below shows that production of maize has been decreasing since 2004/05 season; however, the 2009/10 production appears to be an increase over the past 5 seasons (BoS, 2009).



- Although area planted in 2009/10 was 8% lower than the previous season, maize production was 72% higher; while sorghum and wheat production had increased by 177% and 117% respectively.
- Government plans to make efforts to increase hectares of land being planted each year; effectiveness, coordination and management of institutions that support subsistence farmers throughout the supply chain; and involve the private sector in supply chain.
- Information from the Meteorological Services indicated that in 2010/11 the rains fell at the end of the planting season. Most farmers planted late due to drought. In addition to late planting, the crops were destroyed by heavy rains received from December to February
- The total rainfall received between December and January was equivalent to the rainfall normally received within 6 and 3 months period in the northern region and southern region respectively.

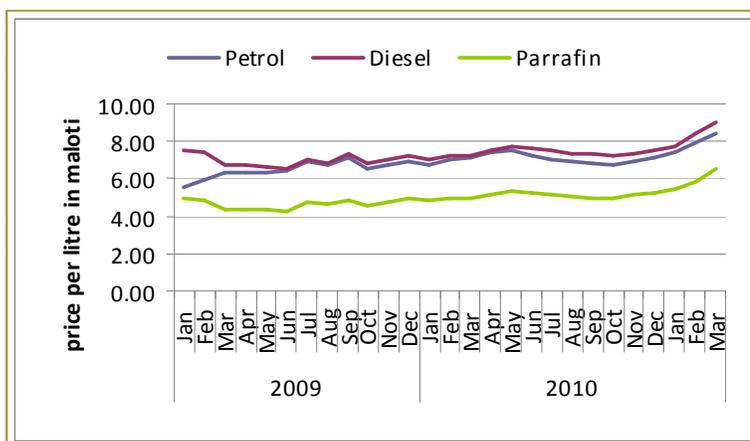
## Response to the impact of the heavy rains

**The Disaster Management Authority plans to update the LVAC baselines in April 2011. The annual vulnerability assessment will be done in May/June.**

- Following the heavy rains, the government led Rapid Assessment (February 2011) revealed significant losses in livestock and field crops; reduced field operations as well as infrastructure damage especially in roads, bridges and culverts which constrained accessibility to health services.
- Based on the information provided by the rapid assessment, LVAC estimated 34% loss in area planted to food crops and at least 3% increase in prices of staple food. Using the LVAC analysis model, at least 250,000 people will be highly food insecure in the coming months, an increase from 200,000 people as previously estimated by the VAC assessment for 2010/2011.
- OCHA granted UD\$50,000 cash grant to UN Lesotho which was used to procure non-food items in response to the emergency.
- The Lesotho United Nations Country Team successfully applied for US\$ 1.5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funding to respond to the impacts of the heavy rains that affected the country.
- Out of the total CERF funds approved, WFP received USD\$179,534.00 to provide food support 8,220 people affected by the heavy rains for a period of three months. Other UN agencies that received a share of the total budget from CERF are WHO, FAO, UNICEF, and UNFPA.
- FAO received CERF fund with which 5000 farming households will be provided with inputs for winter cropping (May-July) and will be assisted with tillage. About 180,000 livestock will be vaccinated against blue tongue and lumpy skin disease.
- ECHO mission was conducted in February to assess the impact of the heavy rains on food security. The mission advised for further analysis of the situation.

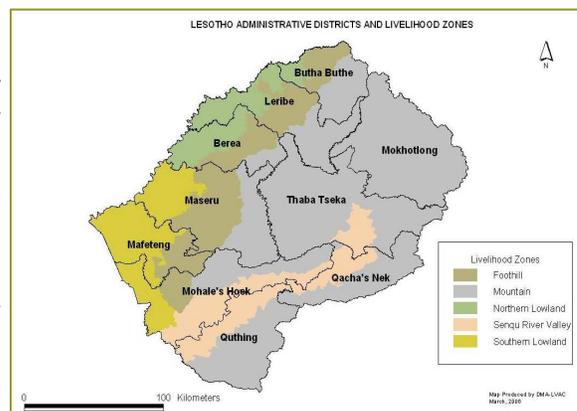
## Markets and prices

- Prices of fuel increased significantly compared to the previous quarter. Petrol prices increased by 24%, diesel prices by 28% and paraffin prices by 31%.
- Between February and March, there is an increase 4.8% in petrol prices, 6.6% increase in diesel prices and 6.2% increase in paraffin prices.
- On an annual basis, petrol prices increased by 18.9%, diesel by 28.7% and paraffin by 33.9% (source: Petroleum Fund)
- On average, prices of maize meal remained stable in the first quarter, with 12.5kg bags ranging from M42.00 to M49.00. There was only 1% increase from December (source: Bureau of Statistics)



## Livelihoods

- A baseline survey (January, 2011) was commissioned for the four districts where the Joint UN Nutrition programme is to be implemented. The survey was conducted to provide baseline indicator levels prior to the programme implementation and to be used for monitoring and evaluating programme impact.
- Most households rely on income sources that are not reliable. In all the districts except *Qacha's Nek*, more than 50% of households mentioned obtaining their income through crop production. Even though not done for commercial purposes, many households obtain income through selling part of their produce. Casual labour was also mentioned by many households especially in *Qacha's Nek* where more than 50% cited this income source. Brewing was mentioned by more than 30% of households in *Thaba-Tseka* and *Mokhotlong*, 20% in *Qacha's Nek* and less than 10% in *Berea*. At least about 20% of households in *Qacha's Nek*, *Mokhotlong* and *Berea* rely on salary/wages; while *Thaba-Tseka* it is about 12%.
- On expenditure, *Qacha's Nek* district had the highest mean per capita monthly income at M192, while the other three districts had M145. Monthly per capita expenditure on food was M43 with *Qacha's Nek* district showing the highest average monthly per capita expenditure at M64, followed by *Berea* (M40), *Mokhotlong* (M35) and lastly *Thaba-Tseka* (M31).
- Most households rely on purchase to access most of their food. Household income is geared towards food than other household needs.





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The Spanish Government is providing financial support for the strengthening of Food Security Monitoring Systems in Southern Africa.

## LESOTHO—Key Facts



	2008
Population, total (millions)	2.02
Population growth (annual %)	0.5
GDP (current US\$) (billions)	1.6
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	1,080
External debt stocks (% GNI)	33.7
Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)	30.4
Agricultural land (% of land area)*	76.9
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)*	43
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)*	84
Malnutrition prevalence, weight for age (% U5)*	17%
Prevalence HIV, total (% pop aged 15-49)*	23.2
School enrolment, primary (% net)*	72.4

Source: World Development Indicators  
\*Most recent data available, 2001-2008

## Health and Nutrition

- HIV and AIDS** have devastated sub-Saharan Africa. Lesotho has the third highest prevalence rate in the world after Swaziland and Botswana. It is estimated at 23% by the Demographic Health Survey (2009), while in 2004, it was estimated at 23.2% (DHS, 2004). More than 210,430 children have been orphaned and made highly vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (MDG Report, 2010). In 2000, His Majesty King Letsie III declared HIV and AIDS a national disaster, highlighting the seriousness of the epidemic and the government's commitment to dealing with the impacts.
- Malnutrition** can occur even when access to food and healthcare is sufficient and the environment is reasonably healthy. The social context and care environments within the household and the community also directly influence nutrition. Factors influencing nutritional status include poor feeding practices, poor maternal hygiene, morbidity and HIV and AIDS.
- Malnutrition trends in Lesotho in particular **stunting** (height for age) amongst children below five years seems to be stable at an alarming rate of 39% as reported by Demographic Health Survey (DHS), 2009. Stunting is a chronic form of malnutrition and is highest in the mountain districts ranging from 47% in *Qacha's Nek* to 51% in *Thaba-Tseka*. Stunting is associated with decreased survival, childhood and adult health, learning capacity and productivity (*A&T Technical Brief, Issue 2: September 2010*).
- The 2009 LDHS estimated wasting at 3.8% and underweight at 13.2%.
- The Nutrition Baseline Survey conducted in *Thaba-Tseka*, *Mokhotlong*, *Qacha's Nek* and *Berea* showed that the majority of people living with HIV had acceptable body mass index. However, about 19% in *Berea* were undernourished and needs support (*FNCO, 2011*).