

FSAC AFGHANISTAN RESPONSE MONITORING UPDATE March 2022

Background

The combined impact of a series of acute droughts since 2018, the protracted political crisis and conflict that affected the country for over forty years and economic collapse in the second half of 2021 has generated a hunger crisis of unprecedented proportions. Some 22.8 million¹ people were projected to be facing acute food insecurity (IPC3 and IPC4) by the start of 2022.

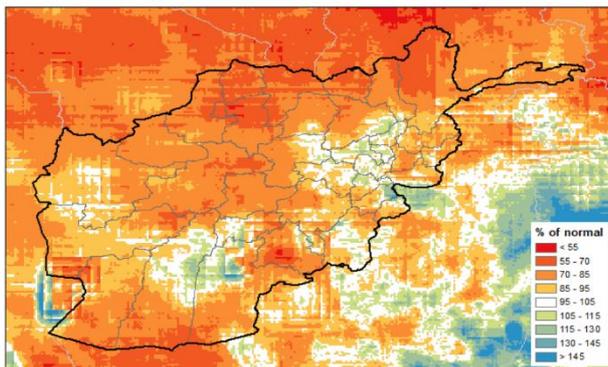
Based on FEWSNET's Seasonal Monitor, precipitation during the remainder of the season is expected to be below average, given the forecast persistence of La Niña. Moisture stress will be experienced in the following weeks and it will not bode well for the yield prospects of wheat. Below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures are expected through May 2022.

Situation Overview

- **Climate Outlook**

A weak to moderate La Niña event has been affecting Afghanistan since October 2020 and will likely continue through the May 2022 wet season. The Precipitation anomaly experienced at the start of the season, which led to a below average precipitation, still exists across most parts of the country. FEWSNET's climate data shows that below-average cumulative precipitation from October 1, 2021 was observed in the southwestern, northern, central highlands, and northeastern parts of the country. In some partes of the cenetral and southeren regions, average to above-average cumulative precipitation for the same period was observed.

Figure 1: October 1, 2021 – April 15, 2022, precipitation percent of average from CHIRPS.



FEWSNET: Afghanistan Seasonal Monitor

In addition, low soil moisture and low snow water volumes have led to moisture stress in the northern wheat belt. Negative snow depth anomalies were observed at higher elevations in the northeastern and central highlands of the country. Lower snow water equivalent has been recorded in March 2022 compared to the longterm average, which will likely reduce water table recharge.

- **Crop Outlook**

Drought, spiralling household debts and the inability of farmers to procure and use fertilizers indicate that the wheat harvest will be below average this year. Below average and untimely precipitation has negatively affected both rainfed and irrigated agriculture in the first planting season. The below average precipitation will also likely impact the second harvest.



Wheat field in Zindajan district, Herat: Photo credit@FAO



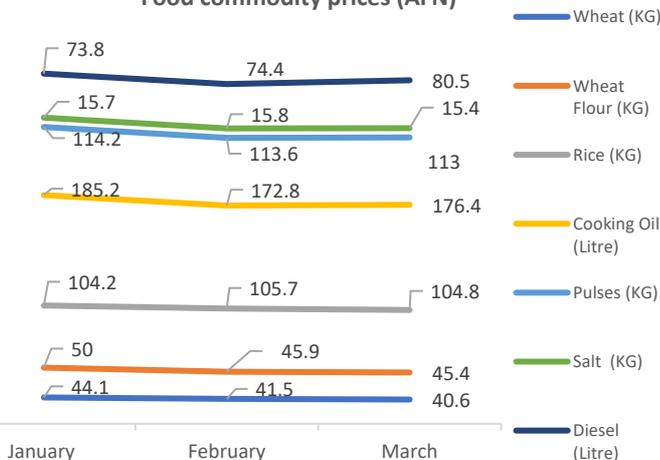
Wheat fields in Kuz Kunar district, Nangarhar: Photo credit@FAO

Faryab, Sare Pul, Balkh, and Samangan were mostly affected by below average precipitation. The agricultural lands in these provinces are mostly rainfed. In the northeast region, farmers reported that wheat spikes are comparably smaller this year, which will likely impact the harvest. In the eastern region, harvesting of the wheat crop is ongoing except in some high-elevated areas in Nuristan and some in Kunar provinces. Farmers reported that the main challenges that impacted their season were below-average rainfall, high fertilizer costs, unavailability, and an army worm outbreak.

• Markets

Prices of main food commodities fell slightly in March compared to January and February 2022, but remained significantly higher than the same time last year and the month of June 2021 prior to the August 2021 transition. Prices of wheat flour and grain were slightly reduced in March compared to January and February. The average monthly price of wheat grain decreased by 2.2% compared to last month but increased by 27% compared to last year same time. On average, diesel prices have increased by 8.1% compared to last month and are significantly higher by 74% compared to the same time last year. This has resulted in higher transportation costs for food and non-food commodities to the country.

Food commodity prices (AFN)

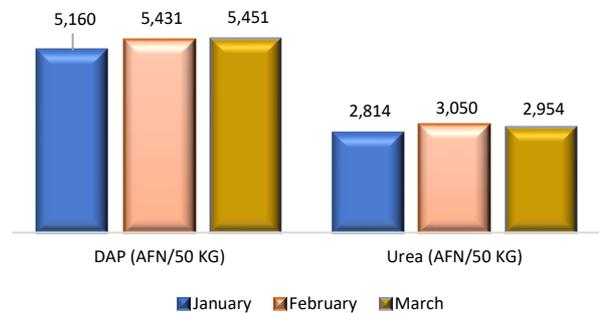


According to WFP’s market monitoring update, the number of days work available in a week improved from 1.6 days per week to 1.9 days per week compared to February in the main urban cities of the country, but it is still below the last two year’s average and last year’s at the same time. As part of typical seasonal progress in agriculture, labor opportunities have slightly improved in rural areas.

Di-ammonium Phosphate popularly known as DAP, is a preferred fertilizer in Afghanistan because it contains both Nitrogen and Phosphorus which are primary macro-nutrients and part of the 18 essential plant nutrients. Russia produces high amounts of nutrients like potash and phosphate—key ingredients of fertilizers. These input prices have increased

globally due to the recent conflict in Ukraine. In Afghanistan, DAP prices were significantly higher by 108% compared to the same time last year. Compared to the month of June 2021, prices were higher by 91%. Higher prices were reported

Fertilizers Prices in 2022



from Nimroz, Parwan, and Laghman.

Urea is a source of Nitrogen, an essential nutrient crucial for crop growth and development. Urea is the most important nitrogenous fertilizer in the country because of its high N content (46%N). On average, the price of urea slightly increased compared to February, however, it is significantly higher by 154% and 133% compared to the same time last year and the month of June 2021, respectively. In several provinces, higher prices of urea fertilizer were reported compared to last month. Prices were higher in Paktya by 70%, Samangan by 33%, Balkh by 18%, and Paktika by 13%.

In the month of March, after the Afghan currency hit the lowest level against the US dollar in the months of December 2021 and January 2022, the value of the Afghan currency partially stabilized. The exchange rate improved from 92 to 88 Afghani per dollar indicating a 4% improvement. The depreciation of the Afghan currency, which was caused by economic and political factors, increased the prices of major food commodities in recent months.. The effects of the curency fluctuations are still being felt in most markets in Afghanistan.

• Conflict and Displacements

From January 1, 2021 to March 20, 2022,, 822,546ⁱⁱ people fled their homes due to conflict across the country. Although the de-facto authorities are encouraging the displaced to move back to the areas of origin, many of the IDPs remain displaced as a lack of livelihood opportunities is preventing them from returning to their areas of origin.

• Natural Disasters

Between January and March 2022, 29,521ⁱⁱⁱ people have been affected by natural disasters, of these 4,251 people were affected by floods, 25,256 people were affected by earthquake and 14 people were affected by landslides or mudflow. No major natural disaster incidents have been reported in the month of March.

● **Humanitarian Response Planning 2022**

In 2022, to address the high levels of food insecurity, FSAC will scale up emergency life-saving food assistance in cash or in-kind for 21.6 million food-insecure men, women and children that includes 20.5 million multiple shock affected people in IPC Phase 3+, 200,144 undocumented returnees, 72,000 refugees, 504,370 IDP's, 150,000 natural disaster affected people and 72,000 Pakistani refugees. A total of 10.7 million vulnerable and food insecure people will also receive assistance to protect and promote livelihoods, including: 10.5 million people facing acute food insecurity (IPC 3 +), 100,000 conflict-affected IDP's, and 100,000 natural disaster-affected people in 'crisis' and 'emergency' levels of food insecurity (IPC 3 and 4), focusing on both rural and urban areas and livelihoods.

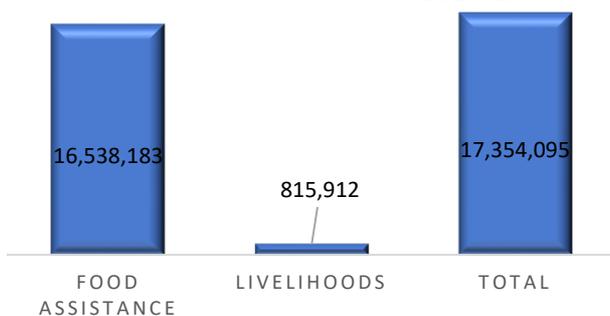
The FSAC requires US \$2.6 billion to cover the urgent food assistance and livelihood needs under the 2022 HRP. US \$436.9 (17% of the required funding) has been received as of March 2022.



● **Humanitarian Assistance**

For the month of March 2022, FSAC partners provided food assistance to 16.5 million people and livelihood assistance to 815,912 people in all 34 provinces. For food assistance, most of these beneficiaries received one to three rounds of assistance. Agriculture and livestock support were also provided to vulnerable people across 32 provinces. Out of the 17.3 million people assisted, 16.4 million were in IPC Phase 3 and 4 people received cash or in-kind food assistance. The focus of humanitarian partners were to primarily support IPC Phase 4 populations. More funding is required to complement and complete the assistance package for these people.

**HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE-
JANUARY - MARCH ACHIEVEMENT**



■ People reached (Jan-Mar)

● **Access**

There were no major access issues reported in the month of March. Some level of interference of the de-facto authorities in the implementation of interventions was reported in most regions, but these were resolved locally without major impact on the delivery of assistance.

● **Pre-lean Season Assessment 2022**

FSAC with the Assessment Working Group (AWG) and technical and financial support from WFP conducted the Pre-lean Season Assessment. Data was collected from 11,250 households in 1,134 enumeration areas in 34 rural and 11 urban analytical domains. A total of 339 field workers (45 supervisors and 294 enumerators), including 43 female enumerators, participated in the data collection process. At least 15% of the data was collected by the female enumerators. To ensure the assessment was properly administered, field level monitoring was conducted by the company's assigned field supervisors as well as FSAC partners. The key results of the PLSA were;

- 74% of households have either no or very low education. The education level is especially low among the women-headed households
- 52% of people have poor consumption, 38% borderline, and only 10% acceptable. 23% of people consume only 0-2 food groups while 33% consume 3-4 food groups. To cover their food consumption gaps, 31% of households resort to emergency livelihood coping strategies, while another 40% apply crisis coping strategies. Only 5% of households do not adopt any livelihood coping strategy for fulfilling their food consumption gap.
- 67% of households experienced at least some sort of shock in the past six months. Out of those who experienced shocks, 72.2% reported a huge increase in food prices, 66% reduced income, 56% loss of employment, and 17% drought/dry spell as the major shocks.
- Compared to last year, income decreased for 97% of households mainly due to reduced employment opportunities (58%) or conflict (22%).
- 92% of households have borrowed money or in-kind items, mainly for food (88%) and health (9%).
- 81% of households experienced difficulties while cultivating their lands. Out of those who faced difficulties, 65% were unable to obtain fertilizers, 63% reported crop pests and diseases, 57% reported irrigation/precipitation water shortages and 56% were unable to obtain seed.
- 68% of livestock holders are facing difficulties while raising animals with a lack of fodder and pasture, the high price of fodder, and lack of access to veterinary services being the major difficulties.

- At national level only 7% (10% Urban vs. 6% Rural) of HHs had women who had paid job or involved in income generating activities 6 prior to the assessment.

- **IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, March 2022**

The analysis workshop was held from March 19 to 28, 2022 in Kabul, Afghanistan. The workshop was facilitated by the country's IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) with the support of the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) and, for the first time, by an expert from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC-EC). The workshop was attended by almost 55 experts from 18 agencies from across Afghanistan, UN organizations, international and national NGOs, technical agencies, and academia.

The analysis was conducted for two time periods -the current period (March–May 2022) and the projection period (June–November 2022). The analysis was mainly based on data from the Pre-Lean Season Assessment (PLSA), along with 13 other secondary data sources. After the completion of the analysis workshop, the IPC report is drafted by the IPC Technical Working Group (TWG), reviewed and revised by

the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU). The report will be endorsed by the IPC Steering Committee (SC) and released in May 2022.

- **Partner Capacity**

Supported by over 236 registered FSAC partners, of which 68 partners are operational in 34 provinces. Despite improvements women's staff participation in humanitarian activities, in various provinces, women's staff are still not allowed to fully participate in humanitarian work.

- **Planned Cluster Activities**

FSAC will conduct the following activities in the months of April and May;

- An Orientation session for the newly elected Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) members.
- Field visits to the eastern and northern regions.
- Conducting information management training for partners.
- Conduct the CCPM (Country Cluster Performance Monitoring) workshop.

ⁱ https://fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/ASM_Apr22_2022.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/idps>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/natural-disasters-0>