GIEWS Country Brief
Mozambique

Reference Date: 20-March-2019

**FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT**

- Floods in March caused widespread damage to agriculture sector in central provinces
- National cereal production expected to decline in 2019 from last year’s above-average level, due to floods in central provinces and dry weather conditions in southern provinces
- Prices of maize higher on yearly basis in early 2019, while flood-induced price spikes expected
- Food insecurity anticipated to worsen in central and southern provinces

**Floods resulted in extensive crop losses in central regions**

Harvesting of the 2019 main summer season cereal crops is expected to start at the end of March in southern areas and progress further north until the end of June.

In central provinces of Manica, Sofala and Zambezia, as well as some parts of the southern province of Inhambane, the landfall of Cyclone Idai in March and earlier heavy rains associated with the cyclone, resulted in widespread flooding that caused damage to cropped land and infrastructure. Remote sensing data indicates significant areas of flooded land north and west of the coastal city of Beira, where Cyclone Idai made its landfall. Although results from damage assessments are not yet available, crop losses and yield reductions are likely to be extensive in the affected areas. In total, the three central provinces contribute between 40 and 50 percent to the national cereal output; consequently, crop losses could adversely impact both provincial and national cereal supplies.

In northern parts of the country, cumulative rainfall between October 2018 and early March 2019 have been generally favourable. As a result, good yields are expected and cereal production is forecast at an above average level in 2019. In the southern provinces, which are minor cereal-producing areas, despite mostly favourable weather conditions in coastal areas, drier and hotter weather conditions in the interior are likely to keep cereal harvests at average to below average levels.

At the national level, in consideration of the flood damage in central provinces and dry weather conditions in some southern parts, maize production is expected to decline in 2019 from last year’s above-average outturn. Good harvests in the north,
however, are expected to compensate for some production losses and prevent a larger decline in domestic output.

**Cereal import requirements forecast to rise in 2019/20**

The foreseen reduction in 2019 maize output is expected to result in a drawdown in stocks and an increase in import requirements to an above average level in the 2019/20 marketing year (April/March). On average, the country imports about 100 000 tonnes of maize per year, generally destined to the deficit producing provinces in the south, while outputs in central and northern provinces are usually sufficient to cover local requirements.

In addition, the country imports more than 1 million tonnes of wheat and rice annually. While maize imports are normally accessed by land from South Africa, a large proportion of the wheat and rice imports are shipped to Beira Port, located in the central province of Sofala. Cyclone damage to the Port's infrastructure and storage facilities could impede and delay the importation of cereals, with implications on supply and prices.

**Prices of maize higher on yearly basis**

The impact of the floods is expected to result in price spikes of food commodities in central provinces as infrastructure damage is likely to hinder the movement of goods and impede normal market functions, causing supply deficits.

Before the impact of the floods, prices of maize, the main food staple, had been rising seasonally. As of February 2019, maize grain prices were well above their year values across most of the country.

**Floods expected to worsen food insecurity**

The recent large-scale floods have caused the loss of lives and affected more than 600 000 people. Most likely, this preliminary number will rise following on-ground assessments. The impact of the floods are expected to result in an increased prevalence and severity of food insecurity in central provinces, especially for households that have lost their food crops and livestock, which in turn would reduce both their food supplies and income opportunities from crop sales. While the immediate humanitarian interventions are focused on search and rescue, the provision of shelter and the delivery of food aid, following the recession of floodwaters, interventions to support agricultural households would be required in order to restore their productive capacities, in consideration of likely losses of productive assets and agricultural equipment. Forecasts of heavy rains in the last week of March could result in more damage and losses.

Food insecurity is also likely to increase in southern parts affected by dry weather conditions due to foreseen production shortfalls, while the higher year-on-year prices of maize are likely to constrain food access. In northern regions, food security conditions are anticipated to remain stable, reflecting a forecast increase in crop production.

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**Mozambique**

**Cereal Production**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>1716</td>
<td>2346</td>
<td>2449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice (paddy)</td>
<td>362</td>
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<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>225</td>
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<td>Others</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>2355</td>
<td>3050</td>
<td>3171</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

**Mozambique**

**Retail prices of white maize**

![Graph showing retail prices of white maize](image)

Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.

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