GUATEMALA: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Snapshot | March 2022 – February 2023

Current Situation Key Figures | March - May 2022

Over 3.9 million people out of the 17.4 million people analyzed have experienced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) in Guatemala between March and May 2022.

Overview

In the latest IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis, the 17.4 million inhabitants of all 22 departments of Guatemala were analyzed. Between March and May 2022, more than 3.9 million people have experienced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) and therefore require urgent actions. This figure is expected to increase to 4.6 million people in the period of June to September 2022, during which the lean season falls, and to decrease to 3.2 million people for the period of October 2022 to February 2023, the harvest season.

The population in the worst conditions is made up mainly of small subsistence/subsistence farmers, whose reserves have been depleted and have also seen their ability to invest for the next harvest diminished by the high cost of several inputs and fuel, small informal merchants have had difficulty selling their products due to the increase in fuel prices. This has led to an increase in the prices of food and raw materials and reduced sources of employment, so that many households have been forced to use crisis and emergency coping strategies to solve their food gaps, such as the sale of assets and the use of their savings. According to the Food Security Survey (FSS) of the World Food Program (WFP), 28% of the population reports limited and poor food consumption, likewise, regarding the use of livelihood strategies, 19% of households report using stress strategies, 30% crisis strategies and 14% emergency strategies during the current period.

However, due to the crisis generated by the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, a sustained increase in the prices of food and raw materials as well as some inputs is expected. Therefore, between June and September 2022, households will likely face greater difficulties in terms of food availability and access, and their food insecurity situation could deteriorate during this period. Between October 2022 and February 2023, an increase in employment sources derived from coffee and sugarcane crops is expected, there could be greater marketing opportunities, so the food insecurity situation could improve for a good part of the country’s departments.

Key Drivers

High food prices

The increase in food prices and in particular in basic grains, which have been the highest in the last 15 years, is expected to continue throughout 2022, in a context of rising inflation and the cost of the basic food basket increased from 19.4% in March last year to 6.4% in the same month of 2022, which would affect access to food consumption mainly for the population that depends on the purchase of food, and who already report limitations of access to the market due to lack of money.

Conflict between Russia and Ukraine

This conflict has caused the price of fertilizers and agricultural inputs to rise 128.7% in March 2022, adding to last year’s 42.1% increase in SICA countries and therefore in food prices, since both countries are among the largest producers worldwide. SICA member countries are importers of fertilizers from Russia, prices in the fertilizer market increased by 60% in supply, so that prices are expected to remain high, with the consequent risk to agricultural crop yields. In this context, fuel and transportation prices have also increased; causing speculations and increases in food prices.

Depletion of basic grain reserves

The limited availability and depletion of basic grain reserves, both in the current and projected periods, in a context of seasonal hunger, is associated with food gaps in disadvantaged communities that already had unsatisfied basic needs, especially in those departments with greater dependence on subsistence agriculture.

Loss of jobs and income

The loss of jobs and decrease in income, which has intensified internal and external migration in search of jobs, will likely affect food insecurity in the projected periods more, as they could further limit household purchasing power and access to food. However, by 2023, a slight increase in the labor force is likely and better employment opportunities could be expected.

COVID-19 pandemic

In Guatemala, the COVID-19 pandemic is still present, although mobility restrictions have practically disappeared. However, vaccination coverage with complete vaccination schedule reaches about 8%. The flexibility of measures and the possible appearance of new variants could provoke outbreaks and/or an increase in cases for the entire period of analysis, which could generate work incapacity and certain limitations to the economic impulse, for which reason the return to restrictive measures would depend on the increase and effectiveness of vaccination strategies in those departments defined as being on orange or red alert.

Acute Food Insecurity Trends 2020 - 2023

Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(Imagery used represents highest severity affecting at any point in the analyzed population)

Evidence Level (accounted for in Phase classification)

Area receives significant assistance (IPC Phase 1 or above)

Area receives no aid (IPC Phase 2 or above)

High

Medium

Acceptable

Areas not analysed

Areas not analysed

Areas with inadequate evidence

Areas with inadequate evidence

1 - Minimal

2 - Stressed

3 - Crisis

4 - Emergency

5 - Famine

Evidence Level

1 - Minimal

2 - Stressed

3 - Crisis

4 - Emergency

5 - Famine

Acute Food Insecurity Trends 2020 - 2023

Over 3.9 million people (20% of the analyzed population of 19.4 million) are likely to experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) in Guatemala between June and September 2022.

Over 3.2 million people (19% of the analyzed population of 17.4 million) are likely to experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) in Guatemala between October 2022 and February 2023.

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