



# Zimbabwe, once the bread basket of Africa...

WFP/Tatenda Macheke

After concluding a recent trip to Zimbabwe, the World Food Programme's Executive Director David Beasley said, "People are marching towards starvation if we are not here to help them... We are facing a drought unlike any that we have seen in a long time."

In light of the devastation caused by Cyclone Idai and severe seasonal drought conditions, the Government of Zimbabwe declared a **State of National Disaster** in August 2019, while appealing for international humanitarian assistance.

Currently, 3.5 million people are considered severely food insecure. At the peak of this year's lean season (January – March 2020), some 5.5 million people are expected to be food insecure (including 2.6 million children).

This equals almost 60 percent of the country's rural population. Additionally, recent assessments indicate some 2.2 million people will experience food insecurity in urban areas.

The results of the April 2019 Second Round Crop and Livestock Assessment indicate that the annual cereal production is more than 40 percent below Zimbabwe's five-year national average. Consequently, the country has a cereal deficit of more than 700,000 tonnes which will need to be met through imports.

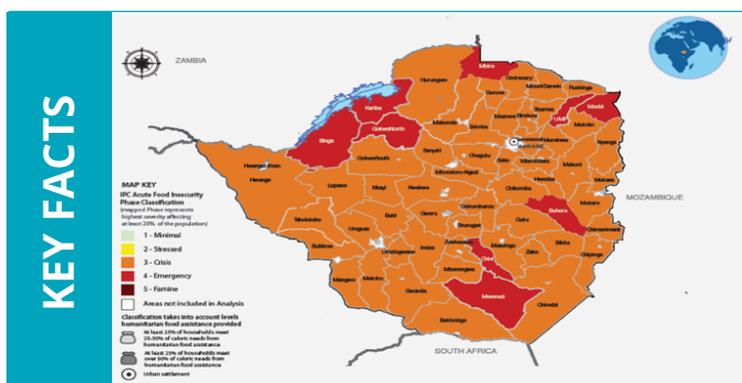
*"People are marching towards starvation if we are not here to help them... We are facing a drought unlike any that we have seen in a long time."*

**– WFP Executive Director  
David Beasley**

The extended drought has affected multiple countries in the region, which has registered its lowest supply of cereal stocks in five years, leading to severe cereal deficits across Southern Africa.

Furthermore, economic degradation has led to staggering price increases for fuel, maize and wheat, while shortages of local and international currency, basic commodities, fuel and electricity further impact populations. Since June 2019, the rate of inflation has increased in such a way that the average rural household would require three times its current income to feed its inhabitants.

To address the most immediate needs, Food Security Cluster Partners plan to support more than 2.5 million people with either cash or in-kind assistance during the peak of the lean season. An estimated USD 207 million is required to cover the daily food basket of the most vulnerable under the current Humanitarian Appeal duration. Another key response to this crisis will be to immediately restore the productive capacity of drought-affected small holder farmers and enhance access to water for productive purposes. Partners are planning to assist 1.2 million farmers with agriculture inputs in this regard, requiring USD 47 million



- Zimbabwe has the fourth highest food insecure population in the world according to FewsNet analysis conducted in September 2019.
- An estimated 5.5 million people in rural areas will be food insecure from January to April 2020.