Issue 4

Food & Nutrition Security Working Group

May 2014 Monthly Update

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Regional Update (updated 16 of May 2014)

Despite an erratic and delayed start of season, the overall regional perspective reflects that the 2014/15 consumption season in terms of cereals supplies is much better than last year's with bumper harvests being recorded in Zambia, South Africa and an improvement in Zimbabwe compared to last season.Malawi and Mozambique are expecting good production despite late onset of rains and localized mid-season dryness. Angola and Namibia were more negatively affected by adverse weather conditions during the season.

Regional cereal availability is likely to be above last year and close to the past five-year average, and will be sufficient to meet regional requirements for the next six months and beyond – covering the import needs of structurally grain deficit countries and leaving a surplus that could be exported outside of the region. Major exportable maize surpluses are expected from Zambia (approximately 1.1 million MT), and South Africa (approximately 1.8 million MT). In Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe (where estimates are yet to be released), cereal availability is also expected to meet national level domestic consumption needs, though poor households in localized areas in Malawi are likely to face constrained access.

Most rural households across the region will maintain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes between April and September, relying mainly on own produced food stocks from the main season harvest, supplemented by market purchases. However in localized parts of Angola, poor households are projected to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes from April through September, while those in parts of Madagascar are projected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity outcomes in the April to June period, and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from July to September.

Regional informal cross border trade is expected to increase following the harvest, and flows out of Zambia could be more robust in the next 3 months following the recent lifting of national export restrictions. Given the average harvest expectations in neighboring Malawi, it is expected that traders in that country will increase activity in order to take advantage and buy up stock in Zambia and Mozambique during the harvest period when prices levels are relatively lower. The commencement of harvests has led to maize price stabilization, and significant price drops have been observed on most reference markets across the region (FEWS NET).

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Angola

Although the late onset of rains helped mitigate and improve the situation in Kunene and Cuando Cubango, very limited recovery has been achieved due to the extent of the conditions that had prevailed and the situation remains of concern. In this respect, USAID has reaffirmed its declaration of drought and support to programmes in this part of the country. Conditions in the coastal areas of Benguela and Cuanza Sul remain average and not as bad as earlier been reported. Situation is due to be verified.

Lesotho

Ongoing harvest is average and food prices started decreasing especially in the south. A few localised areas in the Mountains had late onset of rain and were also affected by frost and below average yield is expected. However, this is not significant enough to affect the overall food situation. Crop assessment report from Bureau of Statistics is due early June.

Average to below average rainfall is expected countrywide during the period April to July 2014. There is also high likelihood of El Nino conditions which are expected to result in dry conditions over the country. Crops (maize and sorghum) in the highlands were adversely affected by frost. Some crops have been affected due to delayed planting which resulted from late onset of rains during the planting time. Harvesting of wheat, potatoes, beans and peas was done. Wheat crop is mostly grown in the highlands and was not affected by frost. Potatoes and peas were planted by few farmers.

Madagascar

Owing to better locust control, the crop production is expected to be more than last year. Some localised pockets of vulnerable communities in the South West are currently in Phase 3 and this condition will persist till June when harvests start.
Following the impact of Tropical Cyclone Hellen in early April, an assessment has found that 24,405 households require agricultural assistance and 14,000 households food security assistance.

Malawi

The Second Round Crop Estimates report mentions that maize is estimated at 3,929,015 MT which is a decrease from 4,012,228 MT estimated in the First Round; but still an increase to the 2012/2013 Third Round which was estimated 3,639,866 MT.

Mozambique

Generally the situation is much better than last year with a noticeable decrease in food prices except for areas that were affected by floods and cyclone Helen. Areas affected by heavy rainfall and flooding include localized areas in Incomati, Maputo, Limpopo Basins, coastal Cabo Delgado and Nampula.

Namibia

Provisional crop estimates indicate a 50% improvement to last year but which is still 2% below average.

Swaziland

Preliminary information indicates that much as the rains were erratic at the onset of the season, a better harvest of 23% higher than last year is expected. This is as a result of a much higher increase in area planted.

Tanzania

The country faces high levels of stunting (42%) among children under five. The food security and nutrition assessment conducted in 61 districts during the last quarter of 2013 indicates that nearly 828,000 people (5% of the assessed population) have acute food insecurity while nearly 3,360,000 have moderate food insecurity based on IPC analysis. The MUAC screening among children aged 6 to 59 months conducted during the assessment indicated a fairly stable situation with SAM of 0.3% and GAM of 2.5%.

The current agricultural season is performing fairly well in both unimodal and bimodal rainfall regimes thanks to the normal to above normal rainfall received in most parts of the country. Normal production is expected this season with paddy likely to record above normal harvest levels. There is also improved pasture and water availability for livestock resulting in increased milk availability and health animals. The ministry of agriculture is currently collecting data for crop harvest forecast.

As agricultural season advances to early harvesting in unimodal rainfall areas, early harvest will increase food availability to the markets and at household level. Areas previously affected by drought have recovered with promising normal harvest. In some areas, however, food availability will last short as the crops had suffered erratic rainfall at the beginning of the seasons.

Zambia

A surplus of 1.1 million MTs of maize is expected in this current season. Furthermore, the export ban was lifted. Cross border trade expected to increase but this may be limited following the recent ban on maize imports by Zimbabwe, the traditional importer.

Zimbabwe

The First Round Crop and Livestock Assessment reported a 16% increase in area planted to cereal crops in the 2013/14 agricultural season compared to the 2012/13 season raising speculation of surplus production this year given the strides that were made by the Government in the agricultural sector through the provision of inputs and other factors related to crop production.

The country has recorded one of the best maize performances in the last close to 20 years. The government has not yet released estimates of a second crop assessment although indications suggest a significant increase in the production of cereals compared to last year. Government placed a ban on import of cereals based on a likelihood of projected adequacy.

WFP's Food Security Monitoring system revealed that levels of availability of cereal (both maize grain and meal) were much higher in April 2014 compared to the previous year. About 85% of communities reported cereal as always or frequently available on the markets for purchase in April 2014 as compared to 61% in April 2013.

Status of Annual Vulnerability Assessments (as of 15th May)

Country	Status
Lesotho	Data collection commences on 19th May. To complete Analysis in June
Malawi	Data collection to commence in beginning of June
Mozambique	Data collection to commence in mid-June and analysis to be concluded in July
Namibia	Data collection will start from 19th May and report concluded by end of June
Swaziland	Data collection to commence on 23rd May. Currently waiting for funds to be released
Tanzania	The MUCHALI plans to conduct the annual assessment by end of May/early June Baseline and Livelihoods profiling will start from June till August
Zambia	Field-work will commence from 20th May and analysis & reporting thereafter
Zimbabwe	Data collection is ongoing and analysis to be completed in the first week of June

Important Events in 2014

Event	Dates	Venue	Contact Organization
RVAC Dissemination Meeting	First week July	Malawi	SADC RVAA
World Breastfeeding Week	August (Dates TBC)	Mbabane, Swaziland	NEPAD
Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security	30 October	TBC	NEPAD

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.

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Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the respective **country teams** from the various Agencies in providing contributions to this report. Additional information is obtained from relevant websites as reflected in the main body of the report where applicable.