Timely start of 2020 cropping season
Following a timely onset of the seasonal rains in late March, planting operations for paddy rice, the major cereal grown in the country, are ongoing mostly in the south and some part of the east upland and riverine areas. In the most northern and northwestern areas of the country, land preparation activities are presently underway, for the planting to take place during May. The harvests are expected to start in September. Since the beginning of the season, adequate rainfall amounts supported soil moisture content for crop development. In most planted areas, crops are at sprouting, seedling and tillering stages, and weeding activities are regularly underway. However, the latest Forum of the Agro-Hydro-Climatic Seasonal Forecast in Sudano-Sahelian Africa (PRESASS) points to below-average rainfall amounts during the July-September period, with a likely negative impact on crop yields and availability of pasture and water for livestock.

During the dry season in early 2020, there was a scarcity of pasture and fodder for livestock. Rains usually contribute to the recovery of pasture conditions and, in May 2020, forage availability is satisfactory in the main grazing areas of the country, allowing animals to maintain good body conditions and enhance their market value. The animal health capacity is very weak and mostly dependent on partners’ support to prevent seasonal outbreaks including Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) in sheep and goats, Foot and Mouth (FMD) in cattle and Newcastle in poultry.

Average cereal production harvested in 2019
Despite the excess rainfall, which caused some flooding in July-August, the 2019 national cereal production is estimated at an average level of 1.3 million tonnes.

Import requirements for the 2019/20 marketing year (November/October) are forecast at an above-average level of 425 000 tonnes as local traders are aiming to replenish their stocks.
Increasing staple food prices due to inflation

Markets are well supplied with both local and imported commodities across the country. However, field reports indicate that prices of staple food continued to increase in early 2020 due to some macro-economic factors including the high inflation rate, the liberalization of the exchange rate and the weakening of the local currency. According to Trading Economics, the year-on-year food inflation increased to 8.30 percent in February 2020. The large trade deficits are maintaining a downward pressure on the exchange rate, which weakened from SLL 8,900 per USD in early 2019 to about SLL 9,600 per USD in early 2020.

Pockets of poverty remain in country

According to the March 2020 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 1 million people are estimated to need food assistance from March to May 2020. This number is expected to increase to 1.3 million during the lean period from June to August 2020, if no mitigation actions are taken.

COVID-19 and measures adopted by the Government

In view of the evolving COVID-19 situation, the Government has decreed a partial country lockdown. The Government has taken some sanitary, social and economic measures. In early April, the World Bank through the International Development Association (IDA) approved a USD 7.5 million grant to strengthen the preparedness of the national health system in terms of prevention, detection and response to the threat posed by the virus. Official restrictions on population movements, combined with heightened levels of fear, have led many people to stay at their homes. These measures have already affected the flow of farm produce to the markets and further restrictions on population movements could hamper the access to land and have a negative impact on 2020 agricultural production.

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Timely start of 2019 planting due to favourable moisture conditions

Following a timely onset of seasonal rains, planting of paddy rice, to be harvested from September, started in April 2019. Rainfed paddy is the major cereal grown in the country. Planting operations for maize, millet and sorghum are ongoing and the harvests are expected to start in August. The cumulative rainfall amounts since February/March is supporting favourable soil moisture conditions for crop growth and development. This is also contributing to the recovery of pasture conditions across the country. Weeding activities are underway in most cropping areas.

Above-average cereal output gathered in 2018

Despite the erratic rainfall at the beginning of the season and Fall Armyworm infestation, the 2018 national cereal production is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes, about 16 percent above the five-year average.

Imports account for about 20 percent of the country’s total cereal requirements. Following the above-average harvest in 2018, the cereal import requirements for 2018/19 (November/October) are estimated at 330 000 tonnes, about 15 percent below the average.

Increasing economic growth and decreasing food price inflation projected in 2019

According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), the economy is expected to grow by about 4.4 percent in 2019, up from an estimated 3 percent in 2018. This growth is supported mostly by strong private and public investments in mining, agriculture and service sectors. However, it is expected that the local currency will weaken from SLL 7 931 per USD in 2018 to about SLL 8 500 per USD in 2019 as a result of large trade deficits, which is maintaining a downward pressure on the exchange rate. Despite the depreciation of the local currency, the year-on-year food inflation is expected to fall from 16.9 percent in 2018 to
15.2 percent in 2019 mainly as a result of the reduction in domestic fuel prices which was decided by the Government in response to the public unrest in January 2019.

**Pockets of poverty remain in the country**

Despite the overall favourable food security conditions, some vulnerable households still need external food assistance. According to the March 2019 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 67 000 people are estimated to be in need of food assistance from March to May 2019. This number is expected to increase to 124 000 during the June to August 2019 period, if no mitigation actions are taken.

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>1 311</strong></td>
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Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

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GIEWS Country Brief
Sierra Leone

Reference Date: 02-August-2018

**FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT**
- Favourable moisture conditions in 2018 cropping season allow timely planting of rice
- Above-average cereal crop production harvested in 2017
- Strong economic growth projected in 2018, food price inflation decreasing
- Pockets of food insecurity remain

**Timely start of 2018 planting season**
The timely onset of the rains in late February and early March 2018 allowed for a normal start of the cropping season. Planting of paddy crops, to be harvested from September to December, was completed in July. Rainfed paddy is the major cereal grown in the country. Planting operations for maize, millet and sorghum were completed in July and the harvest will start in October. The cumulative rainfall amounts since February/March resulted in favourable soil moisture conditions for crop growth. Weeding activities are underway in most cropping areas.

Abundant rainfall amounts are also contributing to the recovery of pasture conditions.

**Above-average cereal output gathered in 2017**
Despite the presence of Fall Armyworm across the country, the 2017 national cereal production was estimated at 1.5 million tonnes, about 20 percent above the previous year’s average level.

Imports account for about 20 percent of the country’s total cereal requirements. Following an above-average harvest, the cereal import requirements are estimated at 356 000 tonnes, with a decrease of 20 percent compared to previous year and 8 percent compared to the average.

**Strong economic growth projected in 2018, food price inflation decreasing**
Marketing activities have significantly recovered since the effects of the Ebola outbreak (June-August 2014) on the national economy (movement restrictions and limited trade flows). According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), the economic economy grew at about 5.7 percent in 2017, driven mostly by recovering iron ore production, agriculture and services. Although growth is expected to slow down, at 4.9 percent in 2018, it
remains strong due to private and public investments in agriculture and mining.

Field reports indicate that prices of imported commodities are rising due to the liberalization of the exchange rate which led to an overvalued and weakening local currency (around SLL 7,950 per USD in July 2018 compared to around SLL 7,528 per USD a year earlier). However, the year-on-year food inflation was set at 15.14 percent in April 2018, down from the 18.91 percent reported in April 2017 due to a slower currency depreciation and stable aggregate demand.

**Pockets of poverty remain**

As the economy continues to recover, household livelihoods and incomes are returning to the levels observed prior to the Ebola crisis. However, pockets of poverty still remain. According to the October 2017 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 12,000 people were estimated to be in need of food assistance from October to December 2017 (last figures available), showing a substantial improvement from about 159,000 a year earlier. This number is expected to increase to 138,000 during the June to August 2018 period if no mitigation actions are taken.

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Above-average harvest gathered in 2017

Harvesting of the 2017 rice crop, virtually the only cereal grown in the country, was completed in December 2017. Yields benefited from abundant rainfall. Despite the presence of Fall Armyworm across the country, cereal production is estimated at well above average 1.5 million tonnes, including 1.4 million tonnes (over 90 percent) of rice.

Abundant rainfall contributed to the recovery of pasture conditions. However, with 60 percent of the cattle and small ruminant population being concentrated in limited area, high stock density with limited possibility to supplement grazing with other sources of feed presents a challenge for pastoralists. Some 8 000 square km of land (about 10 percent of the total area) are reported to be overgrazed.

Below-average import requirement

Although the country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing in recent years, it remains a net importer, with a cereal import dependency ratio of about 20 percent. Following an above-average harvest, the cereal import requirement is estimated at a slightly below average level.

Food situation continues to improve

The economy grew at an estimated 5 percent in 2017 as iron ore prices recovered, up from a 20 percent contraction recorded in 2015. However, most economic activities continue to be negatively affected by the lingering effects of the Ebola virus outbreak of 2014 and the collapse of iron ore prices in 2016. More than 60 percent of the population lives on less than USD 1.25 per day. Subsistence agriculture accounts for about half the GDP and employs 60 percent of the total workforce.

Following the above-average harvest, cereal prices have been generally stable or declining since August 2017, but remain above their levels of one year ago, supported by the currency devaluation. The local currency depreciated from SLL 4 500 per USD in 2014 to SLL 7 400 per USD in 2017. In 2017, the annual
food price inflation ranged from 18 to 22 percent, affecting the purchasing power of the most vulnerable households.

Despite the above-average harvest, pockets of food insecurity remain in some parts of the country. According to the latest “Cadre Harmonisé” (Harmonized Framework) analysis, between October and December 2017, almost 12 000 people (out of 7.4 million inhabitants) are estimated to be in Phase 3: “Crisis” and above, showing a substantial improvement from about 159 000 people a year earlier.

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Above-average rice production expected in 2016
- Coarse grain prices showed seasonal increases in previous months but declined in August with end of lean season
- In spite of significant improvements in food security situation, about 392,000 people still need food assistance

Above-average harvest anticipated in 2016

Harvesting of the 2016 paddy crop, virtually the only cereal grown in the country, is underway and is scheduled to be completed by the end of December. According to satellite imagery, rains and soil moisture have been generally favourable in most regions since the beginning of the cropping season, allowing the satisfactory development of crops. Rice production is forecast to expand further this year.

An above-average harvest was already gathered in 2015, owing to favourable climatic conditions in the main rice-growing regions. In spite of the floods in some areas, which partly affected the production of rice and tubers, the 2015 cereal production is estimated to have increased by 10 percent compared to the previous year’s output. Production of rice, the main cereal grown in the country, also increased by 10 percent. Similarly, the cassava harvest increased significantly.

In 2014, the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak resulted in a serious shock to the agriculture and food sectors. Rice production declined by 8 percent compared to 2013. In particular, cereal production in the Kailahun District was substantially affected by the outbreak that started to spread when crops were being planted and grew during the crop maintenance period, and then expanded rapidly during the critical harvesting period for the staple rice, maize and cassava crops.

Food markets and trade activities continue to improve

Although the country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing in recent years, it remains a net importer, with a cereal import dependency ratio of about 18 percent. Trade flows of agricultural commodities to Guinea, Mali and Senegal have recovered significantly.

In addition, most public gathering restrictions have been lifted improving domestic food markets and trade activities. Prices of
local staples, including local rice and cassava, showed seasonal increases in recent months, which were amplified by the significant depreciation of the Leone which led to an 80 percent increase in domestic oil price. However, food prices declined slightly in August reflecting new supplies from the first harvests in August and the end of the 2016 lean season.

### Food situation improving

Beyond its impact on the agriculture and food sector, the EVD has seriously affected all other sectors of the economy. The mining, manufacturing and service sectors have been the hardest hit. According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), Sierra Leone’s real GDP grew by just 4.6 percent in 2014, compared to 20.9 percent in 2013 before the EVD. In 2015, the effects of the EVD epidemic resulted in a sharp decline of 25 percent. With the EVD largely under control, real GDP is predicted to grow by 1 percent in 2016. The disruption of food chains due to the closing of markets, road blocks and quarantines, restricted cross-border trading, as changes in traders’ behaviour due to the fear of Ebola, significantly reduced the income of EVD-affected communities, including producers, consumers and traders. Specifically, income-generating activities typically led by women, such as small trading, were hit hard and the ban on bush meat has also deprived many households of an important source of nutrition and income. Although the Ebola outbreak has ended and the economic situation is improving, about 392 000 people were estimated to be in Phase 3: “Crisis” between June and August and continued to need food assistance. This represents a significant improvement from the 1.1 million estimated during the Ebola crisis.
An above-average harvest is anticipated in 2016. Harvesting of the main rice crop, the main cereal produced and consumed in the country, has begun. Rains and soil moisture have been generally favourable in most regions since the beginning of the cropping season, allowing the satisfactory development of crops according to satellite imagery. Rice production is forecast to expand further this year.

An above-average harvest was already gathered in 2015, owing to favourable climatic conditions in the main rice growing regions. In spite of the floods in some areas, which partly affected the production of rice and tubers, the 2015 cereal production is estimated to have increased by 10 percent compared to the previous year’s output. Production of rice, the main cereal grown in the country, also increased by 10 percent. Similarly, the cassava harvest increased significantly.

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Food markets and trade activities continue to improve

Although the country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing in recent years, it remains a net importer, with a cereal import dependency ratio of about 18 percent. Trade flows of agricultural commodities to Guinea, Mali and Senegal have recovered significantly.

In addition, most public gathering restrictions have been lifted improving domestic food markets and trade activities. Prices of local staples, including local rice and cassava, showed seasonal increases in recent months, but declined slightly in August.
reflecting new supplies from the first harvests in August and the end of the 2016 lean season.

**Food situation improving**

Beyond its impact on the agriculture and food sector, the EVD has seriously affected all other sectors of the economy. The mining, manufacturing and service sectors have been the hardest hit. According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), Sierra Leone's real GDP grew by just 4.6 percent in 2014, compared to 20.9 percent in 2013 before the EVD. In 2015, the effects of the EVD epidemic resulted in a sharp decline of 25 percent. With the EVD largely under control, real GDP is predicted to grow by 1 percent in 2016. The disruption of food chains due to the closing of markets, road blocks and quarantines, restricted cross-border trading, as changes in traders' behaviour due to the fear of Ebola, significantly reduced the income of EVD-affected communities, including producers, consumers and traders. Specifically, income-generating activities typically led by women, such as small trading, were hit hard and the ban on bush meat has also deprived many households of an important source of nutrition and income. Although the Ebola outbreak has ended and the economic situation is improving, about 420,000 people are currently estimated to be in Phase 3: “Crisis” and are in need of urgent assistance across the country, according to the latest “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis. This represents a significant improvement from the 1.1 million estimated during the Ebola crisis.
Above-average harvest anticipated in 2016

Harvesting of the main rice crop, the main cereal produced and consumed in the country, is expected to begin in September. Rains and soil moisture have been generally favourable in most regions since the beginning of the cropping season, allowing satisfactory development of crops according to satellite imagery. Rice production is forecast to expand further this year.

An above-average harvest was already gathered in 2015, owing to favourable climatic conditions in the main rice growing regions. In spite of floods in some areas, which partly affected the production of rice and tubers, the 2015 cereal production is estimated to have increased by 10 percent compared to the previous year’s output. Production of rice, the main cereal grown in the country, also increased by 10 percent. Similarly, the cassava harvest increased significantly.

In 2014, the EVD outbreak resulted in a serious shock to the agriculture and food sectors. Rice production declined by 8 percent compared to 2013. In particular, cereal production in the Kailahun district was substantially affected by the outbreak that started to spread when crops were being planted and grew during the crop maintenance period, and then expanded rapidly during the critical harvesting period for the staple rice, maize and cassava crops.

Food markets and trade activities recovered significantly; coarse grain prices showed seasonal increases

Although the country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing in recent years, it remains a net importer, with a cereal import dependency ratio of about 18 percent. Trade flows of agricultural commodities to Guinea, Mali and Senegal have recovered significantly.

In addition, most public gathering restrictions have been lifted improving domestic food markets and trade activities. Prices of local staples, including local rice and cassava, showed seasonal
increase in recent months. Similarly, prices of imported food commodities are on the increase, driven mostly by the continued depreciation of the country’s currency.

**Food situation improving**

Beyond its impact on the agriculture and food sector, the EVD has seriously affected all other sectors of the economy. The mining, manufacturing and service sectors have been the hardest hit. According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), Sierra Leone’s real GDP grew by just 4.6 percent in 2014, compared to 20.9 percent in 2013 before the EVD. In 2015, the effects of the EVD epidemic resulted in a sharp decline of 25 percent. With the EVD largely under control, real GDP is predicted to grow by 1 percent in 2016. The disruption of food chains due to the closing of markets, road blocks and quarantines, restricted cross-border trading, as well as, changes in traders’ behaviour due to the fear of Ebola, significantly reduced the income of EVD-affected communities, including producers, consumers and traders. Specifically, income generating activities typically led by women, such as small trading, were hit hard and the ban on bush meat has also deprived many households of an important source of nutrition and income. Although the Ebola outbreak has ended and the economic situation is improving, about 420 000 people are currently estimated to be in Phase 3: “Crisis” and are in need of urgent assistance across the country, according to the latest “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis. This represents a significant improvement from the 1.1 million estimated during the Ebola crisis.
GIEWS Country Brief
Sierra Leone

Reference Date: 10-March-2016

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Cereal production in 2015 recovered significantly from previous year’s Ebola-affected level
- Prices of main staples generally stable
- In spite of significant improvement of food situation, about 420 000 people still need food assistance

Recovery in 2015 cereal production compared to previous year’s Ebola-affected harvest

Harvesting of the 2015 main rice crop was completed in December. Rains and soil moisture were generally adequate during the cropping season, allowing satisfactory development of crops. Moreover, Sierra Leone was declared free of the Ebola virus transmission in the human population in November 2015. The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak had a serious impact on labour availability during last year’s cropping season. In spite of floods in some areas, which partly affected the production of rice and tubers, preliminary estimates indicate that 2015 cereal production increased by 10 percent compared to the previous year’s output. Production of rice, the main cereal grown in the country, is also estimated to have increased by 10 percent. Similarly, the cassava harvest increased significantly.

In 2014, the EVD outbreak resulted in a serious shock to the agriculture and food sectors. Rice production declined by 8 percent compared to 2013. In particular, cereal production in Kailahun was substantially affected by the outbreak that started to spread when crops were being planted and grew during the crop maintenance period, and then expanded rapidly during the critical harvesting period for the staple rice, maize and cassava crops.

Food prices mostly stable

Although the country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing in recent years, it still remains a net importer, with a cereal import dependency ratio of about 18 percent. Trade flows of agricultural commodities to Guinea, Mali and Senegal have recovered significantly. Prices of rice, cassava, and sweet potato have generally been stable in recent months.

Food situation improving

Beyond its impact on the agriculture and food sector, the EVD has seriously affected all other sectors of the economy. The mining, manufacturing and service sectors have been the hardest hit. According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), Sierra Leone’s real GDP grew by just 4.6 percent in 2014, compared to 20.9 percent in 2013 before the EVD. In 2015, the effects of the EVD epidemic resulted in a sharp decline of 25 percent. With the EVD largely under control, real GDP is predicted to grow by 1 percent in 2016. The disruption of food chains due to the closing of markets, road blocks and quarantines, restricted cross-border trading, as well as changes in traders’ behaviour due to the fear of Ebola, significantly reduced the income of EVD-affected communities, including producers, consumers and traders. Specifically, income generating activities typically led by
women, such as small trading, were hit hard and the ban on bush meat has also deprived many households of an important source of nutrition and income. Although the Ebola outbreak has ended and the economic situation is improving, about 420 000 people are currently estimated to be in Phase 3: “Crisis” and are in need of urgent assistance across the country, according to the latest “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis. This represents a significant improvement from the 1.1 million estimated during the Ebola crisis.
Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) continues to affect farming activities in some areas

Planting of the 2015 main rice crop is almost completed. According to satellite imagery, precipitation was average to above-average from April to the first dekad of July, allowing for land preparation and planting. However, new cases of the EVD continue to be confirmed every week in the country and the Government has maintained the state of health emergency. As of mid-July 2015, Sierra Leone has reported 13 209 cumulative Ebola cases, including 3 947 deaths. Although ten of the 14 districts have been declared Ebola-free, having gone 42 days without reporting any new cases, movement restrictions continue to be implemented in affected districts such as Kambia and Port Loko. As a result, restrictions on the gathering of people as well as below-average incomes continue to limit farming activities in affected communities. According to a recent World Bank survey, while rice planting activities have not been disrupted, working hours are still below the baseline and may hamper the 2015/16 agricultural production.

Last year, the EVD outbreak resulted in a serious shock to the agriculture and food sectors in 2014. The epidemic started to spread when crops were being planted and grew during the crop maintenance period, and then expanded rapidly during the critical harvesting period for the staple rice, maize and cassava crops. Various farming activities, including crop maintenance (such as weeding, fencing and application of chemicals) and harvesting have been disrupted mostly through labour shortages. Production of rice, the main staple crop in the Mano River Region, has been most affected. Based on the GIEWS Disease Impact on Agriculture – Simulation (DIAS) Model and the findings of Rapid Assessments carried out in the country, the aggregate food crop production in 2014 is estimated at 2.09 million tonnes (including cassava in cereal equivalent and rice in milled terms), which is 5 percent lower than the record harvest of 2013. Of this total, milled rice production (using the milling rate of 66.7 percent) is estimated at 770 000 tonnes, 8 percent lower than the year before and accounts for about 85 percent of the cereal production. Total coarse grains (maize, sorghum, millets and other small grains) and cassava in cereal equivalent (32 percent of fresh weight) are estimated to have declined by 4 percent and 3 percent, respectively. The relatively low level of impact at the national level masks the sub-national production and food security impacts. For example, the negative impact on rice production is estimated as high as 17 percent in Kailahun.
Food markets have been disrupted by outbreak and continue to function at below-average levels

Although the country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing in recent years, it still remains a net importer, with a cereal import dependency ratio of about 18 percent. Border closures, quarantine measures and other restrictions have seriously disrupted marketing of goods, including agricultural commodities. Trade activities are estimated to have declined significantly, particularly in quarantined districts.

According to a recent FEWSNet survey, as of May 2015, 46 percent of people surveyed reported that the most important market in their area was closed or operating at reduced levels. Twenty-eight percent of traders also reported that agricultural and market activities continue to function at below-average levels. The economic slowdown due to Ebola has resulted in low income levels and weak household purchasing power.

In May 2015, local rice prices remained mostly stable, except in rural parts of the Western Area where they rose by 5 percent and in Freetown where prices increased by 3 percent. Prices of imported rice increased by 13 percent in Kenema and by 7 percent in urban parts of the Western Area.

Food security severely affected by EVD outbreak

Beyond its impact on the agriculture and food sector, the EVD has seriously affected all other sectors of the economy. The mining, manufacturing and service sectors have been the hardest hit. According to the World Bank’s revised estimates, 2015 GDP will grow by 5.7 percent instead of the earlier forecasted 7.7 percent, with serious impact on livelihoods, income and access to food. The disruption of food chains due to the closing of markets, road blocks and quarantines, restricted cross border trading, as well as changes in traders’ behaviour due to the fear of Ebola has significantly reduced the income of EVD-affected communities including producers, consumers and traders. Specifically, income generating activities typically led by women, such as small trading, have been hit hard and the ban on bush meat has also deprived many households of an important source of nutrition and income. This has in turn negatively impacted on the food security situation of large number of people in the affected communities. Overall, according to the latest “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 1.1 million people are currently estimated to be in Phase 3: “Crisis” and above and are in need of urgent assistance across the country.
Food Security Snapshot

- After several years of steady growth, rice production is estimated to have dropped by 8 percent in 2014 due to Ebola Virus Disease outbreak.
- Cereal import requirements in 2015 are, therefore, estimated to increase compared to last year’s level.
- Trade activities have declined significantly across the country, particularly in quarantined districts.
- Number of food insecure people estimated at about 450,000 people as of December 2014, is projected to increase to 610,000 by March 2015.

Ebola Virus Disease outbreak severely affected agricultural production

Harvesting of the 2014 main rice crop was completed in December. The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak resulted in a serious shock to the agriculture and food sectors in 2014. The epidemic started to spread when crops were being planted and grew during the crop maintenance period, and then expanded rapidly during the critical harvesting period for the staple rice, maize and cassava crops. Various farming activities, including crop maintenance (such as weeding, fencing and application of chemicals) and harvesting have been disrupted mostly through labour shortages. Production of rice, the main staple crop in the Mano River Region, has been most affected. Based on the GIEWS Disease Impact on Agriculture – Simulation (DIAS) Model and the findings of Rapid Assessments carried out in the country, the aggregate food crop production in 2014 is estimated at 2.09 million tonnes (including cassava in cereal equivalent and rice in milled terms), which is 5 percent lower than the record harvest of 2013. Of this total, milled rice production (using the milling rate of 66.7 percent) is estimated at 770,000 tonnes, 8 percent lower than the year before and accounts for about 85 percent of the cereal production. Total coarse grains (maize, sorghum, millets and other small grains) and cassava in cereal equivalent (32 percent of fresh weight) are estimated to have declined by 4 percent and 3 percent, respectively. The relatively low level of impact at the national level masks the sub-national production and food security impacts. For example, impact on rice production is estimated as high as -17 percent in Kailahun.

Food markets have been disrupted by the outbreak

Although the country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing in recent years, it still remains a net importer, with a cereal import dependency ratio of about 18 percent. Border closures, quarantine measures and other restrictions have seriously disrupted marketing of goods, including agricultural commodities. Trade activities are estimated to have declined significantly, particularly in quarantined districts.

Cereal import requirements in 2015 are estimated at 300,000 tonnes, slightly up from last year. Rice import requirements account for about 215,000 tonnes of the total. With commercial imports estimated at 285,000 tonnes, the uncovered gap is estimated at about 55,000 tonnes.
tonnes for which additional resources and international assistance is required. The significant impact of Ebola on export earnings is expected to have compromised the country’s ability to import more. Prices of imported rice remained mostly stable in recent months, except in localized areas, where relatively high prices persisted reflecting reduced trading activity and increased transport costs.

**Food security severely affected by EVD outbreak**

Beyond its impact on the agriculture and food sector, the EVD is seriously affecting all other sectors of the economy. The mining, manufacturing and service sectors have been the hardest hit. According to the World Bank’s revised estimates, 2014 GDP growth fell by more than half to 4.0 percent from 11.3 percent expected before the Ebola crisis, with serious impact on livelihoods, income and access to food. In particular, the ban on bush meat is depriving many households of an important source of nutrition and income. About 450,000 people, or 7.5 percent of the population, are estimated to be severely food insecure as of December 2014. The impact of EVD accounts for more than a quarter of the food insecure. The number of food insecure is projected to increase to 610,000 by March 2015, 280,000 of which are attributed to EVD. About 76 percent of the Ebola-related food insecure individuals live in rural areas. The most food insecure households include food crop producers; fishermen and hunters; and unskilled labourers.
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- An above average rice production was gathered in 2013
- Inflation dropped, driven by more stable currency

Above-average harvest gathered in 2013
Harvesting of the 2013 main rice crop was completed in September. Rains and soil moisture have been generally adequate during the cropping season, allowing satisfactory development of crops. The 2013 rice production (paddy) is estimated to increase by 10 percent compared to the 2012 above-average output. Similarly, a good cassava harvest was gathered.

An above-average harvest was already gathered in 2012. The 2012 rice production was estimated at about 1.4 million tonnes, 9 percent higher than in 2011 and well above the average of the previous five years. Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2003.

Access to food has improved, reflecting lower inflation
The country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 80,000 tonnes, about 15 percent of total utilisation in 2013.

Access to food has improved in recent months, driven mostly by lower prices of imported commodities. The steep depreciation of the Leone (local currency) since 2009 led to higher inflation rates. Average national inflation is estimated to have reached 16 percent in 2011. However, the national currency became relatively stable from early 2012 on, pushing inflation down to 12.9 percent in 2012. Consumer price inflation is estimated to have dropped further to 12.2 percent in 2013 driven by the continuing recovery of the Leone and more stable international commodity prices. Nearly 50 percent of households’ expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural areas is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP recent assessment.
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- An above average rice production is expected in 2013
- Inflation dropped, driven by more stable currency

Above-average harvest anticipated in 2013
Harvesting of the main rice crop is expected to begin in September. Rains and soil moisture have been generally adequate since the beginning of the cropping season, allowing satisfactory development of crops according to satellite imagery. Rice production is forecast to expand further this year.

An above-average harvest was gathered in 2012, owing to favourable climatic conditions in the main rice growing regions. The 2012 rice production was estimated at about 1.4 million tonnes, 9 percent higher than the 2011 good output and well above the average of the previous five years. Similarly, a good cassava harvest was gathered.

Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2003.

The country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing; however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 80 000 tonnes in 2013, about 15 percent of requirements.

Access to food has improved reflecting lower inflation
Access to food has improved in recent months, driven mostly by lower prices of imported commodities. The steep depreciation of the Leone (local currency) since 2009 led to higher inflation rates. Average national inflation is estimated to have reached 16 percent in 2011. However, the national currency became relatively stable from early 2012 on, pushing inflation down to 12.9 percent in 2012. Consumer price inflation is forecast to drop further to 12.2 percent in 2013 driven by a continuing recovery of the Leone and more stable international commodity prices. Nearly 50 percent of households’ expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural areas is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP recent assessment.
Food Security Snapshot

- An above average rice production was gathered in 2011
- Currency depreciation led to higher inflation

Estimates point to a larger rice harvest in 2011

Harvesting of the 2011 rice crop was completed last December. Following above average rains throughout the growing season, rice production (paddy) is estimated to have increased by 15 percent compared to the previous year’s good output. Similarly, a good cassava harvest was gathered. Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2000.

The country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing; however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 100,000 tonnes in 2012, about 20 percent of requirements.

Currency depreciation increases imported inflation

The steep depreciation of the Leone (local currency) since 2009 led to higher inflation rates. Average national inflation is estimated to have reached 18 percent in 2011. In spite of last year’s good crop, prices are likely to remain firm this year due to the continuing depreciation of the Leone and persistently high international food prices. The Government decided in 2011 to ban rice exports to limit price increases. Nearly 50 percent of households’ expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP assessment in 2009.
GIEWS Country Brief
Sierra Leone

Reference Date: 12-January-2012

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Preliminary estimates point to an above average rice production in 2011
- Currency depreciation led to higher inflation

Estimates point to a larger rice harvest in 2011
Harvesting of the 2011 rice crop was completed last December. Following above average rains throughout the growing season, rice production (paddy) is estimated to have increased compared to the previous year’s good output. Similarly, a good cassava harvest was gathered. Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2000.

The country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing; however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 90 000 tonnes in 2012.

Currency depreciation increases imported inflation
The steep depreciation of the Leone (local currency) since 2009 led to higher inflation rates. Average national inflation is estimated to have reached 18 percent in 2011. In spite of last year’s good crop, prices are likely to remain firm this year due to the continuing depreciation of the Leone and persistently high international food prices. Government decided in 2011 to ban rice export to limit price increases. Nearly 50 percent of households’ expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP assessment in 2009.

Crop calendar
Sierra Leone
Cassava (1st year)
Cassava (2nd year)
Maize
Millet
Rice
Sorghum
Yams
Key
Sowing
Growing
Harvesting

Source: FAC/GIEWS

Sierra Leone
Cereal production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006-2010 average</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011 estimate</th>
<th>change 2011/2010 percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice (paddy)</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>1 628</td>
<td>1 164</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>1 167</td>
<td>1 331</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: percentage change calculated from unsounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS/Country Cereal Balance Sheets
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- The 2011 cropping season has started in April
- Preliminary estimates point to an above average rice production in 2010
- Currency depreciation led to higher inflation

The 2011 cropping season has begun with seasonal rains
Seasonal rains commenced in April, allowing land preparation and planting of the 2011 rice crop, the main cereal produced and consumed in the country.

Estimates point to a larger rice harvest in 2010
Harvesting of the 2010 rice crop was completed last December. Following above average rains throughout the growing season, rice production (paddy) is estimated to have increased compared to the previous year’s good output. Similarly, a good cassava harvest was gathered. Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2000.

The country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing; however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 80,000 tonnes in 2011.

Currency depreciation increases imported inflation
The steep depreciation of the Leone (local currency) during 2009 and 2010 led to higher inflation rates. Average national inflation is estimated to have reached 16.5 percent in 2010. In spite of last year’s good crop, prices are likely to remain firm this year due to the continuing depreciation of the Leone and persistently high international food prices. Government decided in mid-February to ban rice export to limit price increases. Nearly 50 percent of households’ expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP assessment in 2009.
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Preliminary estimates point to an above average rice production in 2010
- Currency depreciation led to higher inflation

Estimates point to a larger rice harvest in 2010
Harvesting of the 2010 rice crop, the main cereal produced and consumed in the country, was completed last December. Following above average rains throughout the growing season, rice production (paddy) is estimated to have increased compared to the previous year’s good output. Similarly, a good cassava harvest was gathered. Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2000.

The country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing; however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 80,000 tonnes in 2011.

Currency depreciation increases imported inflation
The steep depreciation of the Leone (local currency) during 2009 and 2010 led to higher inflation rates. The year-on-year national inflation rate was estimated at 16.76 percent in September 2010. In spite of last year’s good crop, prices are likely to remain high this year due to the continuing depreciation of the Leone and increasing international food prices. Nearly 50 percent of households’ expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP assessment in 2009.

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>000 tonnes</td>
<td></td>
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<td>percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (paddy)</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>947</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: percentage change calculated from unsourced data.
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Import requirements for rice decrease, but still remain at a high level
- Currency depreciation led to higher inflation

Heavy rains recorded in southern and eastern areas in March
Land preparation is underway for planting of the 2010 rice crop (the main cereal crop grown in the country), which usually starts in April. Southern and eastern regions received above average rains at the beginning of March, but rainfall levels declined for the last two dekads of the month.

Estimates point to a larger rice harvest in 2009
Preliminary production estimates for 2009, released by the government, indicate an increased rice and maize harvest. Rice production is estimated to have increased by 15 percent to approximately 785,000 tonnes, while maize production expanded by approximately 26 percent relative to the 2008 output. Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2000.

The country’s dependency on imported rice has been decreasing since 2000; however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 80,000 tonnes in 2010.

Currency depreciation increases imported inflation
The steep depreciation of the leone during 2009 led to higher inflation rates. The year-on-year national inflation rate in December was at its highest level in 2009, following a marginal fall between October and November. Although the currency has stabilized during the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010, the high food prices will have a negative impact on households’ purchasing power and food security conditions. Nearly 50 percent of households’ expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP assessment in 2009.
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Below normal rainfall received during the main cropping season
- Imported inflation remains high due to the currency depreciation

Decline in rice production for the 2009/10 season
Harvesting of the 2009 paddy crop, virtually the only cereal grown in the country is nearly complete. Below normal rainfall levels during the beginning of the cropping season have led to slightly lower production estimates for the 2009 rice crop. Satellite analysis confirms poor vegetative growth during the cropping season.

Currency depreciation increases imported inflation
The year-on-year inflation rate in October 2009 increased for the seventh consecutive month, since reaching a low in April, but was at a lower level relative to the rate in 2008. Furthermore, the steep depreciation of the Leone during 2009 has meant that lower global food prices have not been transferred to the domestic market, resulting in a loss of purchasing power. The Government has implemented a number of policies to create a more liberalised grain market, including the removal of the export ban on rice in January 2009. Import tariffs on selected food items (rice, wheat and wheat flour) were also eliminated in 2008 to help lower national food prices.
Reduced harvest for 2009 anticipated
Harvesting of the main rice crop is expected to begin in September. Below normal rainfall levels during the beginning of the cropping season have led to lower production estimates for the 2009 rice crop. Satellite analysis confirms poor vegetative growth.

Food prices continue to increase during first half of 2009
From January to June 2009, the national food price index continued on its increasing trend, but at a slower rate compared to the same period in 2008. The year-on-year inflation rate in June 2009 was only 8 percent compared to 17 percent recorded a year earlier. The Government is implementing a number of policies to create a more liberalised grain market, including the removal of the export ban on rice in January 2009. Import tariffs on selected food items (rice, wheat and wheat flour) were also eliminated in 2008 to help lower national food prices.

Heavy rain during August has caused flooding in the Western, Northern and Eastern Areas of the country.