

MOZAMBIQUE Food Security Outlook Update

November 2011

Stressed food insecurity conditions in localized areas

Key Messages

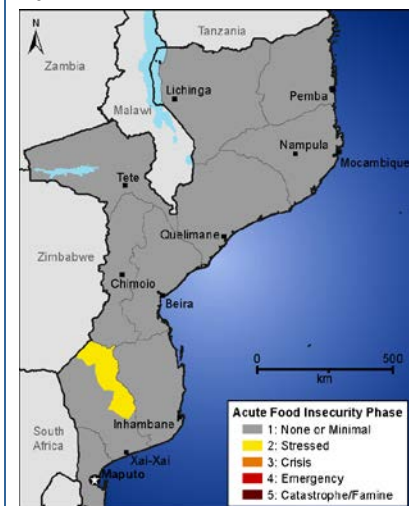
- Food security conditions projected in the October Outlook are still valid and no significant changes are projected. Stressed food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 2) can be found in parts of the country that were affected by last season's drought, particularly Chigubo and Massangena districts. The majority of rural households throughout the country as well as in the focus area are able to meet their basic food needs.
- Staple food prices have been above the five-year average and increasing seasonally as the lean season continues. In Chokwé, an important reference market in the deficit southern zone, monthly prices of maize in October were 25 percent above the five-year average (2006-2010) and 12 percent above the previous year's prices. Throughout the consumption year food prices will remain above the five-year average in most deficit areas of the south and central zones, and the purchasing power of most market-dependent households will likely be reduced.
- October was characterized by normal to above-normal rains in much of the country. The SADC Climate Services Center released an updated forecast for November 2011 to January 2012 predicting increased chances of normal to above normal rainfall in much of the country including the central and southern zones. For the northern part of the country, the probability of above-normal rains is high. The updated seasonal climate forecast predicts favourable conditions for a good cropping season.

Updated food security outlook through March 2012

Food security conditions projected in the October Outlook are still valid and no significant changes are projected so far. Although the country is already in the lean season (October-February), the majority of rural households throughout the country as well as the focus area (*Changara, Chemba, Mutarara, and Machaze* districts in the central region and *Massangena, Chicualacuala, Chigubo, Mabalane, Mabote, Funhalouro, and Panda* districts in the south) are able to meet their basic food needs. However, attention should be focused particularly on *Massangena* and *Chigubo* districts (yellow in Figures 1 and 2), where the population facing Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2) exceeds 20 percent of the respective total population of the district according to reports by SETSAN/GAV, INGC, and FEWS NET field visits.

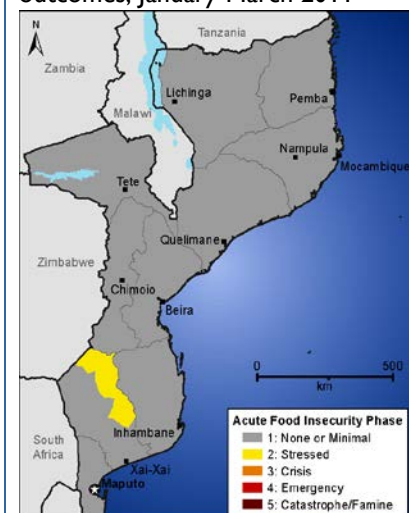
The areas with pockets of stressed food insecurity are mostly located in the southern part of *Massangena* district and the central and northern part of *Chigubo* district. These areas, which are chronically food insecure, were badly affected by drought last season, meaning stocks remain at low levels. Poorer households are unable to meet their food

Figure 1. Most likely food security outcomes, November-December 2011



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Most likely food security outcomes, January-March 2011



Source: FEWS NET

For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

This report provides an update to the October 2011 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions from October 2011 to March 2012.

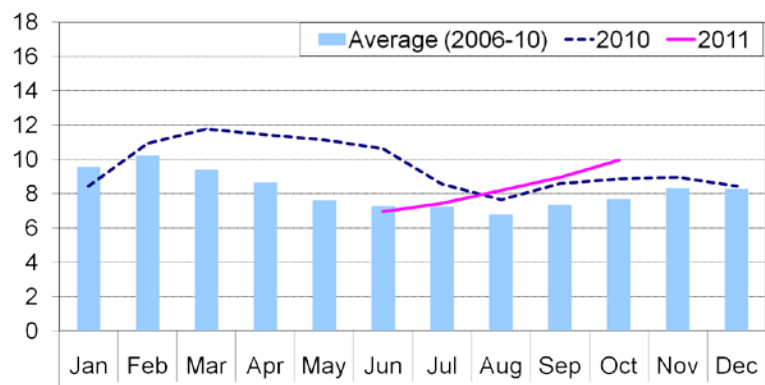
needs through market purchases due to relatively low flows to these remote markets, high food prices, and low purchasing power. These households have limited ability to cope, and relief will only be expected starting in February/March when food from harvests starts to become available. To address food deficits in the meantime, affected households (generally the poorest) are employing a limited number of coping strategies including reducing the typical number of meals, switching expenditures from non-food items to staple foods, and increasing consumption of wild foods including those with adverse effects like a tuber (locally known as “*xicutso*”). The consumption of other wild foods is expected to intensify as the lean season begins to peak in December/January.

According to preliminary findings from a recent food security multisectoral assessment carried out from October 24th to November 4th led by the Provincial Representation of the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC) with participation of other provincial key institutions and FEWS NET, the districts requiring urgent humanitarian assistance in Gaza province are Chigubo and Massangena. To avoid further deterioration of the prevailing food security conditions in these two districts, the assessment team recommended urgent provision of humanitarian assistance including food assistance between now and the next major harvest in March 2012. The assessment team also suggested that humanitarian assistance could be extended to other surrounding areas, namely in the northeastern parts of Chicualacuala. In all other visited districts in Gaza province, the situation appears to be stable, and households including the poorest will be able to meet basic food needs until the next harvest in March 2012. These findings are similar to those provided by the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition’s Vulnerability Assessment Group (SETSAN/GAV) with reference to the Gaza Province, which recommended humanitarian assistance in Chigubo, Chicualacuala and Massangena. Other districts where assistance might be needed, but to a lesser extent, included Panda, Funhalouro and Mabote in Inhambane province, Machanga and Chemba in Sofala province. The SETSAN/GAV report estimates that the maximum number of people at risk of food insecurity may range from 200,000 to 250,000 people countrywide.

For the majority of households in the remaining focus districts, the availability of many diverse coping strategies have contributed to the stabilization of food security conditions at minimum or no acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1). These coping strategies include increased sale of livestock by the wealthier households and seeking casual labor by the able-bodied household members, especially for the ongoing widespread land preparation and planting. With the recent rains in October and early November, water availability for both humans and animals is gradually improving.

With most food reserves at the household level already exhausted or quickly dwindling in the deficit zones, the role of markets is crucial to ensuring food access for households. In general, current prices of staple foods remain above the five-year average. In Chokwé, an important reference market in the south, monthly prices of maize in October were 25 percent above the five-year average (2006-2010) and 12 percent above the previous year’s prices (see Figure 3). Prices are expected to continue following the seasonal trend with a steady increase up until the peak in January/February before a decrease occurs in March as result of the anticipated pre-harvest.

Figure 3. Nominal retail prices for maize in Chókwe (meticals/kg)

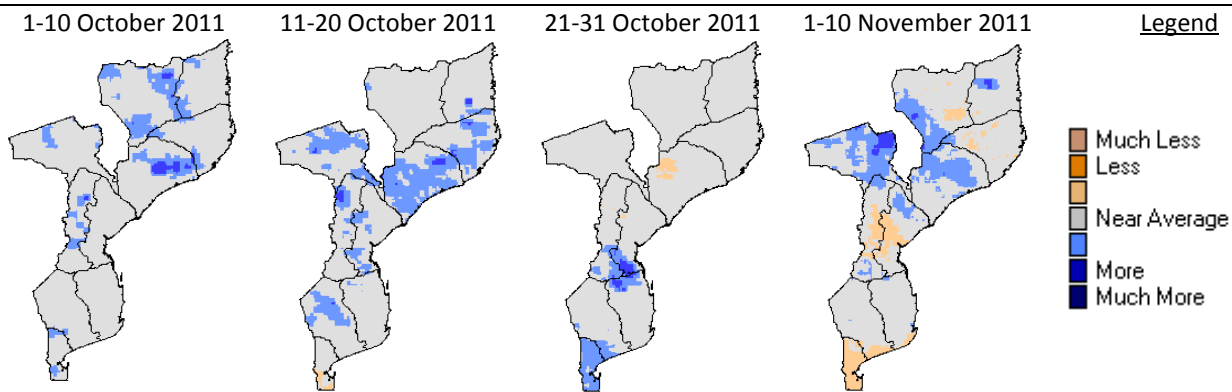


Source: MINAG/SIMA

Throughout the consumption year food prices will remain above the five-year average in most deficit areas of the south and central zones and the purchasing power of most market-dependent households will likely be reduced. During the recent assessment, the mission verified that some of the deficit districts in Gaza province, for instance, were sharing borders with surplus districts like Massingir, Mabalane (south), Chibuto and Guijá. It is hoped that incentives will be adequate for traders to move grain from nearby surplus areas to areas currently in deficit to push prices back down.

October and early November were characterized by normal to above-normal rains in much of the country (Figure 4). The SADC Climate Services Center recently released an updated forecast for November 2011 to January 2012 predicting increased chances of normal to above-normal rainfall in much of the country including the central and southern zones. For the northern part of the country, chances are high for occurrence of above-normal rains.

Figure 4. Satellite-derived rainfall anomaly estimates



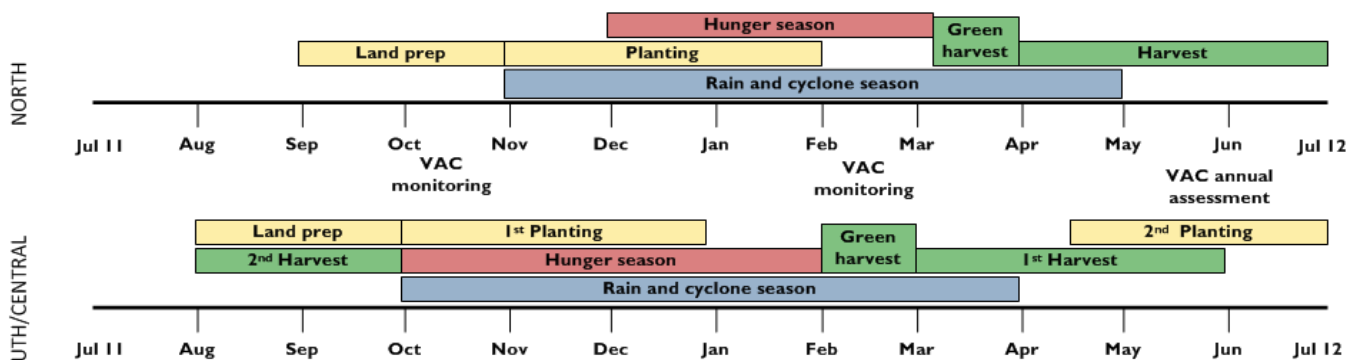
Source: USGS/FEWS NET

The rains in October and early November enabled favorable conditions for the onset of the 2011/12 agriculture season in the southern and central zones of the country. It is expected that planting will begin in the central zone throughout the remainder of November and in early December in the northern zone. During the recent field assessment, the mission observed good conditions of recently planted maize crops from seeding to vegetative stage. Rainfall in November and December will be crucial in determining how the season will unfold, especially in the central and northern areas.

As part of its disaster preparedness, the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC), through the Technical Council for Disaster Management (CTGC), has developed this season’s contingency plan. This plan highlights the potential flooding in at-risk zones along the main river basins. The National Directorate of Water has recommended that special attention be paid to the basins without dam facilities to weaken flood waves, namely Montepuez, Licungo, Mutamba, Pungué, Buzi, Save, and Maputo. In the Zambezi and Limpopo basins, due to an extensive catchment area combined with the forecast of excessive rains in the neighboring countries upstream as well as the above-normal rains within the country, there is a near-average to high probability of flooding. Localized inundations may also occur in other sub-basins not mentioned above. Extreme weather events may include tropical depressions, storms, or cyclones. Such events are likely during the rainy season, posing a risk to crop production, displacing people, and disrupting local livelihoods necessitating emergency humanitarian assistance.

In general, in the most likely scenario, the food security situation is expected to remain stable throughout the country until December, except for the arid and semi-arid zones, where the households are facing Stressed food insecurity outcomes (IPC phase 2) as the hunger season progresses. Stressed food security conditions will likely extend to very poor and poor households in addition to districts in the interior. With the forthcoming cyclone season, which runs from November to April and usually affects the coastal area between Nampula and Inhambane provinces, temporary food needs may arise if a cyclone reaches areas along the coast.

Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline



Source: FEWS NET