



## IPC Post-Analysis Monitoring Brief September 2021 - January 2022

### Introduction

The Post-harvest IPC Acute Analysis conducted in September 2021 classified an estimated 22.8 M<sup>i</sup> (55%) of the total population in IPC Phase 3 or above in projection period (November 2021 – March 2022) which corresponds to winter lean season. Considering the evolving context regarding political instability, food prices, employment, weather conditions, ongoing drought, the restricted economic environment, and other compounding food security drivers, the resulting food security situation in Afghanistan is fragile and requires regular monitoring for an informed decision making. The IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) recommended to continuously assess the severity of the situation and fast changing context during the projection period and review the key assumptions for the projection period and ascertain whether projection analysis is still valid. The IPC Post Monitoring Brief is mainly based on the secondary data of contributing factors e.g., price, drought, etc. that provides an overview on the most updated food security situation to the decision makers.

**Key highlights:** The IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) affirms that there has been no improvement in the food security situation. Assumptions on the performance of the food security key drivers and other related factors influencing food security used for the IPC projection analysis remain valid ranging at different severity levels.

### Review of Food Security Drivers

**Hydro-meteorological Factors:** As per latest available forecasts in December 2021, key global and regional climate prediction centers suggest a weak to moderate La Niña event hitting Afghanistan in the wet winter precipitation season of November 2021 to March 2022. Analysis of the hydro-meteorological factors such as rainfall, snow depth, floods and temperature until January 2021 indicate that the La Niña phenomenon is currently active going into winter of 2021-22 and spring (March – May) of 2022. ENSO and Climate modeling suggests that the current La Niña event is near or at its peak, with a return to neutral ENSO likely by April or May 2022. This means that the current La Niña will be a consecutive event (“double-dip LN”) following a moderate-severe La Niña in 2020-21 that resulted in a severe drought in Afghanistan.

The La Niña will likely result in lower-than-average precipitation from December 2021 to February 2022 in Afghanistan, which is likely to continue further into 2022. Longer range forecasts (6-months), suggest that below-average precipitation is likely to continue till summer (June – August) of 2022. Below average snowfall is also anticipated leading to lower-than-average snowpack formation during December 2021, which anomaly is observed to reduce in January 2022; however, if the snow cover and snow depth anomaly continues in February 2022 then the spring-summer (March – August) months may witness cascading adverse effects on irrigation availability for cereal and horticulture cultivation and pasture growth.

Analysis of Snow Depth Difference Anomaly (January 2021 vs. 2022) shows that while the situation is not as severe as in 2021, some areas of concern namely parts of north (Faryab, Jawzajan and Balkh), north-east (Takhar and Kunduz) and central region (Kabul) remain in terms of snow cover and depth. This anomaly when considered along with the soil moisture depletion and temperature anomaly is a cause of concern from cereal and pasture growth in spring-summer months. Heavy snowfall has however been reported in 30 of the country’s 34 provinces during the first week of January 2022 and that major roads had been blocked in 10 provinces. Similarly, heavy rainfall and flash floods in south (Kandahar, Helmand and Nimruz) has been reported to have affected around 3000 individuals.



Temperature anomalies are also expected i.e. higher than average temperature is most likely across most of Afghanistan with some areas forecast to have lower than average temperatures; essentially temperature anomaly is witnessed across the country. These La Niña effects will likely result in poor soil moisture conditions during critical cereal cultivation months, which when considered with the already depleted soil moisture conditions from summer (March – May) of 2021 and along with the reduced precipitation may result in below average wheat production and adverse pasture vegetation growth conditions in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the cumulative adverse effects on pasture vegetative conditions, fodder availability and its cascading adverse effects on livestock health are anticipated in spring-summer (March – August) months.

**Employment Opportunities:** Before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in early 2020, the unemployment rate in Afghanistan was estimated to be 40%<sup>1</sup>. The deepening economic crisis has been particularly devastating for critical sectors of the Afghan economy, including agriculture, public administration, social services, and construction, with hundreds of thousands of workers losing their job or not receiving wages. It is estimated that 85% of private manufacturing factories (employment source for 8% of the people) in Herat, Balkh, and Kabul are shut down due to the restrictions in the banking sector and their disconnect with international banks.<sup>2</sup> With the current uncertainties over \$ 5 billion of construction projects – where 9% of Afghans were employed – are at halt.<sup>3</sup> It has also been estimated that the Afghan economy has shrunk by 30% in 2021.<sup>4</sup> Other employment opportunities like international and national NGOs had reduced their operations plus multiple development projects dependent on foreign aid were put on hold.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, education sector (*source of income for 4% of Afghans*) is experiencing an uncertain future with half of private universities and schools closed<sup>6</sup>.

Most of the civil servants have been paid for only two months out of the 6 months they have worked<sup>7</sup>, the payment has been done as per the new salary scale, according to new policy the amount of salary is reduced for all public staffs, leading the middle-class segment of the population having a reduced purchasing power<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, the Afghanistan security forces have not been paid and most likely they will not get paid for the period of their service.

The recent employment prospect in Afghanistan by the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows that the ensuing crisis has paralyzed the economy and continues to have dire impacts on the labour market. More than half a million workers in the formal sectors are estimated to have lost their job in the third quarter 2021, relative to a hypothetical scenario with no change in administration, which represents 8 per cent fewer working women and men. The report additionally reveals that employment losses are expected to increase to nearly 700,000 by the second quarter 2022, as enterprises struggle to stay viable and work becomes scarce. If the situation of women deteriorates further and outmigration intensifies, employment losses could increase to more than 900,000 jobs by the second quarter 2022. The impact on female employment is severe. Women’s employment decreased by an estimated 16 per cent in the third quarter

<sup>1</sup> <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/unemployment-rate-spikes-afghanistan>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jurist.org/news/2021/10/afghanistan-dispatches-85-of-factories-are-now-closed-and-more-will-be-shut-down-soon/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-175761>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/afghanistans-economic-collapse-could-prompt-refugee-crisis-imf-2021-10-19/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/09/after-taliban-takeover-can-afghanistans-economy-survive>

<sup>6</sup> <https://ariananews.co/en/afghanistan/half-of-the-private-universities-were-closed/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.khaama.com/we-prevent-economic-collapse-in-afghanistan-talibans-fm-456456/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://8am.af/new-taliban-led-government-payroll-for-government-employees/>



2021, relative to a hypothetical scenario with no change in administration. In the absence of any substantial policy shift, female employment losses are expected to increase to 21 per cent by mid-2022.<sup>9</sup>

**Livelihood Situation:** With recent economic crisis and increasing poverty, many cases of death due to dire situation has been reported, the death of 8 children in Kabul<sup>10</sup>, multiple incidents of committing suicide due to the poverty and hunger in different parts of the country,<sup>11</sup> selling children to buy food and early marriage of girls to access food have been reported.<sup>12</sup>

Overall 71 percent of all Afghans live in rural areas and a further 5 percent are nomadic (herders); with agriculture generating 25.5 percent of Afghanistan's GDP apart from directly employing 45 percent of the national workforce and providing livelihoods benefits (direct + indirect) to over 80 percent of the country's population. Agriculture production particularly rain-fed wheat cultivation and pasture vegetation conditions were drastically impacted by the 2021 drought. 2021 Sumer wheat and cereal harvest estimates indicate an overall 18 to 27 percent reduction in the harvest (rain-fed and irrigated cereal cultivation considered together) compared to the average production of cereals in Afghanistan apart from reducing the pasture and water availability for livestock.

Severe stress on agriculture livelihoods is evident from several factors ranging from significant loss of agriculture (both crop and livestock) production in 2021 due to the La Niña induced severe drought and lack of access to quality inputs (seeds, fertilizers, animal feed, fodder, and such) for agriculture production for over 76 percent farmers and herders. Stress in rural markets is apparent from the reduced and/or disrupted flow of agriculture produce in the local markets to the sharp drop in livestock prices coupled with significant increase in inputs' prices across local markets in rural areas. The ongoing second year of drought has impacted most areas of Afghanistan, which coupled with the current economic crisis is already tipping smallholders (farmers and herders) towards adopting "de-capitalizing mechanisms" including distress sales of productive assets. Moreover, with the political changes in mid-August, main markets have got disconnected with the international markets because most of the agricultural productions could not be exported to the international markets due to border closure and countries stopping international flights into Kabul International Airport.

Additionally, most of the large scale agricultural and livestock support projects' funding has significantly reduced leading to these projects / programs being put on standby, which is a cause of concern because investments made in agriculture sector, food nutrition security drivers and food-market systems run a high risk of being reversed rapidly and disproportionately. To overcome these reversals may require prohibitively high investments in the future hence it is crucial to safeguard and protect these gains in the agriculture sector on addressing the underlying drivers of food nutrition security as well as keeping the food-market systems active and productive. Seventy six percent smallholder farmers continue to lack access to agriculture inputs (quality seeds, fertilizers, feed, etc.) and/or have quality and affordability concerns while a similar proportion (76 percent) livestock herders continue to face difficulties in livestock keeping with animal diseases, constrained access to pasture and water, difficulty to purchase feed, and difficulty in accessing veterinary services. A sharp decline in livestock prices coupled with a substantial increase in the prices of feed and fodder, quality seeds and fertilizers were reported from almost all provinces.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/issue-briefs/WCMS\\_834525/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/issue-briefs/WCMS_834525/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>10</sup> <https://8am.af/eng/eight-orphans-die-hungry-in-western-kabuls-poorest-neighborhood/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/desperate-afghans-forced-to-sell-children/a-59845125>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/desperate-afghans-forced-to-sell-children/a-59845125>



**Commodity Prices and Banking Sector:** A cash shortage means Afghans are running out of money while prices of basic items—from food to medicine—are skyrocketing. The situation is further compounded by the impact of sanctions and the freezing of State assets. Donor countries’ halt in funding and freezing of Central Bank assets have created a major financial crisis for Afghanistan. However, as of October 2021 access of people to banks has slightly improved due to the new regulations that the clients can withdraw USD 400 or its equivalent in Afghani per week which has reduced the public panic to some extent.

The December 2021 WFP Market price monitoring revealed that the prices of wheat flour has increased 53%, cooking oil 40%, sugar 36%, pulses 24%, rice 18% whereas the price for diesel it has increased 50% comparing to June 2021. The Afghani currency devaluation against USD from September – December is 17% and the prices of most of food and non-food commodities reached to its historical peaks mostly due to fluctuation of currency exchange rate and Afghani currency devaluation. Stability and predictability of price could be considered as the major impediment in Afghanistan. Worsening of the terms of trade in rural markets were reported with significantly lower sales being reported apart from substantial “contract in demand” and insufficient supply / reduced supplies of agriculture produce and inputs.

**Health and Nutrition Situation:** The UN has warned that there will be one million children at high risk of dying due to severe acute malnutrition over the coming months. Some hospitals like the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital in Kabul had to expand its space dedicated to malnutrition cases from one room to three. Also, cases of children suffering from malnutrition is on rapid rise across the country. Based on the reports, health sector is on the edge of a collapse with thousands of unpaid health staff resulting from the suspension of World Bank support as main donor of health system and lack of logistical support and medicine in public hospitals<sup>13</sup>. Reported COVID-19 cases have decreased significantly compared to the same time last year. As per the World Health Organization 210 death cases have been reported during the projection period so far compared to 875 death cases were reported for the same period last year.

**Conflict:** Violence and conflict between de-facto authorities and the previous government forces intensified progressively during 2021 and escalated between May–August. The conflict led to a high number of fatalities among fighters and civilians. Since 15 August the conflict has decreased considerably and the internal displacement due to insecurity has reduced significantly. Based on the OCHA reports as of January to December the total number of IDPs across the country is 710 039<sup>14</sup>, with an increase of about 70,000 moving between October and December. With the reduction in conflict, less armed groups are operating, however, criminal activities, robberies, attacking of the de-facto authorities’ security forces have been reported. There have been incidences of MIED, RCIED and other IED attacks attributed to ISIS-Khorasan Province and former government forces which have been mainly centered in Kabul, Nangahar and Kunar Provinces. Several demonstrations against the de-facto authorities have also occurred in Kabul. Despite these security incidences, the humanitarian operating environment is relatively open and implementing partners can deliver assistance with medium to low security risk and limited interference. However, the security situation remains extremely volatile. In some parts of the country resistance movements have been formed and the people are highly concerned about the uncertain security situation.

**Humanitarian assistance:** In response to deepening humanitarian need and acute protection risks increased vulnerabilities during the winter period, the Inter Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT) developed a multi-sector plan (Flash Appeal) detailing a four-month (September-December 2021) and Winterization Plan (November-

<sup>13</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/afghanistans-health-care-system-on-the-brink-of-collapse/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/idps>



February), all strategic responses to the current crisis. The Flash Appeal focused largely on unmet needs detailed in the 2021 HRP (Humanitarian Response Plan) as well as incorporated new emerging needs. The Winterization plan focused on the increased humanitarian needs during the winter period. Of the \$606 M requested under the Appeal FSAC requirement was for \$270M to assist 10.8M people. Of the 10.8 M people, 7.3 M people required food assistance while 3.5 M people required critical livelihoods assistance, including early support for the winter wheat planting season and livestock support.

A total of 302M has been received for FSAC under the Flash Appeal and Winterization Plan. Noting the overlap between the Appeal and Winterization Plan between November and December, between 1 September and 30 December, approximately 9.4 million people were assisted with food assistance while 1.8 million people have been reached with agriculture and livelihood assistance across Afghanistan's 34 provinces. What was planned under the appeal and winterization plan has been achieved while partners have scaled up assistance as necessitated by the high number of people projected to be in IPC Phase 3 and above during the period of November 2021 to March 2022.

## **Conclusion**

The majority of Afghanistan population cannot meet basic needs and the economy and public services are at near collapse despite the end of major conflict. Households are reported to be engaging into irreversible coping strategies and children are at high risk of acute malnutrition due to limited access to nutritious food. Despite these reports, the IPC TWG affirms that there has been no major change in the food security situation – as the situation is as projected. Assumptions on the performance of the food security drivers and other related factors influencing food security used for the IPC projection analysis remain valid ranging at different severity levels. The IPC TWG still estimates 22.8 M (55%) of the total population in IPC Phase 3 or above in projection period (November 2021 – March 2022).

It is critical to continue monitoring the various drivers of food security in the coming couple of months which could have an impact on the food security situation particularly: progression of La Niña phenomenon and its effects on cereal production, pasture growth and livestock health, food prices, imports, and markets, imposed sanctions and financial freeze of the Afghan assets, exchange rate, access to services, conflict, and humanitarian assistance.

## **Next steps**

The IPC TWG will continue to monitor the food security situation through review of the key food security drivers and to provide updates on a regular basis, depending on the evolving situation and available data sources. To provide a complete food security snapshot of the situation the Pre-Lean Season Assessment by FSAC and WFP, which along with FAO's planned next round of assessment on "Impact monitoring of shocks on agriculture production, food security and agriculture markets" will be conducted wherein data collection from approximately 11,300 respondents across 34 provinces during February-March 2022, would produce the most updated food security, livelihood, and nutrition data to feed in the upcoming IPC Analysis. The findings of the analysis will be validated and disseminated in April.

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<sup>i</sup>[https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Afghanistan\\_AcuteFoodInsec\\_2021Oct2022Mar\\_report.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Afghanistan_AcuteFoodInsec_2021Oct2022Mar_report.pdf)

[https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Afghanistan\\_AcuteFoodInsec\\_2021Oct2022Mar\\_snapshot.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Afghanistan_AcuteFoodInsec_2021Oct2022Mar_snapshot.pdf)