



## FSC monthly sitrep

### COVID-19 Situation Update 14<sup>th</sup> September to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

#### Summary

##### Asia & Pacific

In **Afghanistan** Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) activities have largely resumed, with food assistance increasing in scope and livelihoods support restarting ahead of the winter wheat planting cycle. Partners have maintained a high level of operational capacity throughout the crisis. In **Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh)**, partners have completed emergency support for vulnerable host communities (food and unconditional cash) and shifted their programming to support livelihoods.

##### East Africa

In **Somalia**, based on the post-2020 *Gu* assessment results, without sustained humanitarian assistance 2.1 million people are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) food insecurity outcomes between October and December. In **South Sudan**, a second year of unprecedented flooding is ongoing, with 800,000 people so far affected across 37 counties, more than 360,000 displaced, and the country is seeing exceptional price hikes of over 60 percent due to a currency devaluation in August. In **Ethiopia**, projected La Nina conditions will likely worsen food insecurity, particularly in southern and eastern parts of the country ([link](#)).

##### Latin America

In **Haiti**, a currency revaluation against the US Dollar by nearly 50 percent over two months will make imports more competitive and penalize exports, especially for agricultural production. In the context of a highly dollarized economy, many will see their incomes halved. In **Venezuela**, inflation continues to rise and the vast majority of food and non-food traders expect an increase in prices, mostly due to fuel shortages. The high price of gasoline and transport as well as fuel shortages are also affecting traders' capacities to restock, hence limiting the availability of basic goods.

##### Near East and Eastern Europe

In **Iraq**, WFP mVAM estimated that approximately 2.9 million people had insufficient food consumption. In **Lebanon**, the government is planning to remove subsidies (85 percent of wheat costs are subsidized by the Central Bank and 90 percent of fuel imports by the Central Bank). Removal of subsidies will likely lead to an increase in food prices. In the occupied Palestinian Territories (**oPT**), 1.9 million Palestinians are estimated to be in need of food security assistance, an increase of 200,000 people. In the **Syrian Arab Republic**, WFP's national average reference food basket in September 2020 was reported at SYP 83,715

– just a only 3 percent drop from the highest ever recorded price (SYP 86,571, in July) for Syria since the start of the crisis, and more than 230 percent higher than in October 2019 (start of Lebanon’s financial crisis).

### **Southern Africa**

The humanitarian situation in northern **Mozambique** continues to deteriorate, driven by conflict and displacement with about 400,000 IDPs resettled across Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa and Zambezia provinces. In **the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, IPC figures show 21.8 million people (33 percent of the population analysed) are highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3 and above), including 5.7 million in Emergency (Phase 4). This increase is primarily due to the impact of COVID-19, ongoing insecurity leading to displacement, floods and the sharp depreciation of Congolese Franc. The next IPC analyses are currently (mid-October) ongoing in both **Mozambique** and **Zimbabwe**.

### **West and Central Africa**

Most countries are conducting their IPC/CH (**Mali, Cameroon, Nigeria**) or have just finalized it (**Burkina Faso, Central African Republic**). All countries in the region are still working on their HNO and the HRP, which should be finalized around the end of November/December. The security situation remains tense in many countries, especially in Cameroon, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and the Central African Republic, while the coup in **Mali** is still impacting the food security situation, especially food prices and the availability of imported items. In **Nigeria** prices also continue to rise, impacting response with partners shifting to in-kind.

## **ASIA AND PACIFIC UPDATES**

### **Afghanistan**

#### **Situation update:**

- Cases continue to rise slowly, however government partners are now on a regular work cycle and UN and partner staff are returning to work while observing COVID-19 prevention measures.
- COVID-19 is no longer a key concern for many people, as they are more focused on harvesting their crops, having their children return to school and rebuilding their livelihoods. Good rainfall has led to surplus production of wheat in several provinces and good production of various cash crops including grapes, apricots and nuts.
- While some staple goods continue to feature above average prices, most goods have largely stabilized as the purchasing power of casual labourers is gradually improving.
- However, increased insecurity due to an uptick in violence is causing more displacement. Meanwhile natural hazards such as flooding continue to affect pockets of vulnerable people across several provinces, and the fragile economies of neighbouring countries have limited household incomes further due to drops in remittances from COVID-19.

#### **Operational update:**

- FSAC activities have largely resumed, with food assistance increasing in scope and livelihood activities restarting ahead of the winter wheat planting cycle. Partners have maintained a high level of operational capacity across the entire crisis, and the situation is normalizing to the point where most INGO partners are bringing back their international staff.

- Delays at Karachi port due to administrative impediments continue to cause partial supply pipeline ruptures of key staple goods, including vegetable oil. Humanitarians call on authorities in both Pakistan and Afghanistan to develop harmonized and fast-track procedures to facilitate the movement of lifesaving goods.
- More debt, reduced incomes and higher costs have hit refugee and displaced households the hardest. The impact of this latest shock on food security and livelihoods was a key consideration in the recent IPC analysis, which projected that 42 percent of the population (~17 million people) are in IPC 3 and 4, even in a good agricultural production year. Anticipated La Nina impacts are also expected to lead to lower rainfall over the winter months, which could have future impacts on the 2021 cultivation cycle.

**HNO/HRP:** Process ongoing.

### **Cox's Bazar**

#### **Situation update:**

Multisector needs assessment (MSNA) data collected in July, preliminary findings being discussed and validated.

#### **Operational update:**

Partners have completed emergency support for vulnerable host communities as COVID-19 response (food and unconditional cash) and shifted programming to support livelihoods.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

For the moment nothing substantial to report as the JRP process has just started – a workshop with FSS partners in CXB is already planned and will be carried out online.

### **Pacific**

#### **Situation update:**

- Still only extremely limited access to most Pacific countries and territories, mostly repatriates and some essential workers allowed into countries.
- Several vulnerability assessments ongoing across the region. WFP's mVAM in Fiji noted heightened negative coping strategies among other vulnerability indicators, however the proportion of acute vulnerability remains low.
- Cargo and the availability of food and physical access to markets is still fairly normal, however the widespread economic contraction has led to increased vulnerability.

#### **Operational update:**

- FSC is working with Tonga and Samoa to cover their standard operating procedures and information management – agendas to be finalized during a virtual workshop in November.

## NEAR EAST AND EASTERN EUROPE UPDATES

### Iraq

**COVID-19 cases:** 438,265

#### **Situation update:**

The government has started repaying farmers for lost cereal crops in governorates affected by the Daesh incursion, which were marketed to government silos in 2014-15. Preparation for the winter crop planting season has begun, with governorates accommodating plans to irrigate as river water levels reach record lows. WFP mVAM estimated that approximately 2.9 million people had insufficient food consumption, a drop of 374,500 compared with the last week of August.

#### **Operational update:**

Food assistance has been distributed by the Ministry of Displacement and Migration to IDPs living in informal settlements. Cluster partners distributed food assistance to 6,200 of the most vulnerable host community and returnee households. Government food basket distributions are picking up as more commodities are received by the Ministry of Trade, expanding on local distributions.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

HNO narrative and PiN calculation is ongoing and expected to be finalized by October 30. Main challenges to date are about inclusion of non-conflict affected populations and conducting the JIAF analysis with regards to available assessments. The HRP process is expected to end by 19<sup>th</sup> of November.

### Lebanon

**COVID-19 cases:** 65,577

#### **Situation update:**

- A further increase in COVID-19 cases is being reported, while food needs are ongoing following the Beirut port explosion and there is a call to support MSMEs and cash-for-work programmes. The political deadlock continues to affect economic indicators, with the black-market exchange rate rising to nearly LBP 9,000 following the resignation of the newly-designated Prime Minister. Food SMEB prices have also increased month-on-month, reaching their highest price in September 2020 at LBP 105,389. The cost of the SMEB is 174 percent higher than in October, with the north recording the highest month-on-month increase (up 9 percent), followed by Beirut (up 8 percent).
- Between January and July 2020, total imports decreased by 44 percent compared to the same period in 2019. Food imports (excluding cereals) decreased by 19 percent. Some 12 percent of WFP-contracted shops reported scarcity in certain products, such as oil, sugar, fresh produce and subsidized products, while 46 percent reported suppliers not delivering full orders. The government is planning to remove subsidies (for example, wheat imports are subsidized at 85 percent of their cost and fuel imports at 90 percent) by the central bank at the official exchange rate. This will likely lead to importers having to cover the difference between exchanging the cost from dollars to LBP if they are using the informal exchange rate rather than the official exchange rate, a cost that they will most probably transfer to the end consumer, pushing up food prices.

**Operational update:**

In terms of access, the increase in COVID 19 cases has led to localized lockdowns that can affect partners' work, especially if staff and beneficiaries cannot move out of their residences. The Minister of Social Affairs in Lebanon recently approved an increase in the transfer value for the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) and food transfer value for refugees (including food e-vouchers, cash for food, and food portion of MPC) to 100,000 LBP per person per month, as the price of the basic food basket has already reached 100,000 LBP. This increase will be implemented by WFP in October for the NPTP and in November for refugee assistance. The port explosion response has expanded some partners' activities in support of food needs in the Beirut area, either in kind or CBT.

**HNO/HRP:**

Discussions on the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) are ongoing and it is expected to be finalized by October 30. The main challenges are identifying targets for the Lebanese host community.

**Occupied Palestinian Territories**

**COVID-19 cases:** 48,628

**Situation update:**

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown led to a further deterioration of the nutritional status among new vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip. The government has also been unable to pay employees' monthly salaries, a financial crisis that will also delay payments to beneficiaries of cash transfer programmes. Input prices have stabilized in the West Bank but not in the Gaza Strip, a situation aggravated by movement restrictions that have made it difficult for farmers to procure necessary items.

**Operational update:**

There is an urgent need for cash support, especially for households that have lost their main source of income. Buying agricultural products directly from farmers is one of the key actions to maintain production. In the Gaza Strip, the Qatari has committee already stopped providing food in quarantined centres: there is a consequent high risk of COVID-19 spreading if people can no longer stay in these centres due to a lack of food, or if families start bringing food to those staying there. The FSS in coordination with the Health cluster and OCHA are exploring the possibility of mobilizing partners with similar previous experience in providing such support. FSS has also worked with partners to mobilize resources to support people in quarantining at home, and with the Ministry of Social Development to identify additional needs among affected populations in the Gaza Strip due to the pandemic.

**HNO/HRP:**

An estimated at 1.9M Palestinians are estimated to be food insecure, an increase of 200,000 people. This is based on the results of the Socio-Economic Food Security survey (SEFSec, 2018) and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) population growth rate and factors in the impact of COVID-19. The estimate will be revisited early next year based on the 2020 SEFSec survey, which is currently in the preparation stage. The HNO narrative is expected to be finalized by the end of October. While the HRP process has already started (project submissions and framework), the narrative, targets and financial requirements are expected to be completed by the first week of November.

## **Syria**

**COVID-19 cases:** 1,733

### **Situation update:**

- Significant price increases and some shortages of basic goods have been reported across Syria since mid-March 2020. The informal exchange rate weakened to its lowest point on record (SYP 3,200 to US \$1) before stabilizing between SYP 2,100/USD and SYP 2,400/USD in September – a depreciation of about 277 percent since September 2019. The prevailing devaluation of the Lebanese Pound and collapsing Lebanese banking system remain key economic threats that will hamper any recovery of the value of the SYP.
- Agricultural input prices generally stabilized in September but remain high compared to the pre-crisis period. The prevailing high cost of agricultural inputs continues to limit access, especially for smallholder and crisis-affected farmers, as government-subsidized sources are do not meet farmers' requirements. Pre-existing constraints such as the depreciation of the Syrian Pound (SYP) and reduced foreign currency reserves have also limited imports of specific agricultural inputs and raw materials. Most inputs bought at local markets, particularly pesticides, are usually of unknown origin and the quality is quite difficult to ascertain.
- Fuel shortages were also noted in September, which could lead to spikes in agricultural production costs and subsequent future increases in the price of agricultural commodities. If the fuel shortages persist this could adversely affect the coming winter cropping season, especially for mechanized land preparation, planting and even weeding operations in several areas. The fuel situation must therefore be closely monitored in October and November.
- WFP's national average food basket in September was reported at SYP 83,715 – just 3 percent below the highest ever recorded price (SYP 86,571, in July) for Syria since the start of the crisis and 231 percent higher than in October 2019 (start of the Lebanese financial crisis).
- Wildfires also have also continued to impact production of wheat, barley, olives and other tree crops over the summer months. Over 16,000 hectares of wheat are estimated to have burned during the 2019-2020 cropping season. According to consultations with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR), the sector estimates that 32,000 metric tonnes of wheat could have been lost, enough to have met the annual needs of almost 160,000 people. An estimated 12,000 hectares of barley used for animal feed were also lost, while around 3,000 hectares of olive and other tree crops were destroyed by fires that ravaged Syria's coastal Latakia and Tartous governorates and central Homs in September 2020 alone.

### **Operational update:**

- Despite the sector reaching at least 5.6 million people with regular food assistance, significant gaps remain. With an increase in the number of food-insecure people from 7.9 million to 9.3 million, assistance is reaching only 60 percent of those facing acute food insecurity. This is further worsened by the ongoing bread crisis in the country due to a shortage of wheat, especially in southern governorates. FSS partners are assessing the situation to determine the next course of action.
- Critical agricultural and livelihoods support has substantially fallen behind targets, primarily due to limited funding. Only 16 percent of the target was reached for agricultural inputs and support to small-scale food production, 12 percent for livestock asset restoration, 32 percent for livestock vaccinations, 37 percent for infrastructure rehabilitation and just 2 percent for provision of critical services in

support of agriculture-based livelihoods. Given the increased levels of vulnerability, gaps in both food and agriculture livelihood assistance have been recorded in all governorates.

- Insecurity remains a major concern in the south, in particular Dara and Sweida, affecting partners' access to some areas.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

Assessments in government-controlled areas are ongoing, while those in cross-border locations have been completed. Due to delays in getting assessment approvals and the lengthy process, the HNO for 2021 is expected to be published in February. The preparation for the HRP is expected start early February and published in April 2021.

## **WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA UPDATES**

### **Burkina Faso**

**COVID-19 cases:** 2 343 (1,733)

#### **Situation update:**

- All 13 regions of Burkina Faso have registered COVID-19 cases.
- Economic and transport restrictions following the military coup in Mali have been cancelled, flights have resumed and a positive impact on the economy is forecast.

#### **Operational update:**

FSC partners and observers have assisted a total of 1.2 million out of 3.3 million targeted for August and the lean season, a coverage rate of just 37 percent (90 percent in kind and 10 percent in CVA). For IDPs, members have assisted 644,000 out of 921,000 officially registered in August, a coverage rate of 70 percent (81 percent in kind and 19 percent in CVA). For livelihood protection, members assisted 60,000 out of 1 million targeted, a coverage rate of just 6 percent (75 percent in kind and 15 percent in CVA).

The FSC held a series of intercluster and members coordination meetings on the response in the Oudalan district (Sahel) with FAO and WFP Emergency Units. The Oudalan district is one of the two in PH4, with 6,000 people in PH5. A humanitarian convoy led by WFP is scheduled to travel from Ougadougou on November 2.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

The HNO Process is underway through the Cadre Harmonisé. Provisional global results pending HCT approval are an overall PiN of 3.5 million people. The FSC PiN is 2.9 million people in the 6 regions of the humanitarian response and 3.3 million in Burkina Faso. HRP has not yet started.

### **Cameroon**

**COVID-19 cases:** 21,793 (20,167)

#### **Situation update:**

Relentless attacks on civilians, large-scale floods and the impact of the pandemic are exacerbating an already critical humanitarian crisis in Cameroon's far north.

#### **Operational update:** NtR

**HNO/HRP:** CH end of October, HNO in November and HRP in December.

## **Central African Republic**

**COVID-19 cases:** 4,782 (4,288)

### **Situation update:**

- An IPC assessment in September estimated 1.93 million people to be in acute food insecurity, with the pandemic among aggravating factors that further impacted livelihoods of during the lean period.
- The official announcement of the presidential election to be held in December led to various large gatherings that could have increased the spread of COVID-19.
- A joint mission of the national food security survey and monitoring the agricultural campaign is being prepared, with strict adherence to COVID-19 containment measures.
- The Cluster is completing the mapping of decentralized technical government structures to strengthen the dynamics of sub-clusters in the prefectures, while ensuring feedback of information on COVID-19.

### **Operational update:**

- Constraints on the import of production inputs and food to be distributed to beneficiaries have been lifted by the government and the programmes are operational.
- Support from the Humanitarian Fund has enabled the use of helicopters to access remote areas to provide assistance, supervise current interventions and explore areas at risk of flooding.
- To optimize precautions against COVID-19, processes for collecting empirical data on nutrition (SMART) and food security (ENSA, Post-harvest survey) have been postponed. Measuring anthropometric parameters was cancelled during the recent NASM data collection.

**HNO/HRP:** 2.3 million PIN; HNO completed; HRP in November

## **Chad**

**COVID-19 cases:** 1,350 (1,051)

### **Situation update:**

Reopening of shops and restaurants with systematic mask wearing and social distancing required. Curfew between 8pm to 6am. Land borders closed, although commercial flights have restarted. No vehicles or people can enter or leave. Only vehicles transporting goods are allowed in and out from 11pm to 5am and must go directly to their warehouse.

### **Operational update:**

Trainings, targeting, distributions and M&E are the most challenging activities to implement due to social distancing and the limit of 50 people gathering.

**HNO/HRP:** HRP has been launched

## **Mali**

**COVID-19 cases:** 21,793 (20,167)

### **Situation update:**

Harvest for millet and sorghum has started in the south. Heavy rainfall in the east led to damaging floods, and the coup is still impacting the food security situation, especially food prices and availability of imported items.

**Operational update:** NtR

**HNO/HRP:** HNO in November and HRP in December

## **Nigeria**

**COVID-19 cases:** 61,440 (48,445)

### **Situation update:**

- Nigeria's annual inflation rate climbed for a 13<sup>th</sup> straight month to 13.7 percent in September. This is the highest inflation rate since February 2018, amid widespread increases in prices due to ongoing border closures and the pandemic.
- In Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, food prices remain relatively high and partners are seeing increasing transfer values.
- Insecurity remains a challenge, leading to new displacements and new arrivals and making it difficult to access some locations. Heavy rain led roads to become unpassable and some bridges collapsed, limiting transport of food and market operations and leading to further price rises.
- Reduced food stocks as traders supplying Borno, Adamawa and Yobe State have encountered difficulties. This can be partially attributed to reduced food availability due to seasonality and border closures. The extent of the reduced availability is will be monitored against upcoming harvests.

### **Operational update:**

- Increase in food assistance transfer values since early September, due to the significant increase in food prices.
- 20 locations in 12 LGAs have been preliminarily identified for returns by the state government of Borno. Returns are already ongoing to 4 of the 20 locations already effected as at 14 October 2020. Discussions are ongoing between state government and partners to ensure safe returns (Security, Services, Dignity and General Protection).
- Since cooking fuel was officially added to the food basket item list in May 2020, partners are assessing how best to transfer it given the sensitivity that comes with access to cooking fuel. This is especially the case in North East Nigeria, where firewood and charcoal are the main sources fuel and linked to environmental degradation. According to the Borno State Government, forest cover is reducing at a rate of 2km<sup>2</sup> per year.

**HNO/HRP:** PiN for CH completed by 6<sup>th</sup> November, HNO narrative in October, HRP in November.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA UPDATES

### Mozambique

**COVID-19 cases:** 10,258

**Situation update:**

- The distribution of COVID-19 active confirmed cases by Province are: Cabo Delgado (55); Niassa (70); Nampula (30); Zambezia (51); Gaza (26); Tete (39); Manica (3); Sofala (98); Inhambane (8); Maputo Province (575); Maputo City (1,346).
- The humanitarian situation in northern Mozambique (Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa provinces) continues to deteriorate, driven by conflict and displacement. Currently around 400,000 IDPs are resettled across Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa and Zambezia provinces.
- Countrywide IPC analysis took place from 12 to 22 October, and the results will likely be used to refine further the intersectoral and FSC PiN.

**Operational update:**

- FSC partners reached 643,582 food-insecure people (399,859 with food assistance and 243,723 with school feeding) in September, 97 percent of which provided by WFP for a planned FSC target of 813,983 people.
- For livelihoods assistance, 359,338 people were reached during the winter agricultural season from May to September. An additional 95,322 people are planned to be assisted between October and December.
- FSC partners plan to assist about 824,593 food-insecure people in October.
- The FSC component of Cabo Delgado Rapid Response Plan (June-December 2020) is 41 percent funded, however needs have skyrocketed with over 400,000 IDPs. The USD 11.1 million requested is underestimating needs at the moment.
- The FSC component of COVID-19 emergency response plan (June-December 2020) is 54 percent funded.
- Imminent food assistance pipeline breaks are expected in October unless new contributions are received.
- Food security needs, especially for COVID-19 and drought-affected areas, are not being adequately addressed.

**HNO/HRP:**

- The 2021 HNO/HRP will focus on northern Mozambique (Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa provinces)
- The estimated FSC PIN is 1.4 million.
- The HRP will be drafted in the second half of October

### Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

**Situation update:**

- The economic situation is set to deteriorate in the coming months. Although the Congolese Franc remained stable in August and September, foreign exchange reserves are likely to drop to a precarious USD 600 million by the end of 2020, at which level a return to inflation will be inevitable. On the revenue side, the government has only collected about 30 percent of its target for the year. Relatedly,

their capacity to address COVID-19 impacts as well as multiple pre-existing crises has been significantly undermined by a decline in national tax revenues, reduced demand for exports from the mining sector, currency depreciation and a drop in GDP growth by 2.2 percent.

- Further, authorities have reported the [arrival of over 21,000 Congolese people in the province of Kasai](#) after being expelled from Angola. Meanwhile, UNHCR warned that an estimated 49,000 Burundian refugees living in South Kivu since 2015 are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, noting the majority live in densely populated camps where underfunding has led to food ration cuts.
- IPC figures were approved by the government on 15 October and are now official. For the period of July to December, 13 territories were classified in Phase 4 (Emergency) and 68 in Phase 3 (Crisis). Of the 66.6 million people living in the analysed areas, 21.8 million (33 percent of the analysed population) are highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3 and 4), including 5.7 million in Emergency.
- The increase in number compared to the last IPC analysis is due to the impact of COVID-19, continuous insecurity causing population movements, floods and the depreciation of Congolese Franc.
- The projected figures are slightly better as it is foreseen that the impact of COVID-19 will be more limited: markets will reopen, the informal economy will go back to normal, borders will open and supply chains work as before the pandemic.

#### **Operational update:**

- Preparation for the next IPC cycle is ongoing, with needs assessment results to be available by end November, IPC analysis in December/January, publication of results in February and final validation in March 2021.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

- The HNO is at an advanced stage. The methodology for FS and intersectoral PiN has been agreed with OCHA and HCT and now aligned with IPC.
- The HRP is being developed.

### **Zimbabwe**

#### **Situation update:**

- New COVID-19 cases in Zimbabwe have been decreasing since August. However, the number of total infections increased from 7,298 cases and 210 deaths reported on the 8th of September to 8,011 cases and 230 deaths by the 12th of October. The government relaxed some restrictive measures to allow households to resume livelihood activities, however incomes remain depressed rendering many households vulnerable across the country.
- Year-on-year inflation decreased from 838 percent in July to 761 percent in August, and the month-on-month inflation from 36 percent to 8 percent. Food prices are the main driver of inflation, and these also decreased from 977 percent to 866 percent.
- Prices of basic food commodities increased by an average of 10 percent in September. The relatively stable price trends are in line with stabilized foreign exchange rates.
- The National Climate Outlook Forum forecast normal to above-normal rainfall for October to December. Some parts of the country received rain during the first week of October of up to 25mm.
- The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) conducted a 2020 rural assessment in July and the report was approved by the Cabinet on 23 September. The rural ZimVAC found that about 56 percent, or 5.5 million rural people, will be “cereal insecure” at the peak of the hunger season (January to March 2021). This prevalence is one of the highest the country recorded in the recent

past, though slightly lower than last year. The timing for the urban vulnerability assessment is expected to be beginning of November.

- The IPC analysis for rural areas was conducted from 12 – 16 October, with results still to be validated. The findings of the rural IPC will be used for the HNO.

#### **Operational update:**

- For the month of September, partners reported providing in-kind food assistance, vouchers, or cash (USD) to a total of 1,064,000 beneficiaries in both rural and urban zones (96 percent of the monthly target of 1.1 million people), with a further 224,000 beneficiaries receiving agricultural and livelihoods support (51 percent of the target).
- According to the OCHA Zimbabwe Funding Overview (as of 13th of October), only USD 190 million of the USD 483 million total requested budget for the revised 2020 HRP was funded (39 percent).

#### **HNO/HRP:**

- The 2021 HPC was launched in mid-September. The FSLC is working on sectoral contributions to the HNO and HRP.
- The HNO and definition of the FSL PiN should be informed by the rural IPC analysis and planned urban ZimVAC assessment.
- FSLC partners will submit projects for consideration in the 2021 HRP and a multi-stakeholder panel comprising CLAs, INGOs and NGOs, will review the projects by the end of October.
- Planning figures in terms of PiN, targets and financial requirements will be shared with OCHA by the 9th of November, to be included in the publication of the GHO.

## **LATIN AMERICA UPDATES**

### **Haiti**

#### **Situation update:**

- The past month has been very calm from a cyclonic point of view. Major hurricanes could still occur however, as the hurricane season lasts throughout November.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has also slowed in the past month, with 229 deaths to date (+9 people in the last month, up 4 percent) and 8,838 positive cases (+282 people, up 5percent) in the last month.
- The government has been trying to stem the continuous fall of the national currency against the dollar. From mid-2018 to mid-2020, the Gourde had lost 50 percent of its value (from HTG 60 to HTG 120 per dollar). In less than two months, the Gourde has just regained its value of mid-2018; 62 HTG to the dollar this week. This will make imports more competitive and penalize exports, especially agricultural production. In a context where the Haitian economy is highly dollarized, many economic operators therefore see their income halved in less than two months while salary costs have doubled. This also concerns humanitarian organizations.

#### **Operational update:**

- Coverage of needs is still low in Haiti. On the revised HRP 2020 target of 1.5 million people, funding is confirmed for 740,000 (50 percent) on the food assistance component and fewer than 500,000 people for the agricultural/livelihood component (30 percent).

## **HNO/HRP:**

- An HNO workshop was held on October 16 with all active sectors in Haiti to discuss main needs, vulnerabilities, and the intersectoral PiN.
- For the HRP, the volatile economic situation will impact FS sector planning figures, as due to the high cost of the food basket, targeting will hardly be able to include populations in IPC phase 3. With the depreciation of the national currency against the US dollar, it is extremely difficult to estimate the evolution of the food basket for 2021 and therefore propose a reliable budget for the HRP.

## **Colombia**

### **Situation update:**

- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, refugees and migrants now form an even greater proportion of the poorest quintile in the region. This finding is based on a R4V partner report that stated that while informal workers are increasingly included in social protection programmes, despite enhanced efforts by R4V actors to advocate for the inclusion of refugees and migrants into national social protection mechanisms across the region, the majority are engaged in informal work and do not benefit from this.
- On 19 September, Colombia experienced two massacres that left at least 10 dead in the departments of Cauca and Nariño. 246 people have been killed in 61 massacres since beginning of 2020, the highest number since 2014. Antioquía, Cauca and Nariño (on the Pacific corridor) are some of the areas with the highest presence of armed groups fighting for control of the territory. This is contributing to increased insecurity and high levels of violence across the country, resulting in deaths, forced displacement, confinement, and protection concerns related to the presence of anti-personnel mines. The humanitarian needs of the affected population currently exceed institutional response capacities. Violence has also hampered humanitarian access to affected areas, leading to delays in registering victims and providing protection assistance.

### **Operational update:**

- WFP has significantly scaled up its response for the most vulnerable groups in Colombia, including Venezuelan migrants and school children. WFP started to support COVID-affected people in new urban and remote areas, currently 450,000 people every month with food parcels, cash-based transfers, and hot meals as part of its school feeding activities. WFP is supporting governmental priorities, including emergency and livelihoods assistance for indigenous and rural populations in the Amazonia region, the food security initiative led by the First Lady to provide food baskets amid COVID-19 and the government's contact-tracing and selective isolation strategy in eight cities across the country.

## **HNO/HRP:**

The HNO is at advanced stage and the PiN has been calculated. The HRP is being developed.

## **Venezuela**

### **Situation update:**

- As of October 12, Venezuela had confirmed 83,137 cases and 697 deaths due to Covid-19. The real number is most likely much higher.

- People entering Venezuela are required to stay at quarantine centres known as *Puntos de Atención Social Integral*, or PASI. Human Rights Watch reported that while conditions in the centres vary, most returnees interviewed described them as severely overcrowded, with many people sharing a single room. Many also described unsanitary conditions, including a lack of water and electricity to run water pumps and of basic supplies needed for hygiene, such as soap. They said they had serious difficulties getting medical care and food, including formula and clean water for infants.
- The rainy season has caused rivers to overflow and flooding in several states. Some of the most affected communities are in the Girardot and Mariño municipalities of Aragua state, Guanare in Portuguesa state and Upata and Santa Elena de Uairén in Bolívar state.
- The socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 have increased concerns about exacerbated humanitarian needs in the region and in Venezuela. Many companies have been affected by the pandemic, with an impact on economic production and employment. The minimum wage is 800,000 bolivars, which at the official exchange rate of the Central Bank is equivalent to approximately USD 1.80 per month. In addition, the Central Bank of Venezuela (BCV) reports that accounting for accumulated inflation in the past nine months of 2020, the figure rises to 844.1 percent.
- The private agricultural sector reports 120,000 production units and 90,000 producers as heavily affected by the fuel shortage, which translates into a decrease in accessible food.
- The Caritas “Sentinel Monitoring of Acute Malnutrition and Family Food Security” analysed the cost of the Basic Food Basket, which rose from April to July to a maximum increase of 51 percent per month. It is estimated that the official minimum wage (USD 1.40) would cover 0.8 percent of the cost of the food basket. More than half of surveyed households have reduced their food consumption in some way.
- The Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) has produced its first information sheet ([la hoja informativa de la primera ronda de la Iniciativa Conjunta de Monitoreo de Mercados \(JMMI\)](#)). It reports the prices of most products in the region composed of Zulia, Táchira and Trujillo as frequently the highest. The vast majority of food (90 percent) and non-food (81 percent) traders reported expecting an increase in prices due to fuel shortages (81 percent). Almost half of food and non-food traders (48 percent) reported experiencing difficulties restocking, mostly due to the high price of gasoline (90 percent), fuel shortages (79 percent) and the high cost of transportation (74 percent).

#### **Operational update:**

- Local and international humanitarian organizations are assisting returnees and trying to improve conditions in PASI centres, with access reportedly improving in recent weeks. However, their capacity and reach across all PASI centres is limited, so many returnees will not receive services adequate to meet their basic needs (Human Rights Watch).
- In September, FSLC partners have reached almost 40,000 people in 14 states and 46 municipalities.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

- As the 2020 HRP was published in summer, it was decided to proceed with a light revision of the current plan. A qualitative revision of needs will be carried out, while HRP target figures and financial requirements will be updated based on FSC partners’ projects to be submitted in November.

### Ethiopia

#### **Situation update:**

- Flooding and desert locusts have contributed to increased food insecurity in some regions. There are reports of an increase in desert locust infestation in Afar, Tigray and Amhara regions, and control measures are being implemented by the government and partners.
- Floods have contributed to an increase in food-insecure and displaced people in the Afar region. Humanitarian assessment missions have noted the need to provide multi-sectoral assistance to affected households. Food rations are being distributed by the government through the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC).
- Projected La Nina conditions will likely worsen food insecurity in the country, particularly in southern and eastern parts ([link](#)).

#### **Operational update:**

- The mid-year review of the 2020 HRP was officially released on the 1st of September 2020. An estimated 11.8 million people are projected to be food insecure in the second half of the year, due to various hazards including below normal rains, desert locust, floods, conflict and COVID-19.
- Partners are currently distributing cash/food rations to cover September to mid- October food needs. Flooding in some low-lying areas has contributed to delays in food movement to some of the food distributions points.

**HNO/HRP:** Process still at the very beginning, no particular challenge reported.

### South Sudan

#### **COVID-19 cases:**

The actual number of cases is likely to be much higher than the number of confirmed cases due to limited testing. Similarly, the actual total death toll from COVID-19 is likely to be higher due to limited testing and problems in attributing the cause of death.

#### **Situation update:**

- The second year of unprecedented flooding continues, with 800,000 people affected across 37 counties and more than 360,000 displaced. There have been exceptional price hikes due to a currency devaluation in August (prices rising by over 60 percent). Of special concern is Jonglei State, with a convergence of compounding shocks (protracted crisis, COVID-19, floods, intensified violence, macro-economic price hikes, etc).
- Significant contributing and aggravating factors suggest a worse situation than the 2019 lean season; this will be confirmed in the next weeks by an IPC review of outcome level indicators.

#### **Operational update:**

- Flood response: food assistance to 1.1 million people, livelihoods support to 108,000 people and projected pipeline of 55,000 HHs.
- Planned IPC for August: food assistance to 2 million people (65 percent in-kind, 18 percent CVA and 17 percent mixed) livelihoods support to 116,000 HHs (approx. 700,000 people).

- There have been access issues due to conflict and flooding, and in the worst cases such as Pibor County a combination of both, especially in Phase 4 locations which is very concerning.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

IPC will finish after HNO submission date for PiN. Pending final data and PiN from modelling and IPC. HRP budget likely to be similar to the 2020

### **Somalia**

#### **Situation update:**

- Based on the post-2020 *Gu* assessment results, 2.1 million people across Somalia are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) outcomes between October and December without sustained humanitarian assistance. An additional 3 million people are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2), bringing the total number of people facing acute food insecurity to 5.1 million.
- However, anticipated La Niña conditions are associated with higher likelihood of consecutive below-average rainfall, and Somalia faces a high risk that drought conditions will develop by early 2021. Desert locust could exacerbate crop and pasture losses.
- In Somalia, when two consecutive rainy seasons perform poorly or fail, past trends show that rapid and large-scale deterioration in acute food insecurity can occur (e.g. 2010/2011 and more recently 2016/2017). As a result, a high proportion of the population that is projected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in October-December 2020 could deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in early 2021. As such, for the HNO planning the FSC is using an average projection of 3.5 million Somalis to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) through 2021. The current PiN is comparable with 2019 and lower than 2020 (by 25 percent) in terms of trend.

#### **Operational update:**

In September a total of twenty-eight partners reported various food security responses:

*Under objective 1 (Improved access to food and safety nets):* FSC partners assisted 1.5 million people out of 2.1 million targeted (73 percent achievement). Responses in Bakool, Lower Shabelle and Middle Juba are less than 40 percent of the target mainly due to access. In Banadir, coverage is less 10 percent due to funding shortfalls. Notably, people assisted with unconditional transfers are mostly those in IPC 3 or worse who experience significant consumption gaps.

*Objective 2 (Provision of seasonal livelihood inputs):* During September, FSC partners assisted 163,886 beneficiaries with seasonal inputs and livestock asset protection. Since August a total of 189,916 beneficiaries have been assisted with farming inputs and fishing equipment. The cumulative number of people reached accounts for 18 percent of the seasonal target (1,060,406)

The FSC has revitalized agriculture and livestock working groups collaborating with FAO and the two line ministries (Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and Ministry of Livestock, Range and Forestry). The two working groups will map ongoing activities and refine priorities going forward. The groups are linked with similar platforms at global FSC level to tap into existing knowledge and best practices.

#### **HNO/HRP:**

- HNO was completed and no particular challenge was reported, however during the HRP process OCHA drafted three Strategic Objectives for the HRP, two of which are:

SO1: Reduce loss of life for 2.8 million of the most severely vulnerable people, including 1 million children under 5 years old, by decreasing the prevalence of acute malnutrition, public health threats and outbreaks, abuse and violence by the end of 2021.

SO2: Sustain the lives of 4 million people requiring humanitarian assistance, including 2.4 million non-IDPs, 1.6 million IDPs and people with disability across 74 districts, by ensuring safe, equitable and dignified access to food and essential services by the end of 2021.

- OCHA has also proposed two options with regards to people in different IPC phases:
  - Split IPC 3 and IPC 4 populations, such that those in IPC 4 will be reflected under SO1 and IPC 3 will be reflected under SO2; or
  - Reflect both IPC 3 and IPC 4 populations together under SO2.
- While it was eventually agreed to include all IPC 3 and 4 under SO1, HC/OCHA have indicated that this is only temporary.