Food and Nutrition Security Bulletin Southern Africa

Quarterly Bulletin • issue no. 3

released date: 23 November 2020



Food and Nutrition Security Working Group





Figure 1 Number of food insecure people (projected) and Food and Nutrition Security alerts in Southern Africa



FNSWG map - data source: RVAA & IPC last update 26.11.2020. Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of the FNSWG concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiare.

Highlights:

- 51.3 million people are projected to be food insecure in Southern Africa (Figure 1). The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to magnify the scale and severity of food insecurity.
- 2.3 million people across Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe are at risk of further food security deterioration in the region due to African Migratory Locust (AML). In addition, FAO has released an early warning for Desert Locust for north-eastern regions of the United Republic of Tanzania.
- 8.4 million children are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition across the region in 2020, out of which, 2.3 million will require lifesaving treatment for severe acute malnutrition.
- 9-12 tropical storms (or 5-to7 cyclones) are forecast to occur during the 2020-2021 season from October to May in the south-western Indian Ocean, with significant chances that one or more can make landfall and cause devastation.

1. OVERVIEW

The region is approaching the peak lean season (Jan-Mar 2021), which will be characterised by the cumulative impact of persistent drought, accelerated by the systemic impacts of COVID-19 on livelihoods. From an estimated 45 million food-insecure people in July 2020, assessments are pointing towards a continued increase in the number of the food-insecure population towards the peak of the lean season, currently standing at 51.3 million.

United Rep. of Tanzania

The Climate Outlook Forecast for Southern Africa, from October 2020 to March 2021, project normal to above normal forecast which comes with an increased risk of torrential rains resulting in flooding which could damage assets and infrastructure, disrupt markets, increase pest and diseases and increase post-harvest losses. On the other, the forecast could also bring a positive impact of recovery from persistent droughts. The start of the season is ongoing and we are monitoring the situation closely to mitigate the negative impacts and reinforce the positive ones through our programmes.

Locust: African Migratory Locust swarms continue to multiplicate and are currently being reported in Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia, with the addition of Angola in recent weeks. AML infestations are likely to wreak havoc on nearly 1.1 million hectares and thereby affecting close to 2.3 million people unless it is well controlled through a regional approach. SADC on September 11 issued a regional appeal of USD 21.6 million to facilitate regional coordination for cross-border control, preparedness and response. So far, only 0.5 million has been mobilised. Other Locust reports can be seen in <u>section 3</u>.

COVID-19 has worsened the impacts of food and nutrition insecurity due to the containment measures, resulting in a faster than usual increase in food-insecure numbers currently standing

at 51.3 million. The region is increasingly facing possibilities of the second wave that would entrench the already severe impacts on livelihoods and food and nutrition security. The main implications of COVID-19 in the region are on trade and food supply chain, delivery of humanitarian programmes, and livelihoods. The increasing and alarming food insecurity in the urban areas are linked to disruptions in employment and livelihood opportunities due to containment measures. Urban households are increasingly not able to afford adequate and nutritious meals.

Macro-Economic conditions also do not look promising as countries in the region struggle with weakening currencies, sovereign debt, lower export revenue and increased import demand. This precarious situation is likely to undermine effective government response, especially in the case of rapid onset shocks as the region enters the flood and cyclone season.

Maize Prices remain elevated above the 5-year average throughout the region. For example, in South Africa, despite a favourable harvest, in October, the maize price was 18 per cent above the year prior and average levels. This high price is concerning as it will be transmitted to importing countries in the region, which have shown higher demand this year and impact household ability to afford adequate and nutrition foods.

2. SARCOF & Climate Projections

The Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) seasonal forecast issued in August, indicates normal to abovenormal rainfall conditions, likely to occur during October-March 2021, with the exception of Tanzania, northern parts of Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique that will experience normal to below-normal forecast (Southern Africa Climate Outlook Forum, seasonal forecast, August 2020). The detailed down-scaled country-by-country forecast are provided at the following link: SARCOF & NACOF rainfall forecast files (regional and country level forecast).

The <u>World Meteorological Organization (WMO)</u>, SARCOF and other forecasters have assessed that the La Niña has developed and is expected to last into next year. This La Niña event is expected to be of moderate strength with at least 95% likelihood of La Niña conditions continuing through the first quarter of 2021 (Figure 2).

The La Niña event impacts could be substantial in certain countries. The above-average rainfall could lead to good crop prospects but also increase the risk of potential flooding in floodprone areas and consequently damage crops and infrastructure.

The season is yet to start in most parts of the region, but some earlier than normal rains were observed in Zimbabwe, Southern Mozambique and northern parts of Southern Africa while in parts of Zambia it is delayed by about ten days (Figure 3). Close monitoring is required to ensure adequate preparedness and effective response to adverse impacts of heavy rainfall.

Cyclones

An above-average number of tropical storms and tropical cyclones is forecast to occur during the 2020-2021 cyclone season from October to May in the South-western Indian ocean. According to the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC¹), this season could therefore see a total of between 9 and 12 systems (tropical storms and cyclones - see Figure 4) (130 per cent of a regular season on a 23-year average), with slightly more than half of them (between 5 and 7) reaching the tropical cyclone stage. Although this year the geneses zones will be favoured in the eastern half of the basin, we expect a return to a more climatological pattern of TC tracks, i.e. mainly oriented towards the west or southwest, which could lead cyclonic phenomena to threaten the inhabited lands of the western part of the basin.

A majority of trajectories will be oriented towards the west or the southwest, potentially causing the related storms to come to strike inhabited lands, particularly the east coast of Madagascar and the coast of Mozambique (implying an increased risk of landfall) (see Figure 5).

Likelihood of La Nina, Sept 2020 - July 2021





Figure 3

Figure 2

Anomaly of the Onset of Rainfall, November 2020



Figure 4

Seasonal Outlook for Tropical Cyclones Season 2020/2021



Source: RSMC South-West Indian Ocea

Figure 5

Tropical Cyclone Distribution 2020-2021 Season / South-West Indian Ocean



^{1 -} Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) - Tropical Cyclones for the South-West Indian Ocean

3. LOCUST OUTBREAK IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Three types of locust outbreaks have been reported in the region: Brown Locust, Red Locust, and the most alarming, African Migratory Locust (AML).

Since the release of the <u>FNSWG AML Alert</u> in October, AML swarms have continued to increase and spread despite mitigation measures. With recent reports of AML in Angola (Rivungo municipality, Cuando Cubango Province), five countries in the region are now facing AML outbreaks (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe), as per <u>Figure 6</u>.

The growing number of African Migratory Locust (AML) hotspots poses a threat to irrigated crops, thus to the main planting season that has just started. If AML remains uncontrolled¹, the already precarious food and nutrition security situation in the region, precipitated by last season's erratic rains and the COVID-19 pandemic, will further deteriorate. The good rainfall forecast in the AML breeding spots is likely to increase the multiplication of the pest population. In addition, the normal to above-normal rainfall that was forecast for the 2020/21 La Niña event could accelerate even more the reproduction of the AML in the affected areas and increase the threat it poses to crops, grazing and livelihoods.

Urgent actions are needed to identify locust hotspots and ensure AML is controlled.

The SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme estimates that 2.3 million people are likely to be seriously impacted by the outbreak of the African Migratory Locusts in the affected countries. A <u>regional appeal</u> was released by SADC Secretariat in consultation with the Member States and other partners to prevent loss of crops and livelihoods of the affected communities.

In an unusual occurrence, some Red Locust (RL) swarms have also been reported in some AML outbreak areas of Botswana and Namibia, increasing the risk threat. Until now Botswana and Namibia did not have known breeding site of the RL.

1 - Information on the latest information on Member States response and remained untreated areas can be seen in the SADC Regional Appeal

Figure 6 AML Risk-Prone Areas and Acute Food Insecurity Projections* - Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Angola *IPC projections: Thematic Legend: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification African Migratory Locust (AML) 1 - Minimal 2 - Stressed 3 - Crisis 4 - Emergency AML risk-prone area* Namibia - Projected: Oct 2020 to Mar 2021 Zimbabwe - Projected: Oct 2020 to Jan 2021 Zambia - Projected: Oct 2019 - March 2020 Zambia Botswana - no data Angola - no data Zimbab nibia Basemap Legend National boundary First administrative level cap Water Bodies First admi Other Locality Reserve areas

FNSWG map - data source: FAO, SADC, IPC.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of the FNSWG concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.

At least 2.3M people are at risk of further food security deterioration in the region due to AML

	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Namibia	Botswana
Affected area untreated (ha):	39.6 K	371.6 K	380 K	93.3 K
(PC 3+ No. of people in IPC3+ exposed to AML:	1.3 M	747.8 K	171 K	no data

Other Locust reports:

• Brown Locust have recently been reported in the Eastern Cape in South Africa, and the situation is being monitored by FAO.

• An early warning alert for the possibility of a moderate to high-risk Desert Locust outbreak has been issued by FAO for northeastern regions of the United Republic of Tanzania (Kilimanjaro, Manyara, Tanga) from 19 to Sunday, 22 November 2020.

4. MARKET PRICES

Across the region, maize grain prices remain elevated. Although they dropped in line with seasonal trends following the harvest, in many countries they continued to trend above average. In South Africa, the key maize producer/supplier of the region, maize prices took an unusual sharp upward turn from July (Figure Z), likely due to strong demand from both regional and international markets this year, coupled with increasing global maize prices and a generally weaker rand. Despite a favourable harvest, in October, the maize price was 18% above the year prior and average levels.

South Africa's elevated prices are concerning as they will be transmitted to importing countries in the region, which have shown higher demand this year. For the same period (May to mid-October), South Africa's white maize exports to Eswatini and Mozambique this year were double that of last year, and exports to Zimbabwe soared from approximately 1,100 MT last year to nearly 160,000 MT this year (Figure 8).

In Zambia, another key maize producing country in the region, although there has been an improvement in the maize price situation, the national average price remained 40% above the 5-year average (5YA) in September. Its weakening currency has also fuelled inflation, and elevated levels of inflation are likely to continue into 2021.

In other countries such as Malawi and Mozambique, national average maize prices also remain above the 5YA. Macro-economic conditions in the also do not look promising as countries in the region struggle with weakening currencies, sovereign debt, lower export revenue and increased import demands. This precarious situation is likely to undermine effective government response especially in the case of rapid onset shocks as the region enters the flood and cyclone season.

5. COVID-19 IMPACT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Since **FNSWG Alert on COVID-19** was issued in April, much effort has been devoted to understanding the impacts of the immediate, first and second-order impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition security. The Alert identified impacts on the following areas: trade and food supply chain, delivery of humanitarian programmes, assessment and analysis and increase of severity and scope of food and nutrition insecurity in urban areas.

The SADC RVAA programme has just completed an in-depth study on the regional impact of COVID-19 on food and nutrition security. As foreseen in the FNSWG Alert, the study found that COVID-19 worsened pre-existing conditions Impacts of pre-existing conditions (characterised by widespread poverty, chronic malnutrition and macro-economic shocks and conflicts) due to the containment measures, resulting in a faster than usual increase in food-insecure numbers currently standing at 51.3 million.

h **Figure 7**

South Africa, Maize (ZAR/kg) Wholesale Prices







FNSWG graph adaptation - data source: South African Grain Information Service (SAGIS)

Other findings of the report include:

- Most SADC governments shifted funding focus away from basic health and nutrition services to COVID-19 prevention, screening and quarantine of infected individuals.
- COVID-19 inspired disruptions reduced international and regional trade in food items and other products that support agricultural production by as much as 30 per cent.
- Lockdown containment measures hindered access to produce markets causing a decline in agricultural producer prices and the closure of open markets affected livelihoods of informal traders and vendors and farmers.
- Provision of water and sanitation in the SADC region has always been a challenge, and COVID-19 containment measures exacerbated the problem.

According to WHO, the second wave of COVID-19 remains a threat in the southern Africa region. There is a crucial need to continue the monitoring of the impacts of COVID-19 on food and nutrition security, health, markets and on programme delivery in the region.

4

COVID-19 Regional Numbers - as of 20 November 2020

892,789 Confirmed Cases 51,582 Active Cases

818,145 Recovered Cases

23,062 Confirmed Deaths

Data Source: John Hopkins COVID-19 data

Figure 9

Biweekly change in confirmed COVID-19 cases - as of Nov 20, 2020

The biweekly growth rate on any given date measures the percentage change in the number of new confirmed cases over the last 14 days relative to the number in the previous 14 days.



Source: European CDC – Situation Update Worldwide – Last updated 16 November OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus

Figure 10

COVID-19 Growth rate curve in Southern Africa - as of Nov 20, 2020 Number of Confirmed cases per day since 100 cases in Southern Africa



WHO Source: COVID Intel Database

Figure 11

COVID-19 Growth rate curve in Southern Africa - excluding South Africa. (as of Nov 20, 2020) Number of Confirmed cases per day since 100 cases by country.



WHO Source: COVID Intel Database

6. **MIGRATION**

According to a joint report by WFP and IOM, more than 6.2 million people were internally displaced by the end of 2019. Since March 2020 until now, COVID-19 impacts have further deteriorated migrants' situation by limiting access to services and food, thus further compromising their health and nutrition status.

Mobility restrictive measures and economic decline due to COVID-19, have increased migration in the region. Between March 21 and October 26, IOM recorded the highest number of returnees in Zimbabwe (24,640), Lesotho (21,580) and Mozambique (15,341). From March to August 2020, Zimbabwe recorded the highest number of stranded migrants (15,542), followed by South Africa (11,629) and Angola (7,147).

The harsh conditions and impacts on health during the journey put migrants at a higher risk to COVID-19. Other struggles for migrants include harassment, lack of jobs and reintegration for returnees; and the lack of documentation and fear of authorities for stranded migrants.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

1.4 million new displacements due to conflict and violence have occurred only during the first six months of 2020. Other 349,000 people have been displaced due to weather-related events. [WFP & IOM]

Mozambique

355,000 people have been displaced due to conflict in Mozambique, since early 2020. According to WFP and IOM, displacement numbers will continue to rise. The conflict in Cabo Delgado is further deteriorating the food and nutrition security in the country, which is currently enduring the COVID-19 impacts and recovering from 2019 climate-induced events.

5

Lesotho

According to ACAPS¹, Lesotho is at medium risk of economic and food insecurity deterioration due to COVID-19 containment measures, including border closures. The country's economy and people's livelihood are heavily dependent on South Africa.

1 - ACAPS Global Risk Analysis. October 2020

7. NUTRITION

With an existing background of a triple burden of malnutrition characterised by undernutrition (stunting and acute malnutrition); over-nutrition (overweight/obesity); and micronutrient deficiencies, the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has further increased the risk of malnutrition due to the containment measures taken by the various Member States to curb the spread of the virus, resulting in reduced access to food. As seen in Figure 12 COVID-19 has impacted nutrition services across the region. In Figure 13 the top reasons for the disruptions can be seen.

As restrictions were put in place during the year by the Member States, diverse varieties of food have become unavailable, inaccessible and unaffordable to the most vulnerable households. There is a risk that households will be forced to adopt harmful eating practices, including reducing frequency, quantity and quality of foods, to adapt to the lock down measures. This is likely to be more pronounced over the remainder of 2020 as the region heads into the lean season, and particular areas are already on high alert including Southern Madagascar which has not received any rain since 2019 and Northern Mozambique where insecurity is further threatening nutrition status.

While the effects of COVID-19 on malnutrition are yet to be seen, countries across sub-Saharan Africa have prepared for an increase in the number of wasted children of up to 25 per cent during the remainder of 2020 and into 2021, expected as a result of the effects of the pandemic. With these considerations, there are expected to be approximately 8.4 million children who will suffer from acute malnutrition across the region in 2020, and of these approximately 2.3 million children will require life-saving treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

All SADC member states have recognised nutrition services as essential services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and programme adaptations have been put in place across countries to minimise disruption to services. Adaptations include simplifying admission protocols for children with wasting, expanding the teaching of mothers and caretakers to identify child malnutrition and what to do about it (Family mid-upper arm circumference - MUAC), and use of mobile technology for counselling, disseminating behaviour change communication messages, data collection and reporting.

Despite these measures, available data from national routine information systems shows that the sub-region has seen an overall decline of just under 10 per cent in the number of new admissions to treatment programs for severe wasting over the first half of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. Other services such as Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) have also been disrupted, with a 36 per cent reduction. On the other hand, coverage of counselling and messages on infant and young child feeding has more than doubled compared to 2019 (143 per cent increase).

Figure 12



Number of nutrition services disrupted due to COVID-19 by country

Figure 13

Top reasons for nutrition services disruption across the region



ENSWG man - data source: UNICEE

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of the FNSWG concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.

Hence, further COVID-19 containment measures would drive food prices up and cause further income losses for rural and urban households. More than half of the population could experience acute food insecurity as an impact of the COVID-19 containment measures, including border closure.

Recommendations

- Ensure close monitoring of the nutrition situation as the lean season progresses across the region, especially in atrisk areas including Southern Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Northern Mozambique.
- Resume nutrition surveys and data collection following recently released global guidance on <u>safe data collection</u> in the context of Covid-19, as appropriate to the context. Remote data collection approaches (telephone, online), on diets, practices and food security may also continue to be used to provide vital information on changes.
- Continue to ensure COVID-19 adaptations are in place to support the continuation of essential nutrition services, with a focus on resumption of Vitamin A supplementation activities following global guidance, expansion of early detection of wasting through Family MUAC and continuation of infant and young child feeding counselling and messaging using a mix of channels and contacts according to the context.
- Ensure close coordination on social protection, food support and support to agriculture in affected areas to make sure that the specific needs of young children and their mothers are addressed.

8. ASSESSMENTS

The 2020 Timeline (Figure 14) shows a combination of 34 assessments and analyses in the region. As of the end of October 16 are complete, ten are ongoing, seven are planned, and one is on hold. Projected numbers of food-insecure people can be seen in Figure 1. By the end of December 2020, 13 of the 16 SADC Member States would have undertaken vulnerability assessments and analyses in the 2020/21 cycle. The exception will be Comoros and Seychelles.

Coverage of the urban population is still limited and yet very important given the expected impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the urban poor's livelihoods.

Figure 14

2020 Vulnerability Assessment & IPC Analyses Timeline

Southern Africa - Vulnerability Assessments & IPC Analyses Timeline



FNSWG Graph. Data source: RVAA & IPC data via FNSWG Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of FNSWG.

Food and Nutrition Security Working Group (FNSWG) Southern Africa

The Regional Food Nutrition and Security Working Group for Southern Africa (FNSWG) is a coordinating platform for food security and nutrition issues in the region. FNSWG members currently include the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, regional development humanitarian organisations, donors, nongovernmental and academic bodies.

Contact information:

Co-Chair Ruth Malala Mufalali VAN ROOYEN ruth.vanrooyen@ifrc.org Co-Chair Andrew Odero andrew.odero@wfp.org To learn more: