

**NATIONAL EARLY WARNING
AND
FOOD INFORMATION SYSTEM**

NAMIBIA



Republic of Namibia

**AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY SITUATION REPORT
DECEMBER 2008**

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Good showers have been falling in various parts of the regions since the beginning of the season signalling a good start of the 2008/09 cropping season...**Most farmers in the regions have started readying the fields for cultivations and some have started ploughing their fields hoping that good rains will continue for the rest of the season.
- **Delay on the delivery of improved seeds to the regions may hamper production prospects.** At the time of this assessment, all the north central regions as well as Kavango region were still waiting for the improved seeds of pearl millet (Okashana 1 & 2 & Kangara) from Mahenene Seed Co-operative.
- **The prevalence of Foot and Mouth Disease in the Caprivi region is said to be under control...**The recent cases of FMD were detected when two cattle from Zambia were smuggled in the region through Kasika village in Kabbe Constituency. These animals were destroyed and the suspect has been arrested and appeared in court. Nonetheless, a recent outbreak of FMD in the eastern part of the Kavango region is of a great concern.
- **Household food security is tightening as most households are reported to have depleted their food stock last August.** Transitory food insecurity was observed in most parts of the communal crop producing regions as the hunger season progresses. Most households interviewed indicated that they have depleted their harvest in last August and are currently dependent on the market for maize meal.

Compiled By:

Namibia Early Warning and Food Information Unit NEWFIU)

Directorate of Planning

Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

Private Bag 13184, Windhoek. Telephone 264-61-2087662. Fax 264-61-2087767. Email: ndjodhim@mawf.gov.na

OVERVIEW

The National Early Warning & Food Information Unit (NEWFIU) in collaboration with the Meteorological Service of Namibia of the Ministry of Works and Transport carry out an assessment on Agricultural Inputs and Household Food Security in the six crop producing regions¹ as from 17 November to 03 December 2008. The main purpose of this mission was to assess the overall agricultural inputs situation at household and regional levels and to find out as to what extent farmers are prepared for the just started 2008/09 cropping season in terms of land preparation. Moreover the mission assessed the marketing of the 2007/08 harvest, changes in household food security, livestock and pasture conditions.

The assessment team was split into two groups of which one group visited the Regional Council and was briefed by the Regional Governor/ Councillors who provided information on the current agricultural situation in the region. The other group visit the regional Agricultural Extension office and were briefed by the Chief Agricultural Extension Officer and Chief Extension Technicians. The two teams covered all the constituencies of the six crop producing regions. Information of each constituency was obtained from both primary (field observation & farmers' interviews) and secondary sources (agricultural extensionists, Regional councillors, NGOs, farmer's organizations, Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB), Division of veterinary Services, local traders, traditional authorities, etc).

During the field visit in each constituency, the teams were brief by Agricultural Extension Technician who provided an overview of the agricultural situation in view of the upcoming crop season. The assessment team proceeded to the Office of the Councillor where they were briefed about the current household food security situation in view of the poor harvest received last season. These meetings were followed by field visits to three randomly selected households in each constituency for an interview. Interviews were also held with the formal and informal traders working in the area.

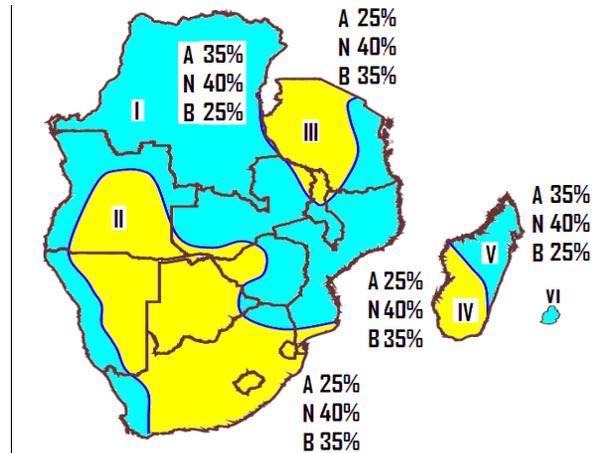
This report however, gives an overview of the agricultural inputs and land preparation during the current cropping season (October 2008 to April 2009), whilst reviewing the marketing problems experienced during the previous harvest. The report is aimed at providing the latest information to the government of the Republic of Namibia, international organizations and other institutions involved in humanitarian operation. Since conditions may change rapidly, please contact the NEWFIU for further information if required.

¹ Crop producing regions included Caprivi, Kavango, Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana and Oshikoto region

SADC REGION SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK (October 2008 – March 2009)

Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Meteorological experts met in Pretoria, South Africa from the 18-28th August 2008 for their Twelfth Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF). The main objective was to come up with a consensus outlook for the 2008/2009 rainfall season over SADC. The rainfall prospects for the SADC region are presented below.

October-November-December (OND) 2008 Rainfall Forecast



Source: 12th Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF), August 2008.

Zone I: Western coastal South Africa, Namibia, western coastal and northern Angola, DRC, greater part of Zambia, bulk of Zimbabwe, Eastern tip of Botswana, North-eastern tip of South Africa, major part of Mozambique, central and southern part of Malawi and The Eastern parts of Tanzania.

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall.

Zone II: Southern part of Angola, bulk of Namibia, Botswana, extreme south-western Zambia, western Zimbabwe, greater part of South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland southern Tip of Mozambique.

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall.

Zone III: Bulk of Tanzania, northern Malawi, northeastern and southwestern parts of Zambia.

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall.

Zone IV: Southern half of Madagascar.

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall.

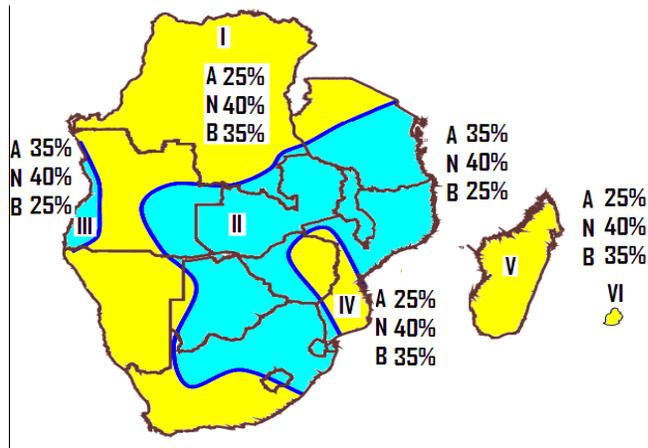
Zone V: Northern half of Madagascar

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall.

Zone VI: Mauritius

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall.

January-February-March (JFM) 2009 Rainfall Forecast



Source: 12th Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF), August 2008.

Zone I: Northern Tanzania, Bulk of DRC, northern and central Angola, Namibia, Western flank of Botswana and southern half of South Africa and southern half of Lesotho.

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall

Zone II: Southern Tanzania, extreme southern DRC, south-eastern Angola, bulk of Botswana, northern half of South Africa, northern Lesotho, Swaziland, western half of Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and greater part of Mozambique.

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall

Zone III: Coastal Angola.

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall

Zone IV: Eastern half of Zimbabwe and central and southern Mozambique.

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall

Zone V: Madagascar

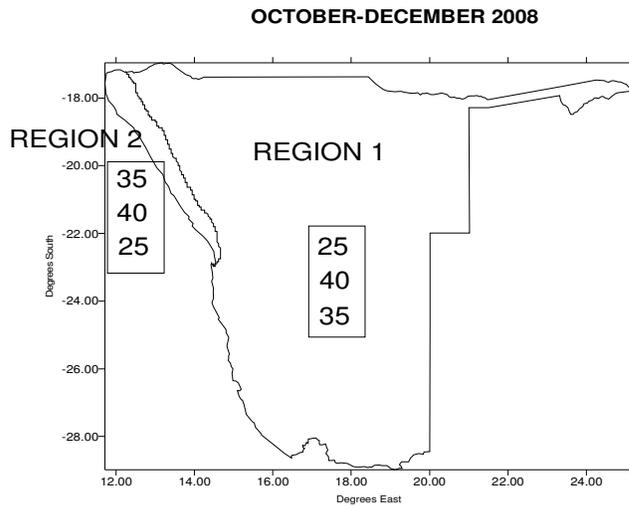
Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall

Zone VI: Mauritius

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall

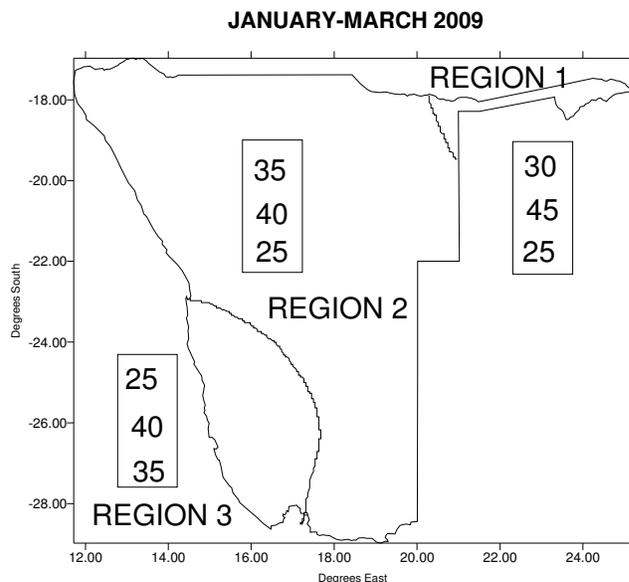
SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR NAMIBIA (October 2008 – March 2009)

Although it appear as if the country have received above normal rainfall since the beginning of this season, but according to the Meteorological service of Namibia, the forecast indicates normal to below normal rains for the OND 2008 period over the bulk of the country as indicated in Region 1 while Region 2 can expect normal to above normal rainfall as indicated below.



Source: Meteorological Services of Namibia

For JFM 2009 period, the forecast indicates normal to above normal rainfall over the northern eastern half of Namibia (Region 1 and 2) and normal to below normal rains over the Southern Western part of the country (Region 3).



Source: Meteorological Services of Namibia

MARKETING ANALYSIS

The past two consecutive cropping seasons, namely 2006/07 and 2007/08 have not been good to most parts of the communal crop producing regions. The former was characterised by sporadic rains and prolonged dry spells combined with the damage by quelleda birds in the greenbelt areas. Whilst the latter on the other hand, harvest was reduced significantly as a result of the delay on the onset of the rainfall and prolonged dry spells during the first half of the season and unprecedented floods coupled with army worms and premature ending of the rainfall.

The abovementioned factors have impacted negatively on the harvests, thus a tighter supply and strong demand of cereal grains (being the staple food for Namibia) has been an order of the day. Consequently, a steeper increase in prices of pearl millet from about N\$2.06 in 2007 to N\$3.50 per kilogram (Or N\$35-N\$60/ latta²) has been felt on the informal market for the current marketing season.

Additionally, the sharp increase in inflation rate from 7.9% in February to 12.0% in August 2008 as a response to high international oil prices has trigger off the increase of food price. On the positive note though, inflation has stabilised at 12.0% for the past three months, following a sharp decrease in international crude oil prices. This implies that there is greater possibility for inflation to decrease and subsequently a reduction of interest rates that would bring more relief to the consumers.

Namibia imports its cereals requirements mainly from South Africa to cover the domestic shortfalls. All the locally produced white maize were sold since the beginning of the marketing season³ till last September when the border where opened for cereal imports. The commercial millers indicated that they do not foresee problems that may hinder the smooth import of cereals in the country, it is business as usual. However they have expressed their concern about the deteriorating public transport infrastructures in SADC region.

Maize and Pearl Millet producer prices (farm gate/mill door prices) are controlled by the Namibia Agronomic Board (NAB) and are all linked to South African Futures Exchange (SAFEX) prices. NAB monitors the daily SAFEX prices and then derives a weekly producer price for the Namibian farmers. Therefore, NAB has reported that prices for maize grain have been the most stable one for the past 16 months as compared to the past seven years. Until June 2008 the maize price has been hovering between N\$1600 and N\$1900 per ton. As a result, Namibian producers are currently receiving approximately the same price as that of last year. Nonetheless, NAB cautioned that due to vibrant competition between retailers there might be instances where retailers have pushed up their mark of which they do not have jurisdiction over them.

² A latta is a container used to measure the quantity of pearl millet grains and is equivalent to about 17 kilograms

³ Marketing season for Namibia starts from 1 May in the current year till 31 April the following year

FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

Household food security is tightening following poor harvests for the past two successive seasons. Transitory food insecurity was observed in most parts of the communal crop producing regions as the hunger season progresses. Most households interviewed in the regions indicated that they have depleted their harvest last August and are currently dependent on the market.

In an effort to circumvent food insecurity, government have availed more than N\$228 millions to feed more than half a million vulnerable Namibians for six months starting from August 2008. Cabinet has decided on a "comprehensive emergency food aid scheme" for 523 633 vulnerable Namibians living in all 13 regions. The elderly, people living with disabilities, children, infants, women-headed households and pregnant and lactating mothers will be targeted for assistance. This decision was taken in a wake of the poor crop harvests for the past two seasons.

This was in addition to N\$30 million that were set aside to immediately buy food items for Namibians displaced by flood living in Oshana, Oshikoto, Omusati and Ohangwena regions as well as the Zambezi flood plains in the Eastern Caprivi.

The N\$30 million for the northern regions came after the Head of State, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba declared a disaster emergency in those areas earlier this year following heavy rains in Angola causing floods in the North Central of the country.

Despite the Government food aid relief distributions in the regions, several households in the visited regions are reported to be flocking to their councillors' office more frequently requesting for food assistance. Most households interviewed indicated that the current drought relief programme only targeting vulnerable people and the majority argued that they were affected by floods and droughts too, but were not qualified to receive food assistance.

The distribution of food aid relief is reported to be ineffective in some places and the assessment team identified the following problems as the most fundamental to food distribution.

- **Insufficient quantity of food received in the regions.** The amount of food aid relief received is relatively low as compared to the growing number of people in need of food assistance. Under the circumstance, the office of the councillor for a specific constituency was forced to reduce the rations given to households so that others can also get food.
- **Some constituencies could not receive their foods items due to some logistic problems related to the supply.** Epembe is one of the constituencies affected and it was reported that this problem came as a results of a certain company awarded a tender to supply food items to this constituency was withdrawn from the contract. Moreover some constituencies such as Sibinda in Caprivi region express their concern about the incomplete food relief packages they are receiving (maize meals only without cooking oils and fish).
- **Transport problem to ferry food items from the office to the distribution points in various parts of the regions.** All the regions visited indicated that, transport is a major factor that hampers the distributions of food aid relief from the office to different villages within the constituency; hence some villages are not getting their food on time.

- **No food aid relief distribution is taking place at Ngoma constituency and some villages in various constituencies of other regions.** At the time of this assessment, most farmers interviewed indicated that no food aid relief distributed in their areas.

In addition, food aid intervention was just an addition to social protection measures already in place by the government and this include;

- **Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) maintenance Grant:** A monthly grant is given to OVC to improve their quality of life.
- **Emergency food assistance to San communities:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister took an initiative to assist the vulnerable San communities with emergency food assistance and sustainable medium and longer-term activities aimed at enhancing their quality of life.
- **School Feeding:** The Ministry of Education's school feeding programme seeks to improve the dietary intake of children whose households have difficulties accessing food. The programme also contributes to national efforts to increase school enrolment, attendance and the ability to concentrate and learn.
- **Old Age Pension :** This is the monthly grant given to senior citizen over the age of sixty to help them afford basic food and services, thus improve their living standard

In the wake of the rising international food prices earlier this year, government has scrapped the 15 per cent VAT on a selected basic food items such as fresh and dried beans, sunflower cooking oil, lard and bread and cake flour. Maize and pearl millet meals have already been zero-rated for some time.

PASTURE AND LIVESTOCK CONDITIONS

Pasture Condition

Pasture conditions have begun to improve as a result of good rains received in the regions since the beginning of the season.

In the Caprivi region, grazing has been poor in the east (areas around Lusese, Bukalo, Masikili, Mubiza, Sibinda, Linyanti) due to high concentration of animals (overgrazing) that were moved in earlier this year from the flooded areas and also due to cases of veld fires reported in the region. The eastern part of Caprivi is one of the area characterised by wild animals especially elephants that are causing damages to crops and properties. It is believed that farmers set veld fire to scare the elephants that are destroying their crops in the area or destroy old grass materials that might have lost their nutritional value and encourage the growth of new grass. Either way will end up destroying grass that is grazed by the animals.

In Kavango region, pasture conditions are generally good especially in the inland except areas along the river where high concentration of animals is reported.

For the north central regions (Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana and Oshikoto), pasture conditions are much better (though poor) as compared to the corresponding period last season. It is imperative to note that good rains received in all parts of the regions revive the pasture to the extent that the worst case scenario of last season, that saw a lot of animals dying due to severe drought, does not occur.

Moreover, no water shortages for livestock were reported at the time of this assessment, all the constituencies have access to water for livestock which in most cases the natural water reservoirs (ponds, Oshanas, river, etc).

Livestock Condition

Livestock conditions in the north central regions range between fair in most areas to good in the eastern part of Oshikoto region (Guinas, Eenghodi, Okankolo, areas around Omuthiya constituency) and the southern parts of Oshana and Omusati regions due to better grazing conditions. No livestock deaths related to poor pasture conditions have been reported in these areas. However, few cases of internal parasites in cattle, goats and donkeys have been reported in the areas of Etayi, Onesi and Ruacana constituencies in the Omusati region and Oshikango constituency of Ohangwena region.

Oshikango constituency further reported cases of black quarter and rabies in dogs, while Mange in goats and Botulism were reported in Eenghodi constituency of the Oshikoto region. Furthermore, cases of sudden death in pigs were reported in Onandjamba village of the Okalongo constituency in the Omusati region.

In Kavango region, livestock body condition range between fair in the areas along the river and good for the rest of the region due prevailing good grazing conditions. Conversely, the recent outbreak of FMD in the eastern part of the region particularly in the Mukwe and Ndiyona constituencies is worrisome.

The disease is believed to have been spread from Buffalos in the area. Attempts to control and prevent the further spread of the disease have been put in place where a ban on livestock slaughtering, transportation of thatching grass and forestry products such as devil craws has been enforced in this area. Farmers have also been advised not to slaughter or sell their animals until further notice. The Directorate of Veterinary Services has deployed its veterinary staff in the affected areas in order to normalise the situation.

In the Caprivi region, the situation about FMD is said to be under control and the recent cases of this disease were detected when two cattle from Zambia were smuggled in the region through Kasika village in Kabbe Constituency. These animals were destroyed and the suspect has been arrested and appeared in court.

Efforts to control and contain further spread of FMD in this region are ongoing and Directorate of Veterinary Services have organised road brocks where the veterinary staff have been deployed in various places especially in the eastern part of the region. Other than this, no neither major disease, nor deaths thereof related to pasture have been reported during the time of this assessment and the livestock conditions are improving in response to improving grazing conditions that were triggered by good showers received.

CROP PRODUCTION OUTLOOK FOR 2008/2009 CROP SEASON

Progress on Land Preparation

The 2008/09 rain season has started from the mid to end of October in most parts of the regions and many farmers believed that the start of the rain was normal. In response to good showers that have been falling in various parts of the regions, most farmers started to prepare their lands for cultivation in terms of removing of old crop stalks, manure applications, fence repairing etc. Some farmers have started ploughing their fields and this is followed by planting. In Namibia, agricultural practices in communal areas have remained predominantly traditional. Land is generally cultivated using ox-drawn ploughs and to some extent hand hoes, while the use of tractors is very limited in some places. Farmers are requesting the government to extend the ploughing service subsidy to those that are using animal drawn ploughs. Traditionally, most farmers plant their crop fields using seeds from previous harvests, but this season the availability of such seeds were curtailed by poor harvest last season.

In the Caprivi region, farmers started planting their river fields in last September to take advantage of moist and fertile river fields of which most of the crops (maize) germinated successfully. There were shortages of improved seeds at that time of planting, but farmers managed with their own traditional seeds. At the time of the assessment, crops stages range between vegetative to flowering, which signify good harvest prospect. Nonetheless many farmers are very skeptical about good harvest due to prevalence of wild animals, particularly elephants that are destroying their crops reducing chances of good harvest of their river planted crops. Elsewhere in the region, most farmers are beginning to plough their fields. Furthermore, improved seeds are readily available from Likwama and Kafasepco cooperatives. The coops indicated that there is enough seed supply in the region and seed distributions to various parts of the region has started. In addition Maize seeds are sold at Kamunu market and Namib mills. Maize, pearl millet, sorghum and dry bean seeds are sold at about N\$10/kg. Fertilizers mainly Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (NPK) are also readily available the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry offices in the different parts of the regions, but the distribution thereof could not commerce because the price for this season was not yet determined.

For the Kavango region, many farmers are in full swing with regards to land preparations and some have started ploughing their fields. The region is experiencing shortages of improved seeds due to the high demand of seeds. The local cooperative (Likorerere coop) received 3.5 tonnes of pearl millet varieties at the beginning of the season, but this got finished due to the growing demand of seeds. Nonetheless the coop has ordered additional supply of the same seeds which were not yet received at the time of this assessment. The assessment team noted that the supply of improved seeds at Mahenene Seed Coop is limited raising fear of shortages for the improved seeds in the region. Moreover, the assessment team further noted that traditional seeds of different crops are available at the open market in Rundu, though might be expensive, but generally a price of N\$10 per half a kilogram for the locally grown crops were observed. Contrary to this, farmers on several occasions argued that, transport cost to Rundu in most cases made it impossible to access those seeds and this by inference suggest an urgent market outreach to different parts of the region in order to fill the gaps caused by market failure.

In the north central regions (Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana and Oshikoto) land preparation has started with some farmers began to plough their fields. Most farmers in these regions are very happy about the start of the rains in which they believe that the start of the rain is normal. Good showers have been reported in various parts of these regions which subsequently activated

ploughing activities. Despite the good start of the rains, there is major delay in the supply of improved seeds from Mahenene Seed coop to the regions. It has been reported that, the delay was caused by limited supply of improved seeds experienced by the cooperative. The cooperative (Mahenene that is) indicated they did not obtain sufficient seed stocks from their seed growers because of poor harvest last season. The coop was only able to obtain 48 tonnes of pearl millet varieties as compared to an average of 75 tonnes they usually receive from the seed growers. The worse case scenario is that, the cooperative dispose 100 tonnes of seeds that they usually keep as a government stock in addition to their normal stock, hoping to restock the reserve with new seeds. To their surprise, the 2007/08 harvest has been reduced drastically due to floods coupled with the curse of army worms.

Meanwhile government through Mahenene Seed Coop has intervened and about 63 tonnes of pearl millet and 5 tonnes of sorghum have been ordered from South Africa. Of this order, only 29 tonnes of pearl millet (Okashana 1 variety) was received and the coop indicated that they are currently busy packaging the seeds in 2kg package and delivery will follow once the packaging exercise has been completed. At the time of this assessment, no region in the north central received improved seeds yet raising fear of seed shortages that may hamper production to green belt of the country.

Availability and Access to Agricultural Inputs

One of the challenges facing the agricultural industry is the rising cost of production world wide due to high cost of agricultural inputs. Government recognised this challenge and introduce policies and programmes that are aimed at boosting food production, particularly in the communal areas of the country. In light of the above, government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry has introduced subsidy services in the communal crop producing regions started last season and will continue for this season. This includes the following:

Seed and Fertilizers subsidy

This is a subsidy that was introduced and piloted in the six communal crop producing regions last year. This program allows farmers to buy seeds and fertilizers (NPK) at 50% subsidy limited to 3 hectares per farmers. The aim of this program is to enable the farmers to afford these inputs (i.e. seeds and fertilizers), thus improve their crop productions.

Ploughing services subsidy

This program allows farmers to afford ploughing services from the private tractors by giving them a subsidy of N\$150 per hectare ploughed, but limited to three hectares per farmer.

Weeding services subsidy

This is another subsidy given to farmers during the weeding activities. An amount of N\$100 subsidy per hectare weeded is given to each farmer and also limited to three hectare like other subsidies mentioned earlier.

Due to limited fund available for the ploughing and weeding services, only few farmers that are going to benefit from these subsidies.

SITUATION BY REGION

Caprivi Region

The supply of improved seeds in the region is satisfactory and most farmers are ready for the season, signalling a good start of the season. Good rains have been falling in most part of the region and farmers have started responding to the season. Unlike last season where seed shortages were observed at the beginning of the season, the seed supply situation for this season is good. Improved seeds are available at the Likwama farmers association as well as KAFASEPCO coop. The current price for improved maize seeds is N\$70/ 5kg, and N\$10/kg for pearl millet and sorghum. In addition, Namib mills and Kamunu market also sell maize seeds. Traditional seeds are also available at the open market for N\$10/kg of maize, sorghum and pearl millet.

The prevalence of Foot and Mouth Disease in the area is said to be under control and the recent cases of FMD were detected when two cattle from Zambia were smuggled in the region through Kasika village in Kabbe Constituency. These animals were destroyed and the suspect has been arrested and appeared in court. Efforts to control and contain further spread of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) are underway and the staff from the Directorate of Veterinary Services have organised road blocks in various places especially in the eastern part of the region.

Furthermore, vaccination campaign on FMD and Lung Sickness has been completed in the region. Meat co abattoir remained closed following the outbreak of FMD in 2006 and farmers still are unable to slaughter their livestock through both formal (abattoir and auctions) and informal (open markets, etc) marketing channels. Many farmers indicated that they have lost their incomes that they usually obtain from the sale of their livestock due to the ban on livestock sale.

Kabbe Constituency: Maize seeds are currently available in most parts of the constituency especially for the upper land fields. For the river fields, improved seeds were not available during planting (in September) but most farmers managed with their own seeds from previous harvest. Draft animals are at least fit for ploughing and with good showers received, rangeland is recovering from overgrazing. Household food security is tightening in this constituency and many households interviewed indicated that they are currently dependent on the market and government drought relief program is not known in this area.

Katima Rural Constituency: Seed supply is fine in this constituency. Farmers especially in Masokotwane area are concerned about the tractor services which according to them, only two tractors and are not reliable. Nonetheless labour availability during weeding activities is expected to be fine this season provided that one have to pay for the service rendered.

Kongola Constituency: Most farmers in this constituency are ready for the season. Many farmers especially in Omega III are still waiting for the seeds from the government. Government usually give them (San community) free seeds and it is also expected to be the case this year until such a time that they are in better position to retain own seeds from harvest or buy from the market. Land preparation has started and most

farmers have started ploughing their fields using draft animals. In addition, most households owners interviewed are thankful to the government for the drought relief assistance given to them (san people) which helps them to endure the hardship of the season. Furthermore, the school feeding program is keeping most children at school.

Linyanti Constituency: Most farmers in this constituency are very much satisfied with the current seed supply situation. The majority of them have shown an interest to participate in the government seeds and fertilizers and tractor ploughing services subsidy program. Some farmers that have participated in the Draft Animal Power Acceleration Program (DAPAP) of European Commission in collaboration with NAB last year have shown their appreciation about the government and its cooperating partners' assistance that enabled them to buy cultivators at a subsidised price.

Sibinda Constituency: Most farmers interviewed are complaining about the unavailability of both improved and traditional seeds in the area. Seed shortages came as a result of poor harvest last season and delay to deliver the seeds from the local cooperatives to this area. Household food security is still satisfactory with many households hoping to reach the next harvest.

Kavango Region

Inadequate seed supply in the region is a great of concern to many farmers and may hamper production prospects for the 2008/09 crop season. Although the region received 3.5 tonnes of improved seeds for Okashana 1 & 2 and Kangara for pearl millet from Mahenene Seed Coop from the beginning of this season, the supply could not meet the high demand for seeds. The demand came as a result of poor harvest received for the past two successive cropping seasons. Nonetheless, supplies of uncertified seeds (traditional ones) of various crop varieties are available at the open market at N\$10/0.5kg for pearl millet, maize, beans and ground nuts.

A recent outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is of a great concern in the eastern part of the region. The disease is believed to have spread from Buffalos in the area and farmers in the affected areas have been advised not to slaughter their animals. In addition to livestock sale restriction, a ban on transporting thatching grass and forestry products such as devil craws has been enforced in this area. Moreover, further attempts to prevent further spread of the disease are underway and the Directorate of Veterinary Services has deployed its veterinary staff in the affected areas. Pasture conditions are generally good and poor in some areas due to escalating cases of veld fire in the region.

With regards to progress on the marketing of agricultural produce, most farmers were unable to produce surplus for the market. Demand for various crop commodities especially the millers (pearl millet and maize) has been high since the beginning of the marketing season, but only few farmers that produces surplus were able to sell. Household food security is still tight despite the government drought/flood relief program. Some households are complaining that, the food relief program is not effective- only targeting certain households and the criteria used to determine who qualify for food assistance are not clear.

Kahenge Constituency: In response to good showers received since the beginning of the season, most farmers are in full swing with land preparation and some have started ploughing their fields. Although, culturally farmers keeps own seeds from the previous harvest, most of those interviewed indicated that, last season's poor harvest could not permitted them to retain sufficient and good quality seeds, hence there is a shortage of seeds in their constituency.

Kapako Constituency: Some farmers have started ploughing their fields. Draft animals are reported to be in good condition and fit to pull the ploughs. There are only two tractors available in the entire constituency, which according to the Extension Technician for this area not enough to meet the growing demand. With regards to the households' food security in this area, most households have depleted their

little harvest from the previous season and are currently dependent on the market and or government food relief program.

Mashare Constituency: Land preparation has started in this constituency and some farmers begun cultivating their fields. No major livestock diseases reported, since the beginning of August up to the time of this assessment. Most farmers have ploughing equipments and the few that don't have usually borrow from others.

Mpungu Constituency: Farmers in this area are heavily dependent on the draft animals to cultivate their fields. During the time of this assessment, draft animals by and large were reported to be weak especially in the areas along the river and may not be available immediately for ploughing services. Due to poor harvest last season, the household food security situation is

tight to most households. Nonetheless, food relief program from the Government is taking place and as a starting point this program focused on the vulnerable members of the society.

Mukwe Constituency: Most Household interviewed in Diyana, Shadikongoro and Bagani villages are complaining that no drought relief food distributions is taking place in their areas. They are alleging that, only villages along the rivers were targeted. Cases of Foot and Mouth Disease in cattle have been reported in most parts of this constituency. This constituency is located between the border of Caprivi and Kavango region and it is understood that the outbreak of FMD have spread from Caprivi region. In an effort to contain further spread of the disease, the Directorate of Veterinary Services has deployed its staff around this area.

Ndiyona Constituency: In preparation for the starting cropping season, many farmers registered for the seeds and fertilizers subsidy program. Some villages such as Katere, Shinyungwe, Kamutjima Wumwe, etc are complaining that no food aid relief is taking places in their villages. There are suspected cases of Foot and Mouth diseases in the area and as

result farmers are not allowed to slaughter their animals, sell thatching grass and related forestry products such as devil craws as they are believed to spread the disease.

Rundu Rural East Constituency: Some farmers especially in the inland have started Ploughing their fields following good showers received in the area. All the households interviewed indicated the shortages of seeds for pearl millet, maize and leguminous crops due to poor for the past two seasons. In addition, there are no private tractors in the area and the only one that comes from time to time is from Rundu and does not meet increasing demand.

Rundu Rural West Constituency: land preparation is underway in terms of removal or stalks from the previous harvests, spreading of kraal manure and so forth. Although draft animals are said to be in fair condition, some farmers have started ploughing their fields using these animals. The livestock body condition is fair due to poor pasture caused by veld fires. It is expected that during weeding activities, hired labor will be readily available as usual provided that one has money to pay for the service rendered.

North-Central Regions (Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto)

The north central regions have not yet received the supply of improved seeds despite good rains received since the beginning of the season. The regions have been receiving good showers since the beginning of the season and farmers are optimistic about the season. Nonetheless, at the time of this assessment, all the regions were still waiting for the improved seeds of pearl millet (Okashana no 1 & 2 & Kangara) from Mahenene Seed Cooperative.

According to Mahenene Seed Coop, the delay to supply the seeds came as a result of limited supply of improved seeds. The cooperative indicated that, due to poor harvest last season, most of their seed growers could not produce enough seeds because of flood impacts coupled with the scourge of army worms. Under the circumstance the coop was only able to produce up to 48 tonnes of different varieties of pearl millet as compared to an average of 75 tonnes plus 100 tonnes as a government reserve.

Coincidentally, last season as part of their stock management strategy the coop has disposed the entire government seed reserve with the aim to restock with new seeds and to its surprise, the harvest was reduced drastically. Meanwhile the government through Mahenene seed coop has imported about 63 tonnes of pearl millet and 5 tonnes of sorghum from South Africa. During the time of this assessment, the coop have only received 34 tonnes of pearl millet which were still to be packaged and delivery to the regions will only be made once the packaging process is completed.

Most farmers have registered for the seed and fertilizer package as well as the ploughing services for the tractors. Farmers of Epembe constituency in Oshana region expressed their concern about lack of tractors in their constituency since last season. Farmers especially in the areas where there are few or no tractors are requesting the government to extend the ploughing subsidy program to those that are using draft animals.

Household food security is tightening as most households are reported to have depleted their little harvest from the previous season. The food relief program is taking place in the regions but is reported to be ineffective due to some shortcomings identified in the distribution process. This included insufficient food stock received, delayed distributions due to inadequate transport and delayed to supply food because certain companies that were awarded tenders to supply certain food items were not in possession to honour their contractual obligation and as result, their service were terminated.

Omusati Region

Anamulenge Constituency: As a response to good showers received in November, many farmers have started ploughing their fields. Despite the fact that last season's harvest was poor, improved seeds have not yet arrived in this area and many farmers are in urgent need of seeds. The household food security is tightening as many households are reported to have depleted their food stock and now dependent on the market.

Elim Constituency: Some parts of this constituency reported slight showers while other parts are still dry. Nonetheless, land preparation is underway and many farmers are expected to start ploughing their fields as soon as the rainfall has established sufficiently. Many farmers expressed their fear on a possible increase in tractor service fees follow a rise in oil prices earlier this year. Last season the tractor service fees were much affordable at N\$120/hectare and are likely to go up this season. Nonetheless, ploughing subsidy from the government is still on and farmers can still register to benefit from the subsidy program.

Etayi Constituency: Farmers are still waiting for the improved seeds from Mahenene Seed Coop. Most farmers could not retain enough and good quality seeds from last season due to poor harvest. Most farmers own the necessary ploughing equipments and usually buy the spare parts from Oshikuku. Household food security situation is reported to be declining in some households because of poor harvest last season. The drought food received from the regional office is not sufficient when compared to the number of people that were identified to be in need of food assistance. Pasture was observed to be in fair condition and is recovering as good showers continued. Farmers are complaining about internal parasite in cattle and goats.

Ogongo Constituency: Land preparation is underway and currently most farmers are either engaged in the applications of kraal manure and some have started ploughing their fields. Due to last season's poor harvest, many farmers could not produce much surplus for the market; hence the majority of them could not trade parts of their harvest. Tractor services are very scarce and expensive. Most farmers use mainly draft animals to plough their field and these animals were observed to be in fair condition.

Okahao Constituency: Most parts of the constituency are still dry and only very few farmers started ploughing their fields. Nonetheless, land preparations in terms of application of manure, removal of old crop stalks, fence repairing, etc has started. In addition, improved seeds have not yet been received and many farmers are going to need seeds due to poor harvest last season. Farmers are requesting the Extension Services to facilitate the availability of improved seeds to their constituency as a matter of urgency. Owing to poor pasture conditions; many farmers took their animals to the cattle posts for better grazing. Some households are reported to have depleted their food stock and are now market dependants.

Onesi Constituency: Despite the willingness of farmers to start cultivating their fields, the rainfall received was not enough to trigger off the cultivation process. Enough tractors are available in the constituency. Most tractor owners are reluctant to participate in the government ploughing service program, claiming that the government takes too long to pay them. Grazing conditions range between fair to poor in some places. Some farmers reported cases of internal parasite (intestinal worms) in donkeys and the situation is said to be exacerbated poor grazing conditions.

Oshikuku Constituency: Most farmers in this area keep their own seeds from the previous harvests. Suitable land for cultivation is readily available and the majority of farmers have Ploughing equipments. Draft animals are reported to be in better condition and can be used especially early in the morning when is cool and for a short time. No major livestock diseases reported since the beginning of August until the time of this assessment.

Otamanzi Constituency: The majority of the farmers have already started preparing their lands for cultivations. Most farmers retain their traditional seeds from previous harvests and indicated that usually they also access improved seeds but this year seeds are not yet available either at their local ADC or the councillor's office. No major diseases reported in the area for the past two months. Pasture condition has deteriorated significantly but expected to recover as more rains are received in the area.

Outapi Constituency: There is a shortage of seeds in this area. Last season could not permit farmers to retain enough quality seeds and improved seeds have not yet arrived. Nonetheless, traditional made seeds are available at the open market in Outapi and price range between N\$16-18 per 2kg. The household food security is tightening as the hunger season progresses. Most households have depleted their food stock and are currently dependent on the market for food supply.

Ruacana Constituency: Rains received since the beginning of this season were not sufficient to activate cultivation activities. Currently most farmers are busy clearing their fields, kraal manure application and waiting for sufficient rainfall. Scarcity of tractors is being experienced as there are only two tractors serving the entire constituency. Farmers are also still waiting for the improved seeds from Mahenene Seed Coop. On livestock health, cases of internal & external parasite, botulism, bloat, still birth in cattle and lumpy skin disease were reported.

Okalongo Constituency: Most part of the constituency has received some shower and some farmers have already started ploughing their fields. The constituency has sufficient private tractors available about 20 tractors. Nonetheless, there were only 5 tractor owners who showed an interest to participate in the government ploughing subsidy services. It is believed that tractor owners are reluctant to participate due to a long process the government takes to pay them. Tractor owners seem to be

not aware that the payment has been decentralized to the regions and the payment will be made there within one month. The household food security situation is tightening in this constituency. Most households have depleted their food stock and are currently dependent on the market for food. Many household owners approached the councilor's office for possible food assistance. The food received from the regional office is not enough and only targeting the most vulnerable people. No major livestock diseases reported in this area except sudden deaths of pigs in Onandjamba and the surrounding villages.

Tsandi Constituency: Most part of this area has not yet received sufficient rains to activate ploughing activities. Farmers are currently busy with land preparation in terms of kraal manure application, removing stalks from previous season and so on, but ploughing have not yet started. Although farmers stored seeds from past season, the quantity is not enough and the quality have been compromised by unfavorable weather last season. Improved seeds are not yet available in the constituency and many farmers have registered for the Government Seeds and Fertilizer Program and Ploughing Services. Household food security is generally satisfactory in this constituency and most farmers receive a relative better harvest last season as compared to the rest of the region.

Ohangwena Region

Eenhana Constituency: Land preparation is underway as good rains continue to fall in most parts of the constituency. Due to the poor harvest last season, many farmers were unable to secure sufficient quality seeds from the previous season. During the time of this assessment, improved seeds have not yet arrived in the area and farmers are always visiting the offices looking for improved seeds. Pasture conditions are fair and was observed to be recovering as good showers continues.

Endola Constituency: Good showers continued to fall in most parts of this constituency and many farmers have started ploughing their fields. This constituency is one of the constituencies that have lost its potential production to flood last season and at the time of this assessment

improved seeds were still unavailable. Household food security is tight and most households interviewed indicated that, they have depleted their food stock and are now market dependants. There is a high demand of tractor services due to the severe shortage of tractors in the area. Most farmers have the necessary ploughing equipments and availability of labour especially during weeding activities is not a problem, provided that one has to pay for the service rendered. The household food security in this constituency is declining as most households interviewed are reported to have depleted their food stocks and are now dependent on the market. Drought relief foods distributed in the area only targeting the vulnerable groups and reported to be insufficient.

Engela Constituency: Farmers have started with land preparations and some have started ploughing their fields as good showers continued to fall. Traditionally, most farmers keep own seeds from the previous seasons, but many farmers in this area were unable to retain enough and good quality seeds because of poor harvest last season. Additionally improved seeds have not yet been received at the time of this assessment.

Epembe Constituency: Since last season, no private tractors available in this area and as a result, farmers are unable to make the best use of government ploughing subsidy services. Tracts usually come from other constituency once they have finished and in most cases are too late. Nevertheless, many of the farmers mainly use draft animal to plough their fields and animal body conditions are much better than last season. Farmers are requesting the government to subsidize those that are using draft animals for Ploughing. In addition, improved seed has not yet arrived. Last season's harvest was poor and many farmers were unable to retain enough quality seeds. Household food security is declining as many households are reported to have depleted their food stocks. The office of the councilor has expressed its dismay on the supply of drought relief foods which was brought to a halt when the service of the company that was awarded a tender to supply food to this constituency was terminated. Such delay causes increased cases of starvation especially the san people, people on Anti-Retro Viral therapy and other vulnerable groups in this area.

Ohangwena Constituency: Some farmers have started ploughing their fields as good showers continue to fall throughout the constituency. Most farmers are still waiting for the seeds to arrive. Improved seed were not yet available in the area at the time of this assessment. Due to poor harvest last season many farmers were unable to produce surplus for the market, hence there has been high demand of pearl millet grains and only very few people are selling. Household food security is tightening as most households are reported to have depleted their food stocks from previous season and are now market dependants. It is reported that the drought relief foods from the government is only targeting few people and the food received is not reasonably enough.

Okongo constituency: Some farmers have started ploughing as good showers continue to fall in various parts of the constituency. Draft animals are by and large in fair condition and fit to pull the plough. Some farmers indicated that many of their animals died at the beginning of last season due to severe drought; hence there might be a shortage of draft animals in this area. Ploughing equipments are available to most farmers especially hand hoe in every farmer's house, though some do not have ploughs. Moreover, spare parts are not available locally and most farmers have to travel long distance to buy them at Ondangwa which is too far. There are a lot of San people in this constituency and more of them need government assistance to acquire ploughing equipments.

Omulonga Constituency: There about three private tractors operating in the area and according to farmers, they are not enough since the constituency is very big. Nonetheless, land preparation is underway in terms of removing stalks from the previous season; applications of kraal manure and some farmers have started planting and ploughing their fields. Seed supply and access is relatively poor- improved seeds have not yet been received in the area and most farmers interviewed indicated that last season's harvest could not permit them to retain enough good quality seeds. No major livestock diseases reported in the area. Pasture and animal conditions are fair and grazing conditions are expected to improve as good showers continue to fall.

Omundaungilo constituency: Land preparations have started and some farmers begun ploughing their fields in response to good rains received so far. No improved seeds received yet and many farmers are looking forward to get the seeds using government subsidy program. Household food security is tightening as the hunger season progressed. Some farmers are complaining that the government food relief program did not reach them and the situation is getting tough day by day.

Oshikango Constituency: Few farmers started cultivation and the majority are still busy with land clearance, kraal manure application, and the likes. The constituency is still waiting for the improved seed from Mahenene Seed Coop and most farmers have registered to participate in the Government Seeds and Fertilizer Program.

Additionally, traditional seeds are readily available at the open market within the town area of Oshikango at about N\$12 per 2kg bag. On livestock health, cases of Lumpy skin disease, internal parasite, rabies (mainly in dog) and Black quarter have been reported in October and grazing condition is very poor, but expected to recover if good rains continue.

Ondobe Constituency: Land preparation is underway and some farmers, though few have started planting and ploughing their fields. No improved seed yet in the area and many farmers have registered to participate in the Government Seeds and Fertilizer Subsidy Program. Household food security is tightening as the majority of households are reported to have depleted their food stock from own production and are now market dependant. Despite the poor harvest last season, the production is mainly

aimed at ensure household food security (own consumption) and as such marketing is barely takes place even if good yields were obtained.

Ongenga Constituency: Some farmers have started planting and ploughing their fields, following good shower received since the beginning of this season. Improved seeds have not yet arrived at the constituency and those that have planted their fields are only using their own traditional seeds from the previous harvest. The household food security is tightening as most households are reported to have depleted their food stocks from own production and are now market dependents. Many household owners visit the councillor's office almost everyday asking for food assistance. Government drought relief foods received are not enough as compared to the growing demand that the office receive in need of food assistance.

Oshana Region

Okaku Constituency: Good showers continued to fall in most parts of this constituency. The majority of farmers have started ploughing their fields. Improved seeds have not yet been received and most farmers indicated that last season's harvest was poor and could not retained enough and good quality seeds. Most farmers in this area do not have draft animals and are heavily dependent on tractor services for their field cultivation. Household food security is tightening as the majority of households are reported to have depleted their food stocks from own production and are now dependent on the market.

Uukwiyu Constituency: Land preparation is underway and some farmers have started ploughing their fields. Most farmers are ready and optimistic about the start of the season where they indicated that rainfall started on time and good showers continued to fall in various part of this area. Improved seeds have not yet been received and many farmers are worried about the delay which may hamper the production for this season. Very few households that are still dependent on their own production and the majority are reported to have depleted their food stock in last August as the hunger season progresses.

Okatana Constituency: Good shower continue to fall in all parts of this constituency and most farmers have started ploughing their fields. Most

farmers in this area uses tractors to cultivate their fields and some express their appreciation to the government for reintroduction of Ploughing subsidy service. As a custom, farmers retain their own traditional seeds from the previous harvests, but this could not gain significant momentum due to poor harvest last season. Additionally, improved seeds have not yet been received. However, traditional seeds for pearl millet & sorghum and other crop varieties are readily available at the open market in Oshakati at N\$ 10/kg just like the previous season. No major livestock diseases were reported except of few cases of Mange and diarrhea in goats reported in Otuwala village.

Okatyali Constituency: Some farmers have started ploughing their fields and the majorities are still preparing their fields for cultivation. Draft animals are in good condition and are reasonably fit to pull the plough. The youth groups that do weeding service are currently unhappy with the price they receive per hectare for the service rendered. The groups felt that a hectare is too big and the amount paid to them of N\$250 (100 from government plus 150 from farmers) is too little and are requesting the Ministry to review the fee and increase to a reasonable amount or equate the fees to that of the Ploughing subsidy program. Currently this constituency is served by ADC office based in Uukwiyu which is far from the farmers. The councilor for this constituency is requesting the

Ministry to establish the ADC in their constituency in order to ensure that the necessary agricultural services are within the reach of their communities.

Ompundja Constituency: Despite farmers' optimism about the start of the season, improved seeds shortage is a great concern to many. Most of them could not retain sufficient good quality seed because of poor harvest last season. However, traditional seeds are available at Oshakati open market at about N\$10/kg for pearl millet, sorghum and maize. For leguminous crops the price is about N\$10/ half a kilogram. There are enough tractors in this area, but farmers are complaining of high services fees charged by the tractor's owners and that most of them have not registered their tractors for Ploughing subsidy service. Tractor owners are still doubtful about the delaying payment by the government, despite government effort to decentralize the payment to a regional level. Last season the tractor service fee was N\$250/ ha and this amount might increase to N\$300 this season due to oil price increase and inflation. Availability of labor in this area is one of the concerns to many farmers in this constituency. Youth groups in the area have shrink as many young people are gone to town areas in search for employment better living standard.

Ondangwa Constituency: Majority of farmers has been busy preparing their fields for cultivation and some have even started planting and ploughing their fields. Household food security is tightening in this constituency as most households depleted the little harvest of last season and are now dependent on the market. Nonetheless government drought relief program has come to their rescue by giving them some food. The distribution of drought relief food according to the office of the councilor' is currently hampered by lack of transport in the constituency. The truck that is usually used to transport relief food items to various distribution points developed some faults and this has made food distribution difficult.

Ongwediva Constituency: This is one of the constituencies that were hardest hit by the flood and army worms last season. In response to good showers received most farmers have started ploughing their fields hoping that this season will be much better than the previous one. There are enough private tractors operating in the area and 7 tractors were registered to partake in the

government ploughing subsidy service. Household food security situation is tightening as the hunger season is progressing. At the time of this assessment, Government Food Relief Program has not yet started distributing food in the constituency due to some logistical related problem, but expected to start soon.

Oshakati East Constituency: Most farmers have the necessary cultivating tools and draft animals are in good conditions. Pasture conditions are improving following good showers that have felled in the various parts of the constituency. Improved seeds are usually made available at ADCs with previous seasons, but have not yet been received. Farmers have access to labour, either hired or family member used as labour especially during weeding operations. In addition, farmers have registered for the ploughing subsidy services program.

Oshakati west constituency: Due to poor harvest last cropping season, many farmers could not obtain a marketable surplus; hence no much selling had taken place. Grazing conditions are said to be improving in most parts of the constituency after some good showers received in November. As a tradition, most farmers retain their own traditional seed from the previous harvests. Moreover, traditional seeds for pearl millet & sorghum and almost all the crops used in this area are readily available at the open market for just N\$ 10/kg, just like last season.

Uuvudhiya constituency: Most parts of this area have received good showers and farmers have already started ploughing their fields. There are only two known private tractors in this area and up to the time of the assessment, only one tractor has been registered for subsidy ploughing service. Nevertheless most farmers use draft animals to cultivate their fields and draft animals are reported to be in good condition and fit for cultivation. Household food security is satisfactory to most areas except few villages such as Uuvudhiya, Onakapya, Onaushe and partly Omapopo that received poor harvest last season. This season many farmers were able to sell their produce (especially mahangu grains) at good price of N\$50/ latta as compared to N\$35-40 last season. Because of the scarcity of Mahangu grains in the North Central regions, many buyers were able to travel to this area in order to buy grains from the farmers. Last season farmers complained that they were unable to sell their surplus due to lack of the market. Poor road

infrastructure and lack of transport are the major causes of marketing failure in the area as

potential buyers are reluctant to visit their area just because there are no proper roads.

Oshikoto Region

Eengodi Constituency: Since last seasons, no tractors available in this area and farmers are using oxen and donkeys to cultivate their fields. Good showers have been received in various part of this constituency and some farmers have already started Ploughing and planting their fields. Draft animals are in good condition and fit for cultivation. Most farmers use their family members as a source of labor and there are also youth groups that can be hired to provide weeding services to the farmers. Cases of Mange in goats, limping in cattle and Botulism have been reported in Eevale village of this constituency.

Guinas Constituency: This is one of the constituencies that have received a relative good harvest last season in the region. Most farmers have retained seeds from the previous harvest and have started ploughing and planted their fields. It has been reported that, no youth groups for weeding exist in this area; most farmers are using draft animals to weed their fields. Some farmers around Casablanca area dry planted their fields with the aim of taking advantage of first rain, and their crops germinated successfully of which most of these crops are starting to form internodes. Marketing of livestock is reported to have decrease due to many farmers have lost their animals to drought during 2006. No major livestock diseases were reported in the area since October up to the time of this assessment.

Okankolo Constituency: Farmers have started preparing their fields for cultivation as good showers continued in various part of the constituency. Since last season, there has been only one known tractor available in the whole constituency and cannot meet the demand for the service. However, most farmers are currently using draft animals to cultivate their fields, but contrarily; the number of draft animals was reduced by last year's drought. During the time of this assessment, improved seeds have not yet been received and most farmers interviewed indicated that they did not procure sufficient seeds from previous season. Pasture is recovering from the dry season and no major livestock diseases reported in the area.

Olukonda constituency: Most farmers in the area are ready for the season and begun to register in order to benefit from government ploughing service and seed and fertilizer subsidies. This constituency have also suffered the havoc of flood and the scourge of army worms and as such, the harvest was reduced significantly. Most farmers could not retained sufficient quality seeds and are going to need seeds for this season. At the time of this assessment, improved seeds have not yet been received. However, traditional seeds are available at the open market in Ondangwa at about N\$10/kg for pearl millet and sorghum while for dry beans and bambaranuts, the price is about N\$10 per half a kilogram.

Omuntele Constituency: Most farmers have the necessary tools for cultivation and some have started ploughing and plating their fields as good showers continued to fall in various parts of the constituency. Household food security situation is reported to be satisfactory as the majority of farmers still have some foods from the previous seasons. In addition, the drought relief program is taking place in the area especially to care for the vulnerable members of the society. Farmers are complaining about the high tractor service fees where tractor owners are reported to charge up to N\$400/ha. Cases of rabies in dogs have been reported in the entire constituency since September to date. In addition, internal parasite especially in goats and cattle has also been problematic in this area.

Omuthiya Constituency: Most farmers have started to prepare their fields for cultivation and some begun planting and ploughing their fields. Most farmers have the necessary tools for cultivation and as a tradition; they retain some seeds from the previous harvests. The majority of farmers in this constituency are using draft animal power to cultivate their fields. Most farmers are optimistic about the season and if good rains continued for the rest of the season, good harvest is likely. Pasture is recovering from the dry period and animals are said to be in good state.

Onayena constituency: Land preparation has started in terms of removing of crop residue, application of kraal manure and some farmers

have started ploughing their fields. Farmers who dry-planted their fields with the aim of taking advantage of the first rain had their crops germinated and good showers continue to be received in this area. Due to last poor harvest last season, most household could not retain enough quality seeds hence they are in need of seeds (for pearl millet, sorghum and dry beans). Improved seeds have not yet arrived at the time of this assessment. Several households interviewed indicated that they do not have enough foods. However, drought relief program is taking place in the area and beneficiaries are thankful of the government for coming to their rescue.

Oniipa Constituency: Improved seeds have not yet been received and most farmers can't wait to receive seeds after poor harvest that has surfaced for the past two seasons. Currently some farmers begun ploughing and planting their fields as

good showers continued in the area. In contrast with last season, draft animals are reported to be in better condition and fit for cultivation. Farmers are concern about the delay of improved seeds in the area.

Onyaanya Constituency: Good rains continue to fall in most parts of this constituency and farmers have started cultivating their fields. Despite the delay of improved seeds from Mahenene Seed coop, most farmers retain seeds from previous harvests. Household food security is reported to be satisfactory, this constituency was less affected by flood and army worms, and hence most farmers had better harvest last season. Conditions of the draft animals are reported to be better as compared to the corresponding period last season. No major livestock diseases were reported since the start of the season till the time of this assessment.