

# End-of-Season Update for 2018/19 and Overview of the Food Security Situation in 2019/20

WFP Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (RBJ)

## Food Security in Southern Africa in 2019/20

- Based on the results of the 2019 Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA), it is estimated that 41 million people will be food insecure in the peak lean season, of which 9 million people require immediate assistance (Table 1).
- Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia account for 75% of the total number needing immediate assistance.
- In Eswatini and Lesotho, 20% and 24% of the rural population are in need of immediate assistance.
- The 41 million food insecure population is the highest figure in the past 10 years (Figure 1, 12,13), which is indicative of cumulative effect of recurrent droughts in the region in addition to conflict-affected DRC. This trend is concerning because it impacts disproportionately on poor and vulnerable households, thereby increasing the risk of malnutrition, poverty and hunger.
- Since the 2015/16 El Niño, the southern Africa region has only seen one favorable season (2016/17, see [Southern Africa Region: ENSO, Rainfall, and Harvest Patterns](#)). The WFP drought hotspot analysis estimates that roughly 26 million poor people (excluding South Africa) live within areas that have consistently experienced drought conditions (of varying degrees of severity) since 2015/16 (Figure 3).
- In 2018/19, the region experienced an unusual dichotomy of severe drought and flooding. Western and central parts of the region experienced the driest season in over 35 years, coupled with an unprecedented event of back to back cyclones. Wide-spread crop failure was observed in Zimbabwe, southern Zambia, northern Namibia and southern Botswana (Figure 2).
- Due to lower cereal production in some of these countries and others, the lean season is expected to start as early as August/September. Tight regional maize supply and higher prices currently being observed in countries such as South Africa and Zambia will affect countries that need to import more maize regionally in the 2019/20 consumption year (see [June Price Bulletin for details](#)).
- A WFP study on Malawi shows that household coping

strategies peak well before the lean season and the earliest for female-headed households. These point to the need for immediate assistance before the start of this early lean season to prevent significant deterioration in malnutrition outcomes.

- The effect of recurrent droughts in the region also highlights the need for shock-responsive social protection systems and anticipatory actions to ensure adequate coverage of vulnerable and potentially vulnerable households.
- Current seasonal forecasts suggest that we are heading towards ENSO neutral conditions (Figure 4). Continued monitoring of the Oceanic Niño Index and local weather patterns will help in enhancing preparedness and scenario-based planning to identify priority areas for early action to reverse the growing trend of humanitarian needs and build resilience of crises-affected populations.

**Table 1** Food Insecure Population in SADC Member States, June 2019 - March 2020

Country	Food Insecure Population (Peak Lean Season January - March 2020)	# of People Requiring Immediate Assistance*
Angola	1,139,000	-
Botswana	38,000	3,600
DRC	13,100,000	-
Eswatini	232,000	200,000
Lesotho	433,000	348,000
Madagascar	916,000	731,000
Malawi	1,126,000	697,000
Mozambique	1,649,000	1,649,000
Namibia	290,000	290,000
South Africa	13,670,000	-
Tanzania	740,000	-
Zambia	2,330,000	1,725,000
Zimbabwe	5,529,000	3,551,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,192,000</b>	<b>9,194,600</b>

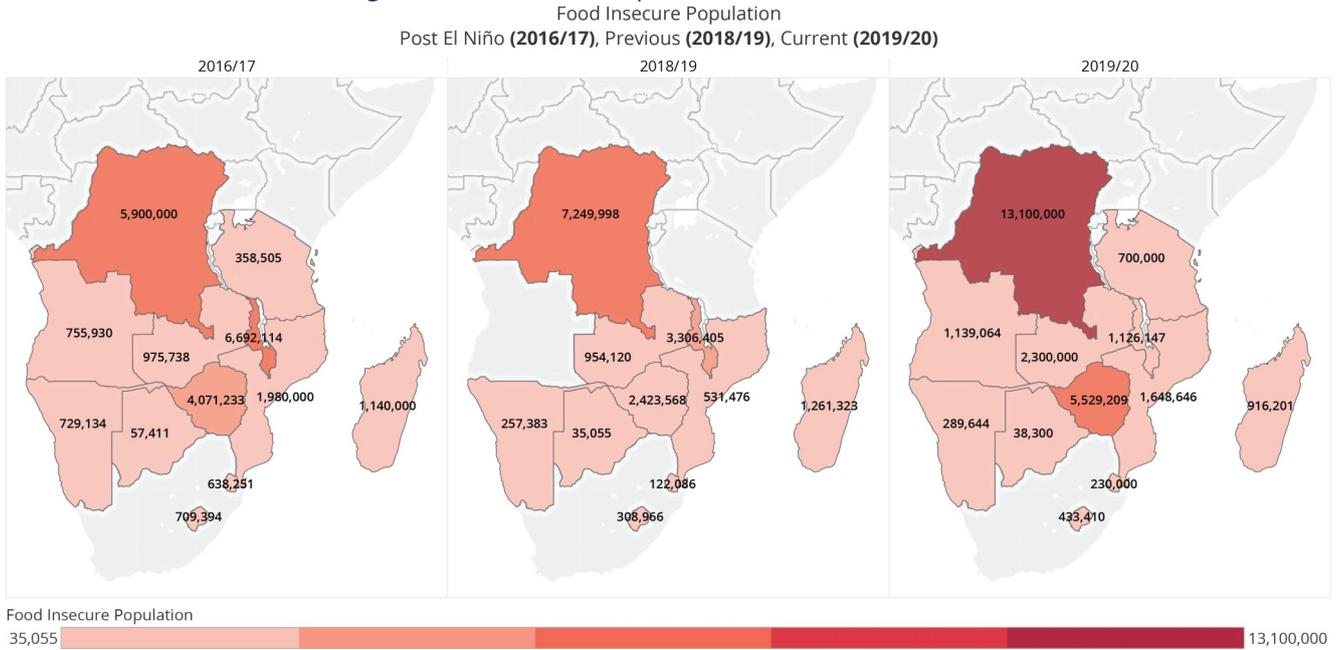
Details available in the [SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis \(RVAA\) Synthesis Report 2019](#)

\*Figures based on current period IPC3+ or CARI Severely Food Insecure except for Botswana (number of temporary destitute persons) and Zimbabwe (cereal insecure population July - September 2019).

For Mozambique, the peak lean season figure could reach as high as 1,995,000.

Updates are expected for the following countries:  
 Angola: New Acute IPC results expected end of August  
 Botswana: New HEA results expected end of September  
 DRC: New Acute IPC results expected end of July  
 Madagascar: CFSAM & IPC update expected end of October  
 Tanzania: Possibility of CFNSVA in late September

**Figure 1 Food Insecure Population Trend 2016/17 - 2019/20**



## 2018/19 Seasonal Performance

The 2018/19 season is the second consecutive season in which the southern Africa region has registered poor seasonal performance. It came on the back of the 2017/18 season, a La Niña year which was expected to result in normal to above normal seasonal performance. Instead, delayed onset of rainfall and dry spells followed by late rainfall at the tail end of the season resulted in mixed performance.

As the driest season in over 3 decades in parts of the region, 2018/19 was also marked by delayed onset and erratic rainfall, mid-season dry spells, and early cessation of rains. Some parts of countries such as Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were particularly drought affected.

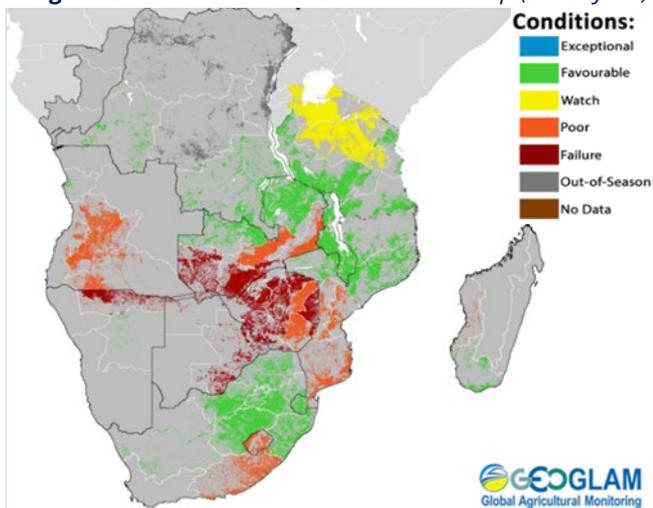
At the same time, the 2018/19 season also saw the quick succession of cyclones Idai and Kenneth, which resulted in other parts of the region (e.g. central and northern Mozambique and parts of Tanzania) receiving significantly above average rainfall. Southern Malawi and eastern

Zimbabwe were also affected by flooding and damage to standing crop awaiting harvest.

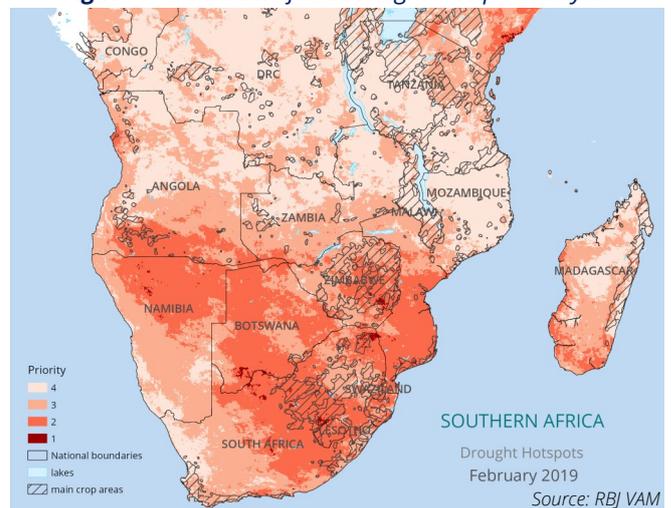
Drought conditions in many countries across the region, combined with flooding in others, have resulted in a relatively poor harvest. Widespread crop failure was observed in Zimbabwe, southern Zambia, northern Namibia, and southern Botswana (Figure 2). Poor crop conditions were observed in Lesotho, parts of eastern Zimbabwe, central and southern Mozambique, southern South Africa, eastern Zambia, and western Angola. Only parts of northern Zambia, northern Mozambique, southern Tanzania and eastern South Africa saw largely favorable maize crop conditions.

The WFP drought hotspot analysis estimates that roughly 26 million poor people (excluding South Africa) live within areas that have consistently experienced drought conditions (of varying degrees of severity) since the 2015/16 El Niño (Figure 3). The region suffers from the cumulative effect of persistent drought conditions exacerbated by climate change.

**Figure 2 Post Harvest Maize Conditions Map (28 May '19)**



**Figure 3 Southern Africa Drought Hotspot Analysis**



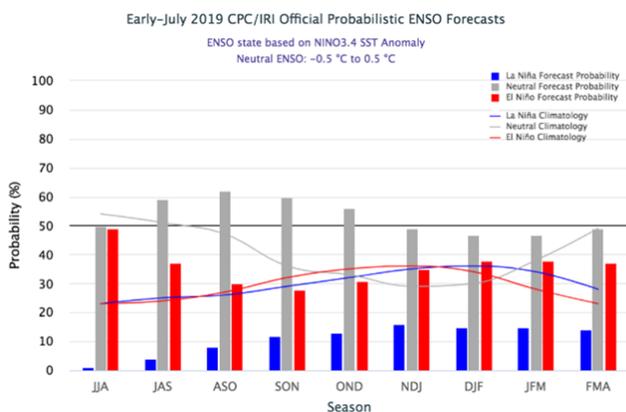
Note: Tanzania has been added to the GEOGLAM Southern Africa Region Map. For the hotspot analysis, the priority levels are calculated using the 2016 and 2019 rainfall anomalies, the 2018 and 2019 date of onset growing season, and the 2017/18 maximum dry spell length classifications.

# El Niño Southern Oscillation Update

According to CPC/IRI\*, we are currently seeing a weak El Niño. However, the latest official probabilistic ENSO forecasts a transition from El Niño to ENSO neutral in the coming month or two, after which ENSO-neutral is likely for the remainder of the year (Figure 4).

The CPC's Oceanic Niño Index (3 month running mean of sea surface temperature anomalies in the Niño 3.4 region) has consistently been above the 0.5 threshold\*\* in 2019.

**Figure 4** CPC/IRI\* Official Probabilistic ENSO Forecasts Early July 2019

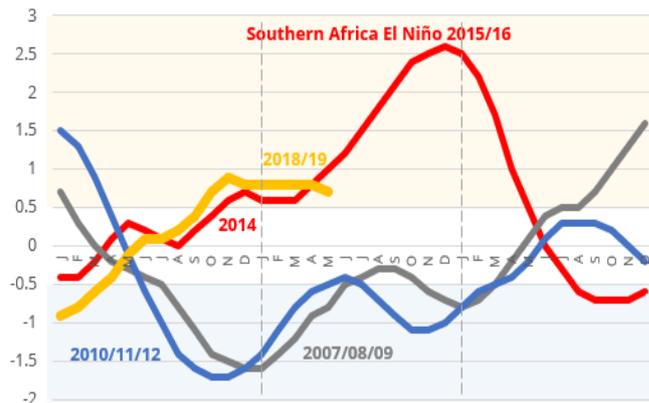


The latest index for the April-May-June period, however, showed a slight dip (Figure 5). Continued monitoring of the ONI is needed to assess its potential effect on the next 2019/20 seasonal performance.

\*Climate Prediction Center/International Research Institute for Climate and Society

\*\*NOAA considers El Niño conditions to be present when the ONI is +0.5 or higher, and La Niña conditions to be present when the ONI is -0.5 or lower.

**Figure 5** The Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## Country Updates

### Zimbabwe

Rural food (cereal) insecurity for the period April – June 2019 was estimated at 21% in Zimbabwe, and this is projected to reach 59% in the January - March 2020 period- equivalent to 5.5 million people. In this period, the provinces of Manicaland (981,839 people), Masvingo (925,652 people), and Midlands (825,215 people) are projected to have the highest food insecure population figures. According to the Second Round Crop and Live-stock Assessment Report, as a result of poor seasonal performance, Zimbabwe's 2018/19 maize production is estimated to have dropped by 54% from the previous year.

In Zimbabwe, recent regulations to control the sale of maize reflect tightening of maize supply conditions in the country. Local trading in foreign currencies was discontinued effective 24 June, and currency instability and soaring inflation (headline 98 percent, food inflation 126 percent) could present additional challenges for the country. The IMF projects Zimbabwe's headline year on year inflation to remain high throughout the rest of the year, and negative real GDP growth in 2019 (-2.1%).

### Mozambique

In Mozambique, the current food insecure population is approximately 1,649,000 (July - September 2019), and this is projected to increase to approximately 1,995,000 in the October 2019 - February 2020 period.

In 2018/19, Mozambique experienced multiple shocks. A

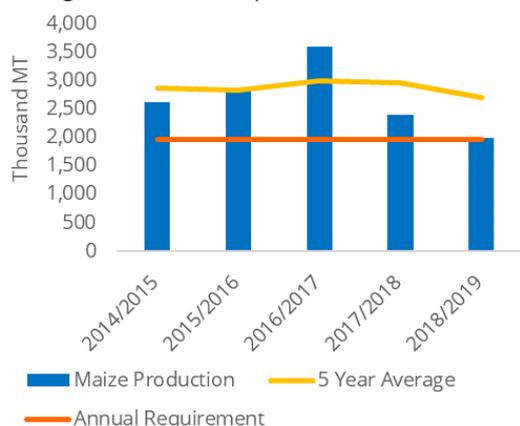
weak rainy season between January and March in the southern part of the country (Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane) caused substantial production losses, and in the central and northern regions, Cyclones Idai and Kenneth resulted in significant destruction of standing crop awaiting harvest, infrastructure and livelihoods.

### Zambia

Due to poor seasonal performance, the country's food security situation is expected to deteriorate in coming months. In the current period (May - September 2019), it is estimated that 19% of Zambia's rural population is food insecure (IPC 3+). In the projected period (October 2019 - March 2020), this is expected to increase to 25%. The number of districts in IPC Phase 4 are also expected to increase, from 2 (Lunga district in Luapula province and Gwembe in Southern province) in the current period to 3 in the projected period (Lunga, Gwembe, and Shangombo district in Western province).

According to the Ministry of Agriculture's Crop Forecast Survey, maize production dropped by 16%, from 2.4 million MT in 2017/18 to 2 million MT this year (25% below the 5YA, Figure 6). With carryover stock estimated at 475,000 MT, Zambia is theoretically considered to have sufficient stocks to meet its domestic requirement of 1.96 million MT. However, the unusual price movements in the southern parts of the country suggest the possibility of localized acute food access concerns.

**Figure 6 Zambia's Maize Production Trends, 5 Year Average and Annual Requirement (Thousand MT)**



Source: Crop Forecast Survey, Ministry of Agriculture

## Lesotho

In the current May - September 2019 period, 350,000 people are estimated to be experiencing severe acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+). 6 districts, namely Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek and Thaba-Tseka, have been classified in Phase 3. This is a significant deterioration from last year, when all 10 districts were classified in Phase 2 for the same period.

In the projected October 2019 - March 2020 period, the food security situation is likely to deteriorate across all districts, and all districts are expected to be in Phase 3 (Crisis). Over 430,000 people are projected to be food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) during this period. October usually marks the start of the lean season; this year, however, the lean season is expected to start earlier than usual due to low crop production. Staple prices are expected to be higher than usual, and the planting season is expected to start late in the 2019/20 agricultural year.

In the past 2018/19 season, most parts of Lesotho experienced a late onset of rains and high temperatures. Late planting, low moisture content, hailstorms, and pests all negatively affected crop performance. Crop estimates declined over 2 consecutive years, with production of maize declining by 70% and sorghum declining by nearly 98% from the previous year. This has resulted in low or no household food stocks, and has also negatively affected livelihoods and income sources, especially for households which depend mainly on agricultural labor activities.

## Eswatini

In the current June - September 2019 period, it is estimated that 200,000 people are facing severe acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) in Eswatini. The situation is expected to deteriorate as the lean season begins, and 230,000 people are projected to be facing severe acute food insecurity in the October 2019 - March 2020 period.

Having experienced a poor start of the season characterized by erratic/poor distribution of rainfall and prolonged mid-season dry spells, Eswatini's forecast gross maize harvest decreased by 15%, from 111,000 MT in 2018/19 to 95,000 MT in 2019/20. With an annual consumption requirement of 128,000 MT, its domestic

shortfall more than doubled from 15,000 MT in 2018/19 to 32,000 MT in 2019/20.

Aside from poor yield, a reduction in the planted area also contributed to the decrease in harvest, thus affecting overall food production. Many farmers did not plant based on early warning messages on the possibility of an El Niño induced drought, and thus were caught unprepared when good rainfall came at the tail end of the season.

## DRC

DRC's IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis results for 2019 are expected at the end of July, and its crop assessment mission is currently ongoing.

Results of the Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSAs) conducted from March to May 2019 in WFP's L3 zone (covering Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Lomami, Sankuru, Tanganyika, Haut-Katanga, North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces) indicate that the overall food security situation remains a concern in these areas. An increase in food insecurity prevalence was observed in the provinces of Kasai Oriental (+7%), Kasai (3%) and Ituri (3%). Although the prevalence of food insecurity decreased in the provinces of Kasai Central (-14%), South Kivu (-8%), Tanganyika (5%), and North Kivu (4%), more than 1 in 2 households continue to face food insecurity across all provinces in the WFP L3 zone (Table 2).

Armed conflicts and subsequent population movement have disrupted livelihood activities and continue to be the determinant contextual factor affecting household food security. Analysis shows that overall, IDPs and returnees are the most food insecure; for example, the highest concentration of food-insecure households in Ituri province is found in the Irumu (77%), Djugu (84%) and Mambasa (79%) territories, which have experienced inter-ethnic conflict since December 2017. In addition, Irumu and Mambasa territories are affected by the Ebola epidemic.

**Table 2 Prevalence of Food Insecurity in WFP L3 Zone EFSA March - May 2019**

Province	Prevalence of Food Insecurity
Kasai	84.9%
Tanganyika	81.0%
Kasai Central	77.5%
Lomami	77.3%
Ituri	73.6%
Kasai Oriental	63.1%
North Kivu	53.2%
South Kivu	50.2%

## Malawi

In Malawi, it is estimated that approximately 697,000 people are currently food insecure (IPC 3+), and this figure is projected to increase to 1,126,000 people during the peak lean season.

Overall in 2018/19, Malawi experienced a favorable season. The country's maize production for 2019 is

estimated at 3.35 million MT (Second Round Agricultural Production Estimates Survey). According to the Ministry of Agriculture, this is sufficient to cover the annual domestic requirement of roughly 3.3 million MT (Figure 7). Compared to the previous season, increases were also noted for other staple food crops such as Cassava (5.4 %), Sweet potatoes (13.9 %), potatoes (23.6%), rice (16.9%), sorghum (61.4%) as well as pulses (6.7 %).

**Figure 7** Malawi: Maize Production and Annual Requirement (Thousand MT)



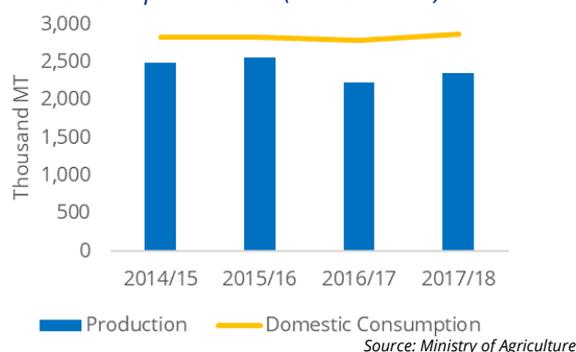
## Madagascar

In Madagascar, approximately 730,500 people are estimated to be food insecure (IPC 3+), and this figure is projected to increase to 916,000 people in the August - December 2019 period. In the 3 southern regions of Anosy, Androy, and Atsimo Andrefana, it is estimated that 48% of the population is drought affected and 42% is food insecure by the end of the cropping season in May/ June 2019.

In the 2018/19 season, Madagascar was not affected by cyclones or significant flooding, however, it did experience dryness in the southwestern and southern regions. The overall season appeared favorable, except in the south and southwest which suffered from dry spells early in the season and pests (FAW and locusts) which negatively affected the maize crop. Rice production is expected to be better than last year, however, based on past trends, it is unlikely to meet consumption requirements (Figure 8).

The current cropping season is coming to an end, and a joint crop assessment mission under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and BNGRC is currently under preparation. CFSAM data collection is expected to conclude in late August, and these findings, along with updated IPC figures are expected to be released in October.

**Figure 8** Madagascar: Rice Production and Consumption Trends (Thousand MT)

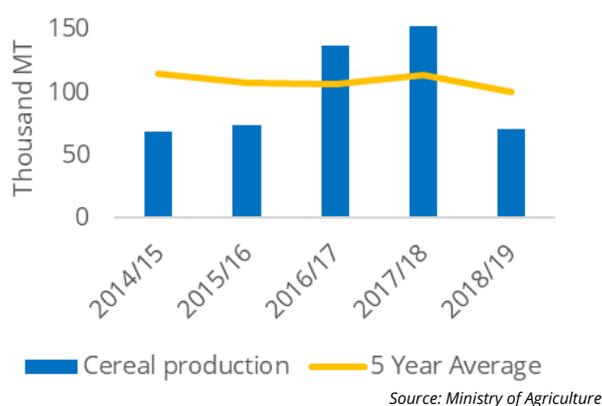


## Namibia

It is estimated that approximately 290,000 are currently food insecure in Namibia. As a result of below average rainfall and prolonged drought conditions, Namibia experienced poor seasonal performance in 2018/19. Its total cereal production dropped by 53% from the previous season, and was approximately 30% lower than the 5 year average (Figure 9). Due to drought, a total of 64,000 livestock loss has been recorded between October 2018 and March 2019.

Based on VAA results, of the total households interviewed, 5% were food and nutrition secure, 22% were marginally food and nutrition insecure, 31% were moderately food insecure and 42% were severely food and nutrition insecure. Overall, 73% of households were food and nutrition insecure.

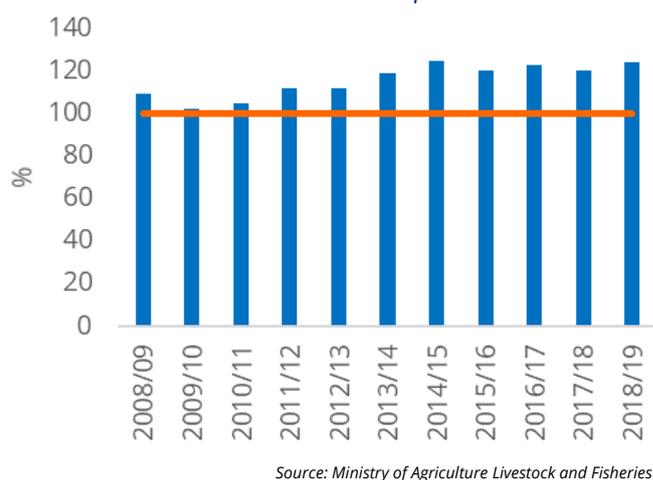
**Figure 9** Namibia: Cereal Production Trends and 5 Year Average (Thousand MT)



## Tanzania

Following a good harvest in the 2017/18 crop season, the food supply situation has remained stable in most parts of Tanzania. Adequate crop production is expected despite most parts of the country experiencing late onset of rains in 2018/19 and pockets of extended dry spells. In the past decade, Tanzania has maintained a food self-sufficiency ratio of over 100%, and this year could possibly serve as a key regional supplier of maize to countries facing a shortfall (Figure 10).

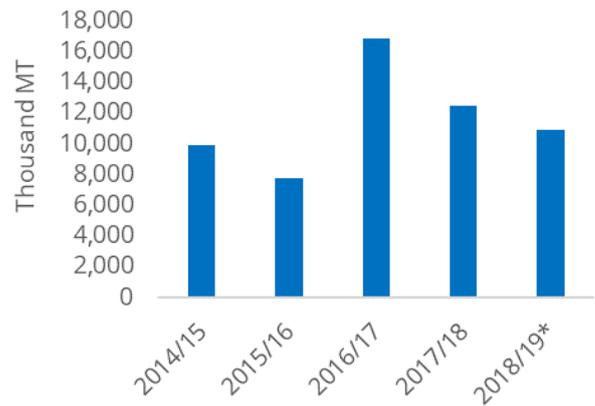
**Figure 10** Tanzania: Food Self-Sufficiency Ratio Trends 2008/09 - 2018/19 Consumption Year



## South Africa

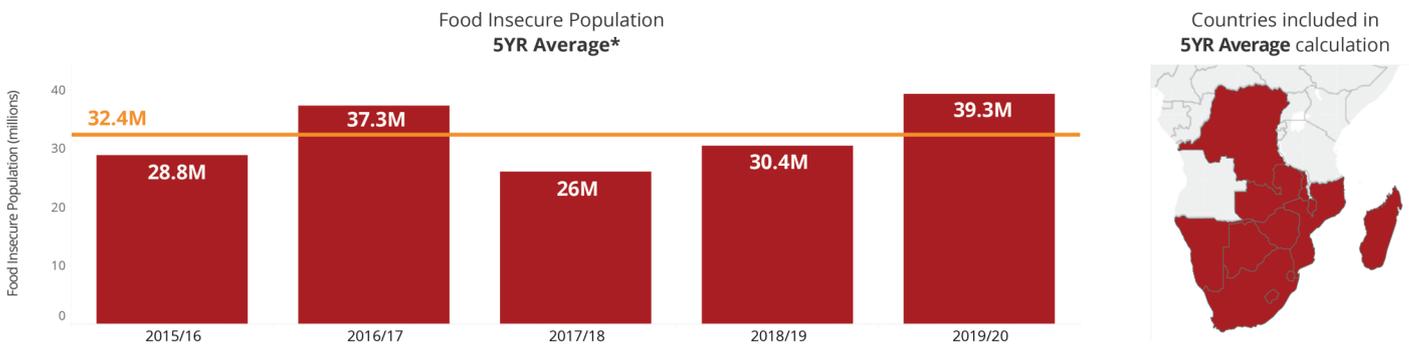
According to the fifth production forecast by South Africa's Crop Estimates Committee (26 June), South Africa's total maize production for 2018/19 is estimated at 10.9 million tons (Figure 11). This is a 13% reduction from the 12.5 million tons produced in the previous season. However, given that annual consumption is approximately 10.8 million tons, South Africa should have sufficient maize supplies for the 2019/20 market year, especially because it also has carryover stock. Yet, with lower production, its maize exports are likely to decrease this year, resulting in reduced regional supply.

**Figure 11** South Africa: Maize Production Trends (Thousand MT)



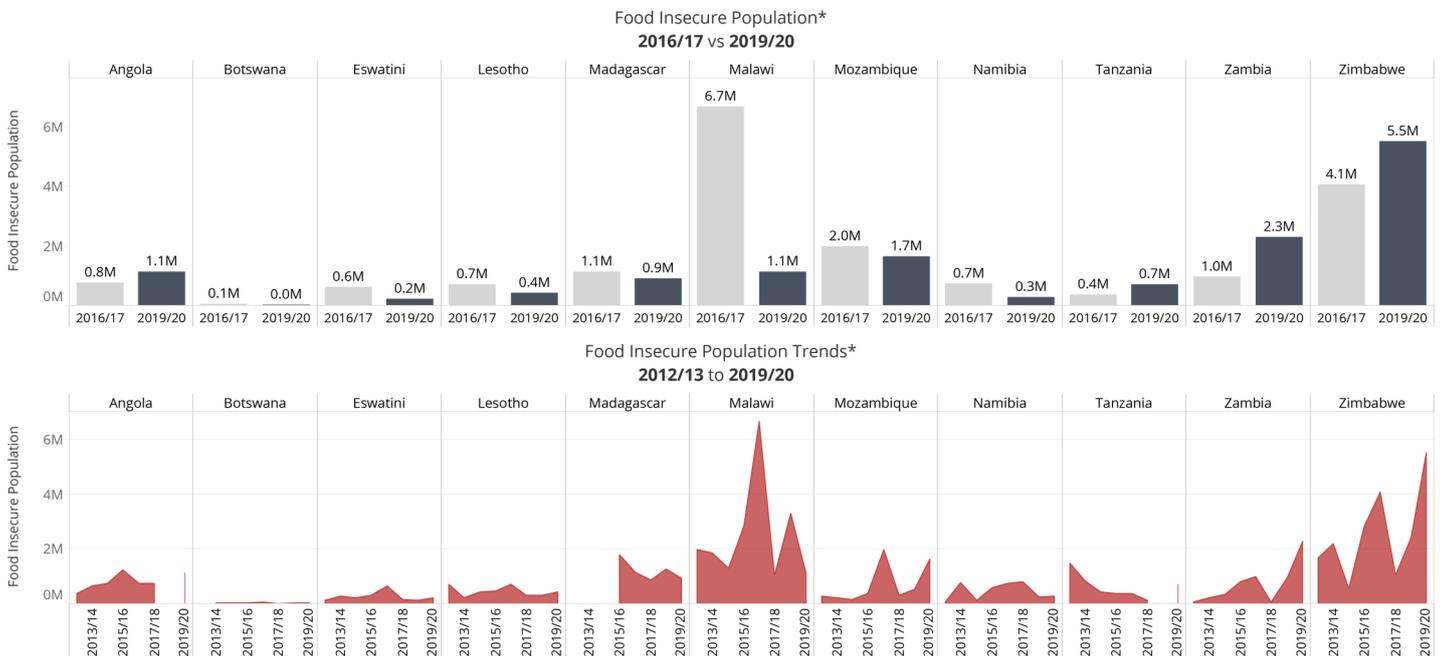
Source: Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

**Figure 12** Food Insecure Population, 5 Year Average for 11 Countries



\* Excludes Angola and Tanzania for comparability (no data for 2018/19)

**Figure 13** Food Insecure Population Trends



\* Excludes Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa for scalability