Below-average rainfall likely to impact agricultural production in northern Mozambique

KEY MESSAGES

- Delays in the onset of rainfall, above-average temperatures, and prolonged dry spells across Mozambique are likely to impact potential harvests for the 2021/22 agricultural season, particularly in northern Mozambique. However, early planted crops in Maputo province and the southern part of Gaza province have recovered following improved rainfall in December, but localized areas are likely to replant. In Inhambane province, northern Gaza province, and central Mozambique, the effective start of rainfall was delayed for 20-30 days before beginning in mid-to-late December. In northern Mozambique, cumulative rainfall is less than 45 percent of the long-term average. Across Mozambique, households are planting whenever it rains, depending on seed availability.

- Most poor households are facing None (IPC Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, but area-level Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes persist in areas impacted by natural shocks over the past three years. In Cabo Delgado, most households have been unable to engage in the 2021/22 agricultural season. Conflict-affected areas are likely in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), with humanitarian food assistance (HFA) driving Stressed (IPC Phase2!) outcomes in more secure areas. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely to emerge in Mecula district, Niassa province, following attacks by insurgents. In urban and peri-urban areas, most poor households remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to below-average economic activity from COVID-19 prevention measures.

- In November 2021, Food Security Cluster (FSC) partners provided humanitarian food assistance (HFA) to around 806,000 people in northern Mozambique. Due to limited resources, WFP provided half monthly rations equivalent to 39 percent of daily kcals in November and December. The distribution of full rations is likely to resume in January 2022. Other humanitarian organizations are also providing HFA to accessible areas in coordination with the Food Security Cluster and district authorities. However, attacks along the border with Tanzania and in Niassa province are displacing households and increasing humanitarian assistance needs.

- In November 2021, maize grain prices remained atypically stable or declined in most monitored markets. The maize grain prices are likely self-adjusting to offset the high maize grain prices in 2019 and 2020. In November, maize grain prices are 6 to 50 percent lower than last year, except in Montepuez where maize grain prices are 20 percent above last year’s prices. Compared to the five-year average, November maize grain prices are 15 to 36 percent lower, except in Montepuez, where maize grain prices are 51 percent above the five-year average. Maize grain prices are similar to the five-year average in Maputo, Massinga, and Bárue. As typical, maize meal and rice prices are relatively stable, with mixed trends compared to last year and the five-year average.
CURRENT SITUATION

In early December 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADER) published the 2020/2021 agricultural production estimates. Last season, production was around 8 percent greater than 2019/2020. Around 1.82 million MT of maize was produced, a 12 percent increase compared to the 2019/2020 season. Similarly, rice and bean production increased by 18-22 percent, with peanuts, tuber, and vegetable production increasing by 3-5 percent. Last year’s average to above-average rainfall also benefited livestock holdings, which increased by 1-9 percent. At the start of the current 2021/2022 agricultural season, most poor rural households are facing None (IPC Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes and gradually increasing their reliance on market food purchases as food stocks from the 2020/2021 harvest deplete through the lean season. Additionally, most poor households are intensifying their engagement in typical coping strategies to meet their food needs, including reducing spending on non-food items, purchasing less preferred foods, and supplementing their diet with wild foods. However, in Cabo Delgado, the impact of the conflict in 2021, below-average household food stocks, limited opportunity to engage in agricultural activity, and limited access to income-earning opportunities for IDPs and host communities is driving Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. In more secure areas of Cabo Delgado, sustained humanitarian assistance is driving area-level Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely emerging in Mecula district in Niassa province following attacks by insurgents that displaced over 3000 people and disrupted economic activity.

The onset of rainfall for the 2021/2022 agricultural season is delayed across most of northern Mozambique and parts of the central and southern regions (Figure 1). In late October and early November, moderate to heavy rainfall in Maputo province and southern Gaza province encouraged many households to begin planting; however, dry spells and above-average land surface temperatures (LSTs) in mid- and late November resulted in the withering of crops and households replanting. In Zambézia and Tete provinces, moderate to heavy rainfall in mid-November provided a false start to the rainy season. However, in southern and much of central Mozambique, crop conditions are likely to improve following sustained rainfall since mid-December. Field informants report that farmers are expecting a near-average 2021/2022 agricultural season in southern and central Mozambique following the start of the rains in mid-to-late December. However, in northern Mozambique, cumulative rainfall from October 1, 2020, to January 5, 2022, is likely to be less than 45 percent of the 1981-2020 average (Figure 2). According to CHIRPS satellite preliminary and forecast data, October 1, 2021, to January 5, 2022, is likely to be the driest start to the season on record across Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula provinces, and in parts of Zambézia, Sofala, northern Manica, and Tete provinces. Due to above-average temperatures and poor rainfall, vegetation is likely in very poor condition in central and northern Mozambique (Figure 3). Across Mozambique, households are expected to continue planting whenever it rains with the hope of establishing a crop to harvest in April/May 2022.

According to the National Directorate of Water Resources Management (DNGRH), the Pequenos Libombos dam, which supplies water to Greater Maputo and the surrounding area, is at 86 percent capacity, while the Massingir and Corumana dams, which supply water to the main irrigated areas in Gaza and Maputo provinces are at 60 and 48 percent capacity, respectively. In southern Mozambique, dam capacity levels are above the five-year average and well above capacity levels last year when the Pequenos Libombos, Massingir, and Corumana dams were at 19, 40, and 26 percent capacity, respectively. Additionally, persistent upstream rains, particularly in South Africa and Eswatini, and the opening of the dam gates resulted...
in localized flooding along the Incomâti River in lowland areas of Manhiça district. Preliminary data indicate around 1200 hectares of crops were affected, with around 29 hectares likely to be replanted. The district government activated an emergency plan to support the most affected households. The dams in the central and northern regions remain at typical levels supported by rainfall at the end of the last rainy season. The near average to above-average water supply is expected to support water access for the major cities and irrigation systems in southern Mozambique.

In November 2021, the Food Security Cluster (FSC) partners provided humanitarian food assistance (HFA) to around 806,000 people in Cabo Delgado, Nampula, and Niassa provinces, with just over 90 percent of beneficiaries located in Cabo Delgado. Due to limited resources, WFP is providing half monthly rations equivalent to 39 percent of daily kilocalorie requirements for November and December. However, the distribution of full rations is likely to resume in January 2022. Other humanitarian organizations are also providing HFA to accessible areas in coordination with the Food Security Cluster and district authorities.

In November, the number of violent clashes between fixed insurgent positions and military forces in Cabo Delgado increased in frequency and the number of associated casualties after observing a steady decline since July. Attacks have been concentrated particularly in districts along the border with Tanzania and spread to Niassa province as insurgents seek food and resources. According to the IOM and Mozambiquan government, in Niassa province, as of December 24, over 3,300 people from Naulala and surrounding localities have been displaced where they are residing in temporary sites in Mecula sede. There is concern among humanitarian partners that the spread of conflict will further pressure limited humanitarian response resources due to increased IDPs. In Cabo Delgado, from December 1-22, the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) cumulatively reported over 4,400 IDPs were on the move, with around 75 percent of the IDPs on the move reporting an intention to return to their place of origin. Likely, the increased travel to Palma, Muidumbe, Ancuabe, and Mueda is due to the improved security situation and a need for households to engage in livelihood activities.

From October to November 2021, maize grain prices remained atypically stable or declined, except in the Massinga market in Inhambane province, where maize grain prices increased 18 percent in line with seasonal trends. The atypical stability and decline in maize grain prices during the lean season are likely due to prices self-adjusting to offset the high 2019 and 2020 maize grain prices following successive shocks, including cyclones, droughts, and flooding. In November 2021, maize grain prices are 6 to 50 percent lower than last year, except in the Montepuez market, where maize grain prices are 20 percent above last year’s prices due to low supply due to the conflict in Cabo Delgado (Figure 4). Compared to the five-year average, maize grain prices in November are 15-36 percent lower, except in Montepuez, where maize grain prices are 51 percent above the five-year average and similar to the five-year average in Maputo, Massinga, and Bárue. As typical, maize meal and rice prices were stable from October to November in most markets. However, in Maputo, Lichinga, Chichualacualu, and Malema markets, maize meal prices increased by 11-33 percent due to localized and temporary changes in demand and supply levels. The impact of localized and temporary changes in demand and supply levels is illustrated by the Mutarara market, where maize meal prices decreased 17 percent following a 20 percent increase last month. Similarly, rice prices remain stable except in the Chókwe, Malema, Bárue markets, where a 6-25 percent increase was driven by localized and temporary changes in demand and supply levels. This is illustrated in Chókwe, where rice prices increased by 11 percent in November, following a 10 percent decrease in prices in October. However, in the Lichinga market, November rice prices are 47 percent greater than October. Compared to last year, maize meal and rice prices had a mixed trend. In most markets, maize meal prices in November were similar to prices last year, while rice prices in most
Markets are 6-25 percent greater than last year. Compared to the five-year average, maize meal and rice prices in November 2021 had a mixed trend. Overall, market access is normal, and the stable to below-average prices are supporting household purchasing power through the lean season.

The emergence of the COVID-19 Omicron variant and the return of thousands of Mozambican migrant workers from South Africa for the Christmas holiday season is likely contributing to the rapid increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in December. The seven-day rolling average of confirmed cases between December 1 and December 29 has increased from 13 to over 2000 cases, with confirmed deaths increased from 0-2 per day to 5-12 deaths per day. As of December 26, around 26 percent of the population has received at least one vaccine dose, with around 18 percent fully vaccinated. On December 20, the government extended COVID-19 control measures for 30 days, but the nightly curfew is suspended for December 24 and 25 and December 31 and January 1. Borders between Mozambique and South Africa remain open, along with the Ressano Garcia border post, and trade flows are at near-normal levels. The continuation of COVID-19 control measures is likely to continue negatively affecting the livelihoods of poor urban and peri-urban families, particularly those who engage in petty trade and small business. Households affected by the measures are likely to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to below-average economic activity impacting household purchasing power. The most affected poor urban households are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

**UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS**

Most of the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET’s most likely scenario for the Mozambique Food Security Outlook for October 2021 to May 2022 remain unchanged except for the following:

- Since November, there has been a resurgence of attacks against civilian targets in Cabo Delgado, particularly in districts along the border with Tanzania, and spreading to Niassa province as insurgents seek food and resources. In Cabo Delgado, attacks are likely to continue at recently elevated levels, though a broader geographic distribution of attacks is likely given the insurgency’s transition back to asymmetric warfare tactics. Although some IDPs have started to return to their homes to prepare for the next agricultural season, most IDPs are unlikely to return due to continued insecurity. With basic livelihoods disrupted, IDPs are expected to remain dependent on emergency humanitarian assistance to fill gaps in food consumption.

- Based on rainfall to date and forecast models, below-average rainfall is most likely for December 2021 to March 2022 in northern Mozambique.

- The late onset of effective rainfall is likely to reduce agricultural activity, negatively impacting income from agricultural labor. The late start to the agricultural season is likely to result in a below-average to average crop harvest in 2022.

- Across Mozambique, maize grain prices in most markets are expected to remain stable due to price re-adjustments. However, seasonal increases are likely through the lean season, peaking in January or February 2022.

**PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2022**

Households are expected to seasonally increase their reliance on food purchases from local markets as food stocks diminish through the lean season. Most poor households in rural areas remain engaged in agricultural activities, including planting and weeding. However, the delay in the effective start of rainfall, particularly in the central region, is likely to delay the start of the green harvest (typically in March) and reduce potential harvests. In southern Mozambique, moderate rainfall in the second half of December has helped recover crops following dry spells and above-average temperatures in late November and early December. However, some households did have to replant. In March, poor households are likely to continue expanding income-earning opportunities and coping strategies to meet their food needs due to a delayed harvest and below-average crop yields. However, in April and May, most poor households in southern and central Mozambique are expected to be facing None (IPC Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity outcomes as household food access improves with the harvest. In Cabo Delgado, areas affected by conflict will likely remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) as food and income access remains well below pre-conflict levels due to poor engagement in the 2021/2022 agricultural season and limited access to HFA due to insecurity. In more secure areas of Cabo Delgado, high staple food prices, including maize grain, and increased competition for income-earning opportunities are expected to drive Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes, while areas with regular HFA access will likely face area-level Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes. In Mecula district in Niassa province, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely to emerge due to insurgent attacks displacing households and disrupting economic activity.
SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

Source: FEWS NET
MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. 
- indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). 
- indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2021 to January 2022

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2022

**FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.**

FEWS NET: Mozambique Food Security Outlook Update December 2021: Below-average rainfall likely to impact agricultural production in northern Mozambique, 2021

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.