3 years of severe drought

Three years of consecutive severe drought have wiped out harvests and hampered people’s access to food in the Grand South of Madagascar. Of the ten hardest-hit southern districts, Ambasary Atsimo is the epicenter, with nearly 14,000 people affected by extreme lack of food and basic services, even with full employment of coping strategies.

Overview

A sustained deterioration in food insecurity is expected in the Grand South of Madagascar from April to December 2021. Over 1.1 million people are in high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) due to insufficient rainfall, rising food prices and sandstorms. The lean season is expected to begin earlier than usual for the current consumption year, as households will deplete their low food stocks due to minimal production. During the current analysis period (April-September 2021), which begins with a harvest period, 1.14 million people need urgent action (IPC Phase 3 or above).

Ambasary Atsimo is the most affected district classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), 75% of its population is in IPC Phase 3 or above, and nearly 14,000 people critically food insecure in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). These people have virtually exhausted their ability to use coping strategies to access food and income. This results in a highly inadequate level of food consumption, both in terms of quantity and quality of food consumed. This district is also in a nutritional emergency in terms of nutritional indicators.

The districts of Ambavobe, Ampanihy, Beloha, and Tsihombe are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), with 55% to 60% of their population in need of urgent action to protect livelihoods, reduce food consumption deficits, and save lives. Tsihombe are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), with 55% to 60% of their population in need of urgent action to protect livelihoods, reduce food consumption deficits, and save lives. The districts of Ambovombe, Ampanihy, Beloha, and Tsihombe are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), with 55% to 60% of their population in need of urgent action to protect livelihoods, reduce food consumption deficits, and save lives. During the projected period from October to December 2021, corresponding to the lean season period, with insufficient food stocks, high prices of staples due to COVID-19 and related restrictions and poor employment opportunities, the food situation will likely worsen, bringing the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above to 1.31 million. The population in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) will likely double, and the number of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) or worse, will likely exceed 510,000. The district of Betioky will be added to the list of districts in IPC Phase 3 (including Betioka, Bekily, and five communes of Taolagnaro).

Key Drivers

Food Insecurity

In several areas of the Grand South, insecurity is rife, affecting the smooth running of humanitarian interventions as well as household livelihood activities.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions led to an increase in food prices due to low food availability and reduced income due to poor employment opportunities, reducing the purchasing power at the household level.

Drought

Devastating drought, characterised by below average rainfall for the last 20 years in areas including Tsihombe, Beloha, Ambasary and Ambavobe, has curtailed production and disrupted livelihoods.

Recommended Actions

Humanitarian Assistance

Immediate and urgent humanitarian action is needed for populations experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) to save lives, reduce food gaps, and prevent a total collapse of livelihoods.

Livelihood Support

Provide livelihood assistance to support the resumption of the next cropping season while facilitating access (physical/financial) to inputs (seeds, plant material, etc.) and agricultural inputs (pest control, cash vaccination of livestock), and improve access to markets.

Early Warning & Action

Conduct early/anticipatory actions based on weather forecasts and other recognized warning mechanisms to cope with shocks/droughts, protect livelihoods (savings, financial inclusion, insurance) and reduce food consumption deficits.

Population in Phases of acute food insecurity

- Minimal
- Stressed
- Crisis
- Emergency
- Famine
- Areas not analysed

Classification standards account levels of food availability or access at least 13% of households, whileIPC indicates levels of food availability and access from the IPC Phase 1 (normal) to phase 5 (catastrophe).

Population in Phases of acute food insecurity

- Minimal
- Stressed
- Crisis
- Emergency
- Famine
- Areas not analysed

Classification standards account levels of food availability or access at least 13% of households, whileIPC indicates levels of food availability and access from the IPC Phase 1 (normal) to phase 5 (catastrophe).

Population in Phases of acute food insecurity

- Minimal
- Stressed
- Crisis
- Emergency
- Famine
- Areas not analysed

Classification standards account levels of food availability or access at least 13% of households, whileIPC indicates levels of food availability and access from the IPC Phase 1 (normal) to phase 5 (catastrophe).

Population in Phases of acute food insecurity

- Minimal
- Stressed
- Crisis
- Emergency
- Famine
- Areas not analysed

Classification standards account levels of food availability or access at least 13% of households, whileIPC indicates levels of food availability and access from the IPC Phase 1 (normal) to phase 5 (catastrophe).

Population in Phases of acute food insecurity

- Minimal
- Stressed
- Crisis
- Emergency
- Famine
- Areas not analysed

Classification standards account levels of food availability or access at least 13% of households, whileIPC indicates levels of food availability and access from the IPC Phase 1 (normal) to phase 5 (catastrophe).

Population in Phases of acute food insecurity

- Minimal
- Stressed
- Crisis
- Emergency
- Famine
- Areas not analysed

Classification standards account levels of food availability or access at least 13% of households, whileIPC indicates levels of food availability and access from the IPC Phase 1 (normal) to phase 5 (catastrophe).