

MOZAMBIQUE Food Security Update

January 2008

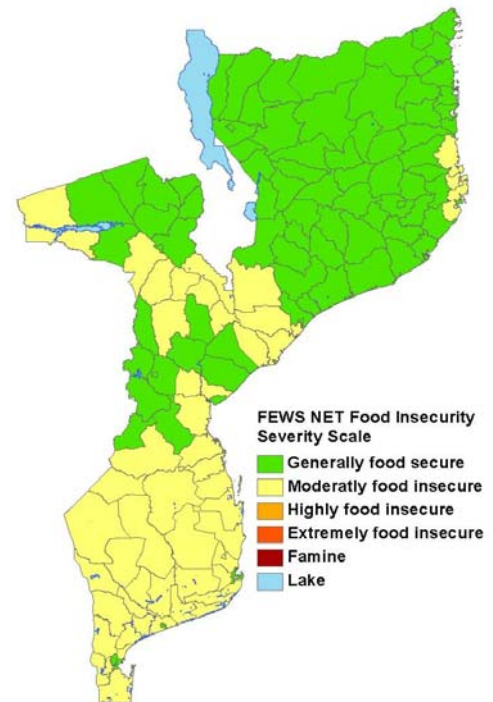
Water levels on the lower Zambezi River and other rivers in central Mozambique have been rising since late December, triggering widespread flooding of many adjacent areas. Flooding is expected to worsen as the peak of the rainy and cyclone seasons, normally between mid-February and the end of March, has yet to occur.

Thousands of households have been displaced and even more affected by losses of food stocks, planted crops, and other assets. Secondary roads and bridges have become impassable, impeding the movement of people and goods, aggravating the temporary food deficits.

The Vulnerability Analysis Group of the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition, have estimated 258,000 people are need of emergency humanitarian assistance through March 2008. Households who have lost crops will also require assistance in the form of seeds and other inputs for replanting once the flood waters recede, should conditions then be favorable.

The World Food Programme is currently providing food assistance to 471,600 people, due to drought, floods, and cyclones last year, but faces a break in the pipeline in February. The government and its partners are providing emergency assistance, including food and other non-food necessities, to households affected by this year's floods. The total number of people in need is likely to increase, given the forecast for continued heavy rain between now and April. Immediate increases in food assistance, water, sanitation and health services are crucially needed. Unless resources are quickly mobilized, the World Food Program will face immediate shortages to meet increasing needs.

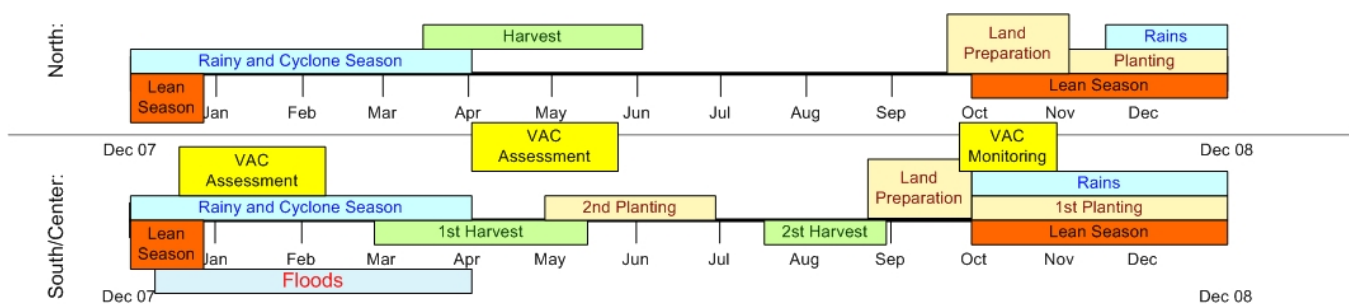
Figure 1. Current estimated food security conditions, first quarter (Jan-March 2008)



Source: FEWS NET

Outside flooded areas, crop growing conditions are favorable, and in the country as whole, crop production prospects remain favorable.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Food security summary

Currently, the food security of the majority of households outside flooded areas is relatively favorable or improving. Food is generally available, markets are adequately supplied, and prices are affordable enough to enable food access for poor households. Pockets of moderate food insecurity exist in parts of central and southern Mozambique affected by last year's drought but conditions have been improving since December with seasonal food availability, food aid interventions, and improved access to water for consumption by both households and animals. Food security is however a significant concern in flooded areas and could spread as these areas expand. Thus far, the Vulnerability Analysis Group (GAV) of the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition has estimated around 258,000 persons to be in need of humanitarian assistance until March 2008 in Zambeze, Save, Pungué and Buzi basins. This figure is likely to rise, depending on the intensity of rains and cyclones between now and March, the normal conclusion of the rain and cyclone season.

The livelihoods in the southern region, as in other agricultural-based livelihood zones in Mozambique, are dependent on household production for the majority of households food needs, in both good years and bad years. This year's crop growing conditions have been favorable in the semi-arid and arid zones of the south affected by drought last year. First season maize production, which accounts for the majority of the annual production of this staple crop, is also a major source of household income, and harvests from March-May will bring much deserved relief for the households living in these areas, where the poorer households otherwise face constraints to generate income with which to purchase food and other household necessities. Better-off households usually have larger stocks of production to consume or sell, but can also sell off a few livestock without depleting their asset base should they need cash.

The World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners are assisting 471,000 people with food assistance until March 2008, about 90 percent of those considered by the GAV last year to be in need. In the south, the majority of those in need were affected by drought last year, while in the central region, the majority had lost crops due to floods and cyclones. In response to the recent floods that are causing temporary food deficits to households along the swollen rivers of the central region, WFP and its cooperating partners are also distributing food rations to vulnerable people in resettlement centers and making adjustments on the ground depending on the needs of new arrivals. As the season progresses and flood conditions continue, perhaps through the end of March, the number in need is likely to increase. However, the WFP pipeline will break in February, and is facing a shortfall USD 15.5 million (26,500 MT of various foods for emergency relief) through July 2008. While assistance meeting food and non-food from the government and its partners is being provided to the flood afflicted households in the central region. The GAV results indicate that food, water, shelter, and basic sanitation are the priority needs in the flood-affected areas visited. Thus far, the GAV has estimated around 258,000 persons to be in need of humanitarian assistance until March 2008 in Zambeze, Save, Pungué and Buzi basins. This figure is likely to rise, depending on the intensity of rains and cyclones between now and April, the normal conclusion of the rain and cyclone season.

Severe to very severe flooding in Zambezi, Buzi, Púngue and Save basins

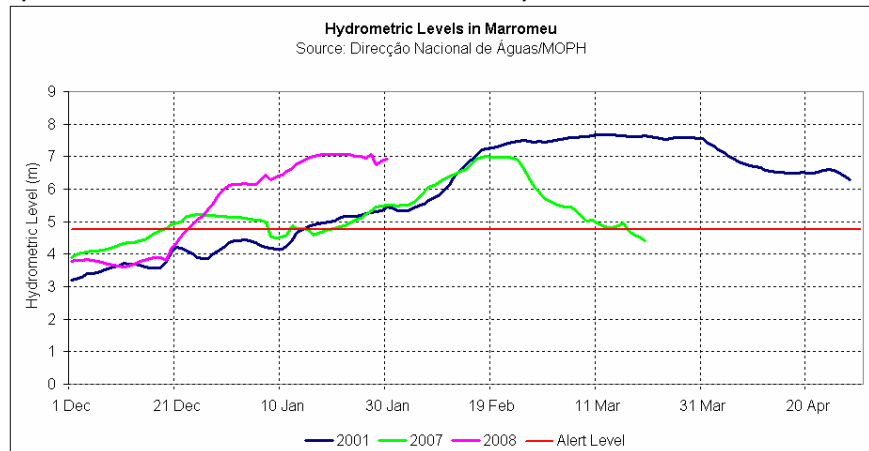
Thousands of hectares of land in the mid to lower Zambezi River Basin are now flooded, as a result of persistent moderate to heavy rains this season. The water level of the Zambezi River has been increasing steadily since the beginning of the New Year. A second flood wave occurred on January 12, 2008 in the Búzi and Save basins (specifically in the Vila do Búzi, Machanga and Nova Mambone) following the first wave on December 31, 2007. Figure 2 below indicates the severity and location, by district, of the current floods.

On January 3, 2008 in view of the worsening situation in the country, the government declared a Red Alert. Under the Red Alert, all relevant government institutions and partners' organizations are called to revise their humanitarian assistance plans in accordance with the prevailing situation and to have to prioritize preparedness and mobilize resources. Also it gives authorities power for compulsory evacuation whenever it is needed.

The latest information from the National Center of Emergency Operations (CENOE) indicates that as of January 25, 2008, eight people have died and about 258,000 persons are estimated to have been affected by these floods, including more than 95,000 people who have been displaced. Thus far, the floods have also destroyed more than 117,000 hectares of crops (approximately 3 percent of the total cropped area this season). Complete crop losses are possible in some of these

People living in the at-risk areas of Zumbo, Mágoe, Mutarara, Caia, Marromeu, Mopeia, Morrumbala, Chinde, Maganja da Costa, Namacurra, Chemba, Búzi, Machanga, Nhamatanda, Guro, Tambara, Mossurize, and Govuro districts are urged to quickly relocate to safe areas. Resource mobilization is needed now to assist the displaced households. Food, health and water interventions are recommended for at least two months. Ongoing assessments will determine the level and type of short and medium term needs

Figure 3. Comparative flood curves of the 2001, 2007 and 2008 in Marromeu Hydrometric station in the lower Zambezi Valley

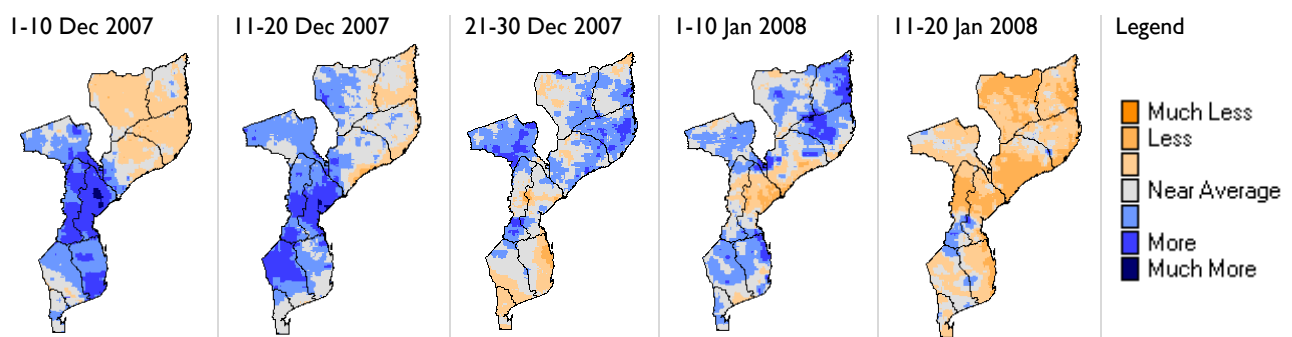


Normal to above normal rains likely for the remainder of the rainy season

Most parts of Mozambique received sustained heavy downpours throughout December into early January, which have contributed to rising river levels in the Zambezi, Búzi, Púngue, and Save catchments, and subsequent flooding and heightened flood threats. However mid January (11-20 January, 2008) was characterized by below average rainfall as shown in Figure 4 below. This cannot mean direct improvement in the current flooding conditions given that the main cause of flooding in Mozambique is greatly imputed to the heavy rains in the basin’s catchments areas in neighboring Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The sequence of satellite images in Figure 4 shows the rainfall anomalies throughout December into early January (December 1, 2007 to January 10, 2008). Above normal rains have occurred in much of the country, especially in the central and parts of the southern region during the first twenty days of December. Subsequently, above normal rains were consistently received in most of the north (Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Nampula). The heavy rains in Nampula have damaged infrastructure, and making major roads and railways intransitable, putting significant strain on the movement of goods and people.

Figure 4. Satellite derived rainfall anomalies estimates



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

The global model forecast like the one produce by NOAA for February-April period gives a low to moderate tilt in the odds favoring above average rains over northern Mozambique, the northern and southern ends of Malawi, and northeastern Zambia. There is a low to moderate tilt in the odds favoring below average rains over southern Mozambique, portions of northeastern South Africa, portions of Zimbabwe, much of Namibia, and southeastern Angola.

A glance at the agricultural season in progress

Although it is too early to make any quantitative production estimates, a qualitative assessment of the season to date in each province is shown below. Away from the flooded areas, crop growth is excellent. In the country as whole, crop prospects remain good. In flooded areas and in areas affected by persisting heavy rains, depending on the duration, households may have significantly reduced production this year, either due to direct loss of crops or inability to weed. Critical agricultural inputs are necessary for the families who lost some or all of their possessions to replant as the flood waters recede or if the conditions permits. If growing conditions are then favorable, they could expect a harvest approximately two and a half to three months later.

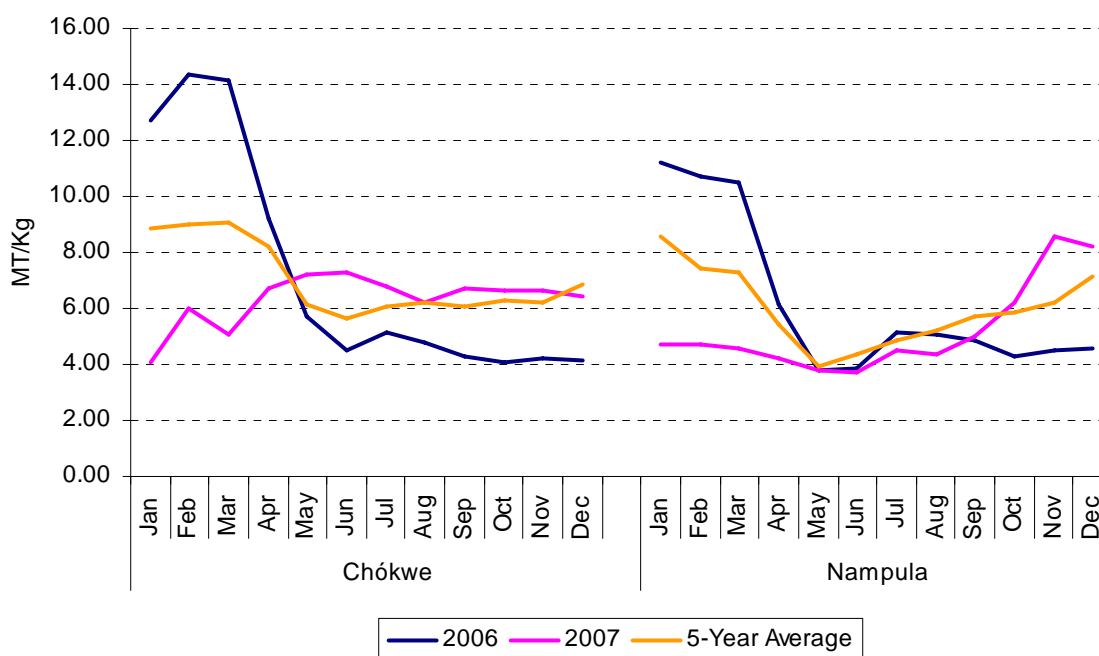
Province	Comments
Maputo	Favorable growing conditions. The rains started in late October and planting started thereafter. Although crops appear in different stages, they are developing quite well, and currently the greens crops are available for household consumption. <u>Crops:</u> Beans, maize, cassava, peanuts and vegetables,
Gaza	Massive planting happened in November. Earlier planting occurred in lowlands. Thus far, crops are in good conditions and in a vegetative phase. By mid-February, green crops should be available. Note that persisting rains might affect the production of cashew nuts. <u>Crops:</u> Maize, sorghum, millet, beans, cowpea, peanut, sweet potato, cassava, and diverse vegetables.
Inhambane	Favorable growing conditions. It has been raining regularly, and thus far, crops planted in December are in good condition. Green crops are expected by mid February. As happened in Gaza districts, persisting rains might affect the production of cashew nuts, as they occurred when the tree was flowering. <u>Crops:</u> Maize, sorghum, beans, cowpea, peanut, sweet potato, cassava, and diverse vegetables.
Sofala	Crop planting was widespread in October. Growing conditions have been favorable thus far, although in flood affected districts, crops are submerged. Assistance in terms of seeds for flood recession planting is crucial. Elsewhere, the condition of the crops is very good due to a good precipitation. Maize planting is taking place continuously, and crops are in various stages of development from flowering to maturation. <u>Crops:</u> Maize, millet, sorghum, peanut, and beans
Manica	Widespread planting occurred in November. Crops are found in various growing phases and are progressing well, with a prospect of good harvest, except in the flood affected districts where crops were damaged. There have been no reports of major pests. Until now. <u>Crops:</u> Maize, beans, vegetables, and sweet potato.
Tete	Planting took place in October and November in the southern part of the province and in December in the northern part. In general, the crops are in good condition and in flowering and, in some cases, grain formation stages. However persisting and substantial rains may undermine the favorable prospects of this year's production. In flood affected areas, many households have lost their crops. <u>Crops:</u> Beans, peanut, maize, sorghum, potatoes and vegetables.
Zambézia	Planting took place in December right after the rains set in. Thus far, growing conditions have been favorable. Crop conditions are very good, and most are in a vegetative phase. However, in the flood affected areas, many households have lost their crops. Assistance in terms of seeds for planting after the floods recede is crucial. <u>Crops:</u> Maize, rice, cassava, peanut, beans, pigeon peas, and vegetables.
Nampula	Planting started in November after an early start to the rains. Crops are in vegetative phase and developing well. Green crops are expected by mid February. Cassava, a staple in coastal zone, which was severely affected by virus in the recent past, is improving, and production is gradually increasing. <u>Crops:</u> Cassava, maize, sorghum, beans, and peanut.
Cabo Delgado	Rainfall has been good except in northern coastal area. Planting occurred in mid-December. The crops are in good condition, and there are no reports of significant pests. Growing conditions for all crops have been favorable thus far. If excessive rains occur, maize production may be affected. <u>Crops:</u> Cassava, maize, rice, and various beans.
Niassa	Widespread planting took place in mid-November. The rains have been well distributed. The current cropping season in the province as a whole is progressing well thus far. <u>Crops:</u> Maize, cowpeas, peanuts, rice, and pigeon peas.

Source: Field visit, SETSAN and agricultural services in the Provinces, January 2008

Real Maize prices abnormally decreasing in December 2007 in the south and north

Generally in a normal year, maize prices are expected to begin rising toward the end of the year. However, price analyses of the reference markets in north (Nampula) and in south (Chókwe) show an abnormal drop and price stability, respectively, during the November-December period. December prices in Chókwe were slightly below the 5-year average, while in Nampula they were above the 5-year average (Figure 5). In both cases, the prices are largely above the previous year (2006/07), which followed a good year, while the current year follows a bad year. The stabilizing prices in the drought-affected region of south is good for households who are now relying to the market to meet their food needs, especially during the peak of the lean season. However, prices are expected to begin rising again in February, due to the gradual tightening of supplies during the lean period, and in some areas due to disruption of trade and transport routes caused by seasonal floods.

Figure 5. Real maize retail prices in reference markets, in meticaís per kg



Source: SIMA

The latest bulletin from the Agriculture Market Information System (SIMA), published on January 9, 2008, indicates that the flow of maize into Malawi through the Milange border has been decreasing during the last days due to the low prices offered in the area. According to the SIMA bulletin, contacted traders are quoted as saying that exports to Malawi have declined due to low prices in the neighboring Malawi. According to the traders, they would rather keep the maize until the time when prices would be more attractive. The good production of maize last year in Malawi is cited as the reason behind the low prices in that country. Detailed investigation from SIMA is still to be carried out.