SOUTHERN AFRICA:
SEASONAL OUTLOOK

FNSWG
Food and Nutrition Security Working Group

Bulletin 1 | December 2019

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY SITUATION

- Latest assessment figures continue to indicate that an estimated total of **41 million people** will be food insecure in the southern Africa region during the peak lean season (January - March 2020)(Figure 1, Table 1). In addition, **2.2. million** are estimated to be food insecure in the urban areas of Zimbabwe.

- According to the "Joint Call for Action to Address the Impacts of Climate Change and a Deepening Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa," the number of food insecure people in **Tier 1** countries is **11 million** and account for 27% of the total figure. The figure for **Tier 2** countries is **2 million** and accounts for 5% of the total. The tiers are based on severity and impact of drought in each country.

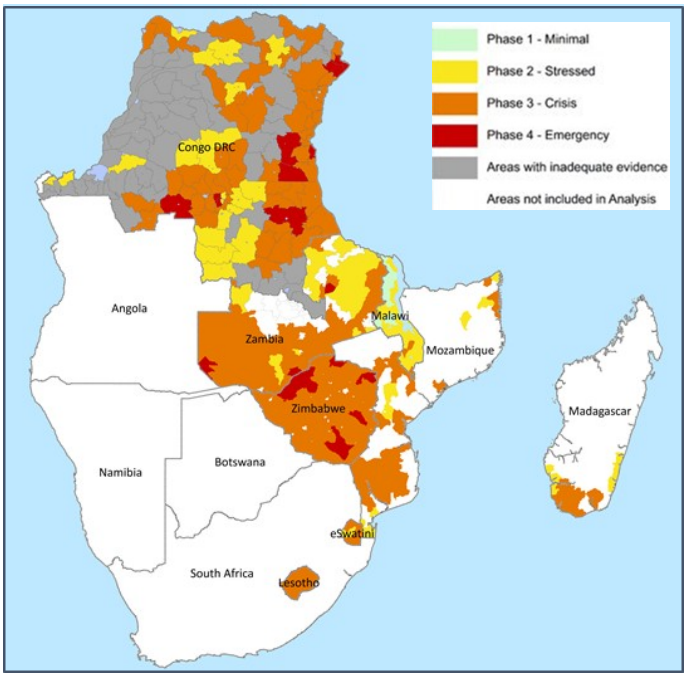
- The severity of the situation is largely a consequence of cumulative effects of recurrent droughts in the region as well as sudden onset emergencies experienced last year (Figure 7 and 8). Macroeconomic challenges increasingly felt in the region have compounded and magnified the food insecurity situation in the region.

- It is estimated that in the region, 7.3 million children* under 5 years of age are wasted. Available data shows an increase in GAM in parts of Zambia and Zimbabwe, and increased admissions for SAM in Angola and Zimbabwe.

- Cases of acute malnutrition are expected to increase until March 2020. UNICEF and World Vision are currently conducting 2 SMART surveys in Angola in the southern districts and SMART surveys are also planned for January in Zambia. World Vision is also conducting a livelihood assessment in Angola.

- Immediate assistance is needed to prevent significant deterioration in food security and nutrition outcomes in the 2019/20 season, and to reverse the growing trend of humanitarian needs.

Figure 1 IPC Acute Food Insecurity (October 2019 – March 2020)



CURRENT RAINFALL SITUATION

- The 2019/20 rainy season began in the 2nd dekad of November for much of the region, which is now generally considered to be normal onset. Good rains were received in most parts of the region in November, with the exception of parts of central South Africa, southern Madagascar, north-western Botswana and north-eastern Namibia (Figure 2).

- Tanzania has been affected by heavy rainfall and flooding since October. This has reportedly disrupted transportation and contributed to maize price spikes. In the northern Congo river basin, DRC is also experiencing unusual riverine flooding.

Table 1 Food Insecure Population in SADC Member States January - March 2020

Tier 1		Tier 2		Others	
Angola	562,000	Eswatini	232,000	Botswana	38,300
Madagascar	730,000	Lesotho	433,000	DRC	13,562,000
Mozambique	1,995,000	Malawi	1,063,000	South Africa	13,670,000
Zambia	2,330,000	Namibia**	290,000	Tanzania	740,000
Zimbabwe***	5,529,000				
Tier 1 Total	**11,146,000**	**Tier 2 Total**	**2,018,000**	**Other Total**	**28,010,300**
				TOTAL	**41,174,300**

Source: Joint Malnutrition Estimates 2019. As data is not up to date for all countries, this figure does not reflect the current emergency.

Source: National VACs

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

***New IPC figures expected January 2020*

****Excludes urban food insecure*

IMPLICATIONS AND OUTLOOK

Figure 2 Rainfall Percent of Average (Nov 2019)

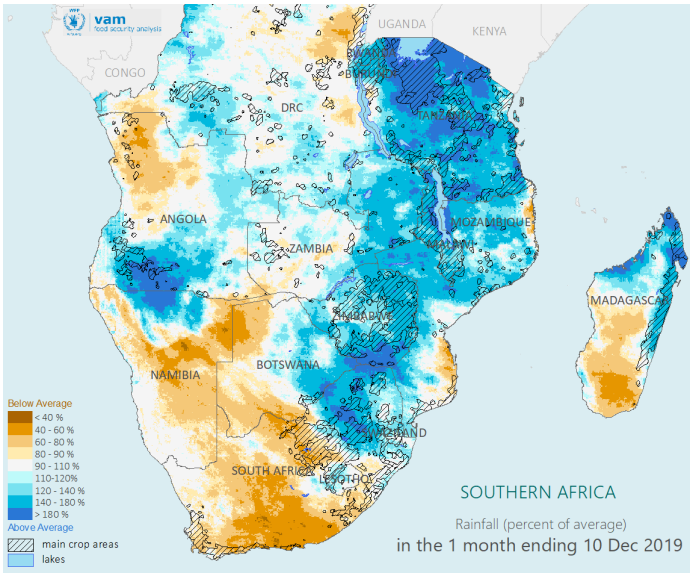
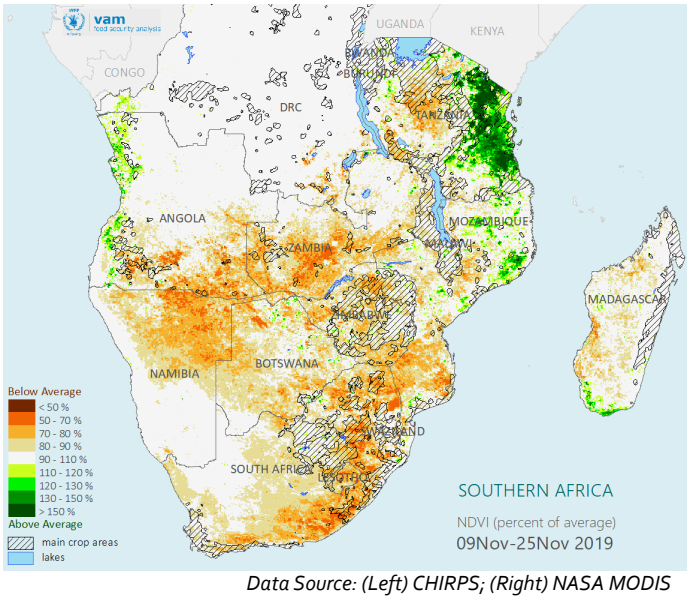


Figure 3 NDVI Percent of Average (09 - 25 Nov)



Data Source: (Left) CHIRPS; (Right) NASA MODIS

- Despite a timely start of the season, below average vegetation and poor pasture conditions persisted in much of the southern half of the region due to carryover of extreme dry conditions from the previous season (Figure 3). Water levels at Kariba Dam are reportedly at their lowest in 2 decades, at 10% of full capacity.

- Having entered the cyclone season in November, close monitoring of tropical storms will be needed between now and May 2020.

IMPLICATIONS

- The cumulative effect of recurrent droughts can be seen in the below average vegetation across much of the region and depletion of water sources for livestock. Such conditions are associated with an increased risk of transboundary diseases as farmers move livestock in search of pasture and water.

- There is also concern of localized outbreaks of African Armyworm and red locusts in different parts of the region. This calls for early detection and effective monitoring, and FAO has already sent alerts to all countries in the region regarding these threats.

- With the widespread water deficit being experienced in Southern Africa, the negative impacts on power generation, industries, community watering points for livestock and small-scale irrigation are likely to be high this coming season.

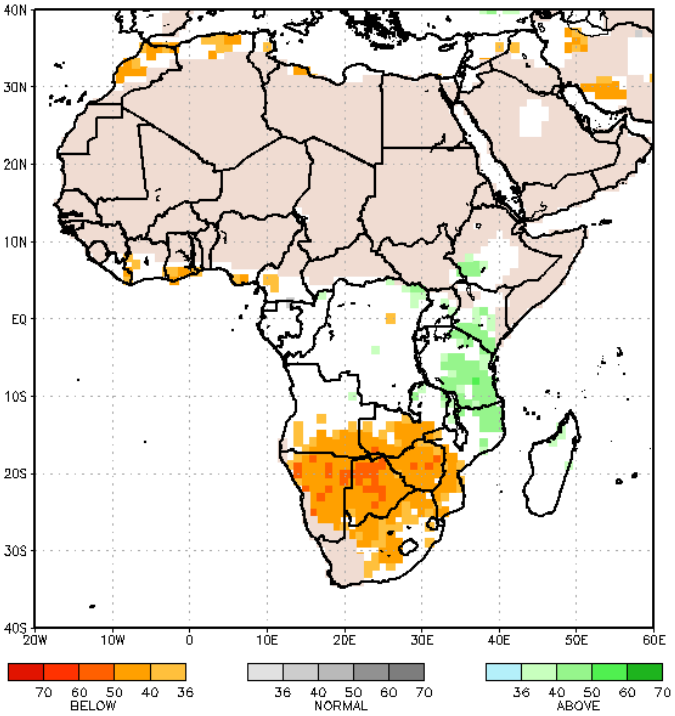
- Coming on the back of a poor season in 2018/19, there are also concerns that farmers may not be able to access inputs in the areas that were affected by drought. High risk of crop failure and depletion of water could lead to deepening food insecurity.

OUTLOOK

- Seasonal forecasts for the January-February-March period are showing a bias towards below normal rainfall across the southern half of the region (Figure 4). This could mean poor establishment of crops and yield reduction in some major maize producing areas. Although maize crop conditions appeared favorable as of the end of November, it is still too early to tell and the situation needs to be monitored closely (Figure 5).

- Across the region, maize grain prices have been picking up earlier than usual this year, and are not expected to abate before the next harvest in May/June 2020 (Figure 6).

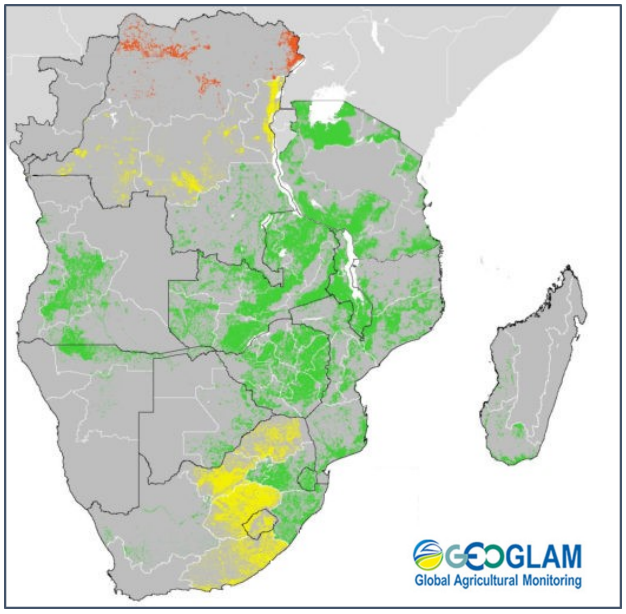
Figure 4 NMME* Forecast (Jan – Mar 2020)



**North American Multi-Model Ensemble*
Source: NOAA CPC

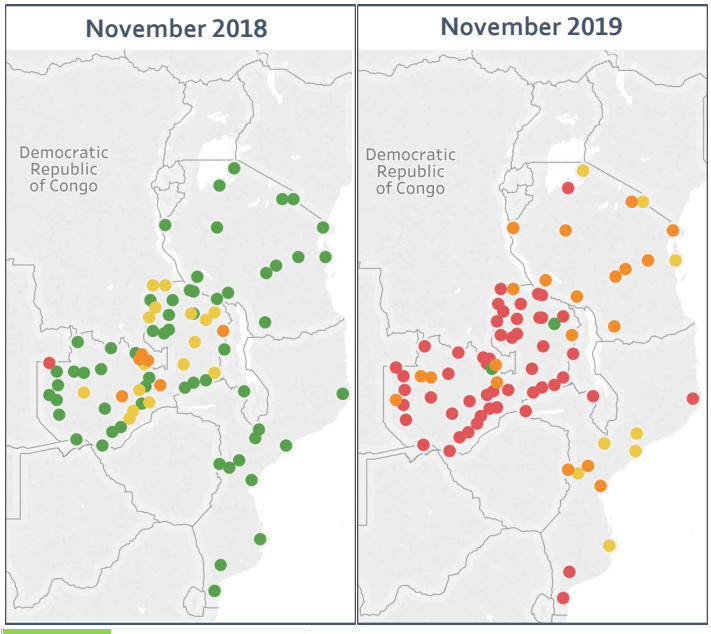
RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 5 Maize Crop Monitor (End November)



Note: Tanzania has been added to the GEOGLAM Southern Africa Region Map (both Maize Map 1 which covers main producing southern highlands and Maize Map 2 which covers short-season Vuli maize crops in the north).

Figure 6 November ALPS (Maize)



Normal	ALPS < 0.25
Stress	0.25 ≤ ALPS < 1
Alert	1 ≤ ALPS < 2
Crisis	ALPS ≥ 2

For more details on the ALPS indicator

Sources for Figure 6 and Table 2: WFP
Data available as of December 19th, 2019

Current maize price movements show significant deterioration in food access compared to November last year. The national average maize price in Zambia was 61% above the 5 year average (5YA) and 90% higher than a year prior. In Malawi, the national average maize price was 45% above the 5 year average (5YA) and 85% higher than a year prior (Table 2).

Table 2 Maize Price Comparison (November 2019)

Country	National Avg. Maize Price Compared to Nov. 2018	National Avg. Maize Price Compared to 5YA
Tanzania	110% ↑	38% ↑
Zambia	90% ↑	61% ↑
Mozambique	59% ↑	25% ↑
Malawi	85% ↑	45% ↑

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In addition to other ongoing protracted assistance programmes such as DRC, provide immediate emergency intervention for affected areas in Tier 1 and Tier 2 countries with increased attention to resilience building of crises-affected populations in the region.

- Interventions to prevent acute malnutrition are a priority, as well as early identification of cases of severe acute malnutrition and early treatment.

- Social protection interventions should target nutritionally vulnerable households, especially those with children under 2 years to protect them against wasting and stunting.

- Improve availability of timely nutrition data and information, including strengthening routine data systems (HMIS) as well as improving availability of survey data.

- Closely monitor seasonal progress and market prices.

- There is need for more focus on water-food-energy linkages to elevate the multi-sectoral engagement and response. This combines immediate humanitarian action and long-term developmental approaches. Water management and use of conservation agriculture are key interventions to consider.

- In view of the recurrent nature of drought in the region, the FNSWG will revisit the recommendations of the 2016 "Preventing El Niño Southern Oscillation Episodes from Becoming Disasters: A Blueprint for Action" report and track the status of implementation of the blueprint which will enable the region to be better prepared and responsive to the ever increasing challenges of climate change.

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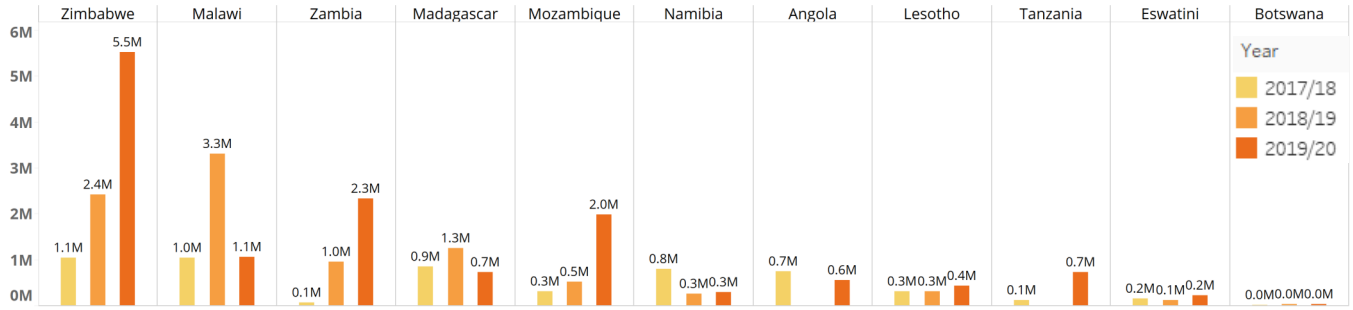
Figure 7 Food Insecure Population Trends by Country (2017/18 to 2019/20)



No figures available for Angola and Tanzania in 2018/19; DRC and South Africa not included for presentation purposes.

Figure 8 Food Insecure Population (2016/17 – 2019/2020)