



Context and methodology

Rainfall anomalies during the 2017 year and an ongoing economic crisis have negatively impacted the livelihoods of rural households in Chad, including agriculture, livestock, and nonfarm income activities. This has driven a deterioration in food and nutrition security across the majority of Chad's Sahelian belt. In some regions, the rainy season was characterized by prolonged dry spells and an early end, which resulted in a 2.1% decrease in national cereal production compared to the five-year average and 5.1% reduction compared to last year's levels. The largest production declines were recorded in several regions of the Sahel, notably Wadi Fira (-39%), Kanem (-27.7%), Bahr El Ghazal (-20.5%) and Batha (-9.4%). Fodder deficits and the rapid drying of semi-permanent waterpoints also caused early transhumant movement of livestock from Sahelian regions to the Sudanian zone. As a result, the agricultural and pastoral lean seasons started early this year.

Given this situation and taking into account the recommendations of the CASAGC Technical Committee to monitor the evolution of the food, nutrition and pastoral situation, the Food Security and Early Warning Information System (SISAAP), ministerial departments providing information (SPI), and technical partners involved in food and nutrition security monitoring (WFP, FAO, and FEWS NET) conducted this joint assessment.

Its main objective was to assess the magnitude and severity of the current food and nutrition security situation in order to propose appropriate responses. Data collection was conducted at three levels (individual, household and community) with anthropometric measurements (MUAC and oedema) of children aged 6-59 months. The survey was conducted in 10-18 May 2018 on a sample of 4,574 households in 24 departments.

What is the proportion of households who are food insecure?

Using the Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) methodology, 61.6% of households in the assessed departments are food insecure. Out of these households, 7.5% are severely food insecure, while 54.1% are moderately food insecure. Additionally, 33.2% of the population are marginally food secure and are at risk of become food insecure during the peak of this year's lean season (July-August).

Where are the food insecure households?

As shown in Map 1 below, the areas with the highest prevalence of food insecure are Bahr El Ghazal Nord (90%), Wayi (86%), Mangalmé (80.3%) and Biltine (80.3%). Meanwhile, the departments with the highest prevalence of severe food insecurity are Bahr El Ghazal Nord (36%) and Bahr El Ghazal Sud (22.5%).

Compared to October 2017 levels, food insecurity increased in 15 departments, with the largest percentage increases observed in the departments of Wayi (+73.9 percentage points) and Ouara (+42.7 percentage points). On the other hand, the prevalence of food insecurity remained relatively stable in five departments and decreased in four departments (Nord Kanem, Fouli, Abdi and Djourouf Al Amar). These declines can be explained by a number of factors including food assistance for the displaced populations and good off-season production (Fouli), a slight improvement in livestock-to-cereal terms of trade compared with last year's levels and the positive effects of seasonal migration (Nord Kanem), off-season harvests and residual food stocks (Abdi), and the positive effects of seasonal migration and residual food stocks (Djourouf Al Amar).

What is the nutritional situation?

The nutritional status of children aged 6 to 59 months, assessed through their Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC), suggests a concerning situation. In Kanem, Lac, and Wadi Fira regions, the proxy prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) already exceeds WHO's critical threshold at 12.1%, 11.4% and 13.6% respectively. Meanwhile, the proxy prevalence of GAM in the regions of Barh El Ghazal, Guera,





and Ouaddaï are 9.8%, 7.5%, and 8.7%, respectively, indicating a serious nutritional situation. Only the department of Dagana (Hadjer Lamis) was found to have an acceptable nutritional situation, with a proxy GAM prevalence of 4.6%.

The proxy prevalence of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) exceeds the emergency threshold of 2% in the regions of Kanem (3.6%), Wadi Fira (3.0%), Ouaddaï (2.3%), reflecting a high risk of death within children aged 6 to 59 months.

Compared to historical global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates using MUAC measurements, this prevalence indicates a deterioration in the nutritional situation compared to average 2010-2017 lean season levels in the regions of Barh El Gazel, Lac, Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Kanem.

Which households are food insecure?

Households headed by a female or someone who is widowed/separated/divorced or who cannot read and write were found to be most affected by food insecurity. On the other hand, larger households and those with low dependency ratios tended to be more food secure, likely because additional members can work to generate food and income for the household.

With regard to livelihoods, participation in cropping activities during the 2017 agricultural season does not seem to have any impact on food security at the household level. However, households raising livestock are generally less food insecure than others.

Finally, households reporting that they were affected by a shock during the last 12 months are more food insecure than those reporting no shock.

Why are they food or nutrition insecure?

Current food insecurity across the Sahel is characterized by a high economic vulnerability and a low dietary diversity. Negative coping strategies, such as borrowing money or food, reducing educational or health-related expenses, and the sale of non-productive assets, are also common across the region.

This food insecurity is the result of multiple factors. Even during normal years, the Sahelian zone of Chad faces high levels of food and nutrition insecurity due to low agricultural production, poverty, and limited access to safe drinking water and sanitary infrastructures. Adding to these chronic challenges are several shocks that occurred during this past year, resulting in a deterioration of the food and nutrition situation due to relatively low resilience of rural households.

In several regions, main and off-season 2017/18 harvests were below average, resulting in household food stocks depleting earlier than usual. Consequently, households became dependent on markets to access to food for a prolonged period, thus increasing their household expenditures. Additionally, non-farm incomes have been below average this year, causing low purchasing power and limited market access for many households. For example, seasonal migration is an important source of income for many households during the dry season, and due to food security challenges this year in rural areas, migrants often left earlier than usual and in greater numbers this year. However, the level of transfers that these migrants have been able to send back to their families are below typical levels because the economic crisis has reduced incomes in many urban centres and other host areas.

Additionally, limited pasture and water resources have resulted in livestock underweight, which have driven a sharp decline in livestock prices on local markets. Demand also remains relatively low in urban centres due to the economic crisis, even despite a seasonally normal rise in livestock purchases during Ramadan in May. Though cereal prices remain close to the five-year average, lower livestock prices have lead to a deterioration in livestock-to-cereal terms of trade, limiting market access for affected households.





Insecurity and displacement have also restricted livelihood activities in the Lac region. Most households have increased their food expenses at the detriment of other expenditures and have begun to use negative food and livelihood-based coping strategies earlier than usual.

The deteriorating food security situation has already begun to affect the nutritional status of children under five, and further declines are expected during the peak of the lean season due to increased food insecurity, difficulties accessing health care and safe drinking water, water-borne diseases, and other socio-cultural structural factors.

What forms of assistance can help improve the situation of these households?

Access to safe drinking water was repeatedly indicated by communities as a major source for concern alongside challenges relating to food access. Even if the solutions involve development programs, continued monitoring of these water access challenges is necessary until the rainy season has fully begun across all areas of Chad. Given the worrisome levels of food insecurity among rural households living in the Sahelian zone and prospects for further degradation during the lean season, the following humanitarian actions are recommended:

- Provide unconditional food assistance across areas of concern until the next harvests in October, in the form of direct food, cash or voucher distributions;
- Establish and/or intensify nutrition programs aimed at the prevention and treatment of severe and moderate acute malnutrition for children aged 6-59 months;
- Conduct agriculture-related livelihood support programs to replenish assets and strengthen the resilience of local households; and
- Continue to closely monitor the food and nutrition situation across the country.

