

# REGIONAL REPORT 2024

ON THE STATE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND VULNERABILITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Angola | Botswana | Comoros | Democratic Republic of the Congo | Eswatini | Lesotho | Mauritius | Malawi Mozambique | Madagascar | Namibia | Seychelles | South Africa | Tanzania | Zambia | Zimbabwe



ON THE STATE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND VULNERABILITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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#### About SADC

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an organization founded and maintained by countries in Southern Africa that aims to further socio-economic, political, and security cooperation among its Member States and foster regional integration in order to achieve peace, stability, and wealth.

# Acknowledgements

This Synthesis Report on the State of Food and Nutrition Security and Vulnerability in Southern Africa 2024 is a flagship product of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) system, established in 1999 to monitor social vulnerability in the region, and to inform evidence-based humanitarian and development programmes, strategies and policies.

The report was compiled by the SADC Secretariat, under the leadership of the SADC Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (DRRU), and the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Directorate. The SADC Secretariat is grateful for the work of the team of technical experts drawn from the RVAA system, in particular the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and the National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs).

NVACs from 13 SADC Member States contributed data and analyses for this report, and participated in the 2024 regional vulnerability assessment and analysis dissemination forum that reviewed and validated the report from 25–28 June 2024.

SADC thanks the following international partner members of the RVAC who contributed to writing this report: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FEWS NET, Oxfam South Africa, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Regional Support Unit (RSU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food

Programme (WFP), and the Disaster Risk Management Sustainability and Urban (DiMSUR). Besides the DRR unit and FANR, the SADC Secretariat's Social and Human Development directorate (SHD), Infrastructure Services and Finance Investment and Customs (FIC) teams also contributed to writing this report.

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#### Preface

This report provides an overview of vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity across the region. Central to its analysis is the primary data collected by respective NVACs, as well as secondary data provided by other government bodies and humanitarian and developmental partners.

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World Food Programme





# **Executive summary**



Food and nutrition insecurity in the SADC region continues to be unacceptably high, requiring concerted efforts for the region to build resilience and address the multiple and increasing shocks it faces. A range of measures targeted at addressing acute and chronic aspects of food and nutrition insecurity are required and have been recommended in this report.



Pervasive and elevated levels of poverty continue to be reinforced by low economic growth rates, high unemployment, rising inequality, increasing frequency and intensity of climate shocks, weak social protection systems, and poor provision of basic services, including health, water, hygiene and sanitation across the region. These factors are at the root of the region's persistent and cyclical food and nutrition insecurity.



The 2023–2024 El Niño-induced drought has led to widespread harvest failure and livestock deaths. Over large parts of Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, a long and extensive dry spell affected crops at the time when moisture was most critical for plant development. February brought the lowest rainfall on record together with a month-long heat wave with temperatures 5 degrees above average. In the most-affected areas no meaningful harvest is expected. The lean season from November 2024-March 2025 is anticipated to start earlier and be more severe than usual due to the impacts on crop production, livelihoods and food prices.



Overall maize production for the region is expected to be 14 percent below average with supplies insufficient to cover regional requirements for the 2024/25 marketing year. Given the drop in production in South Africa and Zambia, the main exporters in the region, imports from Tanzania and outside the subregion are likely to be the major source of grains to meet consumption needs in the 2024/25 marketing year. The situation is further complicated by early data indicating a reduction in maize crop area in the United States of America and poor weather conditions affecting production in Mexico, which are traditional sources of white maize imports.



Reduced production in the SADC region is likely to significantly exacerbate food and nutrition insecurity by driving up food commodity prices while lowering agricultural wage-earning opportunities. As food prices rise, households, especially those with low purchasing power, will find it increasingly difficult to afford the necessary quantity and quality of food to meet their nutritional needs.

Besides drought, the region experienced significant cyclonic activity in the first four months of 2024, with ten named tropical systems of which four made landfall. Despite this, the number of people affected has not been as high as in 2023 when cyclone Freddy struck Malawi and Mozambigue.



As a result of the complex interaction between persistent structural issues and recent shocks, an estimated 67.7 million people or 17 percent of the population will face high levels of acute food insecurity in 2024-2025 in the 11 member states that provided data for this report. This is an annual increase of 24.5 percent in the ten countries with comparable data. At national level, the biggest year-on-year increases are expected in countries affected by drought emergencies - Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.



The El Niño event has had a widespread impact on malnutrition among young children, especially in the countries that declared national disasters and those where food insecurity has severely deteriorated. More than 4 million children under 5 years require treatment for wasting. These children are experiencing immediate nutritional deprivation that exposes them to an increased risk of illness and even death, driven by the climate crisis, poor socioeconomic conditions impacting negatively on the affordability of nutritious diets, diseases including cholera epidemics, and widespread inadequate Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. At the same time, overweight and obesity levels among children are on the rise, particularly among women and girls, and in urban areas.

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## Acronyms

vi

AfCFTA	African Continental Free-Trade Area AIDS	KfW
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome	MAD
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy	MEC
ARV	Anti-Retroviral	MONUSCO
AU	African Union	M1/A
AUC	African Union Commission	
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa	NVACs
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease (2019)	OCHA
DiMSUR	Disaster Risk Management Sustainability and Urban	
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo	OSRD
DRRU	Disaster Risk Reduction Unit	
EAC	East African Community	PMTCT
FANR	Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources	RAIP
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	RDF
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	RECs
FIC	Infrastructure Services and Finance	RISDP
	Investment and Customs	RMF
FMD	Food and Mouth Disease	RPTC
FSIN	Food Security Information Network	RTGS
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	RVAC
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SADC
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	SADCAT
HEA	Household Economy Approach	SAMIM
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	SAPP
ICPs	International Cooperating Partners	SENS
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies	SEOM
IOM	International Organization for Migration	SHD
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification	01100
IMF	International Monetary Fund	SHOC
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding	SME
IXP	Internet Exchange Point	SSA
		SENS

Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
Minimum Acceptable Diet
Macro-Economic Convergence
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo
Manufacturing Value-Added
Normalised Difference Vegetation Index
National Vulnerability Assessment Committees
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Official Development Assistance
One-Stop Border Posts
People Living with HIV
Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission
Regional Agricultural Investment Plan
Regional Development Fund
Regional Economic Communities
Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
Resource Mobilisation Framework
Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre
Real-Time Gross Settlement System
Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee
Southern African Development Community
SADC Administrative Tribunal
SADC Mission in Mozambique
Southern African Power Pool
Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey
SADC Electoral Observer Mission
SADC Secretariat's Social and Human Development directorate
SADC Humanitarian Operations Centre
Small and Medium Enterprises
Sub-Saharan Africa
Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey

Tuberculosis
Tripartite Free-Trade Area
United Nations
(Joint) United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN Children's Fund
UN Refugee Agency
Vulnerability and Assessment Committees
UN World Food Programme

### Key to icons

<b>ŤŤŤŤ</b>	Acutely food-insecure people	0	Major food crisis
洣	Conflict/insecurity	ò	Nutrition
<u>*</u> f	Weather extremes/drought	M	Acute malnutrition
	Weather extremes/flooding	a i	Pregnant and breastfeeding
	Economic shocks	ж Ж	Infectious diseases
**	Agricultural pests	6	Inadequate health and
	Livestock	_	nutrition services
<i>7</i> ,→	Displacement – IDPs	****	Food insecurity/ lack of food
8₽	Displacement – refugees	<b>_</b>	Inadequate maternal and child-feeding practices
Re	Displacement – returnees		

#### Map disclaimer

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on all the maps in this document do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

### Introduction

#### The vulnerability context

The SADC region's high susceptibility to climate change stems from its low adaptive capacity due to poverty, and high household reliance on raindependent agriculture, natural resources and livelihoods that are sensitive to climate change, such as agriculture, extractive industries, fisheries, mining and tourism.

Frequent extreme weather events, including droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, exacerbate livelihood and food insecurity, influence displacement and migration, and heighten competition over resources such as land and water. The region's vulnerability is further increased by a high burden of human, livestock and crop diseases, which also stem from climate change and climate variability.

Climate change amplifies existing risks, particularly for the most vulnerable groups such as the rural and urban poor, small-scale farmers, and internally displaced persons who have limited access to alternative livelihoods. The elderly, sick, women and young children are disproportionately affected due to unequal access to productive assets, such as land and water, and to decision-making processes.

The region is also marked by high levels of unemployment and poverty, a failure to structurally transform its economies, environmental degradation, high inflation, and increasing debt levels. These factors collectively hinder its potential for socioeconomic growth.

The region is witnessing rapid urbanization, which presents both green economic growth opportunities and challenges for service sectors that struggle to meet the increasing demand.

Despite relative political stability, conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the ongoing insurgency in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province continue to cause displacement and disrupt livelihoods. In 2024, about 7.3 million people were living in internal displacement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (OCHA, May 2024) and over 709 000 were internally displaced in Mozambique (IOM, May 2024).

The 2023/2024 El Niño event led to severe drought conditions throughout Southern Africa, with delayed rainfall, prolonged dry spells and record-high temperatures. This resulted in widespread crop failure in many central areas including Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe where states of national disaster due to the drought were declared.

The El Niño-induced dry conditions also impacted livestock due to the significant depletion in vegetation conditions across the southern half of the region and reduced water availability.

The combined impacts of the El Niño-induced drought, flood damage, price increases and other socioeconomic shocks haveworsened food insecurity across the region. During the 2024/25 season, an estimated 67.6 million people in the region are facing high levels of acute food insecurity, representing 17.1 percent of the total population.

#### The RVAA system

The SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) system was set up to provide timely and reliable vulnerability information to meet the ever-increasing information needs of governments and partners for developmental programming and emergency response. The system comprises National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs) in each SADC member state. The NVACs are government-led multisectoral and multiagency committees mandated with producing information on social vulnerability in their respective countries.

At the regional level, the NVAC chairpersons and representatives from several SADC international cooperating partners (ICPs) to form a regional coordination platform called the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC). Since the establishment of the RVAA system in 1999, NVACs have become a key source of information for emergency response and development programming by both governments and partners.

#### The dissemination forum

Every year in June/July the RVAC convenes I regional dissemination forum for NVACs to share their analyses. These are synthesized and combined with secondary data from a variety of other sources to produce a coherent regional analysis on the state of food and nutrition security and vulnerability in Southern Africa. Thirteen SADC member states contributed data and analyses for this report and participated in the 2024 annual regional vulnerability assessment and analysis dissemination forum that reviewed and validated the report from 25–28 June 2024.

The synthesis report presents acute needs, identifies structural constraints, and posits recommendations to address vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity across the humanitarian-development nexus.

#### **Approaches and methods**

NVACs employ various livelihood-based approaches to guide collection and analyses of a wide range of vulnerability data. This report operationalises the data through the four pillars of food security: availability, access, utilization and stability. The Household Economy Approach (HEA) and the IPC are common integrated food security analytical frameworks that are applied alongside several other thematic frameworks.

The various assessment methods and approaches employed by NVACs are harmonised through a common conceptual framework and a set of indicators in their assessments. Qualitative methods as well as quantitative household surveys (structured questionnaires) are used to collect primary data that is complemented with secondary data from multiple sources. The vulnerability assessments and analyses are jointly conducted and owned by the different institutions that make up the NVACs. Many countries in the region have only recently begun integrating the urban dimension in their living standards surveys, with the objective of understanding urban vulnerabilities and developing urban-focused targeting and shock responsive strategies. While most surveys now allow for urban-rural data disaggregation, the vulnerability framework and food and nutrition security indicators are more suitable for rural contexts. Additionally, urban assessments often lack a multi-dimensional analysis, which is crucial to understand intersecting vulnerabilities among urban populations and to reflect them in an essential needs approach.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has partnered with NVACs in four countries in the region – Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe – to develop urban-specific indicators, conducting several mixedmethods participatory analyses to build a holistic view of urban needs.



# CHAPTER 1

# REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY OUTLOOK

The lean season from November 2024–March 2025 is anticipated to start earlier and be more severe than usual due to the impacts of the El Niño-induced drought on crop production, livelihoods and food prices.

An estimated 67.7 million people in eleven member state countries are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity in 2024–2025, an increase of 24.5 percent in the ten countries with comparable 2023/24 data.

At national level, the biggest year-on-year increases in the magnitude of acute food insecurity are expected in countries affected by drought emergencies – Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

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On average, during the current 2024–2025 consumption year, 17.1 percent of the region's total population are expected to be food insecure with the highest percentages in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Lesotho and Zambia and the lowest in Botswana.

# Chapter 1 | Regional food security outlook



are estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity in 11 countries from April 2024 to March 2025.

At the regional level, 2023/2024 cereal production in Southern Africa is expected to be below average and insufficient to cover regional requirements. As a result, in the 2024/25 marketing year, the region is expected to see a significant increase in cereal imports, particularly white maize, to maintain adequate consumption levels.

Considering the drop in production from South Africa and Zambia, the main exporters in the region, imports from Tanzania and from outside the subregion will be the main source of grains to meet consumption needs.

The situation is further complicated by early data indicating a reduction in the area planted for maize crops in the United States of America and poor weather conditions affecting production in Mexico, which are traditional sources of white maize imports (FAO-GIEWS, April 2024). In 2016/17, following the previous severe El Niño-affected harvest in Southern Africa, substantial maize quantities were imported into Southern Africa, with nearly 650 000 tonnes of white maize sourced from Mexico and the United States of America (FAO-GIEWS, April 2024).

Decreased food production across the region

and greater reliance on imports are likely to lead to rising food prices, making it difficult for households with below-average purchasing power to afford the necessary quantity and quality of food. The region's macroeconomic issues, such as currency depreciations and high borrowing costs, will compound these challenges. Across the SADC region, where many communities are already vulnerable, these conditions could have a profound and lasting impact, escalating the levels of food insecurity and necessitating urgent interventions to assist affected populations.

The lean season, which typically begins in November/December and lasts through until March, is typically marked by rising prices and the depletion of households' food stocks. It is anticipated to start earlier and be more severe than usual.

During the 2024/25 season, an estimated 67.7 million people in 11 member state countries with data – Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe – will face high levels of acute food insecurity. This represents an increase of 24.5 percent over the previous season using comparable data from the nine countries for which we have data for 2024/25 and 2023/24 due to the impacts of the El Niño-induced drought and extreme weather events and conflict.

At national level, the biggest year-on-year increases in the magnitude of acute food insecurity are in countries affected by drought emergencies: in Zambia, the number



Map 1.2 Share of population facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 11 countries, 2024–2025.



#### Map 1.1 Number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 11 countries, 2024–2025.

of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity is projected to increase by 222 percent to reach 6.6 million in October 2024–March 2025; in Namibia, the number is projected to increase by 106 percent to reach 1.4 million; in Zimbabwe, it is projected to increase by 80 percent to reach 7.6 million; in Botswana by 61 percent to reach 58 000, and in Malawi by 30 percent to reach 5.7 million. The five other countries with data for 2023/24 and projection data for 2024/25 all have projected increases (Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and South Africa).

On average, during the current 2024–2025 consumption year, 17.1 percent of the region's total population is food insecure with the highest percentages in Zimbabwe (50 percent), Namibia (48 percent), Lesotho (34 percent) and Zambia (33 percent). The prevalence is projected to be lowest in Botswana (2.4 percent), Angola (5.1 percent) and Madagascar (5.7 percent).

ladie 1.5 Food insecurity estimates	Table	1.3 Food	insecurity	estimates
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COUNTRY	TOTAL NATIONAL POPULATION (in millions)	FOOD-INSECURE POPULATION 2019–2023 AVERAGE (in millions)	FOOD-INSECURE POPULATION 2023–2024 (in millions)	FOOD-INSECURE POPULATION 2024–2025 (in millions)	FOOD-INSECURE POPULATION % CHANGE FROM 2019-2023 AVERAGE	FOOD-INSECURE POPULATION % CHANGE FROM 2023–2024	FOOD-INSECURE POPULATION % OF TOTAL POP. 2024–2025
Angola*	35.1	1.2	-	1.8	55.7%	-	5.1%
Botswana	2.4	0.04	0.04	0.06	58.6%	60.9%	2.4%
Comoros	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
DRC**	108.6	22.4	25.4	25.4	13.6%	0.0%	23.4%
Eswatini***	1.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	2.9%	7.4%	26.2%
Lesotho***	2.0	0.5	0.5	0.7	46.5%	20.3%	33.7%
Madagascar	31.0	1.4	1.7	1.8	26.1%	3.5%	5.7%
Malawi***	20.3	2.7	4.4	5.7	109.3%	29.5%	28.1%
Mauritius	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mozambique	33.0	2.5	3.3	-	-	-	-
Namibia^	3.0	0.5	0.7	1.4	181.5%	106.4%	47.5%
Seychelles	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Africa	62.3	12.9	13.5	16.3	26.8%	20.7%	26.2%
Tanzania	59.4	0.7	0.9	-	-	-	-
Zambia*	19.6	2.0	2.0	6.6	231.7%	221.5%	33.4%
Zimbabwe***	15.2	4.7	4.2	7.6	61.4%	79.5%	50.2%
SADC	395.4	51.6	57.1	67.7	31.2%	<b>18.</b> 5%	17.1%

Source: SADC member states

\*Appeal figure used for 2024/2025 to be superseded when VAC results become available. \*\*DRC 2023/2024 figure for Jul 2023–Dec 2023. \*\*\*Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe data include urban. ^Namibia's 2024/2025 is the figure for July-September 2024 (projection revised) as the VAC figure will come out in August.

## Spotlight | Urban vulnerability

People living in urban areas in Southern Africa face significant food security and nutrition risks due to rapid and slow onset disasters such as El Niño, unplanned urbanization, and economic instability, exacerbated by climate change.

The majority of the urban poor live in informal settlements, often in hazard-prone areas characterized by poor access to sanitation, energy and waste management facilities. Given the complexity of the urban space, urban poor communities are continuously resulting to negative coping strategies. When confronted with climate and socioeconomic shocks, their situation can easily turn into an acute emergency from which they are hard pressed to recover.

Substandard living conditions significantly increase health risks, leading to higher incidences of waterborne diseases, respiratory infections, malnutrition and vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever (Penrose K, de Castro MC, Werema J, Ryan ET. 2010).

The high level of informal employment in urban areas and a cash-based economy leaves workers without a safety net at a time when many countries in the region are experiencing a prolonged period of high inflation (Business Insider Africa, February 2024). The highly dynamic urban context weakens community-based safety nets.

Rapid urbanisation is outpacing the construction and delivery of essential services in many cities, leading to overcrowded residential areas, schools and healthcare facilities, particularly in poorer neighbourhoods. El Niño is likely to have a harmful impact on the resilience of marginalized urban households by contributing to rising food prices, water shortages, public health crises, and disruptions to health and education services (OCHA, June 2024).

Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe have been conducting mixed-methods participatory risk and city vulnerability mapping exercises in selected cities with WFP's support. They have used the data to identify urban hotspots through a matrix ranking that includes various dimensions such as housing quality and tenancy, access to WASH facilities, solid waste management, and livelihoods.

For effective urban programming, understanding the socioeconomic and asset-based drivers of urban household vulnerability is crucial to complement geographic profiling efforts. This enables DRM agencies and stakeholders to integrate both data layers to design focused interventions for enhancing urban resilience.

Ideally, quantitative and qualitative data are triangulated to ensure that the analysis is data-driven while also being peoplecentred and grounded in local knowledge. For example, in Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, people's perceptions of urban vulnerability in the identified hotspots were mapped in focus



Mother-of-two Audrey (21) lives with her disabled parents in the town of Gweru in central Zimbabwe. They rely on poultry production for their family income.

group discussions. The results informed quantitative machine-learning regression models on national-level datasets, to identify the key predictors of vulnerability. As part of this process, multiple vulnerability frameworks - food consumption score, monetary poverty, and vulnerability to food insecurity - were tested to determine which models are most effective in predicting the drivers of urban food insecurity. Certain common predictors of urban vulnerability identified in all four countries included specific household types: households headed by people who are single, female, elderly or with a disability; households with a high dependency ratio (greater than 1.5), and households with a high crowding index.

Access to improved water and sanitation facilities and ownership of certain assets emerged as important protectors against economic vulnerability in urban areas, suggesting the importance of tailored urban strategies while simultaneously reemphasizing the fundamental relationship between the benefits of provision of quality essential services and household resilience, in both urban and rural areas.

The essential needs analyses conducted by the vulnerability assessment committees (VACs) of Lesotho, Madagascar and Mozambique highlighted how household consumption differs between urban and rural areas, with urban households often spending more on food, rent, communication and transport than their rural counterparts. Different daily routines and higher urban costs are among the factors that influence these differences in consumption patterns. Urban residents also rely more on markets, leaving the urban poor more vulnerable to food inflation.

Additionally, general population surveys often underestimate the needs of the urban poor due to high income variability in urban areas, underscoring the importance of a mixed-methods approach that combines expenditure data with rights-based information to fully assess the cost of living.

This finding underscores the need to distinguish between urban and rural minimum expenditure baskets, as the current practice in the region is to use national-level MEBs. This is an essential shift to ensure that transfer values can be set that adequately equip both rural and urban populations with the resources necessary for a dignified and secure standard of living.

### How to address these complex urban vulnerabilities

Preparedness planning aimed at reducing continuous setbacks to long-term sustainable urban development

Inclusive disaster risk management (DRM) policies

Robust social protection systems, all driven by comprehensive evidence



Figure 1.4 Urban population (% of total population) in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2013–2023

Source: United Nations Population Division

Estimates show that 43 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) population lived in urban areas in 2023 compared with 38 percent in 2013 (World Bank, June 2024). Official projections suggest that the percentage will pass 50 percent in around 2035. Southern Africa is the most urbanized of the Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) regions, followed by West, Central and Eastern (UN Habitat & WFP, December 2021).

About 23 percent of the urban population in SSA lives below the international poverty line and 29 percent experience multidimensional poverty. Close to three quarters of the cities in SSA have high levels of inequality as indicated by Gini coefficients exceeding 0.4. Around 21 percent of the world's 1.1 billion urban slum dwellers live in SSA (UN Habitat & WFP, December 2021).

South Africa is one of the most urbanized countries in Africa with around 67 percent of its population living in urban areas, projected to increase to around 80 percent by 2050. Its cities rank highest in inequality in the SSA region (UN Habitat, accessed July 2024).



# CHAPTER 2

# REGIONAL NUTRITION OUTLOOK

The 2023/24 El Niño crisis has had a widespread impact on malnutrition among young children, especially in the countries that declared national disasters and those where food insecurity has severely deteriorated.

Early analysis indicates that the levels of malnutrition are expected to increase, reaching their peak in the first quarter of 2025, long after the actual El Niño has dissipated.

The situation is further worsened by cholera epidemics and macroeconomic conditions, impacting negatively on the affordability of nutritious diets.

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## Chapter 2 | Regional nutrition outlook

The 2023 Joint Malnutrition Estimates report shows that there has been insufficient progress in reaching the 2025 World Health Assembly Global Nutrition targets and the SDG 2030 targets, both globally and in the region (UNICEF, May 2023). All four countries in the region that declared national disasters due to El Niño have a stunting prevalence above 20 percent. The prevalence is considered Very High according to the WHO classification in Madagascar (39 percent), Malawi (34 percent) and Zambia (31 percent) and High in Zimbabwe (22 percent) (UNICEF, May 2023). An estimated 21 million children under 5 years old are stunted in the Southern Africa region, an increase from 18.6 million reported in 2022.

Stunting poses severe lifelong and intergenerational consequences that have

lasting negative effects on future health and development. Data indicate that only Zimbabwe is on track to achieving the stunting target by the year 2025.

Wasting reflects immediate deprivation of food and nutrients, which is currently exacerbated by the climate crisis, disease, and socioeconomic conditions. About 3.5 million children with acute malnutrition need nutrition treatment services, out of whom more than 900 000 require treatment for severe acute malnutrition in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Madagascar, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Eswatini and Lesotho.

Evidence indicates that episodes of severe and moderate wasting expose children to increased risk of mortality. Those with severe wasting are 12 times more likely to die than their well-nourished counterparts, while a moderately wasted child faces a threefold risk of death (GRFC 2024, May 2024). Untreated severe wasting carries a case fatality rate of up to 21 percent (WHO, June 2024). For those children who survive, repeated episodes of wasting increase the risk of chronic malnutrition. Hence, there is a need for immediate malnutrition prevention and management interventions.

Countries in the region are facing a high risk of malnutrition due to several factors. The 2023 El Niño event, the worst to hit Southern Africa in the last 40 years, has had a widespread impact, especially in the countries that have declared national disasters and those where food insecurity has severely deteriorated. Early analysis indicates that the levels of malnutrition are expected to increase, reaching their peak in the first quarter of 2025, long after the El Niño has dissipated, as observed during the 2016–17 El Niño event. The situation is further worsened by cholera epidemics and macroeconomic conditions, impacting negatively on the affordability of nutritious diets.

### Figure 2.3 Number of children under 5 years old with acute malnutrition in three countries, 2023



Sources: Democratic Republic of the Congo IPC TWG, December 2022; Madagascar IPC TWG, October 2023; Mozambique IPC TWG, November 2023.



#### Figure 2.2 Wasting prevalence among children under 5 years old in the SADC region



Source: Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (JME) 2023 edition

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Figure 2.4 Percentage of children aged 6–23 months receiving a MAD







The SADC region is facing significant challenges with micronutrient deficiencies, particularly in women of childbearing age. Anaemia prevalence in this group remains high, with all countries above 20 percent, and above 40 percent (considered a Severe public health problem) in Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique.

Furthermore, overweight and obesity in children are on the rise. Several countries, including South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles, Mozambique, Zambia and Namibia, are experiencing a prevalence above 5 percent which is above the SADC 2030 target of less than 3 percent. (UNICEF, WHO, The World Bank, May 2023) . In all age groups, overweight and obesity are higher in females than males. This issue is most prevalent in adults and is rapidly increasing in the 5–19-year age group, particularly in urban areas among wealthier households. The SADC obesity study of 2023 highlighted these concerning trends.

Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi have each conducted assessments since the beginning of 2024 following the onset of the El Niño crisis. When households are forced to make difficult survival choices, their coping mechanisms may include reducing meal size and frequency and/or choosing cheaper less nutritious food, which leads to nutritional inadequacies that affect long-term cognitive and developmental outcomes.

Recent analysis indicates that food poverty leads to inadequate and poor-quality diets, as well as diseases, which are the primary causes of chronic malnutrition. These issues are worsened by factors such as poor access to essential health services and other socioeconomic issues. In the region, children continue to have inadequate Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. Most do not receive a MAD, and the rate of exclusive breastfeeding is low, coupled with poor caregiving practices.

According to the State of the World's Children (2023), the average MAD for the region is 14 percent (considered Critical), with individual

countries ranging from 5 percent (Extremely Critical) to 37 percent (Serious), as shown in the figure below (UNICEF, WHO, The World Bank, May 2023).

Additionally, the level of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) for the first 6 months of life is considered Serious with the regional average at 49 percent. However, it is worth noting that some progress has been made and EBF is on target to reach 50 percent by 2025 (UNICEF, WHO, The World Bank, May 2023).



# CHAPTER 3

# IMPACT OF CLIMATE AND WEATHER EVENTS ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

The El Niño event brought late onset of rains, record dry conditions and extreme high temperatures in many areas during the 2023/2024 rainfall season leading to widespread crop failure and reduced yields across the region.

Overall maize production for Southern Africa is expected to be 14 percent below average with supplies insufficient to cover regional requirements for the 2024/25 marketing year.

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In late 2023/early 2024, six named tropical storms and tropical cyclones struck inhabited lands, resulting in loss of infrastructure, crops and household assets in some countries.

From August 2024 to January 2025, there is a high probability of a La Niña event, which is usually associated with increased rainfall and may cause flooding in the region.

### Chapter 3 | Impact of climate and weather events on food security and nutrition

#### **Rainfall season performance**

The 2023/2024 rainfall season ... was driven by an El Niño event that caused widespread drought conditions across Southern Africa, characterized by a late onset of rains. extended mid-season dry spells, and extreme high temperatures. El Niño typically results in hotter and drier-than-usual conditions in most of Southern Africa, and above-normal rainfall in northeastern parts of the region. This season was characterized by record dry conditions in many areas. The onset of rains, which usually occurs in November in most parts of the region, was delayed by as much as 30 days in central areas, including southeastern Angola, northern Botswana, southern Malawi, southern Mozambigue, northern Namibia, northwestern South Africa, southern and central Zambia and central Zimbabwe.

Despite improved rainfall from mid-December to mid-January, prolonged dry, extremely hot conditions returned to the central parts of the region in late February 2024, with dry spells of over 50 consecutive dry days during the critical flowering period. February was particularly dry in central parts of the region, with only 1992 being comparable in dryness in the last 100 years. The dryness marked in some cases an effective end of the rainfall season.

Areas affected by this severe dry spell include eastern Angola, eastern Botswana, southern Democratic Republic of the Congo, eastern Lesotho, southern Malawi, central Mozambique, northern Namibia, southeastern South Africa, most of Zambia, and most of Zimbabwe.

### Map 3.1 Absolute anomaly of onset of the rainy season by 30 April 2024



Climatological period: 1991–2020 Definition: 20mm threshold over 3 days and no dry spell in the next 10 days. Calculated after 1 September

#### Map 3.2 Anomaly of total precipitation Dec-Jan–Feb 2023/2024



#### **Temperature and heat waves**

Over the bulk of the SADC region, temperatures had exceeded the monthly mean by 2–3°C during October 2023 -March 2024 period.

Consecutive high temperatures led to heat wave conditions particularly during January and February 2024 over central Democratic Republic of the Congo, and most central parts of the SADC region. These regions, including north Madagascar, recorded 15-20 days of daytime and nighttime heatwave conditions in February 2024.

#### Water resource challenges

The SADC region faces various water-related challenges and opportunities due to its diverse climate, geography and socioeconomic conditions.

Dry conditions in central parts of the region posed significant challenge to water resources. Water levels in reservoirs, rivers and groundwater sources were also affected, impacting irrigation capacities, hydroelectric power generation, drinking water supplies and ecosystem health. According to the Zambezi River Authority's monitoring data, as of the end of May 2024, the Kariba Dam was at approximately 12 percent capacity.

This is the lowest recorded level for this time of year in its history, as it failed to experience a significant rise during the Zambezi's hydrological peak season (Zambezi River Authority, 2024).

#### Map 3.3 Recorded day-time heatwave days February 2024



Data source: ERA5 Climatological period 1991–2020 Definition: at least 3 consecutive days exceeding 95th percentile of maximum daily temperature

#### Map 3.4 Recorded night-time heatwave days February 2024



Data source: ERA5 Climatological period: 1991–2020 Cautious dam operations coupled with the relatively good dam levels at the end of the rainy seasons of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 hydrological years and good (though intermittent) rains in some parts of the region prevented a worse dam performance at the regional level (Zambezi River Authority, June 2024).

However, water collected by the region's dams since the beginning of the rainy season in late 2023 has only been 7 percent of the total reservoir storage compared with 12 percent the previous hydrological year, showing that the impact of the El Niño has been significant on the region's hydrology.

### Figure 3.5 Average regional dam levels (%) at the end of the rainy season

April 2020	67	7%
April 2021		85%
April 2022		94%
April 2023		93%
April 2024		90%

Source: Zambezi River Authority, June 2024

#### **Tropical cyclones and flooding**

A total of ten named tropical storms and tropical cyclones formed over the South West Indian Ocean (SWIO) basin, of which Alvaro, Belal, Filipo, Gamane, Hidaya and Ialy struck inhabited Iands. The first storm formed late in December 2023 over the Mozambique Channel influencing Mozambique and eventually impacting southeastern Madagascar with strong winds and heavy rains. The season peaked during January and February with the majority of the systems forming in the central part of the basin. Tropical cyclone Belal caused extreme rainfall and flooding over the island of Mauritius. Similarly tropical cyclone Gamane generated heavy rains and floods over northern Madagascar.

Both tropical cyclones laly and Hidaya formed to the north of Madagascar and had very peculiar tracks. Notably laly is the first known tropical storm to directly affect Kenya. Similarly, Hidaya is the third tropical storm in history to make landfall in Tanzania since the advent of modern tropical cyclone tracking systems. Heavy rains in some parts of the region, e.g., Kwazulu Natal and Gauteng Provice in South Africa, some parts of Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania led to severe flooding. This resulted in loss of infrastructure, crops and household assets in some countries. Seychelles declared a national emergency due to the impacts of torrential rains that caused flooding as well as a massive explosion at an explosives' depot in the industrial area of the island.

TROPICAL CYCLONE / FLOO	DDING		ESTIMATED DAMAGE	<b>常前前</b> ESTIMATED PEOPLE AFFECTED	
Tropical cyclone Alvaro	Madagascar	January 2024	3 000 hectares of rice fields and 7 000 houses flooded.	33 000 17 000 displaced	
Tropical cyclone Belal	Mauritius and Réunion	January 2024	Damage to properties and flooding	Over 100 000	
Tropical cyclone Filipo	Mozambique	March 2024	6 000 hectares of crops destroyed	51 000	
Tropical cyclone Gamane	Madagascar	March 2024	21 000 houses and 2 000 hectares of rice fields flooded.	95 000 28 000 displaced	
Heavy rainfall and major flooding	Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo	March–April 2024	21 000 houses collapsed, 184 health centres destroyed, and 54 water wells damaged.	161 000	
Heavy rainfall, floods, and landslides	United Republic of Tanzania	April 2024	10 000 buildings damaged and destroyed (including schools). Roads and bridges damaged.	200 000	
Tropical storm Hidaya	Mafia Island, Tanzania	May 2024	Some damage to properties and flooding		

#### **Disaster risk management**

A number of member states developed multi-hazard contingency plans before the start of the season. These contingency plans enabled member states to define their state of readiness, and the conditions under which national systems would be activated to respond to floods, drought and other hazards. They also outlined the systems, resources and capacities needed to respond to each hazard. These plans would prove valuable as the season progressed and a number of hazards materialized.

Several member states implemented a raft of measures intended to cushion the most vulnerable ahead of the onset of drought. In Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, governments and development partners, collaborated to deliver anticipatory actions aimed at mitigating the impact of the forecasted drought on agricultural production and food supply, ahead of the peak impact period.

The activities included: dissemination of localized weather information and advisories, water supply enhancement, cash transfers and provision of agricultural inputs. These activities were implemented up to the end of the rainfall season. As a result of the combined impacts of drought and floods experienced during the 2023/24 rainfall season, five member states – Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe – declared states of national disaster in response to the compromised agriculture production, water scarcity and its implications for energy production and health. These strategies enabled the affected member states to access external support to respond to the drought, while raising the visibility of the regional climate emergency.

Members states affected by cyclonic activity and flooding were able to issue early warning ahead of an event, enabling at-risk populations to act ahead of time.

The SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Strategy and Action Plan was approved in May 2023. Additionally, the establishment of the SADC Humanitarian Operations Centre (SHOC) in April 2024 now provides an opportunity to better coordinate disasters within the region, especially those that affect more than one member state. Continued investment in the capacitation of this institution is critical going forward.

#### **Livestock production**

Livestock have also been impacted by the El Niño-induced dry conditions, due to considerable deterioration in vegetation conditions across the southern half of the region, as well as reduced water availability. The drought resulted in poor replenishment and drying up of community watering points for livestock and wildlife.

Satellite-based vegetation indices (NDVI) used for large-scale monitoring of vegetation conditions were below average throughout March 2024 in large areas of southern Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, southern and central Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, southern/western Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Many of the areas with poor vegetation conditions were primarily grassland areas where livestock is an important livelihood asset.

**In Botswana**, over 16 000 drought-related livestock mortalities were reported.

**In Namibia,** "distress grazing conditions," inadequate for livestock, were reported in most parts of the country due to the dry conditions. As a result, livestock in parts of Namibia were in poor body condition.

**In Zimbabwe,** more than 9 900 droughtrelated cattle deaths were reported at the beginning of the season; 47 percent of the country's wards are expected to face critical grazing shortages from July 2024, while 76 percent are expected to face challenges in drinking water for livestock.

**In Zambia,** pasture and livestock were reported to be in poor condition due to the

dry conditions in the previous and the current seasons. Provinces in Zambia affected by the drought are host to 76 percent of the country's livestock.

#### **Transboundary pests and diseases**

The drought impact assessment reports from most countries indicate a high outbreak of fall armyworm (FAW) in maize. This contributed to the poor performance of the maize crop, already weakened by stressed moisture availability conditions.

The poor availability of water and pasture resulted in increased movement of both livestock and wild animals as they sought grazing and water. This has resulted in more transboundary animal disease outbreaks.

Poor pasture establishment led livestock to graze grass closer to the ground, risking exposure to disease spores such as those for anthrax, a zoonotic disease.

Foot and Mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks were reported in at least four provinces of South Africa. Outbreaks of FMD and Theileriosis (January disease) were reported in parts of Zimbabwe.

#### Food production and supply

The extended dry conditions led to widespread crop failure and reduced yields across the region, particularly affecting cereal crops that are most susceptible to water deficits. Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe all declared states of national disaster due to the drought. Overall production for Southern Africa is expected to be 14 percent below average (Geoglam, June 2024).

As indicated in Table 3, key maize-producing countries in the region recorded reduced maize production due to the impact of the El Niño drought coupled with damage from Fall armyworm (FAW). The most-affected maize production areas were Central and Southern Mozambique, Central and Southern Malawi, Eastern, Central, Southern and Eastern Zambia, most of Zimbabwe, and Northeastern Namibia. South Africa and Tanzania are the exceptions – they will be self-sufficient in the main staple and also have some surplus for export to countries in the region. Though South African experienced a 20 percent reduction in maize production, it benefited from less severe impact of the drought coupled with more resilient maize production systems anchored in relatively wider use of supplementary irrigation by commercial farmers.

An estimated 60 percent of the seeds that smallholder farmers use for their planting is own-produced and from informal markets. The total crop failure experienced among farmers in some areas is of serious concern for seed production. Information from some ongoing seed and impact assessments indicate potential challenges in seed availability and access by smallholder farmers in the coming season in Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

#### Table 3.6 Southern Africa maize production 2023/24 ('000s metric tonnes)

COUNTRY	5-YEAR AVERAGE	2023–2024	2024–2025 Estimate	NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS	CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	CHANGE FROM 5-YEAR AVERAGE	SURPLUS + DEFICIT -
Botswana	33	44	18	300	-59%	-45%	- 282
Eswatini	99	120	75	164	-38%	-24%	- 89
Lesotho	33	56	29	265	-48%	-12%	- 236
Malawi	3 504	3 510	2 930	3 520	-17%	-16%	- 590
Mozambique	2 052	2 479	1 210	2 320	-51%	-41%	- 1 111
South Africa	14 562	16 395	13 310	12 000	-19%	-9%	1 310
Tanzania	6 356	8 109	8 300	6 897	2%	31%	1 403
Zambia	2 823	3 262	1 511	2 300	-54%	-46%	- 789
Zimbabwe	1 532	3 262	635	2 200	-81%	-59%	- 1565
Namihia	67	82	106	200	20%	58%	- 9/

#### Maize production by country

Apart from Madagascar and Tanzania, all countries in the region will have belowaverage staple production (FEWS NET, April 2024).

In **Angola**, below-average cumulative rainfall and above-average temperatures resulted in poor conditions.

In **Botswana,** the drought had a severe impact, and total crop production is estimated to be 6 percent of the national cereal demand of 300 000 metric tonnes (Botswana Assessment Report).

The persistence of socio-political conflicts in **Democratic Republic of the Congo** continues to disrupt households' agricultural activities.

In **Eswatini**, maize production was estimated at 75 000 MT, and a total cereal availability (production and carryover stock) equalled 27 percent of the gross domestic requirement. The shortfall will be mostly covered by planned imports, save for an uncovered gap of 5 000 MT.

**Lesotho** had a maize production of 29 000 MT, a 52 percent decrease since the previous year due to both a decrease in area planted and in yields. Most cereal requirements are expected to be met through imports from South Africa.

In **Malawi**, national maize production is expected to be 2.93 million MT, around 16 percent below the five-year average of 3.5 million MT due to extended dry spells in the central and southern regions. Malawi will benefit from typical cross-border maize inflows from Tanzania and Mozambique and commercial imports to meet the national requirement of 3.5 million MT.

In **Mozambique**, approximately 690 000 hectares of crops were damaged by extreme weather events. Maize production is expected to be around 41 percent below the five-year average.

Preliminary estimates from **Namibia's** Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform indicate that cereal production this season is expected to be 47 percent below the five-year average.

**South Africa** was also affected by the February–March drought conditions. Maize production is estimated at 13.3 million MT, 9 percent below the five-year average.

**Zambia** has been facing severe El Niñoinduced drought in most areas. Maize production is estimated at 1.5 million MT (34 percent below average production and 25 percent below average requirements) (FEWS NET, June 2024).

In **Zimbabwe**, an early cessation of seasonal rains combined with historically dry and hot conditions resulted in failed harvests. It will likely produce 635 000 MT, some 60 percent below the five-year average (FEWS NET, June 2024).

#### **Projected staple market supplies**

Supplies from the 2024 cereal harvest are expected to be insufficient to cover regional requirements for the 2024/25 marketing year due to the aforementioned extended dry periods, high temperatures, and early end of the rainy season driven by El Niño conditions. Additionally, the opening stocks for the 2024/25 marketing year are around 14 percent below the past five-year average due to strong import demand in the 2023/24 marketing years driving tight regional supplies (FEWS NET, April 2024)

Supply is especially tight for white maize with significant harvest declines in South Africa and Zambia, among the region's largest maize producers. Projections for South Africa indicate that white maize exports will be 22 percent lower than the previous year and yellow maize 80 percent lower. However, Tanzania will have a bumper crop of over 10 million MT of white non-GMO maize for 2024, with more than 1.2 million MT available for export.

Six weeks into the new marketing year, South Africa had exported 217 300 MT of maize, 64 percent of which was white maize (SAGIS, June 2024). The pace for white maize exports is quicker than at the same time in marketing year 2022/23 because of the strong regional demand. About 47 percent of the white maize exports went to Zimbabwe, 24 percent to Botswana, and 16 percent to Namibia. As for yellow maize exports, 54 percent went to Zimbabwe, 15 percent to Botswana, 13 percent to Mozambique, and 12 percent to Eswatini. Tanzania's exports of maize and maize meal are already reducing supply gaps in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi and Zambia. Zambia banned formal maize exports in February 2024. Even with strict border controls, limited informal flows from Zambia to Malawi were registered.

Although intra-regional trade will help alleviate deficits in the region, it might not meet regional needs in the marketing year 2024/25, and up to 5 million tonnes will likely have to be imported from the United States of America, South America, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation to fill deficits not met by regional supply. Since May, South Africa has imported 144 000 MT of yellow maize from Argentina.

#### Risk factor to monitor – La Niña

The Indian Ocean Dipole is projected to evolve to a negative phase from the current positive sea surface temperatures leading to a high probability of a La Niña event from August 2024 to January 2025.

La Niña is usually associated with increased rainfall over most of the SADC region except northeastern parts including northern Mozambique, most of Tanzania, northern Malawi, northeastern Zambia and eastern parts of Democratic Republic of Congo, where below-average rainfall is a common occurrence. Increased rainfall may cause floodings, but it also represents an opportunity for the region, as La Niña and neutral conditions are often associated with greater cereal production in Southern Africa.



Although La Niña is usually associated with atypically heavy rain and flooding in the SADC region, in some areas –including northeastern Zambia –it can bring very dry conditions risking another season of crop destruction.



# CHAPTER 4

# REGIONAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Climate shocks, high public debt interest repayments, low foreign reserves, escalating geo-political tensions and slow economic growth are constraining the region's investment and social protection potential.

Regional average inflation slowed down from 12.1 percent in 2022 to 10.2 percent in 2023, but is projected to accelerate to 26.8 percent in 2024.

The decline in agricultural production coupled with the weakness of most national currencies against the US dollar and shortage of foreign currency reserves are expected to exert additional upward pressure on domestic food prices in 2024.

## Chapter 4 | Regional economic outlook

The latest data provided by member states in May 2024 and from the World Economic Outlook database of April 2024 indicate that in 2023 SADC member states were grappling with the economic impacts of extreme weather and the conflict in Ukraine as well as the lingering economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally synchronized monetary policy tightening and withdrawal of fiscal stimuli to curb rising inflation led to economic growth slowing down.

The region recorded an average economic growth of 4.1 percent in 2023, a slight decline from 4.8 percent in 2022. Regional economic growth is forecasted at 4 percent in 2024, largely shaped by the global economic outlook, inflation developments, the evolution of geo-political tensions and the recurrence of climate disasters (IMF, April 2024).

Intensified geoeconomic fragmentation could reduce portfolio and foreign direct investment flows, slow the pace of innovation and technology adoption, and constrain the flow of commodities across fragmented blocs, resulting in large output losses and commodity price volatility (IMF, April 2024).

Regional average inflation slowed down from 12.1 percent in 2022 to 10.2 percent in 2023, but is projected to accelerate to 26.8 percent in 2024 largely driven by the anticipated increase in commodity prices, in particular crude oil and food, and increased freight charges due to supply chain disruptions and exchange rate depreciation.

The IMF reported that the fiscal position of many Sub-Saharan African countries has deteriorated over the past decade. exacerbated by repeated shocks, limited financing options and high borrowing costs. This funding squeeze partly reflects a reduction in traditional funding sources, particularly Official Development Assistance (ODA), a critical support for most countries in the region, which has steadily declined as a percentage of GDP over the past 15 years. This reduction is compounded by the redirection of aid towards conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, Moreover, China's official bilateral lending is significantly lower than its peak in 2016. As traditional funding sources have declined over time, governments have sought alternative funding options. Increased integration in international debt markets and deepening of local financial markets have made it easier to contract more commercial debt, both domestically and externally, on non-concessional terms, resulting in elevated debt levels.

Across the SADC member state countries, fiscal deficit as a ratio of GDP marginally narrowed from an average of 4.0 percent in 2022 to 3.6 percent in 2023 and is forecasted to slightly widen to 3.8 percent in 2024, reflecting anticipated increases in public expenditures to stimulate and sustain economic recovery and to cover disaster response initiatives and other social safety nets programmes. Public debt increased from 59 percent of GDP in 2022 to 63 percent in 2023. High debt interest repayments constrain capital and development expenditures, which are essential for sustainable long-term economic growth. The liquidity squeeze, which is weighing down the region's growth prospects and impeding the ability of countries to respond to current challenges, is further constrained by rising uncertainty and shocks. The IMF noted that in 2023, interest payments for Sub-Saharan countries took up 12 percent of its revenues (excluding grants) (IMF, April 2024).

The Southern African region's current account deficit as a share of GDP slightly widened from an average of 3.9 percent in 2022 to 4.1 percent in 2023 largely due to low commodity prices, exchange rate depreciation (especially in member states that rely heavily on commodity exports) and significant imports related to mega projects in countries like Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania. In 2024, the current account deficit is projected to narrow to 2.7 percent of GDP underpinned by anticipated improved export receipts driven by firming international commodity prices.

Foreign reserves declined from an average of 4.4 months of import cover in 2022 to 4.2 months in 2023 and are estimated to reduce further to four months in 2024. A significant increase in grain imports following the regional drought may worsen the current account deficit and result in a foreign reserves drawdown and weakening of local currencies (SSA-REO, April 2024).

For the region's net food-importing countries, like Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique,



Namibia and Zimbabwe, currency depreciation against the US dollar means higher food import bills are passed on to the consumer, resulting in elevated food inflation. The IMF highlighted that in 2023, most Sub-Saharan African currencies depreciated against the US dollar largely due to lower interest rates than advanced economies, decreased capital inflows, headwinds to exports, and the monetization of high fiscal deficits (SSA-REO, April 2024).

The average GDP per capita for the SADC region increased by 3.27 percent from USD 4 417 to USD 4 561 in 2023. Five member states – Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa – recorded GDP per capita above the regional average in both 2022 and 2023. A 10 percent increase in GDP per capita is associated with a 7.1 percent decrease in the magnitude of moderate or severe food insecurity and a 4.6 percent decrease in severe food insecurity (SADC, 2023). A clear association exists between the prevalence of stunting and a country's GDP per capita. This is because stunting and wasting are closely linked to compromised brain development, affecting a child's cognitive growth, educational attainment, and future productivity and incomeearning potential, ultimately influencing a nation's developmental potential. Across SADC member states, in general, a higher prevalence of stunting was associated with a lower per capita GDP in 2021 (SADC, 2023).

Member states are projected to make progress towards achieving the agreed Macroeconomic Convergence (MEC) indicators in 2024. However, headwinds that include climate shocks, increasing interest rates, limited fiscal space, elevated debt levels, escalation in geo-political tensions and slow global economic growth are likely to affect their overall economic performance. Member states' poor performance on the MEC programme poses a significant risk to the regional integration agenda and its outcomes.

#### **Food prices**

Macroeconomic conditions – including the prevailing weakness of most national currencies against the United States dollar and the shortage of foreign currency reserves – are influencing food market fundamentals. Double-digit food inflation rates persisted in two-thirds of the SADC member states throughout 2023. Although food inflation levels have decelerated in 2024, the annual rates in the first part of the year remained

in double digits in Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, where it stood at 105 percent. While maize grain prices in April to May did not decline seasonally through most reference markets - a reflection of limited availability - they decreased seasonally as expected in central and northern Malawi, southern Tanzania, central Zambia and southwestern Democratic Republic of the Congo as fresh supplies were delivered to markets. Cheaper imports from South America moderated the price of maize in South Africa after it reached record highs in April 2024. This seasonal downward trend is expected to be brief in Malawi and South Africa as market demand increases but the downward trend may continue in Tanzania where supplies are abundant.

In May 2024, maize grain prices were highest (above 0.40 USD/Kg) in southern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, southern Malawi, Mozambique and western and southern Zambia (FEWS NET, June 2024). They were lowest (<0.20 USD/Kg) in Tanzania and South Africa (0.21 to 0.30 USD/kg), which are the only sources of maize exports in the region during the 2024/25 marketing season (FEWS NET, June 2024). Parity prices for markets in northern Zambia and northern Malawi were in the middle range (0.31 to 0.40 USD/Kg) given the proximity to Tanzania's maize surplus regions.

The expected decline in agricultural production in 2024 and increased dependence on imports are foreseen to exert additional upward pressure on domestic food prices throughout the year (FAO-GIEWS, April 2024) in most countries except Madagascar and Tanzania.

#### The white maize market

White maize accounts for about one-fifth of the average person's calorie intake in Southern Africa (FAO-GIEWS, April 2024). Consumers spend more than 15 percent of their total household expenditure on maize alone (Kornher L., 2018). Given the importance of white maize in diets, the current high price levels are having negative consequences on households' consumption (FAO-GIEWS, April 2024).

Maize traders are pricing white maize at a premium above yellow maize. For example, in Randfontein, the trading premium on white maize increased from 2 percent in September 2023 to 23 percent in May 2024. A similar scenario appeared during the 2016/17 marketing year following a strong El Niño season. The high premium on white maize prices also reflects diverging supply prospects for white maize relative to yellow maize.

Despite the strategic importance of maize in the region, direct public intervention in markets in the form of price stabilization is subdued in Zambia and Malawi. However, governments including Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe have removed import duties and import VAT to manage the landed price of maize imports. 
 Table 4.1 Latest annual food inflation rates, 2024

COUNTRY	ANNUAL FOOD INFLATION (%)	MONTH 2024
Angola	↑ 33	April
Botswana	↑ 4	May
Eswatini	↑ 3.7	April
Lesotho	↑ 10.4	April
Madagascar	↑ 6.3	April
Malawi	<b>1</b> 40.7	May
Mauritius	↑ 6.8	April
Mozambique	↑ 4.9	May
Namibia	↑ 4.7	May
Seychelles	↓-1.26	May
South Africa	↑ 4.7	May
Tanzania	↑ 3.7	May
Zambia	<b>1</b> 6.8	June
Zimbabwe	<b>↑</b> 105	April



# CHAPTER 5

# WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) AND HEALTH

Climate change, inadequate infrastructure, limited financial resources and governance issues are affecting water availability and quality across the region.

While progress is being made, sustained efforts, robust policies and international cooperation are essential to improve WASH in the SADC region, which is crucial for public health and economic development.

The region is experiencing a multi-country outbreak of cholera that has spread since the first semester of 2023, made worse by drought-induced use of unsafe water sources.

# Chapter 5 | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Health

#### **Regional WASH situation**

Climate change, inadequate infrastructure, limited financial resources and governance issues are affecting water availability and quality, and hindering the implementation of comprehensive WASH solutions across the region.

Limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities increases vulnerability to diseases. Open defecation poses a severe public health risk in several areas. Handwashing with soap is one of the most cost-effective interventions to prevent diarrhoeal diseases, reducing incidence by up to 48 percent, but 2 in 5 people across the region have no handwashing facility and most people (including those where a handwashing facility is available) do not wash their hands (UNICEF & WHO, 2023).

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities is generally higher in urban than rural areas (UNICEF & WHO, 2023). Access to hygiene (handwashing with soap) ranges from 6 percent in Lesotho to 45 percent in Zambia.

Even South Africa with good access to safe drinking water (94.5 percent) and sanitation (73.1 percent) does not have adequate hygiene levels (44 percent). There were no hygiene data for Botswana, Mauritius or Seychelles (World Health Organization and UNICEF, 2023).

Improving WASH in the SADC region is crucial for public health, economic development, and overall well-being. While progress is being

COUNTRY		URBAN (%)	RURAL (%)	COUNTRY		URBAN (%)	RURAL (%)
Angola	DRINKING WATER	92.6	40.5	Mauritius	DRINKING WATER	100	100
	SANITATION	91.4	54.2		SANITATION	95.8	95.8
Botswana	DRINKING WATER	71.7	79.6	Mozambique	DRINKING WATER	87.3	48.3
	SANITATION	65.3	52.4		SANITATION	61.3	47.7
Comoros	DRINKING WATER	91	91	Namibia	DRINKING WATER	96.2	73.8
	SANITATION	49	49		SANITATION	49.7	56.7
DRC	DRINKING WATER	35.3	53.8	Seychelles	DRINKING WATER	96.4	96.4
	SANITATION	47.3	60.6		SANITATION	100	100
Eswatini	DRINKING WATER	77.7	65.5	South Africa	DRINKING WATER	94.5	84.5
	SANITATION	77.5	15.8		SANITATION	73.1	77.9
Lesotho	DRINKING WATER	72.6	56.6	Tanzania	DRINKING WATER	55.6	45.9
	SANITATION	46.3	51		SANITATION	42.9	63.1
Madagascar	DRINKING WATER	41.3	43	Zambia	DRINKING WATER	68.2	51.1
	SANITATION	32.3	29.9		SANITATION	48	48
Malawi	DRINKING WATER	52.4	58.6	Zimbabwe	DRINKING WATER	37.3	35.1
	SANITATION	46.2	29.2		SANITATION	57	30.4

#### Table 5.1 Population with access to safe drinking water and sanitation by member state (%)

made, sustained efforts, robust policies, and international cooperation are essential to overcoming the challenges and achieving universal access to WASH services (World Health Organization and UNICEF, 2023). Source: World Health Organization and UNICEF. 2023. Global database on WASH.

# Regional health emergencies and challenges

### SADC remains the global epicentre of the HIV epidemic

Approximately 17 million SADC citizens live with HIV, accounting for 44 percent of all people living with HIV (PL-HIV) worldwide. In 2022, 413 000 new HIV infections were recorded in the region representing a 57 percent decline compared with 2010. Youth continue to account for 40 percent of all new infections.

While the region is still far from achieving the 2025 target of reducing new HIV infections by 90 percent, four member states – Botswana, Eswatini, Tanzania and Zimbabwe – have achieved the 95-95-95 HIV treatment cascade objectives whereby 95 percent of PL-HIV should be diagnosed, 95 percent of those diagnosed should be receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 95 percent of all those receiving ART should achieve viral suppression. At the same time countries are encouraged to multiply their investment to reach the last mile and ensure sustainability (SADC, 2024).

Drought can negatively impact HIV patients when it leads to displacement, disruption of HIV treatment and access to services including Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, which threatens treatment adherence. have been made through many decades of HIV prevention and treatment in the region. People from very poor and food-insecure households may use transactional sex as an emergency coping strategy to access food or other essential needs, increasing their risk of HIV infection.

#### Cholera resurgence from 2023

In 2023, the WHO had classified the global resurgence of cholera as a grade 3 emergency, the highest internal level for a health emergency requiring a comprehensive response at all the levels including national, regional and global. As of 15 December 2023, data from African Union member states indicated an increase of more than 667 000 cases and 4 000 deaths compared with 2022 (WHO, 2023).

The SADC region is currently experiencing a multi-country outbreak of cholera that has relentlessly spread in some member states since the first semester of 2023 and is likely to increase due to drought-induced use of unsafe water sources. In 2024, Democratic Republic of Congo continues to report close to 1 000 cases each week (WHO, 2024). Zimbabwe is experiencing a rise in cases, particularly in the provinces of Harare, Manicaland, and Masvingo (WHO, 2023). Mozambique is reporting new cases and further geographical spread. Zambia also continues to report active cholera outbreaks.

#### Addressing cholera in the region

performance annually.

In February 2024, a summit of heads of state and government urged member states to:

1	Develop and implement multisectoral cholera response plans that encompass natural and climatic effects on cholera (re)emergence to effectively control its spread;	2	Strengthen regional collaboration on cross-border outbreak risk assessment and public health surveillance to enhance early detection and prevention of outbreak-prone diseases;
3	Jointly plan and implement cross border cholera vaccination campaigns;	4	Increase investment in the current cholera emergency response while maintaining long-term investment for a sustainable solution to the recurrent cholera crisis;
5	Develop and implement climate- resilient WASH and Disaster Risk Reduction programmes to prevent future cholera outbreaks;	6	Accelerate local and regional manufacturing of cholera vaccines to scale up production to meet the increase in demand;
7	Increase investment in WASH infrastructure and provide efficient waste management and sustainable supply of clean water;	8	Increase budget allocation towards WASH programmes; and
9	Strengthen monitoring and accountability tools for WASH interventions and Local Government reporting on their WASH		

Food insecurity has the potential to reverse the impressive developmental gains that



# CHAPTER 6

# MIGRATION AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

The number of forcibly displaced people in the region is expected to rise to over 12 million in 2024, mostly people internally displaced by escalating conflicts in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique.

In 2023, extreme weather events displaced more than 1.7 million people across the region mainly due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Freddy. In 2024, cyclones and flooding caused new waves of population displacement.

More than 1 million people live as refugees, asylum seekers and migrants across 15 SADC member states, having fled conflict or economic hardship in neighbouring countries.

Although food insecurity and malnutrition data among displaced populations are limited, available evidence points to high levels of vulnerability linked to insecurity and protection risks, limited work opportunities and reliance on dwindling humanitarian aid.

## **Chapter 6 | Migration and forced displacement**

The number of forcibly displaced people, returnees, and stateless people in the SADC region is expected to rise to over 12 million in 2024, mostly people uprooted by the complex emergencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique (UNHCR, July 2024).

#### **Conflict-related displacement**

In Democratic Republic of Congo, the total number of people internally displaced by conflict reached 6.9 million by the end of 2023 driven by the escalating violence in eastern parts of the country. With security deteriorating, by April 2024 it had reached 7.3 million, making it the country with the second largest number of IDPs globally, after the Sudan (OCHA, May 2024). By late April 2024, over 1.5 million people were living in displacement in North Kivu alone, mainly in host communities (56 percent) or in displacement sites (44 percent) that are often overcrowded and struggle to provide essential services such as drinking water, food and sanitation (IOM DTM, May 2024).

The number of IDPs due to the insurgency in Mozambique decreased to 592 000 by the end of 2023, before renewed violence in February 2024 triggered another wave of displacement with the number reaching 709 000, further impacting agricultural production after the main planting season (IOM DTM, February 2024). In addition, 632 000 people have recently returned to their home areas and continue to face precarious living conditions,

and lack the means to restart subsistence farming activities and produce their own food (IPC, November 2023; IOM, June 2024).

#### **Disaster-related displacement**

According to the latest Global Report on Internal Displacement, in 2023 extreme weather events displaced more than 1.7 million people across the region. This included 1.4 million people displaced by the impact of Tropical Cyclone Freddy, the longest-lasting tropical cyclone on record worldwide, of whom 659 000 were displaced in Malawi, 640 000 n Mozambique and 63 000 in Madagascar. People also abandoned their homes because of climate-related disasters in 2023 in Angola (26 000), Democratic Republic of the Congo (147 000), South Africa (6 000), Tanzania (31 000) and Zambia (9 000) (GRID 2024, IDMC, May 2024).

In 2024, cyclonic activities and above-normal precipitation caused new waves of population displacement. In Madagascar, tropical cyclone Alvaro displaced 17 000 displaced in January; tropical cyclone Gamane displaced 22 000 in Madagascar in March (OCHA, April 2024). The same month, tropical storm Filipo affected over 48 000 people in Mozambique (IOM, March 2024). Floods subsequent to heavy rainfall displaced 14 200 people in Malawi in February (Department of Disaster Management Affairs, Malawi, February 2024). In Tanzania, more than 85 000 people were displaced by heavy rains and floods in April (IFRC, June 2024).

# Food security and nutrition data on displaced populations are limited

Limited data exists on the extent of food insecurity and malnutrition faced by populations displaced by conflict and disasters and vulnerable migrants. Where disaggregated data exist globally, they reveal that high levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition are particularly prevalent in displaced communities. This is linked to insecurity and protection risks, limited access to employment and livelihood opportunities, unreliable access to food and shelter, and reliance on dwindling humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Failing to address these vulnerabilities can drive use of harmful coping strategies, leading to further displacement and amplifying acute food insecurity (GRFC 2024, May 2024).

Northern Mozambique provides a concerning example, where FEWS NET estimates a rapid re-emergence of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity areas in violenceaffected Cabo Delgado.

Democratic Republic of Congo, confronted with one of the world's worst displacement and food security crises, had over 25 million people facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity in the latter half of 2023 (IPC, October 2023). While data are not specifically disaggregated by displacement status, evidence heavily suggests that IDPs, returnees and host families were among the most affected.

Across the SADC region, IDPs, refugees,

FIG. 6.1 Numbers of displaced people in 13 foodcrisis countries in the region (in millions)



Source: Source: UNHCR, June 2024; IOM, April and May 2024.





#### FIG. 6.3 Numbers of IDPs by country

DRC	7.3M
MOZAMBIQUE	0.7M
MALAWI	0.7M

Source: IOM, April and May 2024.

and vulnerable migrants are likely to be disproportionately affected by ongoing drought and other natural hazards as most displaced live in marginalized or high-risk areas, exposed to natural disasters or crowded into dense camps or poor urban centres with limited access to social or health services. Access to clean water, improved sanitation and cooking facilities can be limited, increasing the risk of disease and malnutrition, particularly among women and children (GRFC 2024, May 2024).

Significant data gaps exist regarding the mobility trends associated with drought conditions currently affecting the region. There are indications of changing trends in population movements associated with food insecurity, including in Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Migration might become a coping mechanism for vulnerable populations affected by drought, leading primarily to internal displacement but also potentially to cross border displacement. Systematic data collection in both urban and rural areas. including in border areas is crucial for a more comprehensive picture of underlying drivers of vulnerabilities both for displaced persons and host communities.

While data are not specifically disaggregated by displacement status, evidence heavily suggests that IDPs, returnees and host families were among the most affected. Across the SADC region, IDPs, refugees, and vulnerable migrants are likely to be disproportionately affected by ongoing drought and other natural hazards as most displaced live in marginalized or high-risk areas, exposed to natural disasters or crowded into dense camps or poor urban centres with limited access to social or health services. Access to clean water, improved sanitation and cooking facilities can be limited, increasing the risk of disease and malnutrition, particularly among women and children (GRFC 2024, May 2024). Significant data gaps exist regarding the mobility trends associated with drought conditions currently affecting the region.

There are indications of changing trends in population movements associated with food insecurity, including in Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Migration might become a major coping mechanism for vulnerable populations affected by drought, leading primarily to internal displacement but also potentially to cross border displacement. Systematic data collection in both urban and rural areas, including in border areas, is crucial for a more comprehensive picture of underlying drivers of vulnerabilities both for displaced persons and host communities.

#### **Refugees face increasing challenges**

More than 1 million people live as refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in camps, settlements and urban areas across 15 SADC member states, having fled conflict or economic hardship in neighbouring countries. The highest numbers are in Democratic Republic of the Congo (from Central African Republic and Rwanda), Tanzania (mainly from Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo), South Africa (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia and Zimbabwe) and Zambia (mainly from Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi). Many of these refugee populations have been displaced for decades (UNHCR, 2023).

The difficulties faced by forcibly displaced populations across the region continued to be aggravated by food ration reductions and cuts to other essential services in camps and settlements due to funding shortages. In March 2023, WFP was forced to reduce rations for more than 200 000 refugees in Tanzania from 80 percent to 65 percent and to 50 percent by June, which was likely to have left thousands of refugees struggling to meet their nutritional needs just as food prices rose and more people sought refuge in the country from Democratic Republic of the Congo (WFP, May 2023).

## Nutrition in refugee settlements and camps

Over the last two years, Standardized Expanded Nutrition Surveys (SENS) have collected nutrition data in refugee camps in Malawi (one camp), Tanzania (three camps), Zambia (three camps) and Zimbabwe (one camp).

The prevalence of acute malnutrition was above 5 percent, considered Medium by WHO, in all three monitored camps in Zambia. Across the remaining monitored camps, the prevalence of acute malnutrition was Low by WHO thresholds.

Micronutrient deficiencies led to high levels of anaemia among children under 5 years



Odette is a mother of eight children who had to flee her home and settle in Bunia's IDP camp in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

old in camps in Tanzania and Zambia and to high levels of anaemia among women in all the monitored camps Zambia. Exclusive breastfeeding targets of 75 percent for children under 6 months old were only met in Malawi and two camps in Tanzania.

Indeed, malnutrition in Mantapala camp in Zambia was very concerning. Around 2.6 percent of children aged under 5 years were suffering severe acute malnutrition and around 27 percent of pregnant and breastfeeding women were acutely malnourished (MUAC<23cm). It had critically low rates of exclusive breastfeeding (20 percent) and a very high prevalence of poor food consumption (43 percent), measured by the FCS (UNHCR, October 2021).



# CHAPTER 7

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Chapter 7 | Recommendations**

#### Short term recommendations

**1.** Scale up safety net programmes especially among the very poor in urban and rural contexts by immediately assisting food and nutrition insecure populations with food and/or cash-based transfers, through and in harmonizationwith national shock-responsive social protection programmes.

**2.** Provide immediate access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities in vulnerable and underserved areas and implement rapid response systems for waterborne disease outbreaks.

**3.** Protect displaced populations, migrants and host communities from discrimination, exclusion, and heightened vulnerability including risks such as Gender Based Violence (GBV) and trafficking in persons.

**4.** Monitor and respond to transboundary pests and diseases of livestock and crops and promote use of a sustainable and effective pest management approach.

**5.** Support food production through increased access to and/or provision of agricultural inputs, including seed and fertilisers.

**6.** Establish/rehabilitate community watering points for livestock, emergency supplementary feeding for livestock and other inputs in the coming season.

**7.** Intensify and expand programmes to treat acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, pregnant and lactating women, and other vulnerable groups.

raise awareness of good practices for adequate food consumption in children aged 6–23 months at the community level and exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months of age.

**8.** Keep trade open and prioritise intra-SADC commerce for food and other commodities.

**9.** Increase risk communication to livestock farmers so that they can manage their herds during drought, including when to de-stock and re-stock, as well as to encourage fodder production.

**10.** Provide early warning and anticipatory support to farmers at high risk in preparation for the coming 2024/25 main planting season.



#### Medium/long term recommendations

**1.** Encourage crop and dietary diversity by promoting the cultivation and consumption of diversified diets, including indigenous foods and by diversifying livestock production, especially small stock that are adapted to harsh weather conditions.

**2.** Strengthen food and nutrition information systems to increase the quality of assessment and analysis while ensuring that communities are sensitized on food and nutrition key messages.

**3.** Strengthen school feeding programmes to serve as a crucial social safety net in periods of drought and food insecurity.

**4.** Invest in the construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure and water supply systems, including boreholes, wells, piped water networks and develop sanitation infrastructure such as latrines and sewage treatment plants.

Develop comprehensive water harvesting interventions including dams to promote irrigation and ensure year-round agricultural production to respond to climate change. **5.** Develop resilience-building initiatives, including employment creation in rural areas, incorporating climate-smart technologies in subsidies and conservation agriculture.

**6.** Strengthen the integration of agriculture and food security in the national adaptation and mitigation plans to promote conservation agriculture, environment/ecosystem management and build community resilience to climate change.

**7.** Link multidimensional and essential needs-based vulnerability assessments to social protection registries to inform/ improve targeting of shock-responsive social protection systems in urban and rural areas.





# **CHAPTER 8**

Angola | Botswana | Eswatini | Mauritius | Democratic Republic of the Congo | Lesotho | Mozambique Madagascar | Namibia | Malawi | South Africa | Zambia | Zimbabwe

### Angola

#### Background

Angola is a resource-rich, lower-middle-income country. Southern provinces have experienced six consecutive years of severe drought and below-average harvests. Extreme weather events are expected to continue affecting water availability, raising temperatures, and extending dry seasons, negatively affecting agricultural productivity. Angola's heavy reliance on the oil sector has increased its vulnerability to external shocks, undermining macroeconomic stability (World Bank and WFP, April 2024).

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>3.7M</b> (2023)		
Population growth (annual %)	<b>3.0</b> (2023)		
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>0.9</b> (2023)		
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	<b>59</b> males <b>/ 65</b> females (2022)		
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	46		
Unemployment, total (% of total labour force)	<b>14.6</b> (2023)		
HDI ranking	150th		
Share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>58.7</b> (2021)		
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 years	<b>1.5</b> (2022)		
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>4.9 (Low)</b> (2015)		
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>43.6 (Very High)</b> (2022)		

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

#### Map 8.1 Acute food insecurity, April–July



#### Food and nutrition security situation

Using data from 2022/2023, an estimated 853 000 people faced high levels of acute food insecurity, with 31 percent in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 10 percent in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). However, during the harvest period (April to July) this number was expected to decrease to 572 000. Data collection is underway to update the 2023 figures and results will become available before the end of 2024. The levels of acute food insecurity are expected to deteriorate due to El Nino-induced drought. According to the latest available data, stunting levels are Very High with 37.6 percent of children under 5 years of age chronically malnourished. Acute malnutrition levels are Low, with 4.9 percent of children under 5 years of age affected, (Global Nutrition Report 2022).

#### Drivers of food and nutrition Insecurity

The main drivers of food insecurity in Angola are poor rainfall during the 2023/24 cropping season, low household food stocks, and persistent food and fuel inflation, especially in Cunene, Huíla, Namibe and Benguela municiplalities. During the last months of

2023, southeastern areas experienced El-Niño-related rainfall deficits while cumulative rainfall was average to above average elsewhere. Abnormally heavy rains in Luanda in December disrupted food supplies (FEWS NET. December 2023).

Raised food prices throughout 2023 were partly attributed to local currency depreciation between May and July 2023 (FAO-GIEWS, November 2023). The gradual removal of fuel subsidies in 2023 and 2024 is contributing to inflationary pressure, while the drought's impact on agricultural production is expected to add further upward pressure on food prices (FAO, July 2024) From May 2023, food prices steadily increased with annual food inflation reaching almost 22 percent by December and continued to do so in the first guarter of 2024, reaching 33 percent by April (Trading Economics, accessed July 2024). High levels of rural-urban migration, especially of young people, are straining urban resources. Acute malnutrition was a public health problem in drought-hit southern provinces, driven by a range of factors including reduced agricultural production for subsistence farmers, poverty, poor sanitation and hygiene conditions, and low access to safe water sources (GRFC 2024, May 2024).

#### Map 8.2 Acute malnutrition, April–July 2024



Source: Angola presentation at the SADC RVAA, June 2024

#### Recommendations

#### **Immediate actions**

 Mitigate the food consumption deficit by reinforcing actions, such as ongoing food assistance until families regain their self-sufficiency.

• Expand and regularize the Kwenda programme in areas most affected by acute food insecurity.

- · Protect and/or replace household assets and means of subsistence by opening water holes, using the Cafu canal for irrigation and watering livestock, as well as making seeds available to the most vulnerable families.
- Intensify and expand programmes to treat acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, pregnant and lactating women, and other vulnerable groups.
- · Conduct monitoring surveys in all affected municipalities to update data on acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition.
- Create a robust structure with sufficient technical and material capacity at the provincial level to allow AVSAN to be carried out independent

### Botswana

#### Recommendations for Angola continued

#### Background

#### **Short-term actions**

• Coordinate interventions to identify and treat at least 80 percent of cases of acute malnutrition in children aged 6–59 months.

• Ensure vaccination coverage, Vitamin A supplementation, and deworming in at least 80 percent of municipalities.

• Promote and intensify actions to raise awareness of good practices for adequate food consumption in children aged 6–23 months at the community level and exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months.

#### **Medium and long-term actions**

 Continue the combination of complementary interventions to minimize the negative impacts of drought, including the construction of dams, reservoirs and drainage channels that connect rivers and communities in addition to an early warning mechanism for extreme weather events.

• Promote the construction of reservoirs for household-level use of rainwater.

• Improve access to drinking water and sanitation by increasing the availability of drinking water boreholes, improve latrines and raise awareness of their use.

• Intensify the promotion of good water treatment and sanitation practices, such as the construction of improved latrines. Botswana is an upper-middle-income, semi-arid country characterized by poor and unreliable rainfall, high temperatures, and dry spells. Despite its significant diamond wealth and robust institutions, it faces significant development challenges, including one of the highest inequality rates in the world. The economy is dominated by the mining and tourism sectors, contributing to a complex socio-economic landscape. Higher temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns are threatening livelihoods, agricultural production and water supply. Rising costs of food and agricultural inputs have negatively impacted living costs and agricultural output.

#### Food and nutrition security situation

The number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in Botswana is projected to increase by 61 percent from 36 000 in 2023/24 to around 58 000 in October 2024–March 2025, representing 2.4 percent of the total population.

Between 2023 and 2024, levels of acute malnutrition also increased with over 1 850 wasted children to be provided with supplementary food. Other vulnerable groups, such as pregnant and breastfeeding women (around 48 000), are to be provided with a double ration of supplementary foods. Around 6 200 children are to be provided with an extra meal in identified hotspot areas in urban and rural areas.

#### **Drivers of food and nutrition Insecurity**

Key drivers include a shortage of grains (sorghum, maize, beans), loss of income due to limited job opportunities, interruption of livelihoods and businesses (especially the informal sector), and high migration patterns to urban centres in search of better opportunities. Social welfare budgets are overstretched, and high commodity prices/inflation are anticipated. Both urban and rural areas are affected.

The VAC findings indicate that the rainy season from October 2023 to March 2024 was exceptionally dry, with below-average rainfall throughout the entire country. February 2024 was particularly harsh, with the driest conditions since 1980. As a result, water levels in dams

#### Population 2.7M (2023) Population growth **1.7** (2023) (annual %) 2.7 (2023) **GDP** growth (annual %) Life expectancy at birth, 63 males / 68 (years) females (2022) Mortality rate, infant 31 (per 1 000 live births) Unemployment, total (% 23.4 (2023) of total labour force) HDI ranking 114th **23.1** (2021) Share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment Maize self-sufficiency 0.07 (2024/2025)Prevalence of HIV among 16.4 (2022) adults aged 15-49 years Wasting among children 7.3 (Medium) under 5 years (%) (2007)Stunting among children 21.6 (High) under 5 years (%) (2022)

Socio-economic indicators

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

and rivers across the country significantly declined, leading to a moderate hydrological drought.

Delayed rains and extended dry spells severely impacted staple crops, most of which wilted and failed early in the season. The Standard Precipitation Index (SPI), a value assigned to assess the season's condition, was less than 2, indicating that the season was extremely dry. As a result, the crop area planted for this season decreased by 36 percent compared to the previous year, with total production estimated to be only 6 percent of the national cereal demand of 300 000 metric tonnes.

The livestock sector also experienced the negative effects of an extreme drought. At the time of the assessment (April to May 2024), grazing conditions had started to show signs of deterioration nationwide, with limited surface water availability in some areas. A significant number of drought-related livestock mortalities – more than 16 000 – were recorded.

Dry conditions and high temperatures forced wild animals to travel long distances for water, leading to increased human-wildlife conflicts in specific districts. The dry season resulted in a high number of fire outbreaks (over 1 170) across the country, burning a substantial area of land estimated at nearly 855 900 hectares. The harsh climate also impacted the availability of natural resources like veldt products, leading to a decrease in permit requests and, consequently, lower income generated from the sale of veldt products.

The country has seen an increase in the number of destitute persons across all categories from 67 900 in 2022/23 to 75 100 in 2023/24 (an increase of 7 200 people or 10.6 percent). The number of temporary destitute persons is expected to increase by 14 400 in 2024/35 due to the high unemployment rate. The number of beneficiaries on the waiting list under the lpelegeng unemployment relief programme increased from around 69 000 in 2022/23 to 77 000 in 2023/24.

#### Recommendations

#### **Immediate actions**

 Intensify interventions/relief measures as more households will require government assistance to cushion them against the impact of drought.

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

#### **Recommendations for Botswana continued**

• Allow an 85 percent insurance payout to rainfed farmers who received seasonal loans.

• Provide a feed subsidy of 30 percent for traditional farmers (beef cattle and small stock), non-traditional agriculture smallholder farmers (dairy, piggery, aquaculture, apiculture and poultry), and farmers keeping wild animals in small game farms.

• Equip boreholes and reticulation of water for livestock in communal areas that have serious water shortages.

• Re-stock the Strategic Grain Reserve to cover the cereal deficit.

• Procure treated crop residues by Government for sale to livestock producers.

• Establish temporary satellite and mobile stores to improve access to drought relief feeds, drugs and vaccines in remote areas.

• Continue blanket coverage of supplementary feeding for children aged 6–59 months with double ration to moderately and severely underweight children.

• Provide a double ration of supplementary foods for other vulnerable groups, such as pregnant and breastfeeding mothers from localities identified with high prevalence of malnutrition in children.

• Provide two meals at primary schools, and three meals for recognised settlements in Remote Area Communities.

• Provide an extra meal to identified hotspot areas in other primary schools, including those in urban areas countrywide.

• Continue a special food basket to children in localities with high prevalence of malnutrition.

#### **Short-term actions**

• Create an additional 30 000 slots for beneficiaries in the labour-based public works programme (Ipelegeng).

• Provide a special food basket for 12 months to elderly people who cannot be enrolled under the Ipelegeng programme.

• Continue provision of a consistent supply of readyto-use therapeutic foods for children with acute malnutrition.

#### **Medium and long-term actions**

• Re-introduce direct feeding in areas where a special food basket is not practical/feasible.

• Construct four suitable food storage structures in health facilities through Ipelegeng programme.

#### Background

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is endowed with exceptional natural resources, including minerals such as cobalt and copper, significant hydropower potential, vast arable land, and immense biodiversity. Most Congolese have not benefited from these resources due to a long history of conflict, political upheaval and economic instability, resulting in one of the largest, severe and protracted humanitarian crises with widespread population displacement persisting for the past 25 years. (WFP 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

Around 25.4 million people or 23 percent of the country's population experienced high levels of acute food insecurity in July–December 2023. Of them, around 3.5 million people were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The latest Chronic Food Insecurity analysis revealed that about 40 percent of the population or 40.8 million people face IPC Phase 3 or above chronic food insecurity (IPC, July 2024).

The most affected populations are mainly displaced people, returnees, host families and populations living in conflict zones or affected by natural disasters. In the first three months of 2024, nearly 358 000 people were displaced in the country, bringing the total number of IDPs to around 7.1 million (OCHA, March 2024). Individuals and families displaced by conflict often lose access to their homes, lands, and other resources, making it difficult for them to secure adequate food. They may also face challenges accessing humanitarian aid due to logistical issues or security risks.

The provinces with the highest numbers of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity were North Kivu (2.6 million), the city of Kinshasa (2.1 million), Kasaï Central (1.6 million) and South Kivu (1.5 million).

Malnutrition is the underlying cause of almost half of all deaths among children under 5 years old. The stunting prevalence (42 percent of children under 5 years) is one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike in many other African countries, the prevalence of stunting has not decreased over the past 20 years.

According to an analysis of the country's most-affected health zones (only 122 health zones out of 519 were

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>102.3</b> M (2023)		
Population growth (annual %)	<b>1.8</b> (2023)		
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>8.6</b> (2023)		
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>58</b> males <b>/ 62</b> females (2022)		
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	60		
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>4.5</b> (2023)		
HDI ranking	180th		
Share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>55.3</b> (2021)		
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 years	< <b>0.1</b> (2022)		
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>6.4</b> (Medium) (2017)		
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>40.3</b> (Very high) (2022)		

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

analysed), around 1.1 million children under 5 years and approximately 605 000 pregnant or breastfeeding women faced elevated levels of acute malnutrition in the country between July 2023 and June 2024. This includes approximately 254 000 severely malnourished children. From January to June 2024, nine health zones were expected to be in Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) and 40 in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3) (IPC AMN, January 2024).

This critical situation necessitates emergency interventions. Without such measures, many households will struggle to meet their short-term needs and may resort to strategies that undermine local production systems and economies, jeopardizing their safety and further compromising the population's well-being.

#### Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity

Food and nutrition insecurity is driven by a complex interplay of factors, each exacerbating the vulnerability of the population.

Persistent socio-political and intercommunal conflicts disrupt agricultural activities, impacting households' livelihoods and creating a state of insecurity that hinders food production and distribution. North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri have experienced the most protracted conflict and unrest. Nationwide, 7.3 million people have fled their homes and lost their livelihoods, making it the world's second largest displacement crisis, after the Sudan. Additionally, the country hosts over 521 000 refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict in neighbouring countries, mainly from the Central African Republic.

Floods and droughts, often linked to climate change, pose significant challenges.

The El Niño phenomenon caused widespread flooding from September to December 2023, covering an area of 1.6 million hectares of land under cultivation. This had a considerable impact on community livelihoods and acute food insecurity, and also led to the emergence of certain water-borne diseases. Rural populations rely heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods. Unpredictable weather patterns, pests, and other agricultural challenges that lead to crop failures and livestock losses, significantly impact their food security. The depreciation of the national currency has economic implications that ripple through the food system, affecting both producers and consumers.

The current account deficit deteriorated to 6.3 percent of GDP in 2023, from 4.9 percent in 2022, due to rising import prices. The exchange rate depreciated by 21.6 percent in 2023 and inflation accelerated to 19.9 percent on average in 2023 . Inflation is projected to remain elevated at 17.2 percent on average in 2024 .The main risks to the economic outlook arise from the escalation of armed conflicts in the East, further inflationary pressures stemming from oil and food price volatility, with negative effects on the real disposable income of households, an abrupt growth slowdown in China, and an intensification of regional conflicts, including the war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East, which could weigh on export revenues and foreign direct investment (IMF, Jul 2024).

In 2023, food prices saw a significant increase compared with the 2022 annual average. For example, the price of corn increased by 11.6 percent, beans by 9.3 percent, salt by 8 percent, local rice by 19.7 percent, imported rice by 16.3 percent, and cassava by 24.6 percent. These rising costs reduce access to food, particularly for lowincome households.

Epidemics and other diseases can impact agricultural productivity. Crop diseases like cassava mosaic and pests like the fall armyworm (CLA) continue to affect agricultural activities.

Over 60 percent of the population lives on less than USD 2.10 per day, highlighting the extent of poverty. The deterioration of road and rail infrastructure hampers the evacuation of surplus production in certain areas, discouraging trade. In other areas, this deterioration, coupled with transport costs and currency depreciation, limits household access to food.

#### Recommendations

Short-term actions

• Support humanitarian actors in scaling-up operations by facilitating access to combat zones and areas under the control of non-state forces.

• Mobilize additional resources to address urgent humanitarian needs in conflict zones.

#### Medium-term actions

• Strengthen measures to combat water-borne diseases by improving access to water and sanitation infrastructure, particularly in endemic areas.

• Support, protect, and restore the livelihoods of households experiencing acute food insecurity, by assisting them to regain their productive capital, including agricultural recovery for returned populations.

#### Long-term actions

• Support efforts aimed at restoring peace and security with the goal of ending violence and protecting civilians in the east of the country and other provinces.

• Support the establishment and operationalization of a food price control mechanism through the organization and deployment of the national strategic reserve throughout the territory. This control should also extend to petroleum products.

• Expand the scale of existing social safety net projects and mobilize stakeholders to implement a social protection programme. This includes establishing a single population register to allow for joint and multisectoral interventions.

### Eswatini

#### Background

Eswatini continues to experience high and persistent poverty. While there have been improvements in education, social protection, and household income, the benefits have mostly been felt in urban areas, widening the urban-rural poverty gap. Despite a projected economic recovery, challenges like low agricultural production, limited job creation, and poor access to services constrain progress. Inequality in consumption per capita and access to public services remains high, making Eswatini one of the most unequal countries in the world. The country is also vulnerable to climate change, with frequent droughts, erratic rainfall, and prolonged dry spells affecting food production. Inadequate farming technologies, low investment in seeds, fertilizers and equipment, and structural barriers to accessing formal markets, lead to a reliance on food imports (WFP, 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

According to the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis conducted in 2024, an estimated 243 500 people (20 percent of the population analysed) faced high levels of acute food insecurity from June to September 2024. This number is projected to increase to 303 700 people (25 percent of the population analysed) from October 2024 to March 2025, including 34 200 in Emergency (IPC phase 4). The entire country, except the areas of Malkerns, Manzini and Mbabane, is projected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) for this period, necessitating urgent action to save lives and protect livelihoods.

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) shows that 87.2 percent of households had acceptable food consumption, while 9.5 percent had borderline and 3.3 percent poor consumption. In the Shiselweni region, almost 5 percent had poor consumption and 10 percent borderline. Around 44 percent of households adopted livelihood coping strategies to maintain food consumption at adequate levels: 36 percent employed stress-level coping strategies and 20 percent resorted to crisis or emergency coping strategies.

Child malnutrition is a pressing issue, with 20 percent of children under 5 year stunted, with a higher rate in rural (21 percent) than in urban areas (17 percent). Wasting is highest in the Lubombo region (3 percent) and

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Population	<b>36.7</b> M (2023)
Population growth (annual %)	<b>3.0</b> (2023)
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>0.9</b> (2023)
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>59</b> males <b>/ 65</b> females (2022)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	46
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>14.6</b> (2023)
HDI ranking	150th
Share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>58.7</b> (2021)
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>1.5</b> (2022)
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>4.9 (</b> Low) (2015)
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>43.6</b> (Very high) (2022)

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

lowest in Manzini (1 percent). These data underscore the urgent need for interventions to improve food and nutrition security in the region.

#### **Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity**

Disruptions in international supply chains and inflation have led to food and commodity prices remaining well-above the five-year average and are considered the main driver. Household purchasing power has been constrained by limited economic recovery from the



COVID-19 pandemic, including high unemployment and lower wages. Food inflation stood at 3.6 percent in May 2024 (Trading Economics).

Irregular rainfall patterns, particularly the prolonged dry spells in January and February 2024, negatively impacted maize crops at critical stages of tasseling, leading to 14 percent lower production than that of 2022–2023 and 41 percent lower than that of the 2021– 2022 season. Additionally, hail and windstorms affected livelihoods and agricultural production. The maize shortfall will be mostly covered by planned imports, save for an uncovered gap of 5 000 metric tonnes.

#### Recommendations

#### **Immediate actions**

• Provide immediate assistance to households in (IPC Phase 3 or above), prioritizing Orphaned and Vulnerable Children, child-headed households, the elderly and people living with HIV and disabilities.

#### **Short term actions**

• Implement shock responsive social protection programmes, accommodative of basic needs for both elderly and persons with disability.

• Scale-up programmes aimed at increasing access and use of improved sanitation facilities.

#### **Medium and long-term actions**

 Promote livelihood asset-building programmes to build vulnerable groups' resilience to current shocks while building their ability to cope with future shocks.

 Build capacity of smallholder farmers on management practices of harvested crops to reduce post-harvest losses.

- Strengthen innovative and cost-effective ways to improve food diversification, including small-scale backyard gardens to address low household diversity score, especially in rural areas.
- Promote stratified farming input support programmes that accommodate different wealth groups' financial capabilities and farm sizes.
- Promote climate-smart agricultural practices and subsidize these technologies.
- Encourage sustainable water management practices, such as reducing water usage.

### Lesotho

#### Background

Lesotho struggles to address rural poverty and promot inclusive social development, with its economy relying heavily on agriculture. Approximately 80 percent of the rural population are subsistence farmers relying on less than 10 percent of arable land, leading to high dependency on food imports. The country is prone to extreme weather events, such as floods, heavy rains, and drought, which disrupt agricultural production. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic impacts of the war in Ukraine have contributed to increased unemployment and reduced remittances (WFP, 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

The IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis conducted in May 2024 estimated that 293 000 people faced high levels of acute food insecurity in rural areas from May-September 2024. This number is projected to increase to 403 000 people from October 2024 to March 2025, with all rural areas classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), necessitating urgent action to save lives and protect livelihoods.

An additional assessment in urban areas estimated over 296 000 vulnerable people bringing the total food insecure population for the consumption year 2024/25 to 699 000, a 20 percent increase compared with 581 700 in 2023/24.

The FCS reveals that around 19 percent of households had poor consumption and 41 percent had borderline consumption. Households with an HIV positive member recorded higher proportions of borderline and poor food consumption scores than households with no members with HIV.

The Livelihood Coping Strategy Index shows that 42 percent used stress coping strategies, and 11 percent used crisis or emergency coping strategies.

#### **Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity**

Despite a timely start to the agricultural season, storms and heavy rains damaged both crops and infrastructure. The country also experienced extremely high temperatures and heatwaves in November 2023, followed by prolonged dry spells from January to March 2024.

Population	<b>2.3</b> M (2023)
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.4</b> (2023)
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>0.9</b> (2023)
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	50 males / 56
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	56
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>16.5</b> (2023)
HDI ranking	168th

Socio-economic indicators

Share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>30</b> (2021)
Maize self-sufficiency (2024/2025)	0.21
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>0.4</b> (2022)
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>2.1</b> (Very low) (2012)
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>31.8</b> (Very high) (2022)

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

These climatic conditions were further exacerbated by inadequate agricultural inputs, especially fertilizers, outbreaks of livestock diseases, pests and wild animals, with birds causing significant damage to sorghum crops.

Consequently, the yield per hectare declined by 22 percent compared to the 2022/23 harvest, from 0.27 to



0.35 metric tonnes per hectare, marking the lowest yield since the 2018/19 season.

Although national crop production estimates for maize show a 52 percent decrease in 2024 compared with 2023, Lesotho can still meet its total cereal requirements from imports from the Republic of South Africa.

The average cost of a household's basic needs (Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)) increased by 27 percent between 2022 and 2023, and the total cost to satisfy basic survival needs (Survival MEB) increased by almost 22 percent. In May 2024, food inflation stood at 8.2 percent (Trading Economics).

#### Recommendations

#### **Immediate actions**

• Provide immediate conditional and unconditional humanitarian assistance for all households facing IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in rural areas. Assistance will be required for an average of four months, with an estimated transfer value of needs at M1509.

#### **Short term actions**

• Provide conditional and unconditional humanitarian assistance for all households living below the MEB in

urban areas. The gap value per household is estimated at M1828.

• Implement vaccination campaigns to prevent seasonal livestock diseases.

#### **Medium and long-term actions**

• Continue with the purchase of local grains and beans to promote market opportunities for farmers who have a surplus.

• Continue implementing agricultural inputs subsidy, which includes the short, seasoned varieties. These varieties can withstand low soil moisture content. However, a special study is required to establish the impact of the programme.

 Intensify Integrated Catchment Management initiatives to improve rangelands and protect water sources.

• Operationalise the National Strategic Resilience framework to ensure that households diversify their livelihoods to withstand future shocks. All interventions to address food insecurity should aim at building resilience of the Basotho nation and target relevant population groups.

### Madagascar

#### Background

Despite its rich natural resources, Madagascar has persistently high levels of poverty. Lack of crop diversification, high reliance on rain-fed agriculture, low incomes, and rising food prices drive acute food insecurity. The severity and frequency of climate shocks are increasing, damaging agriculture, infrastructure, biodiversity and coastal resources, and leading to the loss of lives and livelihoods. The south of Madagascar suffers from recurrent droughts, while the southeast is prone to cyclones and flooding. These environmental challenges hinder the country's development and efforts to improve living conditions for its population (WFP, 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

From May–September 2024, 1.2 million people in the Grand Sud, Grand Sud Est, and Nord are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity. This number is projected to increase to 1.3 million people from October–December 2024, and further to 1.8 million people from January–April 2025 (IPC, June 2024).

The urban vulnerability assessment highlighted that the majority of households faced serious challenges in accessing a nutritious and diverse diet. Only 22 percent of households had an Acceptable food consumption score (FCS). Furthermore, 66 percent of households were multi-dimensionally poor, with the greatest deprivations concerning housing, food and WASH. Frequent exposure to flooding and other hazards exacerbated these deprivations. Femaleheaded households faced greater challenges with lower incomes and higher deprivation rates. Households in the 1st and 3rd arrondissements were particularly vulnerable, consuming poorer diets, using more severe coping strategies, and facing greater levels of indebtedness.

A precarious acute malnutrition situation in the Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est was expected to worsen during the January-April 2024 lean season with most areas classified in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3) and some in Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) (IPC AMN, August 2023).

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Socio-econ	omic	Ind	Icai	tors

Population	<b>30.3</b> M (2023)
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.8</b> (2023)
GDP growth (annual %)	4 (2023)
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>63</b> males <b>/ 68</b> females (2022)
Life expectancy at birth, Female (years)	<b>68</b> (2022)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	45
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>3.1</b> (2023)
HDI ranking	177th
Share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>73.9</b> (2021)
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>11.6</b> (2022)
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>7.2 (</b> Medium) (2021)
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>38.6</b> (2022) Threshold: <b>Very High</b>

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).



#### **Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity**

Weather extremes and economic shocks have been the main drivers of food and nutrition insecurity. In early 2023, the Grand Sud was still recovering from the devastating impacts of multi-season droughts in 2020–22 and in the Grand Sud-Est, households were still recovering from the negative agricultural impacts of cyclone Freddy in February–March 2023.

In 2024, two cyclones made landfall in Madagascar: Alvaro and Gamane. About 535 000 people in 33 flooded communes were affected by Gamane, including about 22 000 displaced people (OCHA, April 2024). Erratic and below-average rainfall also affected agricultural production during the 2023/24 season. Damages and losses associated with weather shocks amounted to approximately MGA 144.8 million in the crop sector, MGA 80.8 million in livestock losses, and MGA 670.0 million in damages to the livestock sector.

Below-average incomes from agricultural labour and crop production after successive years of weather

shocks, and the need to service debts accrued during the consecutive years of severe drought, mean that poor households reliant on market purchases for food during the lean season are unable to meet their food needs (FEWS NET, November 2023). Although at lower levels compared with 2023, inflation rates remain a concern. As of May 2024, the inflation rate stood at 7.4 percent, affecting the cost of living and economic stability for most vulnerable populations. In May 2024, food inflation stood at 6.3 percent (Trading Economics).

The percentage of children aged 6–23 months receiving a Minimum Acceptable Diet was Extremely Critical in the Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est (IPC AMN, August 2023). Limited access to health and nutrition services, poor sanitation and low use of improved water sources contribute to high disease prevalence, including diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and malaria (IPC AMN, August 2023). Coverage of measles vaccinations and vitamin A supplementation remained low (OCHA, October 2023).

### Malawi

#### **Recommendations for Madagascar**

#### Background

#### For rural areas:

• Maintain and strengthen humanitarian responses in the two districts that are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) (Ambovombe and Amboasary Atsimo).

• Build resilience in districts classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through December 2024 and which are expected to shift to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from January 2025.

• Continue resilience and development actions in districts classified in IPC Phase 2.

• Distribute agricultural inputs (seeds, small farming tools), taking weather forecasts into account.

• Scale up activities for food diversification and adaptation to climate change.

• Diversify income sources with a focus on sustainable and nutrition-sensitive value chains.

• Maintain and strengthen the implementation of early actions, especially in agricultural and livestock activities.

• Rehabilitate and maintain road networks in isolated districts.

• Pre-position various inputs (agricultural, sanitary, nutritional, etc.).

· Monitor the resurgence of locusts.

#### For urban areas:

• Implement targeted interventions to improve living conditions, such as cash-transfer programmes.

• Continue regular vulnerability assessments to guide humanitarian and resilience actions.

Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world despite significant economic and structural reforms aimed at sustaining economic growth. The economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, employing over 80 percent of the population. Most livelihoods rely on rain-fed agriculture, making the population especially susceptible to weather events like droughts and cyclone-induced floods. Challenges are compounded by weak economic growth, high debt distress, low primary school completion rates, a high prevalence of stunting due to malnutrition, and a significant HIV/AIDS infection rate (WFP, 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

Around 4.2 million people were estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) from June–September 2024, representing 20 percent of the analysed population. Out of these, 430 000 people are in urban areas. The situation is particularly severe in 14 districts classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) (Balaka, Blantyre, Chikhwawa, Chiradzulu, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Nsanje, Phalombe, Salima, Thyolo and Zomba).

From October 2024 to March 2025, 5.7 million people are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity, representing 28 percent of the analysed population. Of these, 553 000 are in urban areas. The number of affected districts is also expected to increase to 19, with the addition of five districts: Lilongwe, Ntcheu, Mchinji, Kasungu and Nkhotakota.

#### Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity

Delayed onset of rains and prolonged dry spells induced by El Niño have significantly impacted the country's agricultural sector and water availability. The central region experienced flooding, causing further strain to resources and infrastructure. The agricultural sector has seen a significant drop in maize production from 3.5 million metric tonnes in 2022/23 to 2.9 million metric tonnes in 2023/24, representing a decrease of about 17 percent.

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>20.9M</b> (2023)		
Population growth (annual %)	<b>-0.1</b> (2023)		
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>1.5</b> (2023)		
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	60 males / 66 females (2022)		
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	30		
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>5</b> (2023)		
HDI ranking	172th		
Share of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>61.9</b> (2021)		
Maize self-sufficiency (2024/2025)	0.86		
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>2.6</b> (Very low) (2020)		
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>34</b> (Very high) (2022):		

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

This situation is exacerbated by the country's ongoing economic instability. It is experiencing a foreign exchange crisis with the Malawi Kwacha losing 25 percent of its value against the US dollar in May 2022 and a further 44 percent in November 2023. This has resulted in high levels of inflation, disruptions to productivity and business operations and an import cover that falls below the internationally accepted standard of less than three months.

The annual inflation rate reached 35 percent in January 2024, the highest in the last five years, and continued to be above the 30 percent mark through May 2024. At 40.7 percent, food inflation was the second highest in the region in May 2024 (after Zimbabwe) (Trading Economics, 2024).

#### **Recommendations**

#### **Immediate actions**

• Ensure immediate humanitarian response for recommended populations.

#### **Short-term actions**

• Promote winter cropping in areas with residual moisture and adequate water sources.

 Facilitate the distribution of inputs during the winter season to enhance agricultural productivity and food security.

• Ensure timely supply and distribution of inputs through the Affordable Inputs Programme.

#### **Medium and long-term actions**

• Promote food diversification to enhance dietary diversity and improve nutritional outcomes.

• Disseminate key messages on the importance of diverse and balanced diets to catalyse behaviour change and positive nutrition practices.

• Address feeding practices and post-harvest management to reduce food loss and waste.

### Mauritius

#### Background

Mauritius, a small island in the Indian Ocean, has the fifth largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the world. In 2023, its GDP reached USD 14.37 billion, with a GDP per capita of around USD 11 396. The Mauritian economy is primarily dominated by the services sector, particularly tourism, financial services and Information and Communication Technology, which collectively account for over 72 percent of GDP. Manufacturing, including textiles, and agriculture, mainly sugarcane, also play significant roles. Mauritius has attracted over USD 10 billion in foreign direct investment, particularly in sectors like electrical equipment, telecommunications, and financial services.

#### Food and nutrition security situation

Mauritius does not suffer from high levels of acute food insecurity or malnutrition. Through the welfare state, people are provided with old age pensions, social aid, minimum wage schemes, while the farming community receive social safety nets such as grant schemes and soft loans. The island is self-sufficient in vegetables and local fruits. However, due to the seasonality of potato and onion, imports are necessary during the off-season. The stock is well monitored by the Agricultural Marketing Board to plan for imports. This comprehensive approach ensures the food security and economic stability of the country.

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>1.3</b> M (2023)
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.5</b> (2023)
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>7</b> (2023)
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>70</b> males <b>/ 77</b> females (2022)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	13
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>6.1</b> (2023)
HDI ranking	<b>72</b> nd
Share of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>5.1</b> (2021)
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>7.1</b> (2022)
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>8.6</b> (2022) Threshold: <b>Low</b>

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

#### **Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity**

Flash floods, cyclones, changes in rainfall patterns, dry spells, pests and diseases, high temperatures combined with high humidity, and sea-level rises impact farmers through reduced production and revenue and increasing cost of production. Heavy rainfall, floods and flash floods since February 2024 damaged settlements and farm buildings.

#### Recommendations

In the short-term
• Regularly clean natural culverts and drains.
In the medium-term
Promote rainwater harvesting techniques.
• Encourage gradual migration to greenhouses and sheltered farming.
• Enhance roof-top gardening and vertical farming.
<ul> <li>Introduce new pest and disease resistant varieties.</li> </ul>
Promote backyard gardening.

Introduce high yielding crop varieties

• Develop Integrated Pest and Disease Management packages.

• Identify micro-climates for plantation of new fruit varieties.

• Develop agro-processing and food value chains.

#### In the long-term

• Promote the Cross Border Initiative.

### Mozambique

#### Background

Mozambique is rich in resources, including arable land, abundant water sources, energy, mineral resources, and newly discovered natural gas deposits off its coast. However, since 2017, the gas-rich Cabo Delgado province has faced a violent insurgency, resulting in loss of lives and livelihoods, widespread displacement, and a humanitarian crisis. Mozambique is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, highly vulnerable to extreme climate events such as droughts, floods, and cyclones. These climate shocks, combined with annual lean seasons and economic disruptions, regularly threaten food security. The conflict in Ukraine has also directly impacted food availability, as Mozambique imports essential goods and commodities from Ukraine and Russia (WFP, 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

Around 2.8million people are estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between April and September 2024, representing 28 percent of the analysed population in 63 districts. Of them 0.5 million people or 5 percent of the analysed population are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Three districts in conflict-affected Cabo Delgado are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) with 20 percent of their population in this phase. (IPC, July 2024)

In the projection period (October 2024 - March 2025), 3.3 million people or 33 percent of the analysed population are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). Of them, 0.8 million people or 8 percent of the analysed population are projected in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Nearly all analysed districts are classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) with seven classified in IPC Phase 4 in Cabo Delgado, Manica and Sofala provinces. (IPC, July 2024)

The majority of the people facing high levels of acute food insecurity are located in the central and northern regions of the country and in the province of Gaza. The most affected population arein rural areas.

The national prevalence of acute malnutrition was estimated at 3.9 percent. However, in surveyed districts in 2024, about 144 300 children aged under 5 years (equalling 11 percent of the total population of this age group in the surveyed districts) and 23 200

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Socio-ec	onom	ic ind	icators
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Population	<b>33.9</b> M (2023)
Population growth (annual %)	<b>1.4</b> (2023)
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>5</b> (2023)
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>57</b> males <b>/ 63</b> females (2022)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	49
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>3.5</b> (2023)
HDI ranking	183rd
Share of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>70.3</b> (2021)
Maize self-sufficiency (2024/2025)	0.68
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>11</b> (2022)
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>3.9</b> (Low) (2020)
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>24.1</b> (High) (2022)

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

pregnant and breastfeeding women are affected by acute malnutrition (IPC, July 2024). Nevertheless, an improvement in the situation is expected during the projections period in certain areas that previously presented a severe situation.



#### Map 8.9 Acute food insecurity, projection



#### Map 8.10 Acute malnutrition, current







### Namibia

#### Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity for Mozambigue

Mozambique is grappling with numerous environmental hazards, shocks, and stressors. These include droughts and irregular rains in the southern, central, and parts of the northern regions of the country; the impact of Tropical Depression Filipo; strong winds; rising prices of basic products; conflicts with wild animals; and the insurgency in Cabo Delgado and parts of Nampula and Niassa. Collectively, these factors contribute to the country's vulnerability, affecting the livelihoods, food security and nutrition of its people and posing significant challenges to its development efforts.

People who rely on small-scale agricultural farming are among the most affected. Their vulnerability is driven by their dependence on the regularity of rains and poultry production, which are highly susceptible to disruptions caused by weather patterns, such as the effects of El Niño, as well as economic fluctuations.

The ongoing conflict in the northern region is one of the factors exacerbating the situation, causing individuals at risk to be in constant movement in search of safer places.

#### **Recommendations for Mozambique**

• Ensure emergency food assistance to about people facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity.

• Ensure the integration of all people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) into development programmes.

• Intensify nutritional education programmes and nutrition programmes at all levels.

• Carry out advocacy at all levels for the implementation of the Food Security Baseline Study to monitor the indicators of food insecurity and chronic Malnutrition.

#### Background

Resource wealth, political stability, and sound macroeconomic management have contributed to poverty reduction and elevated Namibia to an uppermiddle-income country. However, socioeconomic inequalities, remain extremely high and were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Structural constraints to growth have also hampered productivity gains and job creation. Despite its economic classification, 18 percent of Namibians live below the national poverty line, and over a fifth were unemployed in 2021, with women and youth most affected. The country imports up to 80 percent of its food, making it highly vulnerable to external shocks. The impact of climate change, combined with COVID-19, has increased deprivation, food insecurity, and malnutrition among vulnerable rural and urban communities (WFP, 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

The 2023/24 Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) projected the food-insecure population for the period of April-June 2024, based primarily on the assumption that the region would receive normal to above-normal rainfall, leading to an improvement in food security. However, due to changes in these assumptions, the projections for April-June 2024 were updated in May 2024, recommending immediate interventions to address the situation until September 2024.

According to the updated analyses, the entire nation, encompassing all 14 regions, is classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and requires measures for livelihood preservation. The worsening food security situation in Namibia is primarily attributed to the effects of El Niño on crop and livestock yields, climatic shocks, price shocks, economic downturn, and unemployment.

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>2.6M</b> (2023)
Population growth (annual %)	<b>0.8</b> (2023)
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>4.2</b> (2023)
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>55</b> males <b>/ 62</b> females (2022)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	29
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>19.4</b> (2023)
HDI ranking	142nd
Share of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>22.1</b> (2021)
Maize self-sufficiency (2024/2025)	0.35
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>25.9</b> (2022)
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>7.1 (Medium)</b> (2013)
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>16.8</b> (Medium) (2022)

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

#### Map 8.12 Acute food insecurity, Jul-Sep 2024



Source: Namibia presentation at the SADC RVAA, June 2024

The number of people estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between April and June 2024 was set a 1.2 million, representing 40 percent of the population analysed, of which about 33 725 were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). This figure has more than doubled from the 491 000 individuals (or 19 percent of the population studied) who were predicted to be facing acute food insecurity during the period under review in the July 2023 analysis.

From July to September 2024, the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity is projected at 1.4 million, representing 48 percent of the analysed population. Of these, over 85 160 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4)

In the projected period, from July to September 2024, the population facing high levels of acute food insecurity is anticipated to increase by an additional 8 percent. This equates to approximately 1.4 million people, or 48 percent of Namibia's population, of which 85 160 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

### Namibia

Urgent measures are needed to alleviate food deficits and safeguard livelihoods. The most at-risk groups include the unemployed, marginalized communities, those without national documents to access social safety nets, children under 5 years, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and the elderly, in both urban and rural settings.

The entire nation, encompassing all 14 regions, is categorized as being in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and requires measures for livelihood preservation. The worsening food security situation in Namibia is primarily attributed

to the effects of El Niño on crop and livestock yields, climatic shocks, price shocks, economic downturn, and unemployment.

Currently, nationwide data collection for this exercise is underway and is expected to continue until June 2024. The data analysis and report drafting for this exercise is planned for the period from July-August 2024.

The projection update will be followed by the 2024/25 Livelihood VAA to determine the actual state of food security in the country.

#### Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity

Acute food insecurity in Namibia is being driven by a multitude of factors, including weather and economic shocks in addition to human-wildlife conflicts, wildfires and chronic vulnerabilities, namely unemployment and poverty.

The main weather-related shock wasEl Niño, which led to dry spells and erratic rainfall patterns. The Namibia Meteorological Service's Climate Bulletin for March 2024 has underscored the country's struggle with minimal rainfall. From October 2023 to April 2024, most regions experienced extremely poor rainfall performance, marked by erratic patterns and frequent prolonged dry spells.

These climatic conditions adversely affected both crop and livestock production, exacerbating acute

food insecurity. Poor pastures and water deficits have negatively affected livestock production. The lack of adequate grazing has led to poor livestock body conditions, resulting in low livestock prices. In response to these severe drought conditions, the country declared a state of emergency, effective from July 2024 to June 2025.

Economic shocks, including the rising cost of food and non-food items like fuel, coupled with high inflation, have further strained household purchasing power and leading to reduced access to food. Unemployment also contributes to acute food insecurity. A notable decrease in seasonal employment opportunities, particularly in agricultural labour, has been observed due to the negative impact of El Niño on production. The decline in livestock prices, likely due to poor livestock body conditions underinned by inadequate grazing, has also contributed to the situation.

Additional challenges include human-wildlife conflicts and wildfires, which have further strained resources and disrupted livelihoods. Chronic vulnerability, especially poverty among marginalized communities, continues to be a significant issue.

Limited humanitarian food assistance has fallen short to fully address the situation, characterized by a diminished purchasing power of households, amid unemployment and high prices. This has led to household depleted food stocks and relying on markets, which increases their vulnerability.

This combination of factors created a complex and challenging situation that requires comprehensive and targeted interventions.

#### **Recommendations**

• Continue humanitarian assistance for the entire country.

• Preposition of staple cereals for the National Strategic Grain Reserves for drought relief.

• Enhance awareness for the creation of government initiatives regarding the drought program.

• Review the current arrangement for accessing fodder by smallholder farmers to ensure fair prices and accessibility.

• Strengthen the provision of ready-to-eat therapeutic foods.

• Address delays in the supplies of the drought relief assistance to affected areas.

• Develop targeted standard operating procedures to guide beneficiaries' identification and registration to expedite the registration process.

· Support smallholders' capacity offodder production.

Continue with water provisions for domestic and livestock use.

### South Africa

#### Background

South Africa's socio-economic challenges have been exacerbated by weak structural growth and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the country's GDP has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, the recovery has been hindered by persistent structural issues, including power shortages and logistics bottlenecks. The unemployment rate remained high at 32.4 percent in 2023, with women and youth being disproportionately affected.

Inequality in South Africa is among the highest in the world, with a consumption expenditure Gini coefficient of 0.67 in 2018. The legacy of exclusion and an economic growth model that is not pro-poor perpetuate this high inequality, leading to low intergenerational mobility. (World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

According to the General Household Survey (GHS) 2023, food insecurity in South Africa has been on the rise. In 2023, approximately 16.3 million people were reported to have inadequate or severely inadequate access to food, marking a significant increase from the 13.5 million in 2022, mostly in urban areas with 9.1 million people compared with 7.2 million in rural areas. Women were found to be facing more food security challenges than men.

The proportion of households with inadequate access to food in 2023 was notably higher in the provinces of Northern Cape (37.7 percent), North West (32.6 percent), and Eastern Cape (26.1 percent), well above the national average of 23 percent. The percentage of households and individuals who went hungry because there was not enough food in the household remained unchanged in 2021 and 2022 but saw an increase in 2023. This indicates a significant rise in both households and individuals with inadequate access to food in 2023, highlighting the growing concern of food insecurity in the country.

In addition to the aforementioned data, the National Food and Nutrition Security Survey (NFNSS) 2023 found that only 36.5 percent of households in South Africa are food secure based on the Household Food Insecurity Access Score (HFIAS). According to the Household

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>6.4M</b> (2023)
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.9</b> (2023)
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>0.6</b> (2023)
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>59</b> males <b>/ 64</b> females (2022)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	28
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>28</b> (2023)
HDI ranking	110th
Share of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>21.3</b> (2021)
Maize self-sufficiency (2024/2025)	1.03
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>4.3</b> (2022)
Wasting among children	<b>3.8</b> (Low) (2017)

Stunting among children	<b>22.8</b> (High)
under 5 years (%)	(2022)

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

Hunger Score (HHS) which measures people's experiences or perceptions of hunger, nationally, over 79.2 percent of households reported that they experienced little to no hunger, while 15.3 percent experienced moderate hunger and 5.6 percent severe hunger. While the national HFIAS and HHS might have





#### Map 8.14 Wasting in children



indicated that food insecurity in South Africa was not acute at a national level, provincial and district scores revealed crisis scenarios in some parts. In North West, the HFIAS showed that more than half of households were moderately (30 percent) or severely (25 percent) food insecure, while the HHS indicated that 10 percent of households experienced severe hunger, almost double the national HHS average (NFSNN, 2023).

Chronic malnutrition remains a public health challenge in South Africa, affecting the physical and cognitive development of millions of young children.

The prevalence of childhood stunting in 2022 was High, with around 28.8 percent of children under 5 years with low height-for-age. More than 5 percent of children of this age group were wasted, which is considered a Low prevalence. Around 7.8 percent are underweight (NFNSS, 2023).

#### Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity

In South Africa, food and nutrition security is influenced by a variety of factors.

The annual headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased to 5.2 percent while inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages increased to 4.7 percent. The cost of the basic urban food basket in April 2024 was 7.9 percent high than in April 2023, but 0.5 percent lower than in March 2024 (NFNSS, 2023).

The main sources of income nationally were salaries/ wages/commission (54.8 percent), grants (23 percent), and remittances (8.8 percent). More than a third of households in Eastern Cape and Limpopo listed social grants as their main source of income.

In the second half of 2024, the expected commercial maize crop is projected to be 19 percent lower than in 2023. The closing stocks of maize for the 2024/25 marketing year are projected to be 31.2 percent lower than the previous year's ending stocks. The exports of white maize for the 2024/25 marketing year are projected to be 26.5 percent below the previous marketing year and yellow maize exports 68.6 percent lower.

### Zambia

#### Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity for South Africa continued

The three main maize-producing provinces – Free State, Mpumalanga and North West – are expected to produce 80 percent of the 2024 crop. The percentage of households participating in any agricultural activities rose to 17 percent in 2023, with increases recorded in all provinces except for Western Cape and Gauteng.

#### **Recommendations**

#### **Immediate actions**

• Ensure proper targeting and monitoring of social protection programmes.

• Monitor nutrition situation.

• Scale-up diversified livelihoods programmes for improved self-reliance, resilience building and social protection to all vulnerable communities.

#### **Short-term actions**

 Implement National Food and Nutrition Security Programmes using the NFNSS results to target priority districts. This will also assist with monitoring of progress in the priority districts of the NFNSP.

• Strengthen current rural poverty strategies.

• Create and strengthen early warning systems to provide timely information.

#### **Medium and long-term actions**

• Promote domestic food production to cushion households from hunger and economic impacts.

• Develop a programme or strategy for addressing urban poverty factoring nutrition issues.

• Promote good nutritional practices at household-level through nutrition sensitive activities, such as home gardening as well as educational awareness on food and water safety.

• Strengthen integrated agricultural production with active involvement from farmer organizations and civil society.

#### Background

Zambia ranks among the countries with the highest levels of poverty and inequality globally. Stark ruralurban disparities in access to essential services hinder human capital development and labor productivity. More than half of the population lives below the poverty line, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further strained an economy already weakened by recurrent climate shocks, falling copper prices, and unsustainable fiscal policies. The country is experiencing its worst drought on record due to the ongoing effects of El Niño, with some regions receiving less than 50 percent of their usual annual rainfall. This has severely impacted food production and natural resources, exacerbating food security issues. The country currently hosts over 82,000 refugees and asylum seekers, most of whom are women and children fleeing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (WFP, 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

The number of people facing high levels acute food insecurity in Zambia has increased alarmingly to around 6.6 million or 33.4 percent of the total population according to the estimate provided for the SADC Appeal. This is an increase of 222 percent compared to the IPC figure covering the 2023–2024 lean period. The unfolding drought emergency in Zambia poses a critical threat to the food security and nutrition of communities, particularly in the realm of nutrition. An estimated 14 million people, including 2.9 million children under 5 years and 1.1 million pregnant and breastfeeding women, are living in the 84 droughtaffected districts.

The affected population is already experiencing inadequate infant feeding practices, such as low exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) of 70 percent and low Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) at Critical/ Extreme levels of 13 percent. In addition, poor water and sanitation services have led to the outbreak of waterborne diseases including diarrhoea and cholera.

Due to the food and nutrition vulnerability of households in the 84 drought-affected districts, the ZVAC has infused a component of nutrition to ascertain the affected number of people in need of intervention. The current estimates are based on the rapid assessments that fed into the 2024 drought response plan. These figures are expected to increase once the ZVAC is concluded, and results generated. Due to the urgency of the matter, the ZVAC results are expected to be made available by July 2024.

#### **Drivers of food and nutrition Insecurity**

The country has witnessed a number of shocks that undermine food and nutrition security, including floods, dry spells, increased temperatures, food price inflation, Fall Armyworm outbreaks and cassava brown streak disease.

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>20.6M</b> (2023)	
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.7</b> (2023)	
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>5.8</b> (2023)	
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>59</b> males <b>/ 65</b> females (2022)	
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	39	
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>5.9</b> (2023)	
HDI ranking	153rd	
Share of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>58.7</b> (2021)	
Maize self-sufficiency (2024/2025)	0.59	
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>10.8</b> (2022)	
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>4.2</b> (Low) (2018)	
Stunting among children under 5 vears (%)	<b>31.4</b> (Very high) (2022)	

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

#### Map 8.15 People in need, date



### Zimbabwe

#### Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity for Zambia continued

impacted surface water levels, crop production and pasture growth. In February 2024, Zambia's President declared the country's drought a National Disaster and Emergency. A total of USD 1.4 billion is required to provide life-saving and early recovery assistance to the 6.6 million people (1.1 million farming households) affected across the country. Out of the 116 districts in the country, 84 have been significantly affected by drought, spanning seven provinces. In addition, floods have impacted about ten districts in three provinces.

The drought has mostly affected the Central, Lusaka, Eastern, Southern and Western provinces of the country. These provinces have historically contributed over 58 percent of the annual national maize crop production and host over 76 percent of the country's livestock population. They also host over 3 800 households engaged in aquaculture, where over 165 000 people rely on fishing for their livelihoods and food security. The drought has resulted in total failure of maize crops, with 982 800 hectares out of an estimated 2.3 million hectares planted to this crop countrywide being destroyed.

The number of affected people is projected to increase once the In-Depth Vulnerability and Needs Assessment for 2024/2025, which is currently underway, is concluded. Accordingly, the current drought response plan will be adjusted.

The country is also grappling with outbreaks and the spread of transboundary and non-transboundary pests and diseases of crops and livestock. These include outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), anthrax, locusts, Fall Armyworms, among others. These outbreaks have led to reduced grazing resources, livestock and wildlife deaths, and potential waterrelated conflicts at the community level.

#### Recommendations

#### Short-term

Amid a heightened likelihood of a growing number of drought-affected people, especially as the lean season approaches, there is a need for the provision of immediate life-saving humanitarian assistance to go along with early recovery for resilience.

#### Medium-longer term

To address these issues, it is recommended to continue with the mobilisation of resources and the provision of relief and implementation of resilience-building interventions, such as mini-irrigation schemes. These measures can help mitigate the impacts of the current crisis and build resilience for future challenges.

#### Background

Zimbabwe was once among the African countries with the highest living standards, supported by a skilled workforce and superior infrastructure. It continues to boast competitive sectors in agriculture and agribusiness, including sugar, cotton, horticulture, and meat and dairy, along with potential in tourism and mining, especially for energy transition minerals like lithium. However, persistent inflation, high dependence on low-productivity agriculture, slow structural transformation, and intermittent shocks like droughts. and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to widespread poverty and vulnerability. The effects of El Niño exacerbate the challenges of Zimbabwe's semi-arid climate, affecting food security and water availability. Inflationary pressures remain high in 2024 due to local currency depreciation (WFP, 2024; World Bank, April 2024).

#### Food and nutrition security situation

The number of people facing high levels acute food insecurity in Zimbabwe is projected to increased to about 7.6 million or 50.2 percent of the total population in October 2024–March 2025. This represents a 79.5 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023–2024. This sharp deterioration reflects the severe effects of the El Niño drought that led to widespread crop failure and significant livestock losses across the country. reflects reduced food availability and high prices that limited household access to nutritious and diverse food in adequate amounts.

#### **Urban areas**

In urban areas the prevalence of acute food insecurity increased from 29 percent in 2023 to 35 percent in 2024, affecting approximately 1.7 milion people. An improvement in diets of children under 5 years old was registered, with 10.4 percent achieving a minimum acceptable diet in 2024 compared with 1.3 percent in 2023. However, this figure remains below the national target of 25 percent and is still considered Critical by IFE Core Group thresholds.

Stunting levels are 'High' according to WHO thresholds, affecting 23.2 percent of children under 5 years, with boys (26.5 percent) more affected than

#### Socio-economic indicators

Population	<b>16.7M</b> (2023)	
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.1</b> (2023)	
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>5</b> (2023)	
Life expectancy at birth, (years)	<b>56</b> males <b>/ 62</b> females (2022)	
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	35	
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	<b>8.8</b> (2023)	
HDI ranking	159th	
Share of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in total employment	<b>61.6</b> (2021)	
Maize self-sufficiency (2024/2025)	0.36	
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49 (%)	<b>11</b> (2022)	
Wasting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>2.9</b> (Low) (2019)	
Stunting among children under 5 years (%)	<b>21.6</b> (High) (2022)	

Source: UNDESA (annual population growth); ILO (unemployment); FAO (share of agricultural, forestry and fishery employment); UNDP (HDI Global Index).

girls (19.9 percent). Underweight and wasting were also more prevalent in boys, while overweight and obesity were more common in girls.

The adult population also faced nutritional challenges, with 50 percent of adults aged 18–59 years and over 60 percent of adults aged 60 years and above overweight or obese.

### Zimbabwe

#### **Rural areas**

In rural areas food and nutrition security was mostly affected by unfavourable weather conditions and economic shocks. Prolonged mid-season dry spells (88.7 percent) and cash shortages (69.5 percent) were the most prevalent shocks experienced by rural households. The proportion of rural households that grew crops decreased across all crops, except for sorghum with an increase from 19 percent in 2022/23 to 23 percent in the 2023/24 season.

ousehold average monthly income in rural areas decreased from USD 116 in 2022 to USD 88 in 2024. The lowest household average monthly income was reported in Matabeleland North (USD 66) and the highest was reported in Matabeleland South (USD 109). In rural areas, 7.5 percent of children received a hot meal at school, with the Matabeleland North province having the highest proportion, well above the average at nearly 30 percent.

The proportion of rural households engaging in any form of livelihood coping strategies increased from 39 percent in 2023 to 53 percent in 2024. Midlands province had the highest proportion of households engaging in any form of livelihood coping strategies, estimated at 63 percent, while Mashonaland Central province had the least, estimated at 42 percent. The proportion of households with a high coping score in the reduced consumption coping strategy of food (CSI at least 10) increased from 30 percent in 2023 to 60 percent in 2024.

#### **Drivers of food and nutrition Insecurity**

Weather extremes and economic shocks have been the main drivers of food and nutrition insecurity.

The 2023-2024 rainfall season was characterised by largely below-average rainfall due to the El Niño phenomenon and an erratic spatial and temporal distribution. This resulted in the worst drought induced by El Niño in 40 years, with negative impacts on the 2023/2024 agricultural season output. Given these challenges, Zimbabwe declared a state of disaster in April 2024. This drought resulted in the failure of staple cereal crops and the depletion of water resources and pastures. In addition, there were nationwide outbreaks

of Fall Armyworm and African Armyworm as well as an isolated but devastating outbreak of armoured crickets that contributed to the reduced crop output. The total cereal production was at about 750 000 metric tonnes, significantly below national requirement of 2.2 million metric tonnes. Over 9 000 drought-related cattle deaths were reported, and over 1.4 million cattle heads were reported as being at high risk of drought conditions and death due to lack of pasture and water.

In addition, economic shocks amid a difficult macroeconomic situation have been a driver constraining access to food. The national average household monthly income decreased from USD 232 in 2023 to USD 202 in 2024, with Manicaland having the highest average income (USD 234). The most reported shock was a sharp increase in prices of basic and other commodities (78.8 percent).

In the first months of 2024, the annual inflation rates consistently increased, starting at 35 percent in January and reaching 57.5 percent in April. However, the Consumer Price Index showed month-on-month declines, reflecting the effects of macroeconomic measures to contain inflation, including the introduction of a structure currency, and the increase in foreign currency receipts in the first months of 2024.

The Reserve Bank has introduced a structured currency, which was expected to alleviate inflationary pressures in the short to medium term. The Monetary Policy Statement has primarily focused on immediate measures necessary to boost the demand for local currency in the multicurrency economy, fostering a stable and sustainable exchange rate, rebuilding market confidence and policy credibility, and supporting a stable and sustainable economy as enshrined in Vision 2030 and NDS1.

There has been a 23 percent increase in foreign currency receipts in January and February 2024, amounting to USD 2.2 billion, compared to USD 1.8 billion received during the same period in 2023. This increase in foreign currency receipts is a positive sign for the economy.

#### **Recommendations-**

Households engaged in food production appeared to achieve greater food security and their nutritional status tended to be better than that of non-farming urban households of the same socio-economic status. In addition, production for consumption and sale could generate revenue and reduce monthly household expenditure on food, leaving more cash available for other basic household needs (such as health, housing, education and clothing).

There is need for the Government to continue spearheading policies and strategies to promote urban agriculture on small plots of land close to urban areas, backyard or in container gardens. Urban farming can contribute to the reduction of food insecurity and increase access to fresh, healthy food in cities, as well as provide several other environmental and economic benefits such as reducing the distance that food travels from farm to plate.

• Promoting economic development through an increase in the production of economic goods and services can help to create jobs and increase income, which in turn can help to increase access to food, as food insecurity is often linked to poverty and lack of economic opportunities.

• The findings show that owning a business was associated with improvements in food security indicators. Entrepreneurship holds emancipatory potential to accelerate the transition towards more sustainable food systems. There is therefore the need to implement policies that promote the ease of doing business.

• With about 53 percent of rural households engaging in negative livelihood coping strategies, which undermine the future productivity of the household, there is need for Government and partners to implement policies and strategies focusing on livelihood diversification and resilience building of households. This will allow households to deal with economic and natural shocks in order to ensure sustainable livelihoods and economic growth.

• In the face of a gradual convergence of unfavourable dietary patterns in urban and rural areas, including the consumption of highly processed foods, policies

and legislation are needed to promote healthy food environments, both formal and informal, and to empower consumers to make nutritious food choices. This needs to be coupled with local initiatives to create healthier retail food environments which include restricting advertising of energy-dense foods high in fats, sugars and/or salt.

• With only 7.5 percent of children in rural areas were receiving a hot meal at school, there is need for the Government of Zimbabwe to consider adapting new strategies from other countries which seem to have a sustainable Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP).

Medium-longer term

To address these issues, it is recommended to continue with the mobilisation of resources and the provision of relief and implementation of resilience-building interventions, such as mini-irrigation schemes. These measures can help mitigate the impacts of the current crisis and build resilience for future challenges.

