FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Favourable prospects for 2019 crops due to adequate cumulative rainfall amounts
- Slightly above-average import requirements forecast
- Higher food prices in northeast due to persisting conflict
- Assistance needs will remain high in 2019

Favourable prospects for 2019 crops due to adequate cumulative rainfall amounts

The rainy season was characterized by a timely onset in February/March in the south and in May/June in the north. Rains have been abundant across the season and cumulative precipitations were well above average in most areas, improving vegetation conditions and lifting crop prospects. The harvest of the main season maize crop was completed in August in the south, while the rice, millet and sorghum crops are at grain setting or maturity stages in the rest of the country. The aggregated crop production is expected at above-average levels, despite some production shortfalls in the northeast region. In the three northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, there are significant constraints to crop production, including restrictions on movement and effective use of dry blended fertilizers.

Pastures and water availability for livestock have improved by early September compared to the previous months, ending the pastoral lean season in the main grazing areas of the country. The animal health situation is overall stable. However, the conflict in the northeast and armed banditry, kidnapping and the farmer/herder conflict in northwest and north central parts of the country continue to limit the access to grazing land and veterinary services for pastoralists.

The aggregate cereal output in 2019 is forecast at 27.3 million tonnes, 3 percent lower than the 2018 record level, but still 4 percent higher than the previous five-year average. The overall favourable performance of the 2019 agricultural season mainly reflects adequate rainfall and continued support in terms of inputs by the Government and humanitarian actors across the country. This has also benefited from the improved security conditions and a re-engagement of agricultural investors lost to the 2015/16 economic recession.

Slightly above-average import requirements
Domestic demand for imported rice remains strong despite trade restrictions introduced in 2015 by the Government of Nigeria. The country is the largest rice producer and importer in Africa, importing on average about 2.6 million tonnes per year. Wheat imports account for 5.4 million tonnes per year. Despite the above-average 2019 production, cereal import requirements for the 2018/19 (November/October) marketing year are forecast at above-average 8 million tonnes, as traders wish to replenish their stocks.

High levels of food prices in the northeast
Market supply has increased in September compared to previous months due to newly harvested maize, rice and tubers in the southern areas. Prices of coarse grains remained overall stable or declined slightly across most of the country in July as a result of well supplied markets. By contrast, in northeastern conflict-affected areas, disruptions to trade flows and marketing activities are resulting in high food prices.

Despite some improvements in security, over 2 million people remain food insecure
As of July 2019, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) identified over 1.9 million people that have been displaced, of which 92 percent by the insurgency in northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. In addition, flash floods beginning in the month of August 2019 and expected to continue towards the end of September, have affected close to 1 000 hectares of farmlands and resulted in livestock losses. As of 30 August 2019, an estimated 21 000 households have been displaced across the three states as a result of flooding. Heightened tensions in recent months have triggered further displacements, with new arrivals mainly in Askira-Uba, Bama, Gwoza, Ngala and Damboa in Borno State. Most of the displaced households are heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance.

According to the June 2019 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis update, about 2.97 million people were estimated to be in need of food assistance from June to August 2019, with a significant decrease from the 3.70 million food insecure people in June-August 2018.