



CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2019 – MARCH 2020)

In Namibia, an estimated 430,000 people (18% of the total population) are currently experiencing severe acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+). Between October 2019 and March 2020, 8 of Namibia's 14 regions are experiencing Crisis conditions of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3). The most affected regions are Hardap, Kavango East, Khomas, Kunene, Ohangwena, Omaheke, Omusati, Zambezi, each having 20 percent of its population facing Phase 3 (Crisis) conditions. Despite the ongoing humanitarian interventions provided by the government of Namibia, helping around 258,000 people, 18 percent of the country's total population requires immediate humanitarian action. Communal farming households located in the Zambezi, Kavango East and Kavango West regions were significantly affected, as their food supplies for income generation and personal consumption were severely reduced by the dry weather conditions earlier in 2019. The purchasing power of communal households in these regions is extremely low due to low incomes, making people very vulnerable to pricing spikes in the market.

Food availability

The impact of the drought on crop and livestock production was significant in some regions with a reportedly significant reduction in maize production compared to the previous season, leading to an increased reliance on imported staple crops. The cereal import requirement for the market year of May 2019 – April 2020 is estimated at 300,000 tonnes, an increase of about 8 percent compared to the five-year average. Import requirements of maize are estimated at 180,000 tonnes, 20 percent higher compared to the five-year average. Imports of wheat are estimated at 95,000 tonnes, 20 percent above the reduced quantity imported in the previous year, but still slightly below the average. The majority of the population depends on markets for food. Markets are functional and all food stocks are available.

Food access

In many regions of the country, the amount of available food stocks a household has determines the level of food access. Households saw a decrease in their harvests because of the impact of the drought-like conditions, so most are relying on markets for food. However, income sources have been reduced by drought conditions, since livestock and livestock product sales are the key sources of income for farmers. Although prices of key commodities have remained stable, low income and purchasing power is limiting household access to food. An analysis of purchasing power showed that 42% of households in the 14 analysed regions spent more than 50% of their income on food. Purchasing power is a major limiting factor to food access in Kavango East, Kavango West, Kunene, Omaheke and Zambezi. Furthermore, in some areas, many farmers were reported to be migrating south towards neighboring countries for better pastures. This has resulted in a reduction of available livestock products for sale and subsequently a decrease in demand for casual labour which many poor people rely on for incomes.

Food utilization

Household utilization of food is generally a minor limiting factor to food security in the country overall. The majority of interviewed households (85%) have access to safe drinking water, and access to water either through their own personal water tap, sharing a tap with a neighbor or a community water tap. However, 23% of households in Omusati, 24% in Kavango East, 23% in Kavango West, and 37% in Kunene only have access to unprotected water from rivers and lakes, which increases their vulnerability to water-borne diseases. Water sources were overall quite accessible, with 58% of households having access to a water point within 50 meters of their household, 20% having one between 50 and 150 meters of their household and 22% having one more than 150 meters from the household. Firewood is the main source of energy used by 83% of households across all assessed regions, with only by 8% of households having access to electricity. Sanitation is also a challenge as 64% of households do not have access to a toilet. 39% of households are using pit latrines, however, there is considerable variation throughout the regions, with 100% of households in Kavango West using pit latrines, 80% in Omusati, 90% in Oshana, 77% in Oshikoto and 77% in Zambezi. 50% of households interviewed shared a toilet with at least 5 people and 30% shared a toilet with at least 10 people.



PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (April 2020 – September 2020)

Between April to September 2020, a slight improvement of the situation is expected owing to the possibility of normal to above normal rainfall in the period October to December 2019 in the north and northcentral areas of the country which are the main cereal producing regions. Land preparation and planting of the 2020 cereal crops, mainly maize and millet, to be harvested in May and June 2020, are expected to start from mid-November, 2019. If rainfall predictions do occur, it could lead to an increase in the total area of planted crops and benefit crop growth. Therefore, food availability and access is likely to slightly improve in a few regions that are dependent on millet and livestock farming. Households will also be able to consume the green harvest towards early April.

An estimated 360 000 people, or 15% of the total population in Namibia, will experience Crisis acute food insecurity conditions (IPC Phase 3) and will require urgent action to address food consumption gaps. In addition, 840 000 people, or 35% of the population, will experience Stressed acute food insecurity conditions (that are characteristic of IPC Phase 2). Although these households have minimally adequate food consumption, they still cannot afford basic non-food items, which can only be purchased through the use of coping strategies. Therefore, they remain highly vulnerable to climatic and income shocks.

Assumptions

- Rainfall forecast to be favourable during the last months of 2019, benefitting planting of 2020 cereal crops. According to the Namibia Seasonal Rainfall forecast for October 2019 to March 2020, during the October to December 2019 period, the country will likely receive normal to above normal rainfall. In the period January to March 2020, the country will likely experience normal to below normal rains. Based on this mixed forecast, it was very difficult to assume the impact of the rains on agricultural production and the outcome of the 2020 harvest. The assumption used in this analysis is based on a more favourable outlook. However, if the rains are late and erratic, the projection will be updated or a new analysis will be undertaken in May 2020 as part of the VAA process.
- Food availability is expected to remain stable throughout the projected period in all regions due to the stable supply of food imports from South Africa.
- Markets are expected to remain stocked and functional.
- Given the rainfall forecast, income from agricultural labour will likely improve market access.
- Livestock conditions will improve owing to the recovery of pastures, and farmers will be able to sell livestock, improving access to food and other livelihood needs.
- Income from remittances and grants will remain stable. However, income from petty trading and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will likely remain low, limiting the purchasing power of the most vulnerable households.
- Prices of maize meal were generally stable in 2019, mostly reflecting well-supplied markets by increased imports from South Africa, which have adequately compensated the reduced harvest in 2019. Therefore, it is assumed that price of maize meal will remain stable throughout the projected period.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

- Provide immediate humanitarian assistance for populations classified in IPC Phase 3.
- Provide emergency agricultural and livestock support to farmers, with a special focus on regions that have been severely affected by the drought.
- Provide farm inputs, support to livestock disease control, provision of livestock feeds, water infrastructure maintenance, and strengthen water infrastructure for livestock.
- Improve the social protection and resilience building programmes to enhance recovery from emergencies and sustain livelihoods.
- Develop a National Resilience Strategy to guide long term disaster response/intervention.

Risk factors to monitor

- The assumptions used for the projected analysis should be closely monitored. If the rainfall forecast changes, then other assumptions on food availability and access will also change, and the IPC projection should be updated.
- Rainfall should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that measures are put in place to mitigate the impact of drought, lack of grazing, loss of livestock and income.
- In the projected period, food stocks should be monitored closely to alleviate food gaps.
- Price of maize and key commodities should be monitored to prevent sudden increases in prices.
- Animal disease outbreaks should be monitored to limit the impact on food supply and loss of income.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

A number of Frameworks were used to design the data collection tool; these include the UNICEF Nutrition Conceptual framework, the Food and Nutrition Conceptual Framework, the IPC Analytical Framework, the UNICEF Nutrition Framework, the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and the Resilience Conceptual Framework. The sample was selected by the Namibia Statistics Agency, and although it was representative at the regional level, it included both peri-urban and rural households.

The questionnaire was developed by the technical team from the Namibia Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NamVAC), with inputs from the Regional IPC Technical Working Group. The enumeration team members were employees of Regional Councils and were trained by the NamVAC Technical Team. Data was collected by staff of Regional Councils using ODK loaded questionnaires on tablet devices. Data was collected across the country in 333 sentinel sites.

The analysis was done by a team of representatives from each Regional Council and local Authorities, including 10 National NamVAC Technical Team members. The IPC training and analysis were led by IPC facilitators from Southern and Eastern Africa. The IPC analysis followed the IPC Analytical Framework for convergence of evidence and phase classification. Direct indicators included in the IPC Reference Table – the food consumption score (FCS), reduced food coping strategies (rCSI) index, household dietary diversity score (HDDS), and livelihood coping strategies (LCS) – were used together with contributing factors for convergence of evidence and generation of population estimates. All analytical parameters and the 13 protocols were adhered to. To facilitate planning and programming, a current analysis for the lean season and a projected analysis, serving as an early warning mechanism, was undertaken for the post-harvest period.

Sources of data used in the analysis

Various sources of information were used for the acute analysis. This included the data collected from the NAMVAC October vulnerability assessment. A household questionnaire was administered and key informant interviews were conducted. Secondary data used in this report were from the 2018 Namibia Labour Force Survey, and the June 2019 Crop Prospects Report from the Ministry of Agriculture. The weather forecast for the period October to March 2020 from the Ministry of Works and Transport and Meteorological Service was used to support assumptions on rainfall for the projection period. Information on key drivers, agricultural production trends for maize and millet and the seasonal outlook was derived from FAO's Global Information Early Warning System (GIEWS). Data on price trends and rainfall patterns was derived from the World Food Programme's Dataviz site.

Recommendations for data collection

- The household questionnaire should be improved to add questions on contributing factors to food insecurity. These include food stocks (months that the food stocks will last, and the quantity of stock), sources of food and income and number of meals consumed per day.
- The sampling framework should be reviewed to be representative of the rural population, and, following the IPC guidelines, should ideally be representative for food security and nutrition analysis.
- Nutrition indicators (MUAC or WHZ) should be integrated into the household questionnaire. Alternatively, greater effort needs to be made to acquire nutrition data to support the analysis.
- All stakeholders should participate in the analysis to improve the quality of the report.
- Data collection should be part of the annual plan of the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) to ensure the cooperation and participation of all line ministries, local authorities and relevant stakeholders.

Limitations of the analysis

- This report is representative at regional and national levels. Further disaggregation of the data at admin level 2 is needed to inform programming and response planning.
- The sample used for this analysis was a combination of the rural and urban populations, and not specifically the rural population.

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What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

Contact for further Information

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Classification of food insecurity and malnutrition was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC, FAO, FEWSNET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.