



MOZAMBIQUE FOOD SECURITY UPDATE NOVEMBER 2005

ALERT STATUS:
NO ALERT
WATCH
WARNING
EMERGENCY

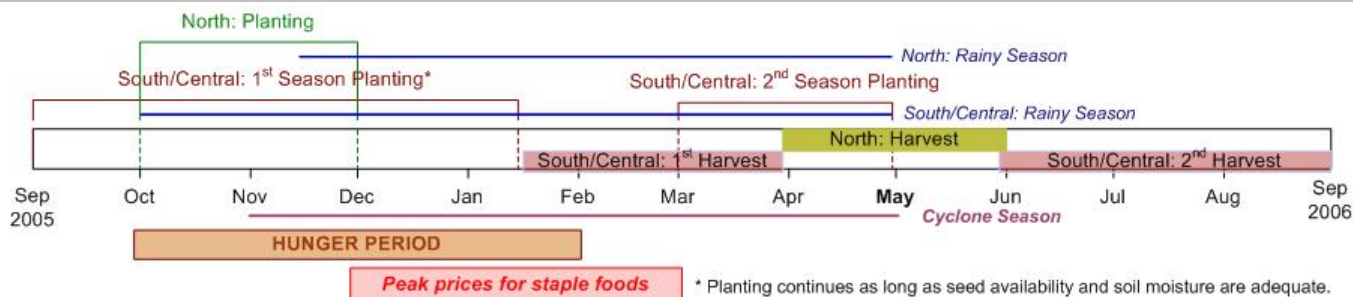
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SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Because of the very limited water availability, poor second season crop production, resource constraints for food aid, high food prices, and exhausted coping strategies, food security conditions have deteriorated in much of southern and central Mozambique and in parts of northern Mozambique. There are 801,000 people in need of food assistance through March 2006. According to a recent Ministry of Health nutrition assessment, about 4.7 percent of children under five suffer from acute malnutrition, revealing an alarming condition in Mozambique. To prevent further deterioration of food security and an increased demand for costly interventions, additional resources must urgently be mobilized. WFP is currently only able to feed about 30 percent of the population in need. Meanwhile, with a high probability of a good start of the rainy season, input support is needed in drought affected districts to assist household recovery from the last poor season.

SEASONAL TIMELINE



CURRENT HAZARD SUMMARY

- The acute malnutrition rate for children under five is estimated at 4.7 percent nationally.
- Maize prices continue to escalate and are above the five year average in several markets in the country.
- The WFP food aid pipeline is undersupplied, with only 30 percent of the population in need currently receiving food aid. WFP hopes to expand the coverage rate to 73 percent between January and March.
- Input trade fairs are underway, but their coverage is limited.

FOOD SECURITY SUMMARY

Recent food security and nutrition assessments indicate that the food security in most of the drought affected provinces is worsening, while it has meanwhile become an increasing concern in the northern region. The Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) and its partners found that, across the country, 801,000 persons are in need of immediate food assistance until March 2006. The amount of food assistance needed is estimated to be 83,000 MT.

Food insecurity is widespread in the southern region and semi-arid zones of the central region, areas severely affected by the drought, and households in these areas have exhausted their coping abilities, particularly because of high food prices, limited purchasing power and water

Table 1. Population in need of food assistance and prevalence of acute malnutrition among under-five years children, October 2005

Provinces	Population in need of food assistance	Acute malnutrition (%)
Maputo	42,758	4.3
Gaza	145,906	2.2
Inhambane	119,317	1.8
Sofala	83,800	4.1
Manica	59,363	3.6
Tete	197,933	4.2
Zambézia	41,488	6.9
Nampula	67,752	4.7
Cabo Delgado	29,945	4.9
Niassa	13,392	5.4
Total	801,645	4.7

Ministry of Health, adjusted acute malnutrition classification: < 3%; acceptable; 3-10% alarming; > 10% grave

According to the Ministry of Health's Department of Nutrition, levels of acute malnutrition for under-fives are highest in Zambézia and Niassa provinces, although prevalence rates in the majority of the provinces are at alarming levels, (see Table 1). The average acute malnutrition rate for under-fives is estimated at 4.7 percent nationally. The alarming prevalence of acute malnutrition reflects poor dietary quality, lack of potable water, incidence of disease, and reliance on negative coping strategies like reducing the number of daily meals.

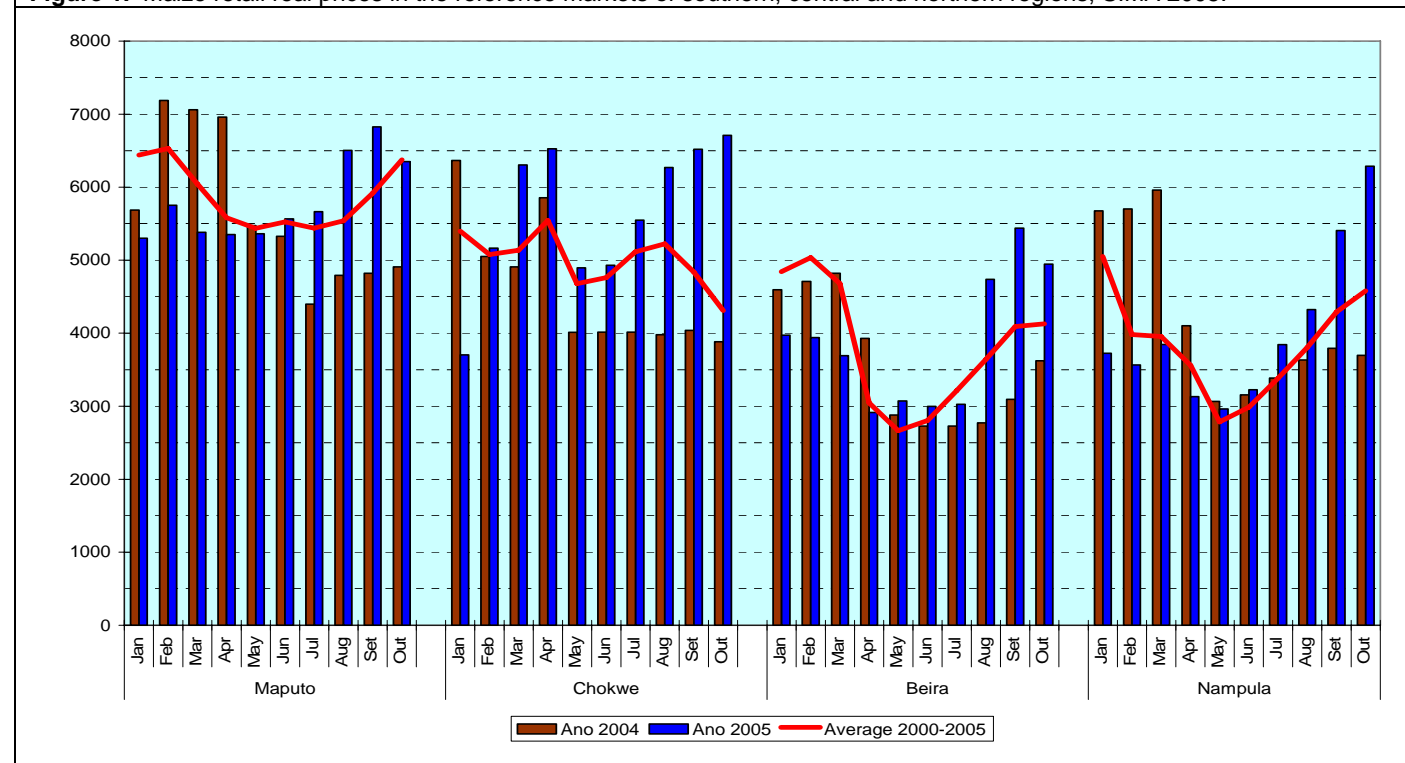
The monitoring assessment results also reveal that school absenteeism was common as school children in drought affected areas are engaged in several activities to mitigate drought effects, such as fetching water and or moving animals in search of good pasture and water. Unless mitigation measures are taken soon, there is a high probability that the food insecurity will deteriorate further.

Given the resource constraints, this month WFP plans to cover only of 30 percent of the population in need, and plans to increase the coverage from January to March 2006, if resources allow, to about 73 percent of the estimated needs.

Widespread increase in maize prices

As the supply of maize dwindles, prices are rising on most markets, inhibiting household food access, even when food is available on the market. In the past two months, maize prices have been rising not only in southern markets, but also in markets in the central and northern regions. In a recent study, WFP found that the availability of maize for local purchase was less than could be expected from production estimates. Overall, the prices are not only higher than last year's prices for the same period, but also higher than five year average in most of the markets monitored by Agricultural Markets Information System (SIMA). Rising fuel and transportation costs are contributing to the price increases. In the last two months in the southern markets, maize prices rose steadily, particularly in Chókwe, where prices have risen to more than 50 percent above the October average. To a lesser extent, the same trend is observed in Beira market in the center. In Nampula, the shortage of maize supplies and increasing demand is also fueling price increases, and by October the price was about twice that of last year's price.

Figure 1. Maize retail real prices in the reference markets of southern, central and northern regions, SIMA 2005.



SEASONAL UPDATE

Recent rainfall marks the start of the rainy season in parts of southern and central Mozambique. At less than 50mm, rainfall amounts have been below average in most places, except in Gaza, Maputo and northern Tete, where rainfall amounts are closer to average (between 50 and 100mm). In the north, scattered rains were observed by satellite imagery and INAM's (National Institute of Meteorology) ground stations, and rainfall amounts are normal for this time of the year. The rains were brought by a frontal system and have helped to decrease some of the extremely hot temperatures observed during the previous weeks, but have not been enough to replenish water sources.

Following the moderate rainfall early in November, the agricultural season is underway in parts of southern and central Mozambique. In the North, land preparation continues, and planting will commence as soon as the rains begin in late November or early December.

The current forecasts indicate that rainfall in the second half of the season will be better than previously predicted by the climate outlook statement, improving the potential yields of cereals, pulses and cassava.

Despite the efforts of the government and its partners to provide timely inputs for the new cropping season, recent food security monitoring results indicated that seed stocks are low in most places and that the ongoing input and trade fairs have limited coverage and lack more diverse, drought-tolerant seeds, such as millet and sorghum, that are widely sought after. The fairs are an important resource for farmers who were not able to save seeds from last season's meager harvest.