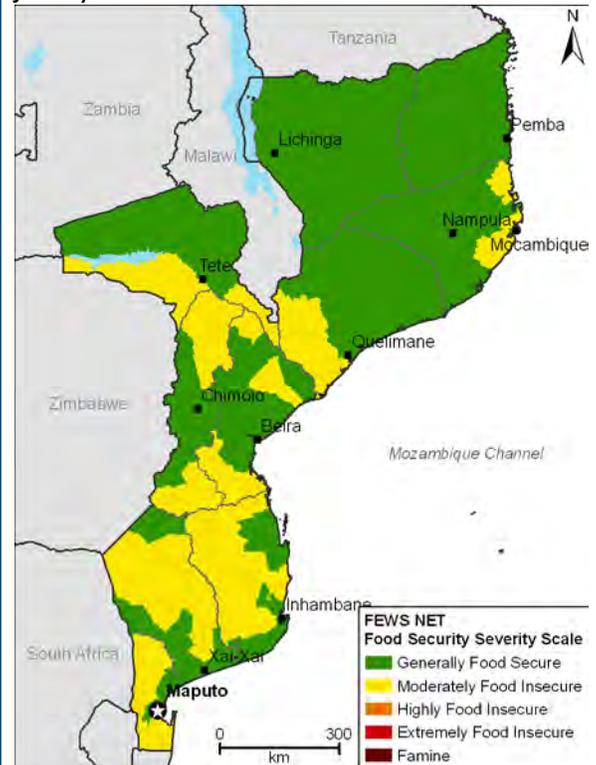


MOZAMBIQUE Food Security Outlook

January to June 2010

- Food is still available, markets are adequately supplied, and prices, despite being above average, are stable, enabling food access for poor households. Yet, pockets of moderate food insecurity exist in parts of central and southern Mozambique, and about 281,000 people need food assistance until April 2010, when the next major harvest occurs.
- From January to March 2010, the majority of households throughout the country will be generally food secure, with exceptions in the semi-arid zones of Tete, Manica, Sofala, Inhambane, Gaza, Maputo, and the coastal Nampula provinces, where moderate levels of food insecurity will prevail among poor households.
- Floods in this period may destroy crops in the field, damage infrastructure, limit movement of goods and people, and leave many households with limited coping options. In coastal areas where strong winds — including tropical depressions, storms, and cyclones — are possible, some households may temporarily face food stress.
- From April to June 2010, moderate levels of food insecurity will continue, but small improvements will occur even if the season turns out poor. With a poor season, the greatest impacts would only be felt after June. The semi-arid zones will be the most affected, since food reserves at the household level are limited.

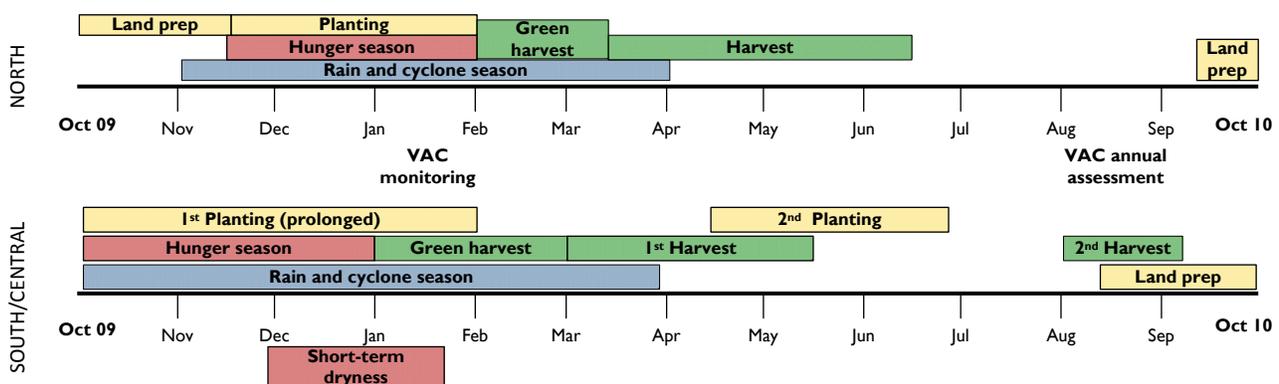
Figure 1. Estimated food security conditions, January 2010



For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Source: FEWS NET

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

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Current food security conditions

Household food security is currently stable. Food is still available, markets are adequately supplied and prices despite being above average are quite stable, enabling food access for poor households. Livestock and pasture are also in good condition thanks to the rains in late November and in December. However, pockets of moderate food insecurity exist in parts of central and southern Mozambique, where household stocks dwindled and households have limited capacity to meet their food needs, through their own production or through market purchases.

According to the annual report from the Technical Secretariat of Food Security and Nutrition (SESTAN) Vulnerability Assessment Group (GAV), about 281,000 people need food assistance until the next harvest. The World Food Program (WFP) still lacks sufficient resources, and is facing a pipeline break beginning in January 2010, and to date was able to only assist 167,000 people, about 60 percent of those in need. Yet, the period between January and March generally is the peak of the hunger season and when the likelihood of floods and cyclones is high. Rains have been well below normal in much of Mozambique this season, threatening the upcoming harvest and potentially preventing recovery from previous droughts in the south. Parts of the areas now being affected by poor rainfall have experienced bad seasons previously, and those households are heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Successive bad seasons leads to an erosion of coping capability, especially for poorer households. In addition, temperatures have been abnormally high, increasing evaporation rates and reducing soil moisture. Initial maize planting attempts have failed in much of the south, and households have had to replant at least once. Adequate rainfall from is needed to prevent failure of the upcoming harvest.

Failure to respond in a timely fashion will cause poorer households to begin employing negative and even extreme coping strategies, including consumption of improper food on a large scale, such as wild foods that are highly toxic, and intensify consumption of green foods instead of mature crops. It is strongly recommended that resources be allocated to prevent further deterioration of the food security situation, as the poorer households have most of their coping ability eroded and are likely to have very limited harvest prospects, because they have less access to inputs and labor.

Under the current circumstances of unfavorable rainfall for agriculture and water availability, FEWS NET, the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC), and the Ministry of Agriculture (Provincial Directorate of Manica) carried out a rapid qualitative crop and food security assessment in mid-January 2010 in Chimoio, Gondola, Manica, Bárue, Guro, and Sussundenga (see Figure 2). The description below also covers the conditions in the whole country through interpolation, remote sensing, published reports, and field sources.

Moderate to severe drought is currently affecting the southern part of Tete province, much of Sofala and Manica provinces, southern Zambezia province, and much of the southern part of the country (Maputo, Gaza, and Inhambane provinces). The 2009/10 rainfall and main agriculture season started late by mid-November in the south and early December in the central region, and was characterized by erratic and irregular distribution, long dry spells, and almost insignificant amounts of rainfall. The cumulative rainfall from October to December 2009 was 35 to 70 percent of normal in large parts of the central region and coastal Gaza and Inhambane provinces. It was under such adverse conditions that households attempted planting in various parts of the two regions. However, the first planted maize crops have failed in most rain-fed areas of Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala, Manica, Tete and Zambezia provinces. The failure of the first planted crops was followed by persistent planting whenever rains occurred, the reason why crops — particularly maize — were found in the field at different growing stages, from seeding to flowering stages. There are no notable problems with inputs, mainly seeds, so far. Most households still have from their own stocks, while others are purchasing, and others still are supplied by the government and partners

Figure 2. Districts covered by the FEWS NET/INGC/MINAG joint assessment, January 12-15, 2010



Source: FEWS NET

In general, the earliest planted maize (October-November) is now totally lost in Manica province except in parts of southern Sussundenga district, where crops still have chance to recover with additional rains. As one moves south of the province, including part of Sussundenga district and the whole of Mossurize and Machaze districts, maize crops are doing well thanks to the beneficial rainfall since November.

In the districts of Bárue, Manica, and Gondola, most households planted in late November and early December. These crops, which are now at vegetative stage prior to flowering stage, are now wilting due to insufficient water and are in urgent need of rain in order to recover. However, even if rains start falling, crop yields will be drastically reduced. Planted crops which are now at the flowering stage, are totally lost except crops under irrigation (where water is still available) and in the lowlands with residual moisture. Nevertheless, most cultivated and planted areas are located in the rain-fed areas.

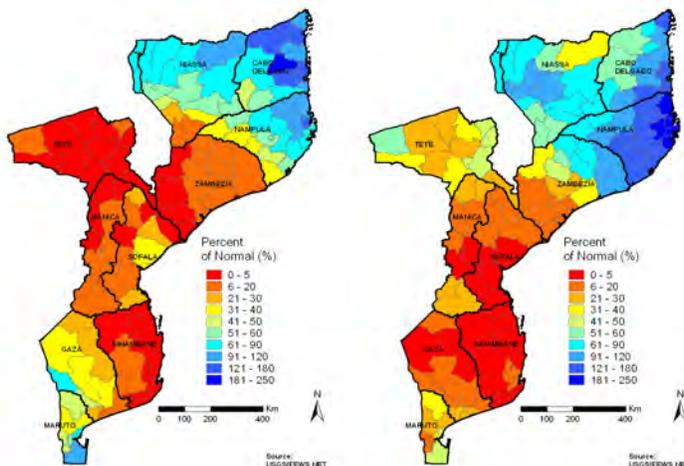
Figure 3. Maize at very early, vegetative, and flowering stages in Bárue in Manica province.



Source: photos by FEWS NET

The scenario becomes even worse in Guro, Macossa, and Tambara districts, the northern part of Manica province. The region is typically semi-arid with sandier soils and moderate levels of food insecurity. Poor rural households in these remote zones are particularly vulnerable to production losses, given the unfavorable agro-climatic conditions. Within these areas, the households most at risk of food insecurity are the poor and very poor, who have no livestock. Near the river banks, the zone is potentially rich in goat breeding and most middle and rich households hold a number of goats, but most poor and very poor households do not have such resources. To cope, households usually sell forest products such as firewood and charcoal, traditionally distilled alcohol, and other goods and crafts, and eventually begin consuming wild foods. A similar situation is known to extend into the neighboring districts of southern Tete province such as Changara, Cahora Bassa, Mágoe, and Mutarara. If the cropping season fails or does very poorly, these behaviors will become more widespread and intense, even to the point of exhausting resources.

Figure 4. Percentage of normal rainfall, January 1-10 (left) and January 11-20 (right)



In addition, abnormally high temperatures are exacerbating the situation in the two regions, with typical average temperatures largely surpassed during a period of seven consecutive days during the third dekad of December. These abnormally high temperatures have occurred with total absence of rains.

During the visit in mid-January, the seasonal rivers that usually are replenished with water during the rainy season from October to March were completely dry. This is affecting water availability for the small irrigation systems.

Other provinces

In the south (Maputo, Gaza, and Inhambane), reports indicate that maize crops planted early in the season are wilting or have totally failed. Households have the opportunity to replant thanks to the early January rains and seed availability. In coastal Inhambane and Gaza, households

cultivate drought-resistant cassava both for food and income, and are less vulnerable to rainfall deficits. Crops are now at various growing stages, from seeding to flowering, but are also showing clear evidence of wilting (see Figure 3).

In the north (Nampula, Cabo Delgado, and Niassa), rainfall has been near normal to above normal in much of the region since it started in late November. Small exceptions of erratic rains include the southern part of Niassa province. In general, the planting process has been satisfactory except in the above-mentioned areas where replanting took place due to crop failure. The coming weeks are crucial to determine the trend of the season. Significant and prolonged rains can help crops now at germination to vegetative stage to recover and allow farmers to replant in the lost fields.

Most likely food security scenario, January-June 2010

Analysis of the first twenty days of January 2010 show that the situation has not improved at all. Figure 4 shows that rainfall totals during 1-10 January (left) and 11-20 January (right) were well below 20 percent of normal in much of the country. Many districts of Tete, Manica, Sofala, Zambezia, and Inhambane provinces have recorded zero to five percent of normal rainfall in both periods.

While monitoring exercises will soon take place from various technical groups (including early warning from the Ministry of Agriculture and SETSAN-GAV) to assess the situation, mitigating actions should be timely taken and contingency planning should be timely prepared. Households’ food reserves in the visited areas are still available and able to last from three to ten months. This means that from January to March 2010, the majority of households throughout the country will be generally food secure (Figure 5). Exceptions include the semi-arid zones of Tete, Manica, Sofala, Inhambane, Gaza, Maputo, and the coastal Nampula provinces where moderate levels of food insecurity will prevail among the poor households.

In the flood plains, such as in the Zambezi, food security may be negatively affected given that the majority of households in the new resettlement areas are still farming in lowland areas within the flood plains. A flood may inundate and destroy crops in the field and leave many households with limited coping options. Attention must be given to the river basins in Northern provinces where above normal rains are expected.

Coastal areas in all regions are at risk of storms and cyclones, between November and April. Heavy storms, including potential cyclones of category 2 or higher, would involve the following: storm surges with intense rains and localized strong winds, causing significant damage to standing crops, trees, and

Figure 5. Most likely food security scenario, January-March 2010

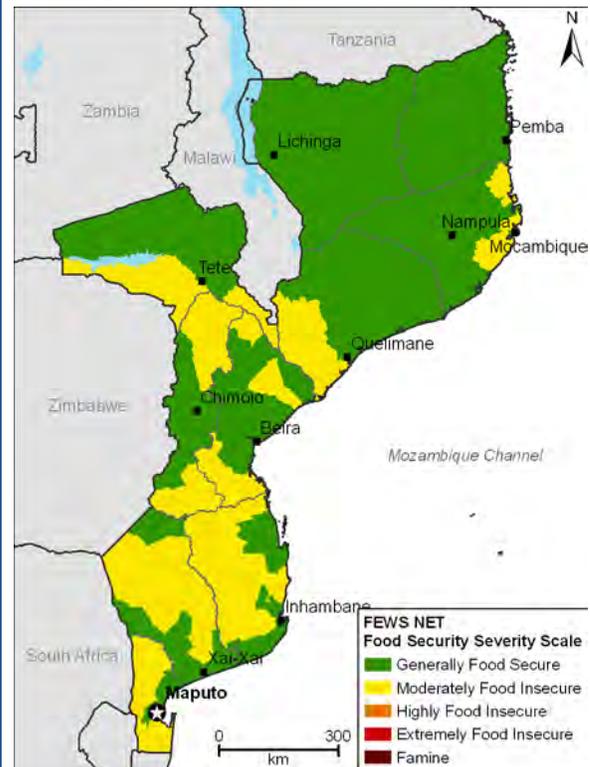
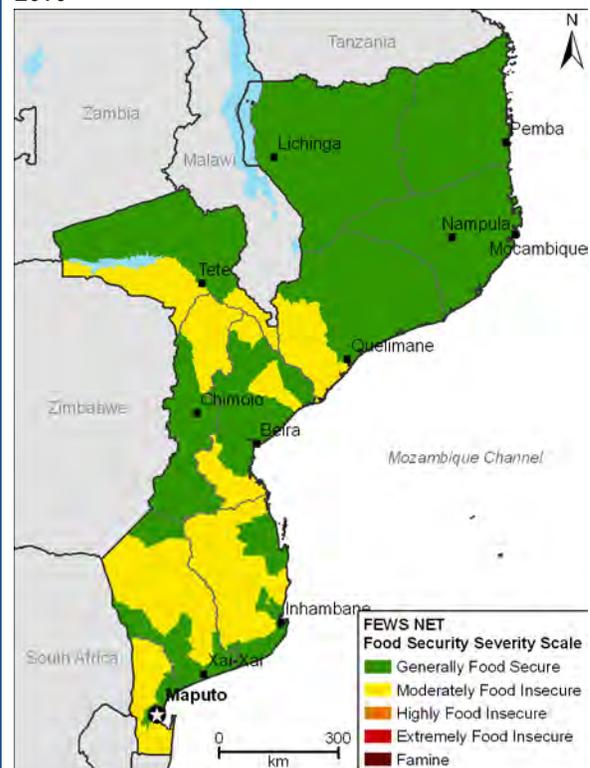


Figure 6. Most likely food security scenario, April-June 2010



Source: FEWS NET

infrastructure. The impacts would be the most severe in coastal areas of Inhambane, Sofala, Zambézia, Cabo Delgado, and Nampula provinces. Depending on the strength of the storm and the time, households may become temporarily food insecure by losing their stocks and having limited access to markets.

From April to June 2010, moderate levels of food insecurity will continue, but small improvements will occur; even if the season is poor, the greatest impact will be felt after June. Again, the semi-arid zones will be the most affected, since food reserves at the household level are limited. Southern Zambezia province also deserves special attention because the most heavily cultivated crop in that area is rice, which requires more water. In these areas, poor and very poor households are expected to remain moderately food insecure following a below-average main harvest that will result from poor rainfall during the 2009/10 agriculture season, perpetuating the effects of the chronically vulnerable conditions in those areas. Households in the moderately food insecure areas indicated above will likely make up for some of their deficits by employing coping strategies, but not necessarily extreme coping strategies which may possibly be employed after June 2010. Alternative and coping strategies include reduction in the frequency and quantity of meals, selling of forest products such as firewood, charcoal, traditionally distilled alcohol, and other goods and crafts.

Some families, especially those living near the South Africa border, will also receive remittances from family members working there and elsewhere. Poorer households will begin to exchange casual labor in neighboring areas for food, though these sources, too, will likely be limited. Also, most households from these areas will turn to the market to meet their food needs, but food prices, especially for maize, will likely become much higher than the average. Higher prices of staple food commodities will limit food access for poor households with limited and exhausted food stocks. The second-season production will be crucial, especially for those who have access to lowlands with enough moisture or irrigation facilities. However, reduced rainfall and early cessation of the main season rains, particularly in semi-arid southern Tete, Maputo, Gaza, Manica, and Sofala Provinces could limit second-season production, since much of it relies on residual moisture from the main rainy season between October and April. The second-season harvest is normally expected in August in the southern and central regions. Food assistance beyond normal safety-net programming will likely be required beginning in July if indeed the main harvest and the second-season harvest do not perform well, and if food prices remain higher in those areas.

The poor rainfall this season will force households to travel longer distances in search of water, allocating less time for other activities like school and farming. Also, water shortages will force humans to share water with animals and to take it from less potable sources, which may result in disease outbreaks such as cholera and diarrhea. Currently, livestock body conditions are good throughout the visited areas, but further deterioration of drought conditions will affect pasture and water availability.

The deterioration of food security conditions to the levels of employing negative coping strategies can only be avoided by timely precautionary measures. These measures include urgent allocation of short cycle and drought resistant seeds, maximum utilization of the lowlands and enhancing second season production. Contingency planning for possible humanitarian assistance should be updated and ready to be activated. Food security and vulnerability assessment should be quickly taken as soon as possible to evaluate the level of assistance that might be needed. Special and immediate attention – including humanitarian assistance – is strongly recommended for the most vulnerable households especially those headed by elderly people, children and women unable to undertake hard work to cope.

The next planned vulnerability assessment will indicate the evolution of food security in these areas and will recommend appropriate mitigation interventions. Interventions addressing access to food, water, inputs, and health services could be needed until the next major harvest in March/April 2011.

Table I. Events which could affect the food security outlook

Geographic Focus Area	Possible events in the next 6 months that would change the most likely scenario in this area	Impacts on food security conditions	Likelihood of occurrence*	Key variables to monitor
Semi-arid zones of Tete, Manica, Sofala, Inhambane, Gaza, and Maputo provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near average to reduced food prices Good harvest Inadequate humanitarian assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would increase access to food through market purchases Most households will become generally food secure People in need unable to meet their food needs and/or input needs, and likely to become highly food insecure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlikely Unlikely Unlikely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food prices Crop development and rainfall Level of humanitarian assistance (number of beneficiaries vs number of people in need)
Southern Zambezia province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved rainfall performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of rice improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlikely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainfall
Zambezi basin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A combination of flooding and poor rainfall in parts of the basin will worsen food insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlikely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water levels

* Probability levels	Description
Unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed moderately
Very unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed significantly



Maize, rice, and beans are the most important food commodities. Maize is the staple food for the poor, with rice most often used as a substitute. Beans are important to all wealth groups. Each of the markets represented here act as indicators for the broader region. Tete is representative for the province by the same name, Nampula is the main market in the north and is representative for the region, and has linkages with the interior of Zambezia and Nampula provinces and coastal Nampula. Beira, Gorongosa, and Manica market has links with Chimoio market, which has links with Gorongosa and southern markets. The Chokwe and Maputo markets in the south are linked to the Chimoio, Manica, and Gorongosa markets in the central region. Chokwe is the reference market for the southern region, except Maputo, the capital.

Monthly prices are supplied by the market information system in Mozambique.

