



GIEWS Updates

VOLUME 2011

The **GIEWS Updates** are issued by FAO's **Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS)** from mid-2004. The updates focus on developing anomalous conditions aimed at providing early warnings, as well as latest and more elaborate information than other GIEWS regular reports on the food security situation of countries, at both national and sub-national levels.

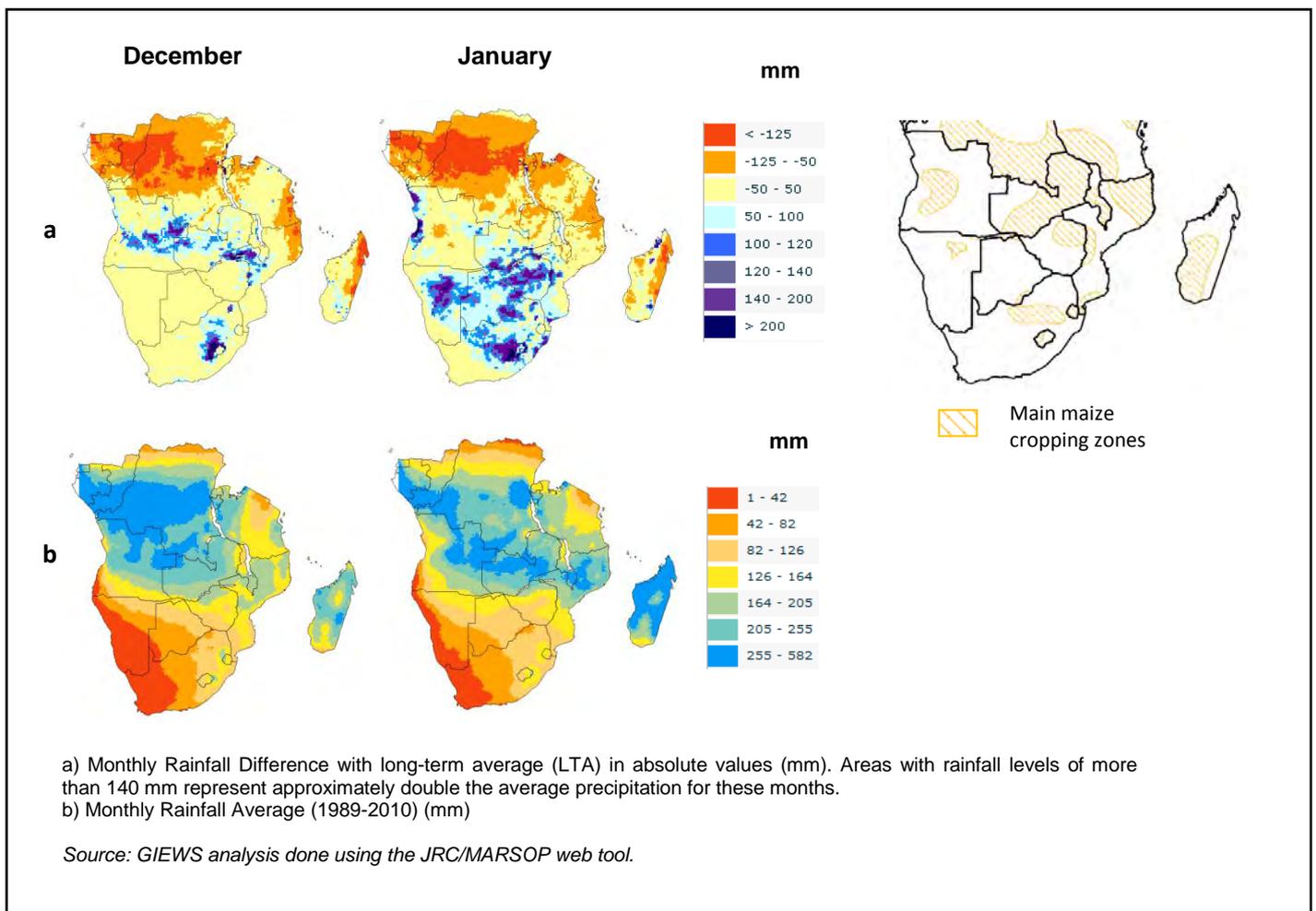
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SOUTHERN AFRICA: Heavy rains and localized flooding raise concerns about the impact on the 2010/11 cereal crop in the affected areas of the sub-region

Heavy rainfall recorded in December and January (Figure 1) across Southern Africa has caused water-logging and localised crop losses in parts of the sub-region, particularly in Lesotho and across the Zambezi basin. The torrential rains have resulted in elevated river levels, with many regions remaining on alert due to increased possibility of further flooding in downstream areas. However, vegetation conditions, based on satellite images, indicate generally good crop development, benefitting from favourable precipitation during the first half of the rainy season.

Despite the severe localised damage, overall prospects for the 2011 cereal crops in the sub-region are still satisfactory. However, the final output will depend on rains over the next two months, prior to the start of the main harvest, and the development of cyclones in the Indian Ocean. Current forecasts for the subsequent two months indicate a continuation of normal to above normal rains across most areas of the sub-region, but heavier rains are expected in the Zambezi river basin. This forecast is consistent with La Niña conditions, which tend to be associated with above-normal rains in Southern Africa. FAO/GIEWS will continue to closely monitor crop development and potential weather hazard.

Figure 1: Monthly Rainfall Levels and Maize Cropping Zones



Angola

Torrential rains in coastal areas in January and in eastern parts bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo in December have led to localized floods, resulting in the displacement of an estimated 29 904 people and crop damage in these areas. However, satellite based analysis indicates that in the large maize producing areas of Benguela and Cuanza Sul, generally average vegetation conditions prevail. Overall prospects for this year's food crops remain favourable.

Lesotho

Excessive rainfall began in November 2010 and continued through to January, particularly in the north-west districts, which constitute the main cereal growing areas of the country. In the two main cereal producing districts of Leribe and Maseru, estimates indicate that cumulative rainfall amounts between December and January were more than 100 percent above average, leading to saturation of the soils and negatively impacting crop development. A rapid assessment conducted by FAO in the country indicates crop losses from 30 to 60 percent of the total area planted in some of the worst affected areas, while an estimated 4 708 livestock (out of a livestock population of over 3 million) have been lost due to the torrential rains. The heavy rains have also caused damage to infrastructure disrupting households' access to markets.

Madagascar

As a result of localized heavy rains in northwestern areas during January, an estimated 2 256 people in Mahajanga, in Boeny region, have been displaced and some crops have been damaged. Similarly, above normal rains were recorded in some southern parts of the country during January and preliminary reports indicate localized damage to the maize and cassava crops in Betsioky district. However, these rains are likely to have contributed to replenishing soil moisture in the south following the severe drought experienced last year.

Mozambique

Heavy rains in January in central and southern provinces resulted in increased river levels, causing flooding and crop losses in riverine areas. At the beginning of February, rivers had passed alert levels in Tete (Zambezi river) and Gaza (Limpopo river) provinces, heightening the risk of further flooding in downstream areas. The government has declared a red alert for central and southern provinces. Current estimates indicate that approximately 23 632 families in southern provinces have been affected by the floods, with many of these households re-locating to higher ground. In the provinces of Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane, an estimated 18 430 hectares of agriculture land have been affected (this represents approximately 6 percent of the cropped area for cereals in the south, but a small proportion at the national level). Rapid agricultural and food security assessments are underway to evaluate the impact of the rains and floods at local and national levels.

Namibia

In the communal agricultural areas of the eastern Caprivi region (an area susceptible to flooding), the Zambezi river reached elevated levels in January, nearly three times the average, and breached its southern banks causing localized flooding. Approximately 1 000 people have been re-located from flood prone areas in the Caprivi region. Many households in the area have already depleted their food reserves, following flood-affected harvests in 2010. Similarly, in the extreme south of the country, above normal rains caused flash flooding along

the Orange river, bordering South Africa, damaging some crops and leading to livestock losses.

Zambia

Abundant precipitation in central and southern parts of the country led to localized water-logging and it is reported that most crops planted along the Kafue river plains are submerged. The intense rainfall has, in addition, caused damage to infrastructure in Sinazongwe, Itezihitezhi and Monze districts in the Southern province, which is a large maize producing region. However, despite the localized damage, satellite images indicate that, overall, vegetation conditions are normal and crops are performing well in the Southern province. The heavy rains have led to rising water levels in Kariba dam, bordering northern Zimbabwe, and consequently the Zambezi Water Authority (ZRA) has increased the discharge rates raising the possibility of further flooding in the Zambezi basin.

Zimbabwe

During January, abundant rains particularly in Midlands, Mashonaland Central and both north and south Matabeleland provinces have caused infrastructure damage and had a negative impact on some cereal crops in parts of the affected regions. However, overall, the 2010/11 maize crop is performing well in most areas. Preliminary reports indicate an increase in the area planted from last year and favourable vegetation conditions, confirmed by satellite analysis. As yet, no impact assessment is available.

South Africa

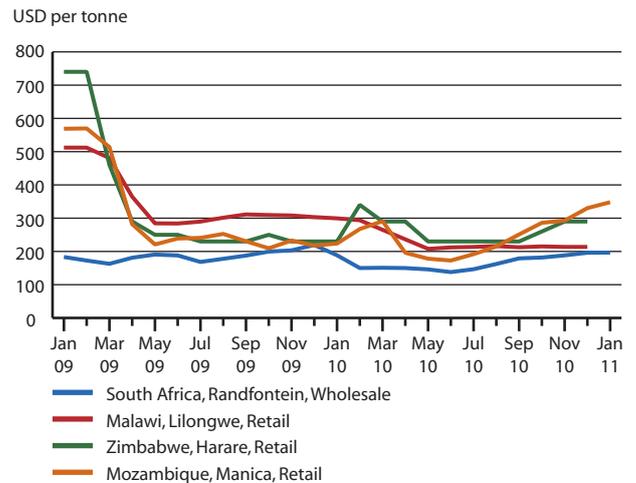
The heavy rains during December and January caused flooding across central parts of the country, with significant levels of rains observed in Free State – a large maize producing area – and in eastern parts of the Northern Cape. Preliminary reports indicate some damage to the maize crop, and other food crops, as well as agriculture infrastructure. However, a full assessment of the impact to agriculture sector is not yet available. The government declared 33 municipalities as disaster areas as a result of the floods, which has affected an estimated 16 473 households.

Adequate food supplies at the sub-regional level

Maize is the main food staple in Southern Africa countries. Following consecutive bumper cereal harvests across the sub-region in the past two years, which has instigated some countries to reverse previously restrictive export regulations for maize, domestic stocks are at satisfactory levels and have contributed to maintaining low maize prices in most markets. South Africa, the sub-region's largest exporter of maize, is forecast to retain a national stock of just under 3 million tonnes at the end of the current 2010/11 marketing year (May/April). This amount is one third higher than in the previous year. The large domestic supplies have limited any significant price increase, despite pressure from rising international prices. This has also helped to maintain lower cereal prices in importing countries of Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and Botswana, which source the bulk of their cereal consumption requirements from South Africa. Similarly, both Malawi and Zambia hold substantial maize reserves and have exportable surpluses. However, the competitive prices in South Africa have limited significant trade in the sub-region for these countries. As of January Zambia had exported nearly 120 000 tonnes, mainly to Zimbabwe. Overall, regional supplies are more than sufficient to cover the import requirements of cereal deficit countries.

Reflecting the good supplies, market prices of maize have remained at low levels in the past year, despite some recent seasonal increases, (Figure 2). The exception to this trend is Mozambique, where production short-falls, which were experienced last season, and depreciation of the national currency have contributed to an increase in maize and rice prices.

Figure 2: Prices of maize in selected Southern African markets



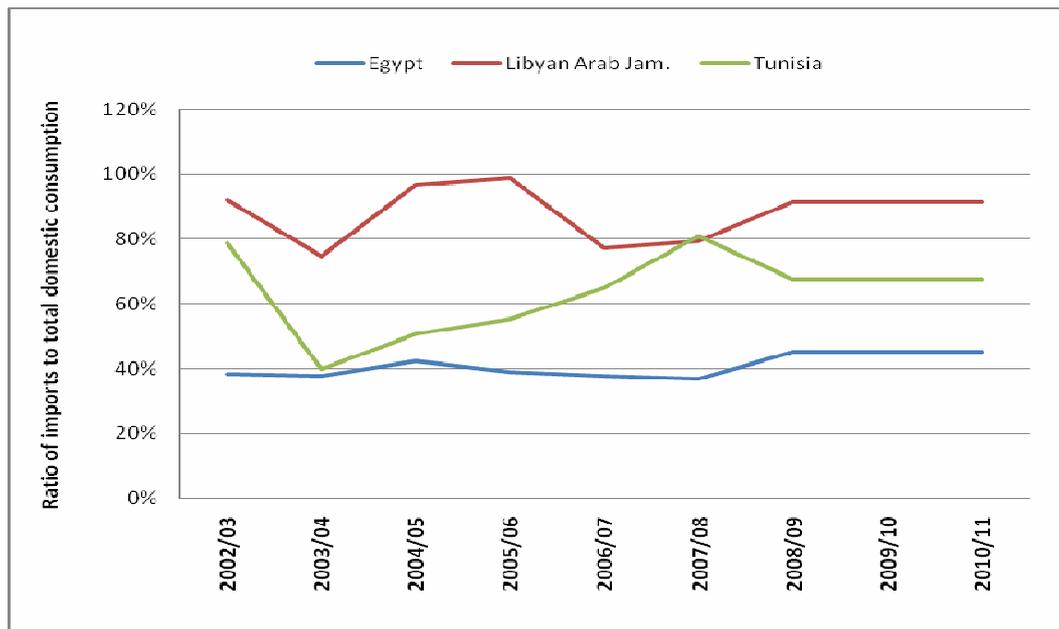
Source: SAFEX Agricultural Products Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, FEWSNET, Sistema De Informação De Mercados Agrícolas De Moçambique

11 March 2011

North Africa Brief

Civil unrest in **Tunisia**, **Egypt** and **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya** that began at the start of the current year has resulted in increasing levels of internal insecurity and population displacement, both within and between countries. Current estimates indicate over 200 000 people have fled Libyan Arab Jamahiriya since 19 February. Food security conditions of the vulnerable population, particularly migrants, are of grave concern. The situation is further aggravated given the high import dependence of these countries, particularly Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, for cereals (Figure 1) and the rising international prices, which have contributed to enlarging national import bills and consumer prices - outside of the national safety net programmes. As an immediate response to the humanitarian situation, WFP has initiated an emergency operation to provide food aid to about one million people in the affected countries for a period of three months, to commence as soon as possible.

Figure 1: Ratio of Imports to Total Domestic Consumption (MY 2002/03 – 2010/11) (%)



Early prospects for the 2011 cereal crops, for harvest from late April/May, remain overall favourable, except in Tunisia where dry conditions in January have dampened prospects for an improved wheat harvest following last year's poor production.

Situation by Country

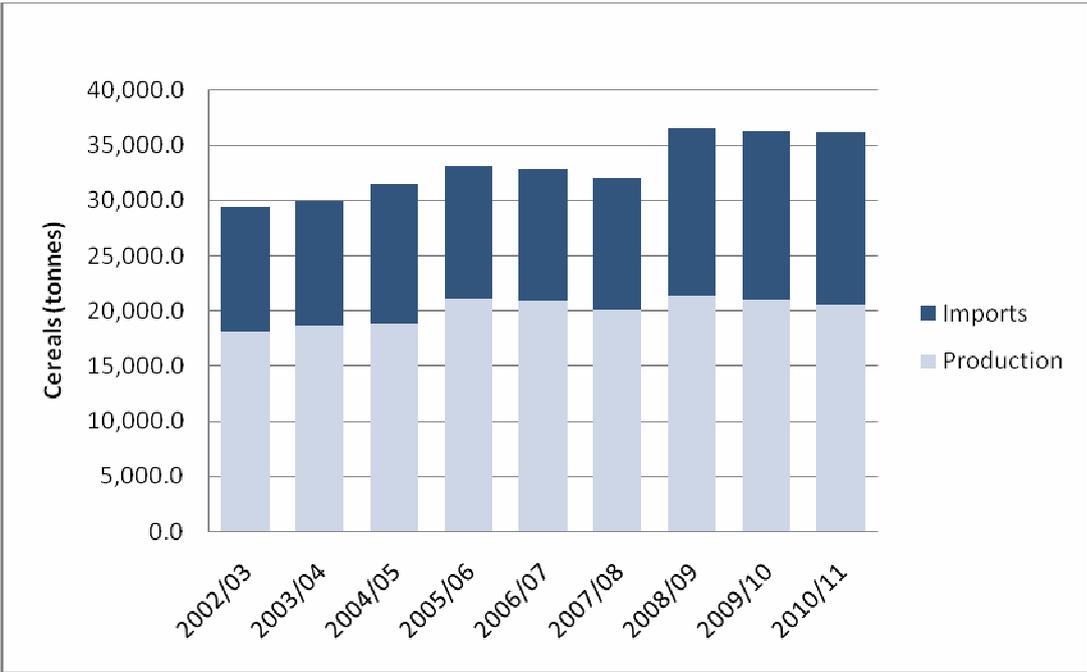
EGYPT

The large influx of people from Libyan Arab Jamahiriya since 19 February, currently estimated at 90 306, has increased the need for food, and other emergency supplies, at border camps; however the majority are Egyptian migrant workers and have utilised the border area as a transitory site. Emergency supplies and shelter are being provided to between 5 000 and 7 000 people.

At the national level, the sharp rise in wheat prices, as well as other food products, will add substantially to the cost of Egyptian wheat imports in 2010/11 and to the expenditure for the Government’s bread subsidy programme. The country is the world’s largest wheat importer with an estimated import requirement of 10 million tonnes for the current 2010/11 marketing year, and a total cereal import requirement of 15.6 million tonnes. Over 50 percent of wheat imports had been sourced from the Russian Federation; however, in view of the reduced supply from the Russian Federation in 2010/11, alternative sources are being used. For most consumers, while the high cost of imported wheat will not be felt in view of the country’s safety net programme, increases in the non-subsidized wheat flour price has caused prices of other wheat products to go up. At national level, nominal wheat prices increased by 32 percent in the year to December 2010 and rising food prices, particularly for rice (price rose 42 percent during 2010 following a decline in production driven mainly by the Government policy to reduce area planted to rice in order to restrict water use), continued to push up inflation in January.

Harvesting of the winter crops will commence in April/May and weather conditions have been generally satisfactory. Preliminary indications point to an average to above-average cereal output in 2011.

Figure 2: Egypt Cereal Import and Production (MY 2002/03 – 2010/11)

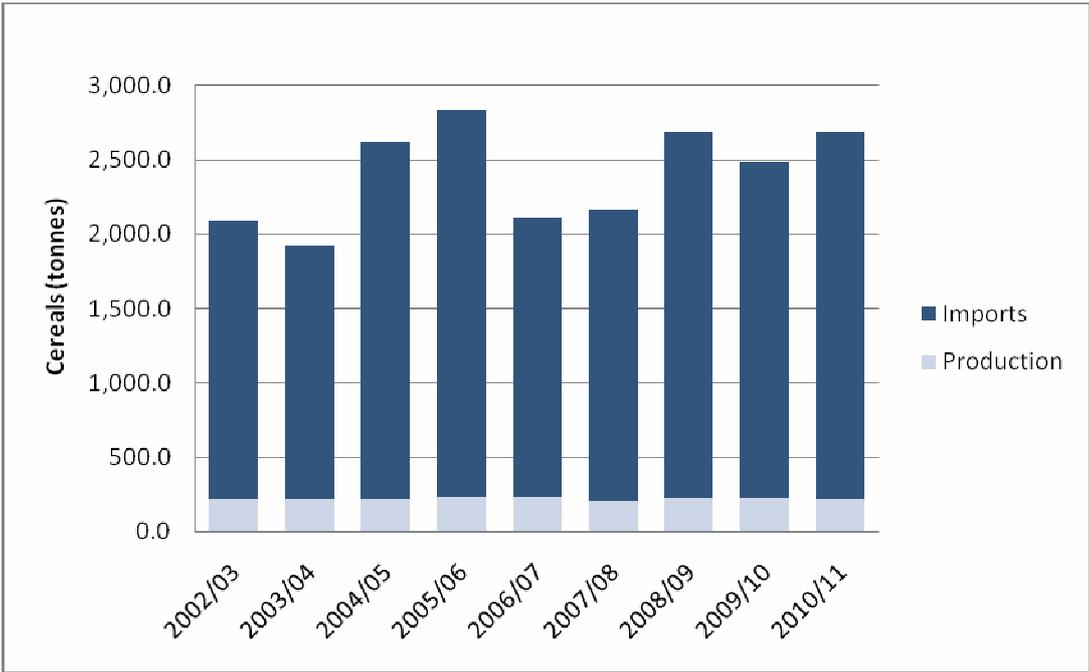


LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

Food is the dominant component of consumer price inflation. Annual average inflation dropped to 2 percent in 2009, down from 10.4 percent in 2008, driven mainly by international commodities prices. Annual inflation is estimated to have risen to 2.5 percent in 2010, and is forecast to reach 4 percent in 2011, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, driven by rising international food prices. Planting of the winter cereals to be harvested from June 2011 was completed in November. Rainfall has been generally adequate since the start of the growing season in October, allowing satisfactory crop development in main producing zones, according to satellite imagery analysis.

However, environmental constraints place a severe limit on Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's agricultural potential. The country is over 90 percent desert. A large proportion of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's land is not suitable for agriculture and most parts of the country receive inadequate rainfall for agricultural production. Most of the country's arable and permanent pasture land is limited to western strip of the coastal belt, where 75 percent of the population is located. Wheat and barley are the major cereals grown in the country. Other important crops include olives, grapes, dates, almonds and oranges. The livestock sector also relies heavily on subsidized imports of animal feed.

Figure 3: Libyan Arab Jamahiriya Cereal Import and Production (MY 2002/03 – 2010/11)



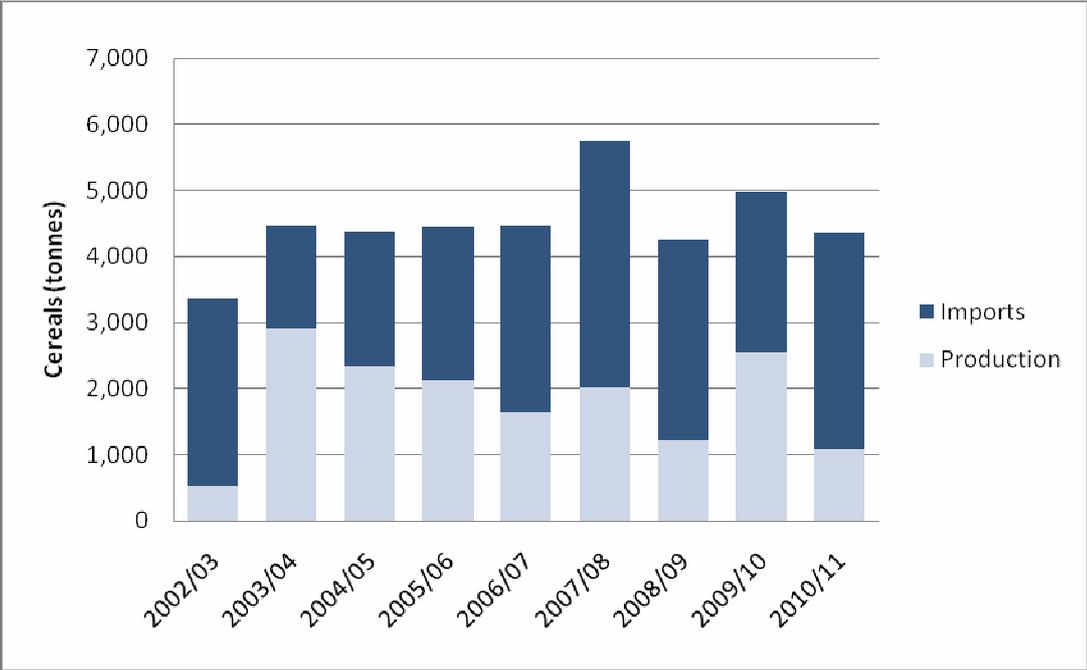
TUNISIA

The crisis in Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has led to a sustained influx of refugees into Tunisia. Current figures from the IOM indicate that over 110 000 people have crossed the Tunisian-Libyan Arab Jamahiriya border since 19 February. Of those crossing, the majority are Egyptian nationals, and the remainder include Tunisians returning to their home country and other foreigners.

Tunisia relies heavily on wheat imports from the international market to cover its consumption needs (Figure 4). In spite of the good crop gathered in 2009, the country imported about 1.4 million tonnes of wheat, 47 percent of its domestic utilization, in the 2009/10 (July/June) marketing year. Import levels are anticipated to be much higher during 2010/11, due to last year's reduced crop – wheat output dropped by about 46 percent in 2010. Consequently, the recent sharp rises in food prices have raised serious concerns over the food supply outlook in the country. So far, however, the hike in international food prices has not been transferred to domestic prices. The consumer price index of food declined slightly from 131 to 130 between November and December 2010. The year-on-year inflation rate in the food sector was estimated at 4.8 percent in December 2010. Nonetheless, the country's food import bill is expected to increase significantly. Moreover, the internal economic slowdown and the influx of refugees from Libyan Arab Jamahiriya have led to a serious deterioration of the food security situation in parts of the country.

Early prospects for the 2011 winter wheat and coarse grain crops, to be harvested from around June, are uncertain. Prior to the current political crisis, the Government has increased its support to the agricultural sector mostly through distribution of improved seeds and debt rescheduling for farmers affected by last year drought and poor harvest.

Figure 4: Tunisia Cereal Import and Production (MY 2002/03 – 2010/11)



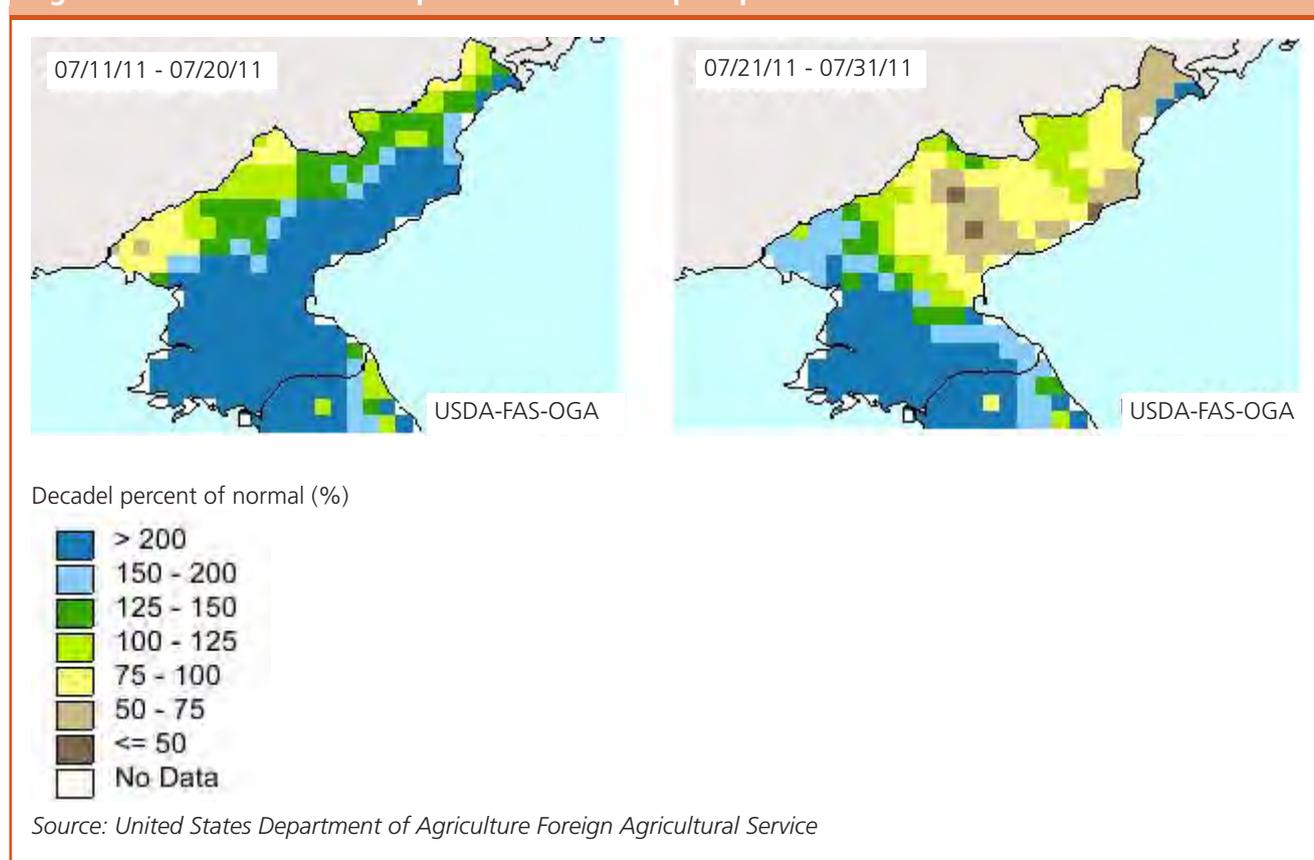
Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Flood Update

8 August 2011

DPRK affected by serious floods following torrential rains in July

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was hit by excessive rains during the second and third dekad of July (see Figure 1) causing severe flooding and localised crop damage to standing crops of the 2011 main season in the cereal bowl of the country, particularly in the southern provinces. The counties reporting serious damage were Chongdan, Jaeryong, Anak and Unchon in South Hwanghae Province and Hoichang and Pyongwon from South Pyongan Province. Reportedly, some 250 mm rainfall was received during five days in the most affected areas.

Figure 1: AFWA/LIS Decadal percent of normal precipitation



The initial estimates provided by the National Coordinating Committee indicate that 59 340 hectares of cropland have been affected (submerged, buried, washed-away or fell down) nationwide. The total area affected amounts to about five percent of the total area under cereal cultivation (see Table 1). Although no precise crop damage estimates are yet available, the paddy crop, currently at the initial growing stage, is likely to be affected the most in the low lying areas. Damage to agricultural infrastructure was also reported. However, in surrounding areas, the abundant rains are likely to benefit the growing crops. The net effect on total production would need to be assessed later in the season.

Table 1: DPRK - Main-season crop areas in 2010 and the area affected by recent floods (000 ha)

Province	Paddy ¹	Total (cereals and potatoes) ¹	Area affected by floods ²
Pyongyang City	16	27	
South Pyongan	83	156	8.1
North Pyongan	101	205	
Chagang	7	50	
South Hwanghae	146	253	39.7
North Hwanghae	70	168	
Kangwon	34	79	
South Hamgyong	60	124	1.3
North Hamgyong	25	91	0.88
Ryanggang	2	33	
Nampo City	27	38	1
DPRK	570	1 224	59.3*

¹ Source: Ministry of Agriculture as reported in FAO/WFP CFSAM 2010 report.

² Source: National Coordinating Committee for UNDP

* Total including 8 300 ha from Kaesong City.

According to the last FAO/WFP/UNICEF Rapid Food Security Assessment (March 2011) the country is facing over one million tonnes of cereal deficit, or about a quarter of its annual requirements, for 2010/11 marketing year (Nov/Oct). Further details can be found in GIEWS Country Brief at <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/index.jsp>. So far both, food aid and commercial imports, have been very slow in materializing.

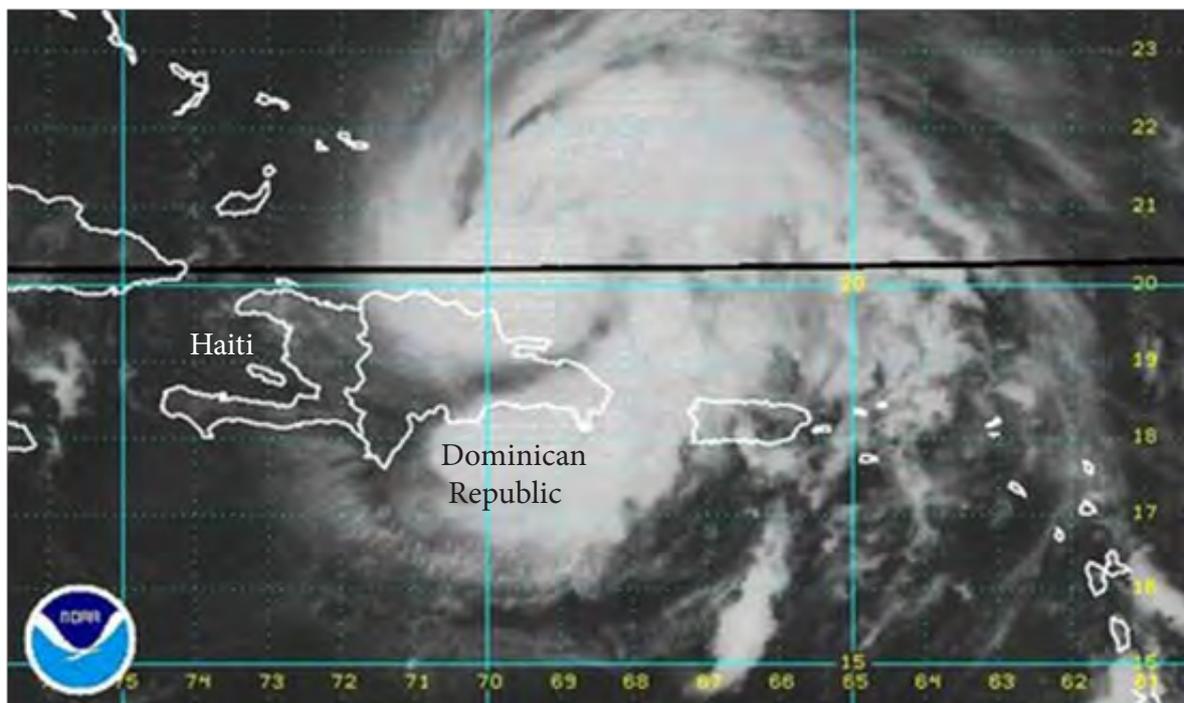
The rainy season typically continues until September. FAO/GIEWS will continue to monitor crop development and weather hazards affecting food security in the region.

Hurricane “Irene” lashes parts of the Dominican Republic and Haiti

24 August 2011

Hurricane “Irene”, the first of the Atlantic hurricane season (June - November), hit northern parts of the Dominican Republic and Haiti as a Category 2 storm Tuesday 23 August 2011. Early reports indicate that most areas have been spared massive damage but approximately 11 000 people in the Dominican Republic were displaced by the storm, which felled trees and flooded some roads.

In the Dominican Republic, harvesting of the 2011 main season paddy crop is about to be completed while planting of the second season paddy crop is underway. Northern parts of the country are the main paddy growing areas and although no reports of serious crop damage are yet available, heavy rains and strong winds associated with the hurricane could have negatively affected the harvesting and/or planting activities. Similarly, in Haiti, extreme weather conditions could have a negative impact on the already uncertain production prospects of the 2011 first season cereal crops, mainly maize, towards the end of harvesting period and planting of the second season paddy and sorghum crops.



Irene position on 23 August 2011. Source: NOAA

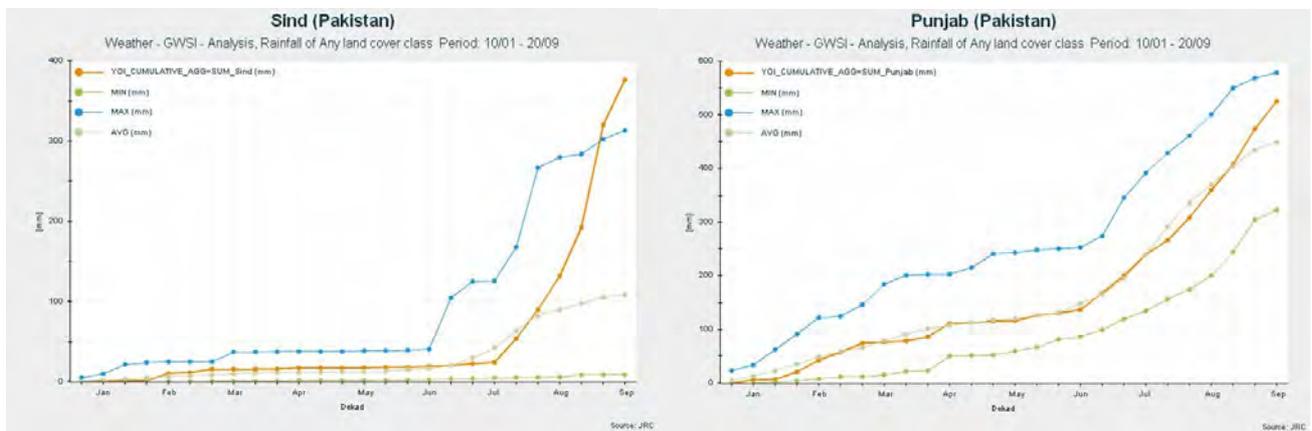
PAKISTAN Flood Update

4 October 2011

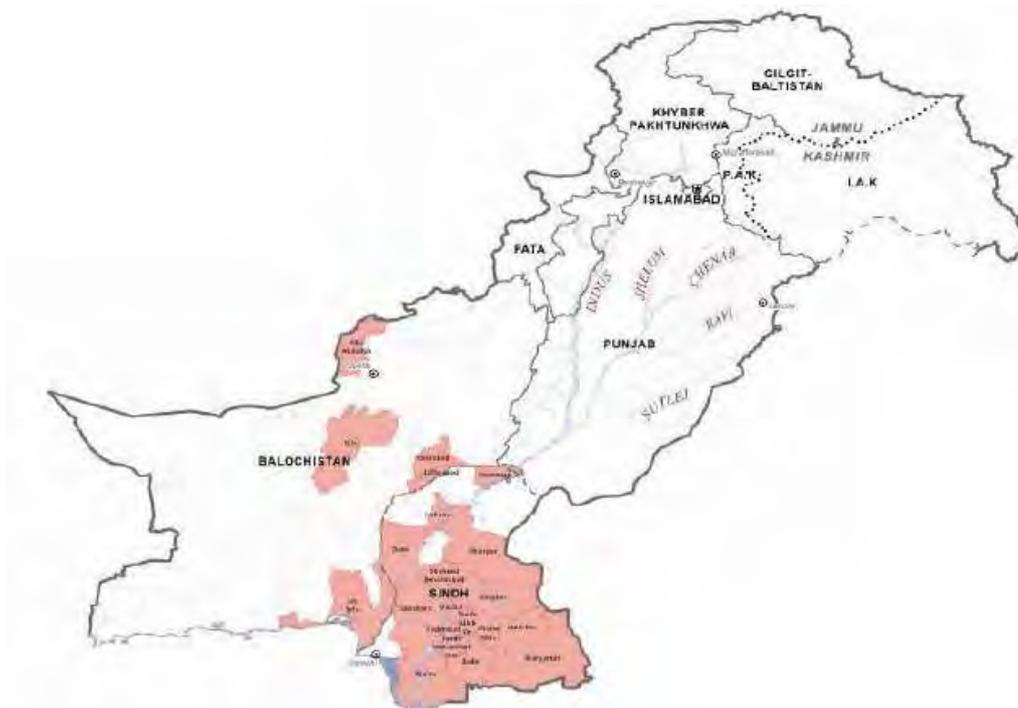
Recent floods in Sindh province have affected large population and caused severe crop damage

The intense monsoon rains from 9 of August 2011 have caused severe flooding in southern Pakistan, hitting Sindh province the hardest. Latest official estimates indicate, as of 29 September 2011, the number of persons adversely affected by the flooding is about 8.9 million. The number of houses damaged or destroyed has reached nearly 1.5 million. Furthermore, nearly 92 thousand livestock have perished and at least 5 million surviving animals are at risk. According to the UN-Government joint assessment over 2.75 million people are in immediate need of food assistance in the monsoon affected areas.

Figure1: Cumulative rainfall from 10 January to 20 September 2011



Source: MARSOP/JRC and FAO/GIEWS



An overall assessment of the agricultural damage is not yet available, but the preliminary official reports indicate that at least 880 000 hectares of standing crops, including rice, maize, cotton, sugarcane, fruit orchards and vegetables, are affected due to the floods in the province. The affected crop land represents some 3.7 percent of the total national cropped area. However, damage to the current paddy crop is moderate and is estimated by FAO and Pakistan's space agency (SUPARCO), as of 20 September, at about 252 700 tonnes, or 2.5 percent of the normal national production. Sindh is second most important province for agricultural production in Pakistan amounting to about 18 percent of the national cereal production (see Table below).

Pakistan: Cereal production (000/000)						Share of Sindh province in Pakistan (%)
	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	Pakistan	
Wheat	18 420	3 540	1 205	868	24 033	15
Rice	3 643	2 537	128	644	6 952	36
Maize	2 627	2	958	6	3 593	0
Jowar (sorghum)	103	33	4	25	165	20
Bajra (millet)	247	45	2	2	296	15
Total	25 040	6 157	2 297	1 545	35 039	18
Total (excl. wheat)	6 620	2 617	1 092	677	11 006	24

Source: <http://www.star.gov.pk/files/sites/default/files/other/yearbook2010/AGRICULTURE/1-5.pdf>
 Note: Wheat doesn't belong to the season therefore has not been affected.

On the other hand, the abundant rains are likely to benefit growing crops in other areas of the country. The net effect on total production would need to be assessed later in the season. FAO/GIEWS will continue to monitor crop development and weather hazards affecting food security in the region.

Further details can be found in GIEWS Country Brief at <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/index.jsp> and the most recent flood damage information at <http://pakresponse.info/>.

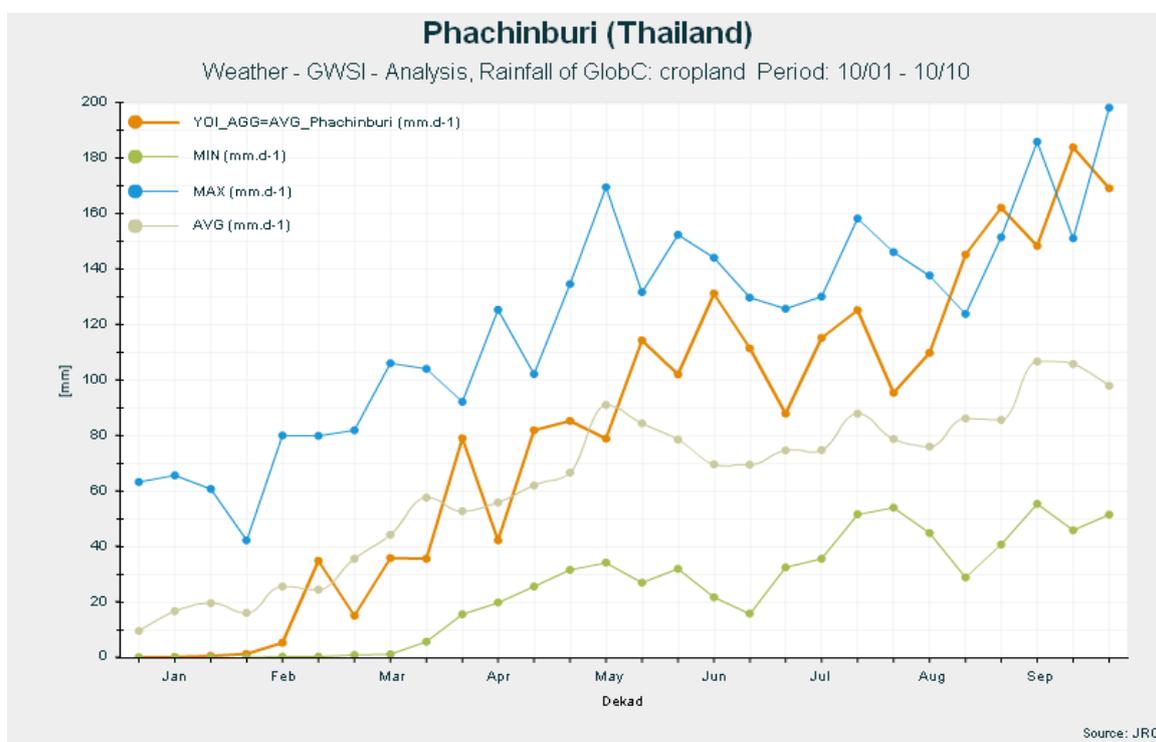
Southeast Asia Flood Update

21 October 2011

Localized flooding due to typhoons and heavy rains have affected large numbers of people and caused crop damage particularly in areas of the Mekong river basin

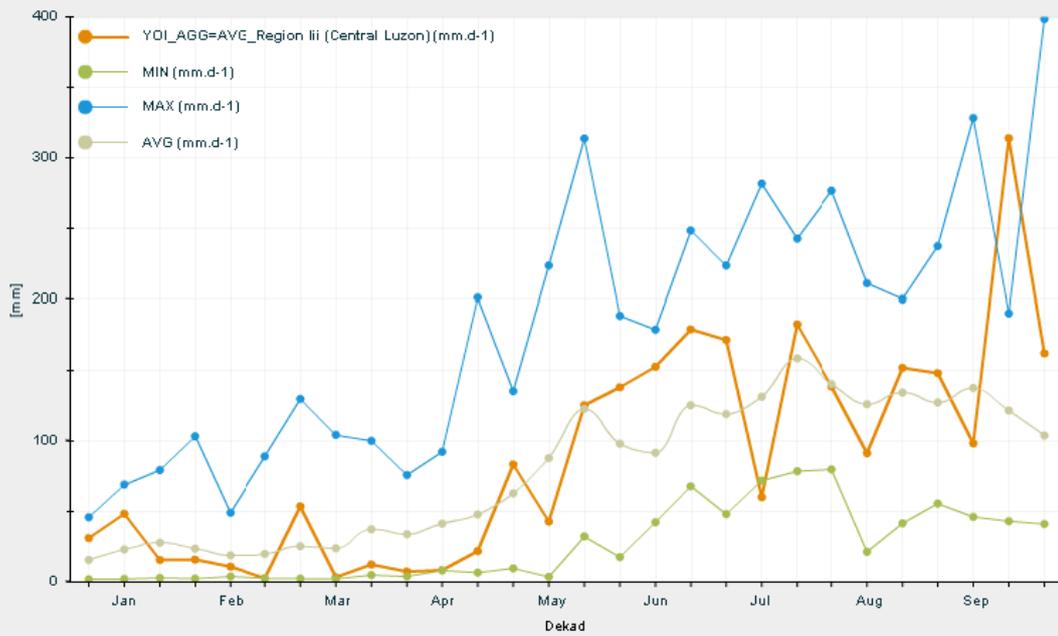
Intense monsoon rains, typhoons and tropical storms in September and the first-half of October have caused significant localized flooding and devastation across **Southeast Asia**, including **Cambodia, LAO People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines, Thailand** and **Viet Nam**, hitting areas across the Mekong river basin the hardest. The recent floods, adding to the localized inundation from heavy rains since mid-July in some parts, have caused loss of hundreds of lives, displacement of millions of people and severe damage to housing, infrastructure and agriculture. The floods occurred when the current main wet season cereal crops were in the field, with paddy rice at the initial to mid growing stage, and maize at an advance critical flowering stage. The flooding has damaged standing crops, particularly paddy fields in low lying areas. Although no precise figures are yet available, the official estimates put damages to standing crops at 1.6 million hectares (or 12.5 percent of total national cropped area) in Thailand, 420 337 hectares (or 6 percent of the total national cropped area) in the Philippines, 332 634 hectares (or 12 percent of the total area under paddy) in Cambodia, 64 000 hectares (or 7.5 percent of the total area under paddy) in Lao PDR and 28 813 hectares (or 0.4 percent) in Viet Nam. In addition, loss of livestock and poultry is reported and significant numbers are considered to be at risk.

Figure 1: The estimated dekadal rainfall from 1 January to 10 October 2011 in the most flood-affected provinces in the region



Region Iii (Central Luzon) (Philippines)

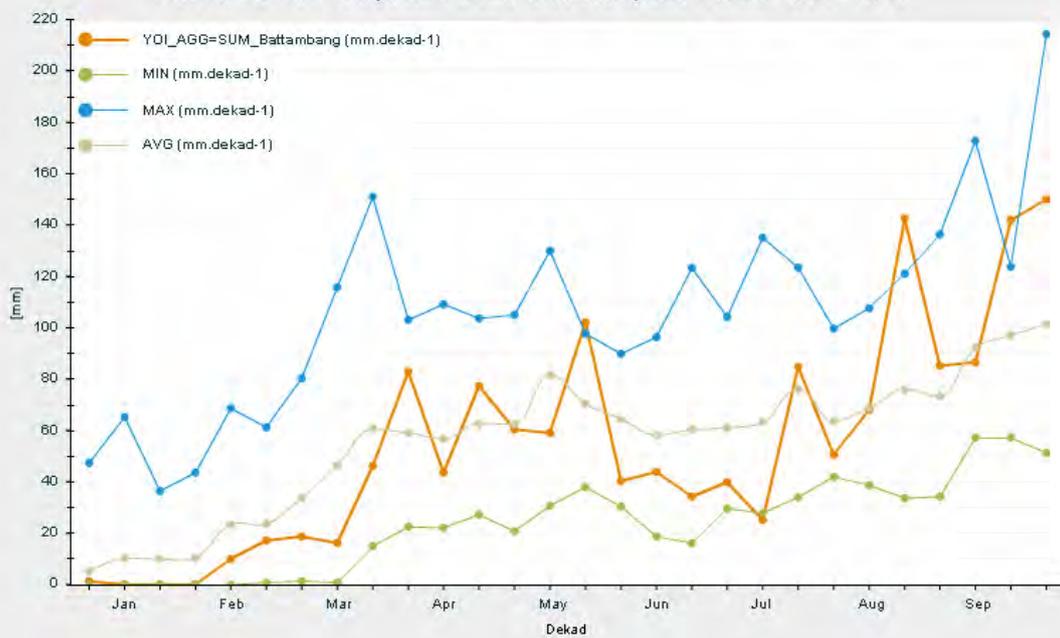
Weather - GWSI - Analysis, Rainfall of GlobC: cropland Period: 10/01 - 10/10



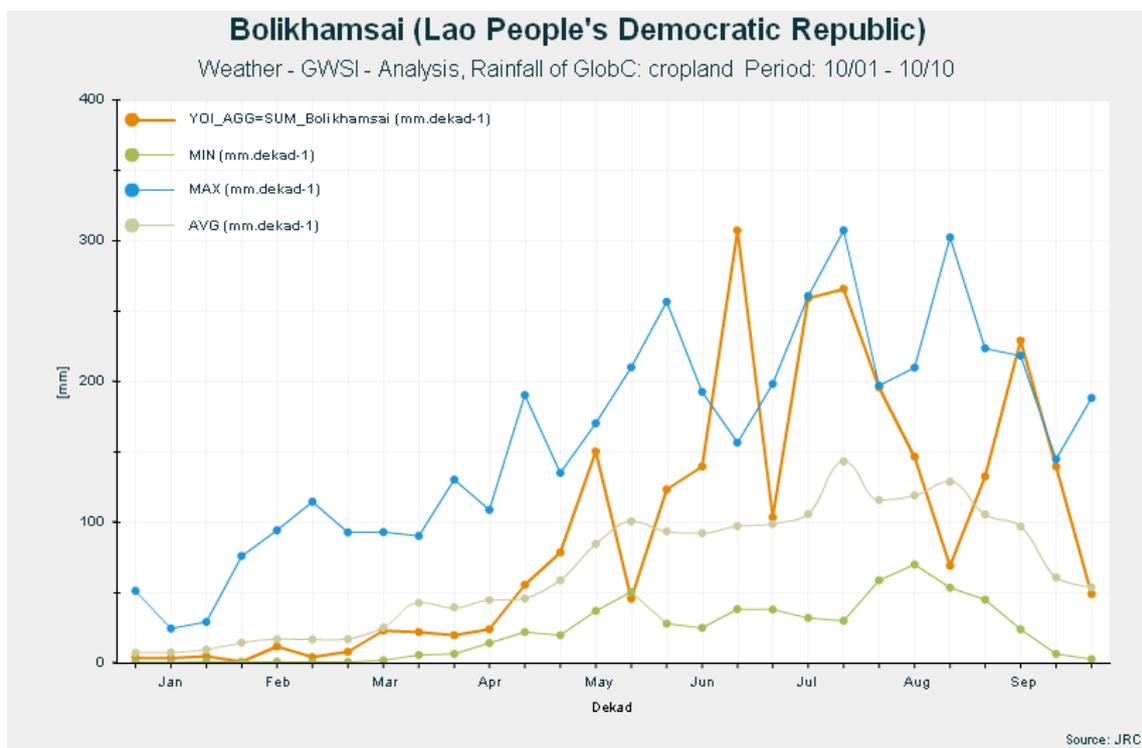
Source: JRC

Battambang (Cambodia)

Weather - GWSI - Analysis, Rainfall of GlobC: cropland Period: 10/01 - 10/10



Source: JRC



Although flood waters have started to recede in some areas, there are concerns of serious food shortages in the affected communities due to the difficulties in delivering food assistance.

The abundant rain in surrounding areas, however, is likely to have beneficial effects on the growing crops. The net effect on the national crop production would need to be assessed later in the season. FAO/GIEWS will continue to closely monitor the situation.

A brief situation summary by country is provided below.

Thailand

Seasonal South-west monsoon rains increased significantly during September and were further intensified by the tropical storm Nalgae in early October, causing severe flash flooding in the Northeast, East and Central regions of the country. The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation estimated that 60 out of 77 provinces were affected in some way by the floods. Flood waters have inundated more than two-thirds of the country causing loss of life, the submergence of rice fields, loss of crop and livestock, closure of hundreds of factories and severe damage to buildings and infrastructure. Official estimates indicate that, as of 14 October, the floods affected over 2.4 million people and damaged at least 1.6 million hectares of standing crops. The affected area covers 12.5 percent of the total national cropped land. Although no precise crop damage estimates are yet available, the main rice season at the critical growth stage is likely to be affected the most. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, nearly 9.9 million heads of livestock are at risk. It is expected that this estimate will rise in the central plains as the flood waters are topped by water discharges from major dams which are beyond or almost at full capacity.

The Philippines

The country was hit by typhoon Nesat on 27 September affecting 35 provinces in northern and central Luzon and later by typhoon Nalgae on 1 October. This exacerbated the situation in 17 of the 35 provinces in the same region, the most affected being Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Pampanga and Tarlac. Both the typhoons and subsequent localized floods had a severe impact on the paddy production of the main 2011 season, which accounts for approximately 55 percent of the national rice output. Preliminary official reports indicate substantial damage to 420 337 hectares with losses estimated at about 728 379 tonnes of paddy or 16 percent of the national production. Overall, latest estimates indicate that about 4 million people have been affected and at least 485 000 hectares of standing crops, including rice, maize and high value commercial crops (HVCC) have been damaged or lost to the floods. The affected cropped area covers 6 percent of the total national cropped area. Additionally, nearly 3.3 million livestock and poultry have been affected.

Cambodia

Since mid-August, the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers have been overflowing, leading to severe floods in the southwest and northern regions of the country. Official estimates, as of 14 October, indicate that 1.2 million people have been adversely affected and thousands of houses have been destroyed or damaged by flooding. Preliminary estimates from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries indicate that 332 634 hectares of rice fields have been affected including at least 158 447 hectares of the crop damaged from the current main wet season, which accounts for about 80 percent of the annual national production. Prior to the floods, the 2011 aggregate paddy production (wet and dry seasons) was forecast at yet another record level of 8.9 million tonnes, some 7.2 percent above the bumper crop the year before.

LAO People's Democratic Republic

Typhoon Haima struck the northern and central provinces on 24 June with typhoon Nock-Ten hitting central and southern areas on 30 and 31 July, which caused severe flooding in Xayaboury, Xiengkhuang, Vientiane and Bolikhamxay provinces, affecting over 37 thousand people and destroying at least 7 200 hectares of paddy, maize, vegetables, cash crops and fruit trees. In addition, a total of 48.3 tonnes of rice seeds and household rice stocks were lost to the floods. Official estimates indicate that nearly 430 000 people have been affected and at least 64 000 hectares of rice fields have been damaged since the end of June. However, a detailed assessment of the crop losses is not yet available. Some areas that were affected by floods in June-July were replanted.

Viet Nam

The mid-October heavy rains worsened the flooding situation in the central region of the country. Some 330 000 people have been affected, with 46 lives lost to floods since the beginning of the monsoon season in July. A total of 28 813 hectares of standing paddy crop have been damaged.

Central America Flood Update

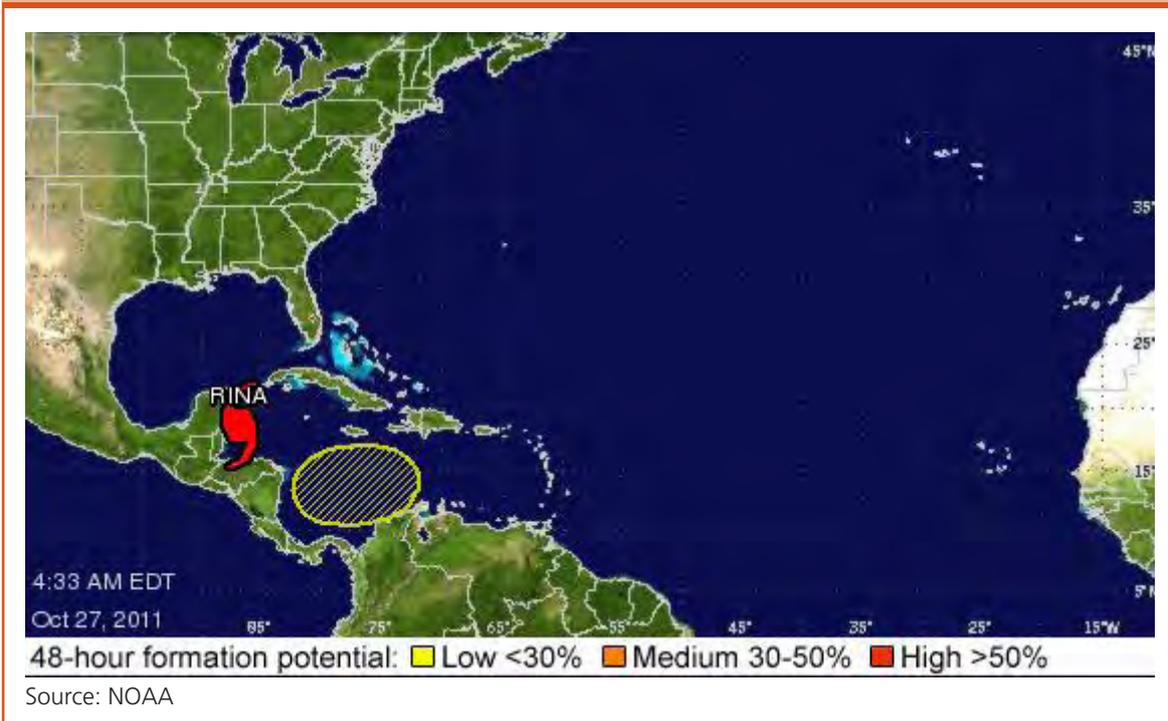
27 October 2011

Flooding affects large number of people and causes localized crop damage

Intense tropical cyclone activity in the second dekad of October, in particular that associated with tropical depression 12-E, has resulted in torrential rains, landslides and floods across Central American countries, including El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica and parts of Mexico. Overall in the subregion, the heavy rains have resulted in more than 100 deaths and approximately 700 000 displaced people, and caused damage to infrastructure and agriculture. The Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua declared states of emergency. The situation could further deteriorate in the coming days as more heavy rains are expected following the development of Hurricane Rina on 24 October.

The floods occurred when harvesting of the 2011/12 main crop season ("de primera"), which accounts for roughly 60 percent of the annual maize output and 30 percent of annual bean production, was almost completed. However, the standing 2011/12 second season crops ("de postrera"), representing about 25 and 30 percent respectively of annual maize and bean output, were more exposed to flood damage. Although a detailed assessment of crop losses is not yet available, the impact of the floods is reported to have been severe at localized level.

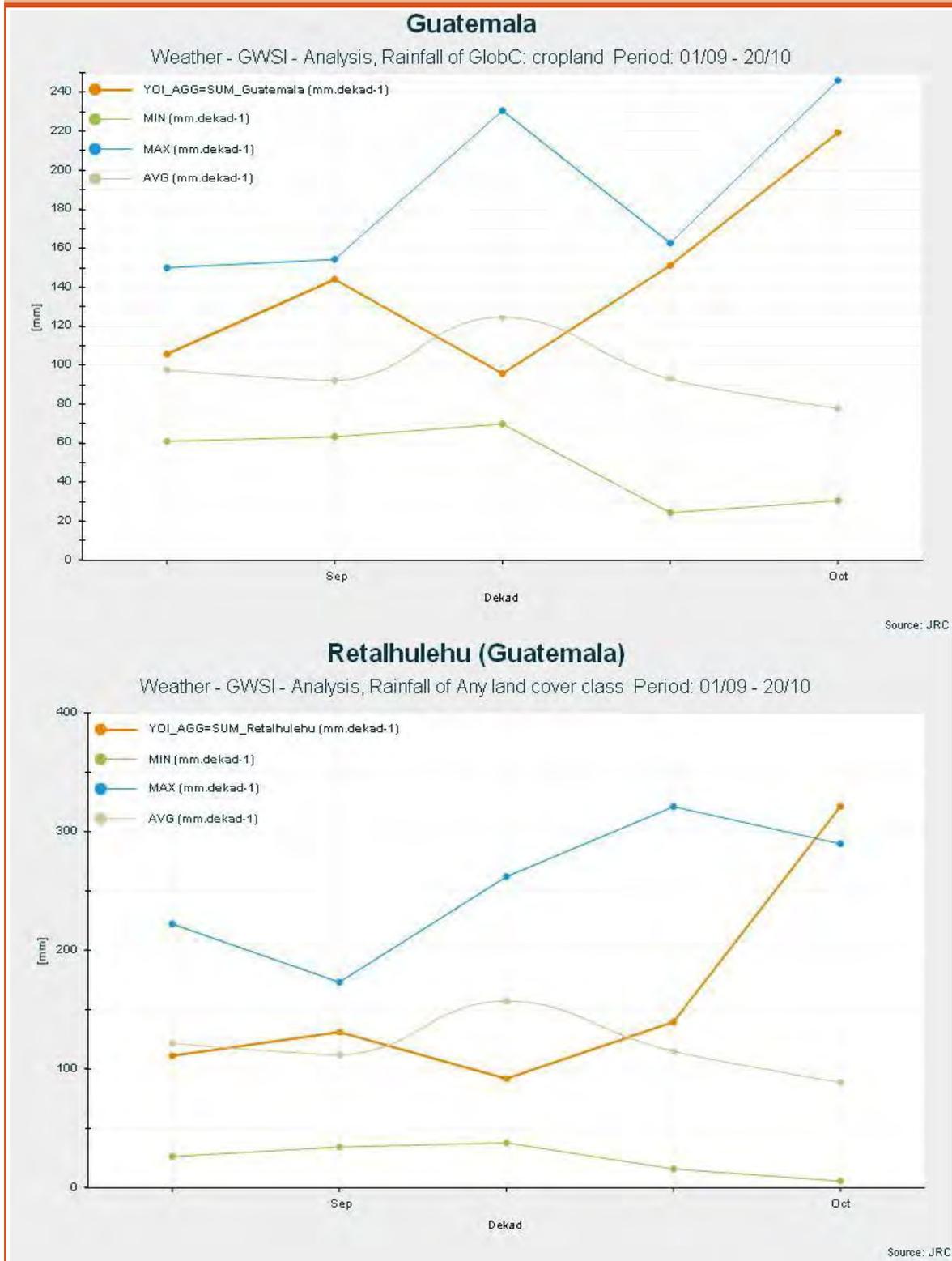
Figure 1: Atlantic tropical weather outlook



GUATEMALA

Heavy rains from 10 to 20 October mostly affected the southern coastal areas (particularly the department of Retalhuehu), the central highland plains, and the northeast department of Petén. Floods and landslides resulted in 38 deaths and affected about 530 000 people. A preliminary assessment by FAO indicates that maize crops were the most affected. However, losses were localized and as of 21 October, amounted to at least 5 810 hectares. Maize and bean prices have risen nationally in the past two weeks, with increases of at least 25 percent in the worst affected areas in the north, as the heavy rains hampered transportation of the recently harvested main season crops.

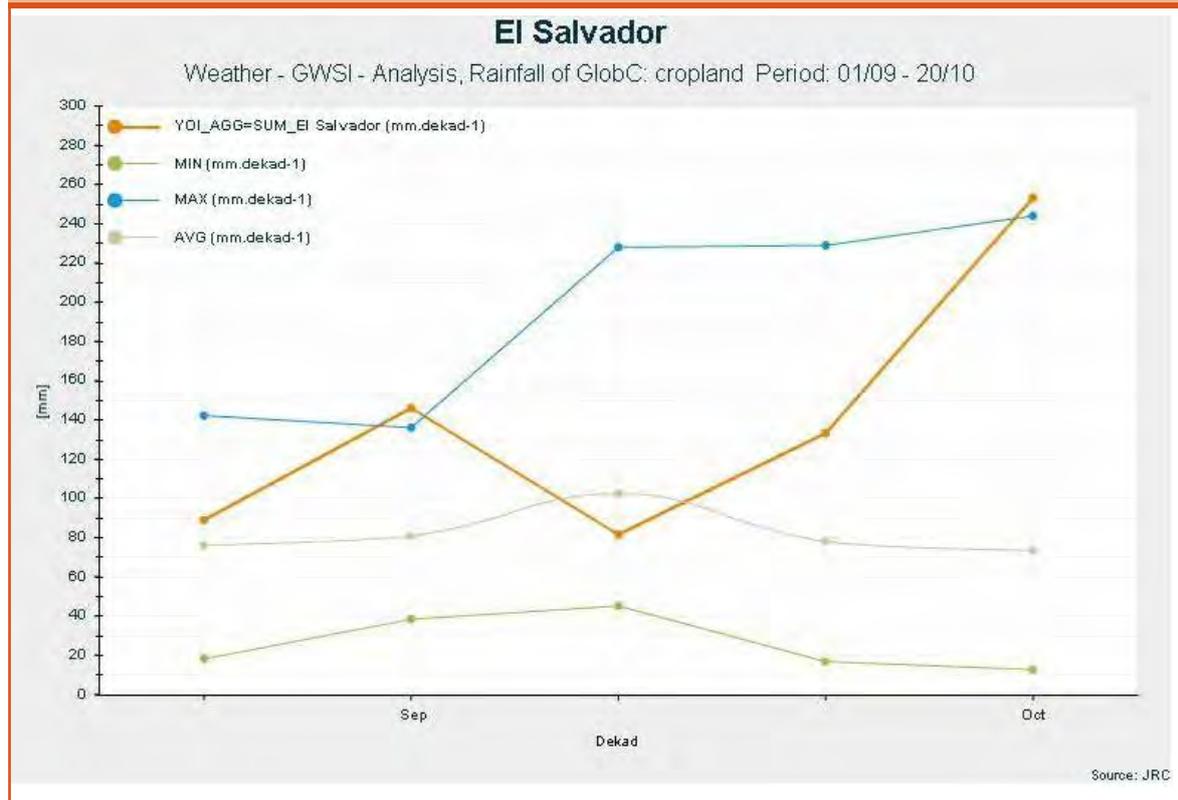
Figure 2: Estimated rainfall



EL SALVADOR

The mid-October torrential rains have caused the loss of more than 30 lives and adversely affected approximately 300 000 people. The Government has requested international humanitarian assistance after having declared a state of emergency. Official preliminary assessments indicate that the crops of some 264 000 farmers have been damaged. Losses of maize are estimated at 46 000 tonnes so far, representing 5 percent of the total production expected in 2011. In addition, some further 180 000 tonnes may be lost if rehabilitation activities are not undertaken soon. The impact of the crop losses has been felt in the markets, with the wholesale prices of white maize increasing by more than 50 percent from 12 to 17 October.

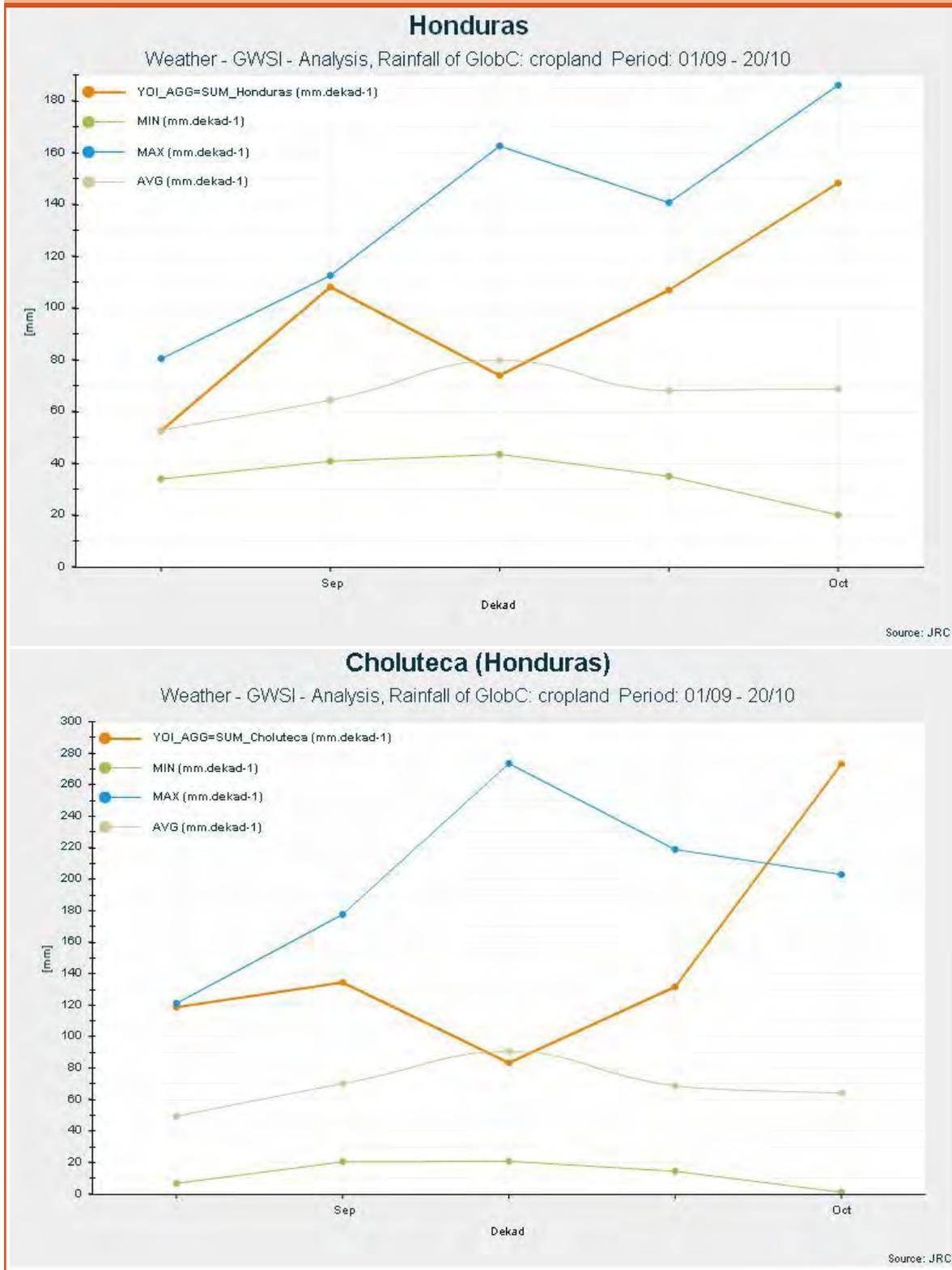
Figure 3: Estimated rainfall



HONDURAS

Well above-average rains associated with tropical depression 12-E in mid-October caused severe damage to infrastructure and agriculture in the southern parts of the country, particularly in the departments of Choluteca, Valle and Intibuca, and affected at least 60 000 people. Although a definitive assessment of the crop losses is not yet available, official reports indicate that some 7 600 hectares of the 2011/12 second season (“de postrera”) crops were affected, including some 1 850 hectares of maize, which was at the mid-growing stage. While the damage is limited at national level, it is severe in some communities, particularly in the department of Intibuca.

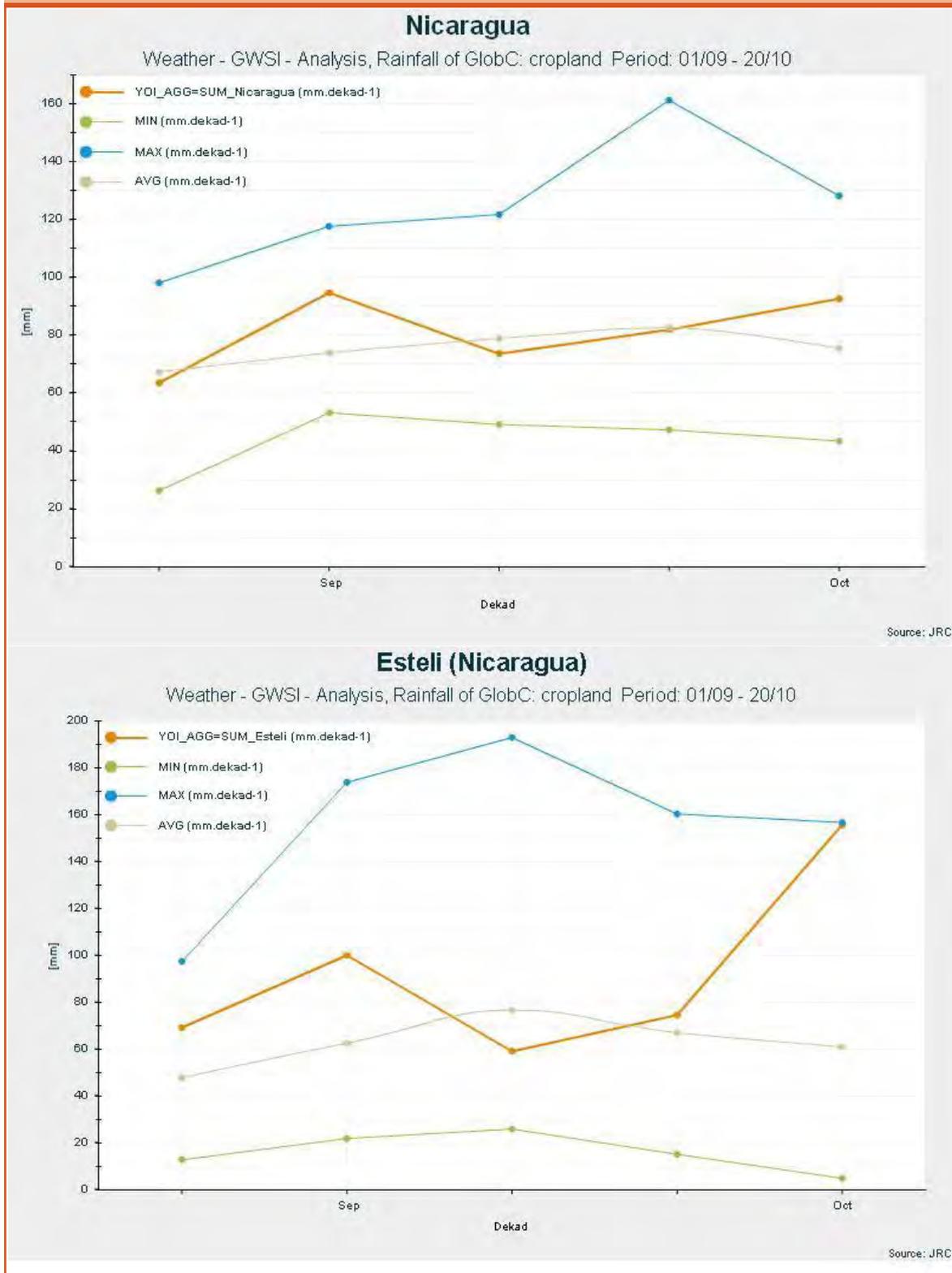
Figure 4: Estimated rainfall



NICARAGUA

Flooding and landslides throughout Nicaragua from 10 to 20 October resulted in 12 deaths and adversely affected 140 000 people. The most hit departments were León and Estelí. As a result, the Government of Nicaragua requested assistance from the international community, after having declared a state of emergency. The floods occurred during planting of the second season ("de postrera"), when about 60 percent of the planned area under maize had been already sown, and planting of beans was almost complete. Preliminary estimates indicate that some 12 and 17 percent respectively of the areas already planted to maize and beans were affected. This would amount to 2 percent of the total annual maize area and some 5 percent of that of beans. A detailed assessment of the crop losses is not yet available.

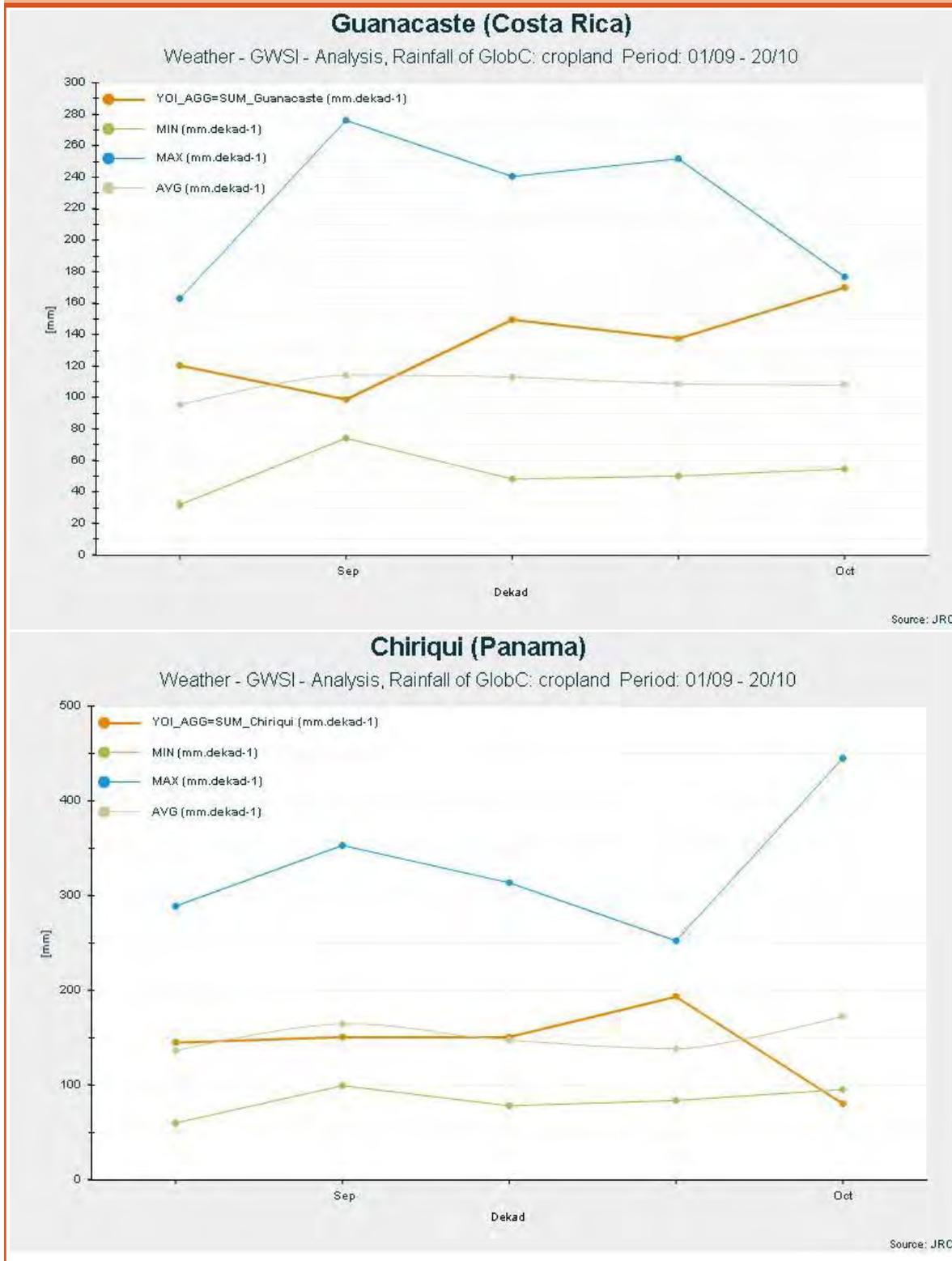
Figure 5: Estimated rainfall



COSTA RICA and PANAMA

Heavy rainfall in Costa Rica in the second dekad of October resulted in the displacement of approximately 1 000 people and caused damage to infrastructure and agriculture. The most affected area was the rice growing province of Guanacaste. Although no precise estimate of crop losses is yet available, the second season paddy crop, which accounts for about 30 percent of annual output, was at the critical growth stage and some 8 000 hectares of paddy are reported to have been affected by the floods. This represents some 10 percent of the total area cultivated with paddy annually. In Panama, above-average precipitation in the first and second dekad of October mostly affected the province of Chiriqui, delaying rice harvesting activities.

Figure 6: Estimated rainfall



Unfavourable food security prospects in parts of West Africa, notably in Chad, Mauritania and Niger

4 November 2011

In 2011, agricultural production has been affected in several parts of the Sahel by late onset of rains, irregular precipitation, prolonged dry spells and significant pest infestations. The expected average crop production in the coastal countries along the Gulf of Guinea will not be enough to offset the expected decline in production in affected Sahel countries. Rising food insecurity, especially in **Chad, Mauritania** and **Niger** is, therefore, likely in 2012.

Production prospects

In **Chad**, growing conditions for cereal crops and pastures have been poor in several parts of the country in 2011, due to irregular rains at the beginning of the cropping season in May/June which delayed plantings, and subsequent erratic precipitation. A joint CILSS/FewsNet/FAO crop assessment mission which visited the country in late October anticipated a sharp decline in cereal and pasture production. Both the southern Sudanian and the northern Sahelian zones have been affected. The most affected regions include: Logone Occidental, Ouddai, Wadi Firra, Batha, Guera, Kanem, Bar El Ghazal and Hadjar Lamis.

In **Mauritania**, dry spells and the poor distribution of rainfall in 2011 growing season (July to October) resulted in a serious decline in cereal production. Coarse grain production is expected to be particularly reduced. In addition to the decline in cereal production, pasture conditions were severely affected in the pastoral and agro-pastoral zones of the country, notably in Trarza and Tagant regions.

In **Niger**, erratic rains and extended dry spells throughout the growing season caused serious damage to crops and pastures in several areas. The most seriously affected departments included Diffa and N'Guigmi in the Diffa region; Douthi and Loga in the Dosso region; Aguié, Guidan Rounджи, Madrounfa and Mayahi in the Maradi region; Bouza, Illéla, Konni and Madaoua in the Tahoua region; Fillingué, Ouallam, Téra and Tillabéri in the Tillabéri region; and Gouré, Matamèye and Tanout in the Zinder region. Coarse grain production is forecast to go down sharply compared to last year record crop, according to a joint CILSS/FewsNet/FAO/WFP crop assessment mission which visited the country in late October. Furthermore, following severe pest infestations and poor rainfall, production of cowpea, the main source of income for farmers, is estimated to drop significantly.

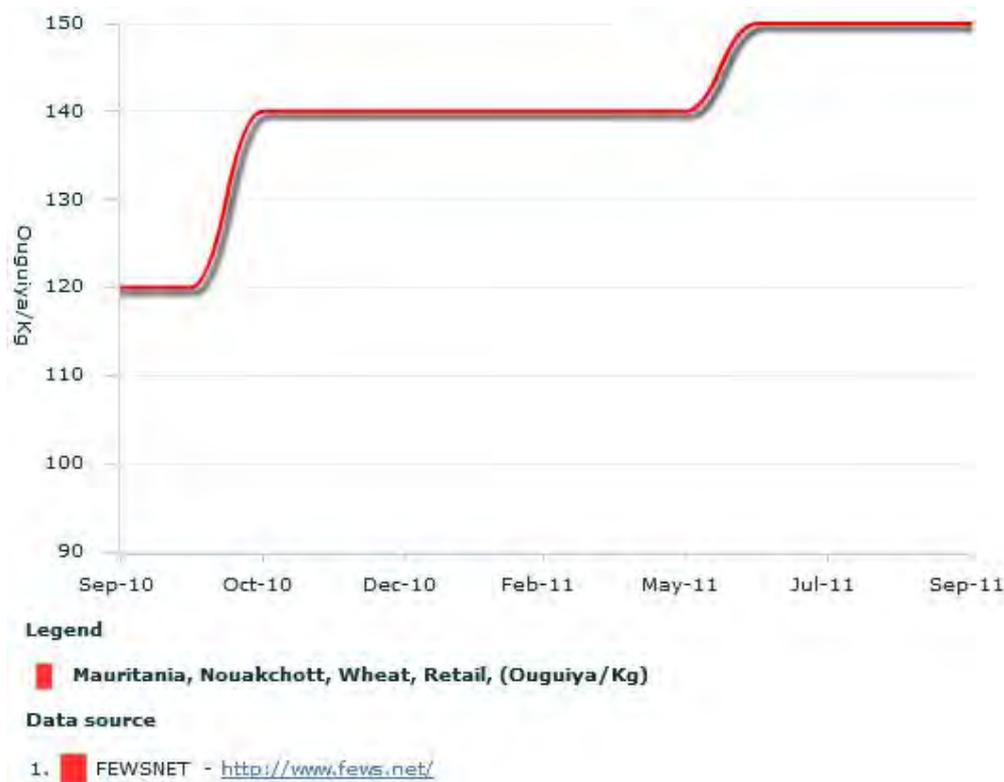
Crop and pastures were also seriously affected in other parts of the Sahel including northern **Burkina Faso**, western **Mali** and northern **Senegal**.

Market and food security prospects

Both **Niger** and **Chad** have been affected by a severe food crisis in 2009/10 which caused a drop in incomes, substantial loss of livestock and other assets, increased levels of household indebtedness, and deteriorated the nutritional situation of the pastoralist, agro-pastoralist and other farming groups. Hence the rural population is still very vulnerable to food production shocks because their coping strategies have been exhausted. Moreover, this year's drop in coarse grain and pastures production occur in all affected countries against a backdrop of high international food prices leading to increased prices of imported commodities.

Mauritania has the highest import dependency rate and domestic cereals production only covers one third of the national utilisation requirement in a normal year. The country is highly dependent on imports of coarse grains (millet and sorghum) from its neighbours, Senegal and Mali, as well as wheat purchased on the international market. In Nouakchott the average wheat price increased by 25 percent in September 2011 over September 2010 driven by trends on the international Market.

Coarse grain prices are also likely to increase in the next months in view of the reduced crops gathered in **Senegal** and **Mali**. Similarly, domestic rice prices have been following an upward trend in recent months in **Chad**; about 13 percent higher in N'Djamena in October 2011 than a year earlier.



In all affected countries the combination of poor rangeland conditions, a fall in coarse grain production, reduced cash crop returns and the continuing combination of poverty and persistently high food prices, could lead to sharp increases in malnutrition in next months. Although livestock prices have remained relatively stable so far, several parts of these countries may experience acute food insecurity if the upward trend in food price continues. Large segments of the Sahelian population will be at risk of food shortages in 2012 and will require targeted and timely assistance. In view of the current food supply situation and unfavourable prospects of imports, the situation is likely to deteriorate further, notably in **Mauritania, Niger** and in **Chad**.

The following urgent actions are recommended:

- Safety net interventions, such as targeted distribution, sales at subsidized prices, food for work or cash for work activities, will be required during next year lean season, with quantities depending on the extent of food supply and pasture deficits in specific areas;
 - distribution of inputs such as seeds and fertilizer is also needed to enable farmers to produce enough food during the current off-season (December-February) and the next cropping season (from June 2012);
 - Vulnerable people, especially children, need (to continue) to have access to therapeutic and feeding centres;
 - In each country, market and price conditions and the situation of vulnerable groups, need to be closely monitored in order to respond to any sharp increase in assistance requirements.

FAO/GIEWS Global Watch

14 December 2011

FOOD SITUATION IN THE SAHEL AND WESTERN AFRICA REGION

- Estimates for the 2011 harvest point to a large decline in cereal production in the Sahel, following erratic rains and extended dry spells throughout the growing period.
- Most affected areas include the sahelian band of Chad, the agro-pastoral zone of Mauritania, the North of the regions of Kayes and Koulikoro and the Niger river Delta in Mali, the North, Centre-North and East of Burkina Faso, the regions of Niamey, Tillabéry and the South-East of Zinder in Niger and certain localized zones of Senegal and the Gambia.
- As a result, cereal prices are on the increase in several countries, unlike the normal seasonal patterns.
- Urgent actions needed in affected countries to prevent a further deterioration of the food situation were discussed in a recent meeting of the Sahel Food Crises Prevention Network (FCPN) * held in Praia, Cape Verde, from 8 to 10 December and are summarized in the report here: **FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

* The FCPN brings together West Africa's main food security actors, including representatives from development co-operation agencies of OECD member countries (in particular Austria, Canada, France, Italy, the United States and the European Commission), West African states, regional organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS), international organisations (ECHO, FAO, OMM, SWAC/OECD, UNICEF, UNOCHA, WFP, etc.), early warning programmes and information systems (FEWS NET), farmers' and agricultural producers' organisations (ROPPA), specialised NGOs (Afrique Verte, FICR, Oxfam, Save the Children, etc.) and other civil society actors.

This report is prepared by the **Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS)** of the Trade and Markets Division of FAO. The updates focus on developing anomalous conditions aimed at providing early warnings, as well as latest and more elaborate information than other GIEWS regular reports on the food security situation of countries, at both national and sub-national levels. None of the information in this report should be regarded as statements of governmental views.

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