

Issue 2  
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# Southern Africa

## Food & Nutrition Security Update

**September 2016 (Reissued)**

A report by the Food and Nutrition Security  
Working Group



### Key Messages

- The El Niño induced drought resulted in 15 percent drop in regional cereal production from 29 million tonnes in 2015 to 26 million tonnes in 2016 which is about 11 percent decrease compared to the five-year average<sup>1</sup>. Southern parts of Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar as well as most of Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia have been significantly affected by this drought. Approximately 40.8 million people (22.5% of rural population) will be food insecure in Southern Africa up to March 2017.
- Unlike in typical years where staple prices are lowest during the post-harvest period, this year, staple prices have already started increasing and in most countries prices are expected to be above last year and the five year average throughout the consumption year. This signifies earlier than normal start of the lean season.
- Most income sources for very poor and poor households are expected to be below normal until the next harvest. This is mainly due to loss of income from crops, livestock, and labour, trading and self-employment activities. Labour and other incomes will be affected by poor liquidity induced by poor crop production.
- Current forecast models show predictions of La Niña further weakening, a situation likely to result in near neutral conditions or a weak La Nina. Latest SARCOF results predict increased chances of normal to above normal rains for the October – December period in most parts of the region except Tanzania, Northern Mozambique, Eastern Madagascar and north western Angola which are likely to receive normal to below normal rains. Similar forecast is predicted for January to March period except southern parts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique as well as northern South Africa which will fall in the normal to below normal category.
- Normal agriculture activities are therefore expected during the coming season, although this will depend on the intensity as excess water leaches out nutrients from soil, disrupt farm operations and pre-dispose livestock to transboundary diseases.
- Information on seed demand and supply in selected countries – Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique and Swaziland - indicates that there are significant gaps in seed availability in formal commercial sector. Male and female farmers in the drought affected areas require seed and other input support in the coming agriculture season.
- Malnutrition continues to be a problem in the region with seven countries recording wasting levels above 5%. Although the nutrition situation in most countries remain below emergency thresholds at national level, pockets of very high acute malnutrition are prevalent in several countries. The HIV vulnerability of the region remains concerning and signs of increased malnutrition among PLHIV on anti-retroviral treatment are emerging along with service delivery break downs. There are risks that development gains achieved could be lost.

### A. Current Regional Food And Nutrition Security Situation

Southern Africa faces the highest food insecurity in the last five years with significantly below average harvest in most countries. Many parts of the region have already depleted the little harvest and are already depending on the market.

The main drivers of current food insecurity are poor crop production, high staple food prices, below normal incomes from other sources especially for the very poor and poor households. With regional cereal production at 11% below the five year average (dropping from 29 million tonnes in 2015 to 26 million tonnes in 2016), the majority of very poor and poor households are already dependent on the

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<sup>1</sup> These figures exclude Mauritius and Seychelles

market to access food. However most have weak purchase power as incomes from crop sales have been affected. Livestock income is also affected as most poor households have sold most of their livestock in the consecutive 2-3 drought seasons.

Non agriculture farm activities are most common in Southern Africa during the post-harvest period are also expected to significantly reduce and these include activities like construction activities, brick moulding, selling of firewood and charcoal, brewing, crafts selling, other petty trade etc. As a result, the majority of very poor households will struggle to access to food from the market.

Remittance-dependent countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique will likely be affected by the depreciation of the South African rand against the US dollar. This will affect households that depend on remittances from South Africa as well as Botswana and Namibia whose economies are tied to the Rand.

### Market performance

- Regional maize harvests for the current (2016/17) marketing year are estimated to be about 20 percent below five year average due to the El Niño drought conditions experienced during the 2015/16 production year.
- As a result, market trends staple prices have already started increasing and in most countries prices are expected to be above last year and the five year average throughout the consumption year. This signifies earlier-than-normal start of the lean season.
- Zambia and South Africa, the main regional maize grain producers and exporters experienced mixed production levels. South Africa maize production levels were approximately 30 percent below average but had above average opening stocks due to increased imports from international destinations.
- Zambia had an average production but opening stocks were below average due to the strong regional demand for the Zambian grain which was relatively cheaper and GMO-free.
- The cereal supply situation in most of the countries in the region remains well below both last year and 5 year average with significant deficits in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar and Swaziland.
- Global commodity markets are currently well supplied with rice, wheat and maize but countries capacity to import will be greatly affected by the macro economic challenges being experienced by a number countries in the region including, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi.

### Malnutrition

The ongoing effects of the drought on the health and nutrition situation remains serious and impacts nutritional status and related vulnerability for PLHIV/TB. The last eight months, have already seen a deterioration of the nutrition situation in a number of countries including drought-hit areas of Angola, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Madagascar, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique. Figure 2 provides an overview of the situation in

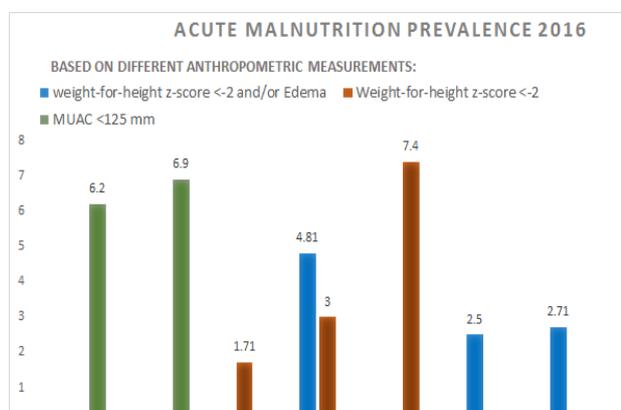


Figure 1: Global acute malnutrition rates 2016, based on nutrition indicators included in vulnerability assessments (except Namibia, based on nutrition surveillance).

some of the most impacted SADC countries, based on survey/assessment and surveillance outcomes on acute malnutrition.

Trend analysis facilitated by **solid and frequent nutrition and HIV information** remains a challenge in the region. 3 countries however, have integrated nutrition, HIV and gender in their annual VAAs (Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) and provided a more in depth understanding of food and nutrition security situation and the HIV and gender-related vulnerability. More countries will follow with integration in upcoming urban VAAs (Zimbabwe, Botswana and Lesotho) and other assessments. A dedicated Malnutrition IPC exercise is ongoing in Mozambique which is the first in the region.

## B. Food and Nutrition Security Outlook ( August – March 2017)

The region estimates 40,622,968 people (22.5 percent of rural population) to be food insecure at peak of the season as highlighted in **Table 1**. The projected food insecure population is the highest in the last five years following last year when 31,000,000 people were estimated to be food insecure.

**Table 1:** Estimated number of current food insecure population in the Southern Africa region\*.

Country	Rural Population	Affected Population
Angola	12 767 654	755 930
Botswana	875 105	1 049 074
DR Congo	40 970 888	7 500 000
Lesotho	1 541 072	709 394
Madagascar	15 727 662	1 140 000
Malawi	14 492 248	6 500 000
Mozambique	18 384 814	1 980 000
Namibia	1 276 090	595 398
South Africa	18 828 580	14 349 445
Swaziland	1 011 606	638 251
Tanzania	35 762 641	358 505
Zambia	9 168 601	975 738
Zimbabwe	10 174 849	4 071 233
	<b>180 981 810</b>	<b>40 662 968</b>

\*This updated figure incorporates figures from South Africa; Angola which were not included in the July RVAC update and updates from Botswana and Namibia.

## **Expected Outcomes using IPC outcome indicators (Food Consumption, Livelihoods, Nutrition, and Mortality)**

**Food consumption:** Is very poor for most households across the region due to lack of food. HEA indicators (survival and livelihoods protection), Household Dietary Diversity Score, Household Hunger Score, Food Consumption Score, Coping Strategy Index and other consumption indicators used by NVACs reflect that the majority of very poor and poor households will not have adequate and quality diet during the projected period.

**Livelihoods Change:** It is expected that this level of food insecurity will force households to engage in irreversible coping strategies. Already, the NVAC results show some households especially in Southern Malawi, Southern Mozambique, most of Zimbabwe, most of Lesotho, Southern Madagascar selling livestock to unsustainable levels and other productive assets due to food insecurity.

**Nutrition:** The nutrition and HIV situation is likely to deteriorate during the lean season when affected communities have depleted resources and the effects of the increased food security will start to show. UNICEF and WFP estimate that over 513,000 children under five are in need of treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and over 777,180 children in need for moderate acute malnutrition treatment until the end of the year<sup>2</sup>. There is potential of a further regional spread of the current yellow fever outbreak in Angola and DRC, which may increase the vulnerability in the region. With some likelihood of La Nina, increased rainfall may either negatively or positively affect the region – if negatively, more water related diseases may be seen and flooding may cause increased food insecurity along with nutrition and HIV service delivery breaks.

### **C. Response Analysis**

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is currently undertaking food assistance programmes in a number of countries including Zimbabwe and Malawi but the coverage of these programmes is currently affected by funding challenges.

Humanitarian partners will provide nutritional rehabilitation (SAM, MAM treatment) to vulnerable groups including children under age 5, PLW, PLHIV/TB. Preventative interventions to avoid a further deterioration of the nutrition situation, are implemented in several countries. To prevent the spread of communicable diseases exacerbated by the scarcity of water, and to ensure access to health care for vulnerable populations, health facilities will be supported with drugs and supplies, and reliable water and sanitation systems.

Collaborative resilience programmes to support and scale up HIV 'Test and Treat' initiatives as part of National Strategic Plans to reach the 90-90-90 ending AIDS targets will continue. To ensure timely response to outbreaks, disease surveillance systems will be established and strengthened. La Nina effects in terms of water related diseases as well as possible expansion of the Yellow Fever outbreak are being watched closely to avoid health system overload.

The Technical Working Group on Integration of Nutrition, HIV and Gender under SADC RVAC, is working on strengthening the availability of evidence through integration in VAAs and supporting

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<sup>2</sup> The MAM case estimation is based on the same countries excluding Angola. WFP/Unicef El Nino Response Overview, August 16, 2016.

surveillance systems initiatives in the region. Efforts are also on-going in the SADC El Niño Logistics Coordination Cell to improve data availability will tools circulated to Member States for monthly data collection.

## D. 2016/17 Agriculture Preparedness

### Seed Availability and Requirements for next Agricultural Season

Information on demand and supply situation in the formal commercial sector in selected drought affected countries -- Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique and Swaziland -- indicates that there are significant gaps in maize and bean seed availability, as highlighted in **Table 2**. Despite the deficits of commercial maize seed in Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi, seed traders think the available seed is enough to meet commercial demand due to the eroded capacity of households to purchase seed as a result of the impact of two consecutive drought season.

A significant number of farmers in the region rely on informal seed systems but the gaps in seed availability presented in **Table 2** is excluding the informal systems which are difficult to monitor.

	Status	Les	Mad	Mal	Moz	Swa	Zam	Zim
Maize	Availability	354	250	17130	1330	750	77885	44152
	Requirements	3000	10000	32935	9245	1057	27465	37500
	<b>Shortfall/Surplus</b>	<b>-2646</b>	<b>-9750</b>	<b>-15805</b>	<b>-7915</b>	<b>-307</b>	<b>50420</b>	<b>6652</b>
	<b>% Availability Vs Requirements</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>71.0</b>	<b>283.6</b>	<b>117.7</b>
Beans	Availability	109	1500	2365	1	3	325	1075
	Requirements	1500	7200	27267	1156	120	266	5000
	<b>Shortfall/Surplus</b>	<b>-1391</b>	<b>-5700</b>	<b>-24902</b>	<b>-1155</b>	<b>-117</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>-3925</b>
	<b>% Availability Vs Requirements</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>122.2</b>	<b>21.5</b>
Source: FAO August 2016								

FAO and partners will undertake community level assessments in September to guide response and support for affected farmers for the next planting season and identify best practices for resilience building initiatives for the affected communities.

### Seasonal Forecast

Compared to previous predictions models have slightly reduced their confidence—from 75% to 55-60%—that La Niña will occur this from October to December. While tropical Pacific waters have cooled, the trade winds have not showed the La-Niña-like strengthening needed to amplify cold-water upwelling. The current outlook is pointing to neutral conditions and favours a La Nina event weak event. Based on recent SARCOF results most parts of Southern Africa will likely receive normal to above normal rains for the October- December period except for northern DRC, Tanzania, North western Angola, and northern Mozambique and eastern Madagascar where normal to below normal rains are expected. The January – March period will have similar conditions but southern Zimbabwe, Southern Mozambique and Northern South Africa will likely receive normal to below normal rains. In general the forecast looks good for agriculture but distributions issues needs special monitoring.

## E. Status of Recommendations from Previous Issue

The below recommendations were proposed in the previous Issue of this publication. This section aims to give an update on progress of the recommendations issued in FSNWG Update Number 4. **(See Table 3 for details and status of implementation).**

- Enhance resilience building programmes and actions geared towards increasing preparedness and early response. This includes urgent disbursement of funds by member states and the international donor community to activate member states' emergency preparedness and response plans.
- It is highly recommended that medium and shorter range weather forecasts be monitored for the development of conditions that may alter or strengthen the outcome of the current forecast.
- Consolidation and documentation of trends in child and maternal malnutrition is needed in all the member states to enable enhanced contingency planning and response. In addition, strengthen child nutrition situation analysis in each country with a focus to sub-national areas known to be the most vulnerable through trend analysis and SMART surveys.
- Continuous monitoring rainfall during planting and growing season of the crops by Early Warning Units (EWUs).
- Governments to utilise tools and instruments like Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) weather-index based insurance products that could support early action and drought mitigation.
- Strengthen community mobilisation network capacities for early identification of severe and moderate acute malnutrition cases to treatment facilities, community sensitization on acute malnutrition, infant and young child feeding, hygiene and sanitation.
- Preposition nutrition commodities in vulnerable areas and support capacity strengthening to support the management of severe and moderate acute malnutrition in each country.
- Encourage timely planting of small grains and other short season/early maturing crops using conservation agriculture and other climate smart techniques to take advantage of the short-cropping window period during the season.
- Strengthen of health and nutrition education programs and continuous monitoring of diseases, food and nutrition security indicators.
- Maximize use of existing irrigation assets (dams, boreholes, rivers) and water harvesting.
- Market monitoring of key variables, including prices of staples, direction of trade, marketing conditions, change of policies or regulations, etc.
- Provide early warning information on the likelihood of crop and livestock disease outbreak as well as diminished pasture
- Institute stringent measures to prevent livestock disease outbreaks such as early vaccination and quarantine to restrict mobility of livestock to and from within and outside the countries in the region.

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**The Food Security Update is jointly produced by the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group – Southern Africa. The overall mission of the Group is to contribute to enhanced programming for improved Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods in southern Africa.**