

Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)
Nepal Food Security Monitoring System / Nepal Khadhyo Surakshya Anugaman Pranali (NeKSAP)
With support from the European Union

Press Release: Food Security Situation (mid-July to mid-November 2015)

1. Current situation: mid-July to mid-November 2015

District Food Security Networks (DFSN) in 66 districts met in mid-November to review the food security situation between mid-July to mid-November 2015 and provide an outlook for the food security situation between mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016. Based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), DFSNs classified Village Development Committees (VDCs) as either highly (Phase 3), moderately (Phase 2) or minimally (Phase 1) food insecure. Because of the ongoing unrest in the Terai, DFSN meetings were not conducted as planned in the 8 districts of Dhanusa, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Siraha and Saptari; these will be rescheduled if possible in the near future.

The April 2015 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks produced significant impacts on livelihoods and food security, particularly in the central, western and eastern hills, which were still evident in this period as well. Nevertheless, DFSNs reported that the food security situation has generally improved in the earthquake-affected districts as compared to the previous two rounds in mid-May and mid-July. DFSNs did not classify any VDCs as severely food insecure (phase 4) in this period. DFSNs classified 120 VDCs in 9 districts as highly food insecure (phase 3) and estimated that roughly 260,000 people of 60,000 households were currently highly food insecure and require humanitarian assistance. Phase 3 is defined as a situation where household food consumption gaps are higher than normal and households are able to meet minimum food needs only through the accelerated depletion of livelihood assets. DFSNs attributed the situation to earthquake impacts, production drops in summer crops (maize, paddy and millet), soaring market prices and the effects of the on-going fuel crisis.

The largest number of VDCs classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3) was in Sindhupalchowk, where the DFSN classified 33 VDCs in Phase 3, attributing the situation to the April and May earthquakes and production drops in maize (20 percent), paddy (22 percent), millet (10 percent) and livestock (16 percent). The situation was further aggravated by an increase in food prices by 40-80 percent and a 20 percent decrease in remittance inflow. Other VDCs classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3) in the earthquake-affected districts were as follows: 20 in Gorkha, 13 in Nuwakot, 12 in Ramechhap, 11 in Dolakha and 2 in Rasuwa. In total, in these earthquake-affected districts, roughly 204,400 people from 48,600 households were reported as highly food insecure.

In the far western region, the DFSN in Bajura classified 10 VDCs as highly food insecure (phase 3), with an estimated 32,800 people of 7,400 households in this phase. The situation was attributed to production drops in maize and millet (50 percent) and paddy (13 percent) and reduced employment opportunities (30 percent). Owing to the summer crop losses, DFSNs in the Karnali also classified 12 VDCs of Mugu and 7 VDCs of Dolpa as highly food insecure (Phase 3), with an estimated 22,800 people of 4,000 households in this phase in the two districts.

Furthermore, DFSNs in 17 districts classified an additional 298 VDCs (46 VDCs in Sindhupalchowk, 27 VDCs in Nuwakot, 12 VDCs in Rasuwa, 32 VDCs in Kavrepalanchok, 14 VDCs in Dolkaha, 22 VDCs in Ramechhap, 16 VDCs in Dhading, 13 VDCs in Okhaldhunga, 15 VDCs in Taplejung, 9 VDCs in Khotang, 17 VDCs in Gorkha, 17 VDCs in Bajura, 2 VDCs in Doti, 13 VDCs in Dolpa, 27 VDCs in Humla, 10 VDCs in Kalikot and 6 VDCs in Jajarkot) as moderately food insecure (Phase 2), a situation where households are able to meet minimum food needs with traditional coping strategies but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in irreversible coping strategies.

DFSNs classified the rest of the country as minimally food insecure (Phase 1), a situation where households can secure food and non-food needs without shifting or changing livelihood strategies. These households are capable of adjusting to small scale stresses caused by hazards, disasters, shocks, epidemics and conflicts or violence by means of existing social, natural and economic capital. In these areas, the food security situation was reported as normal because of sufficient stocks of summer crops (maize, paddy and millet) and income from on-farm and off-farm activities which contributed to household food availability and access and limited the impact of natural disasters and man-made shocks on utilization and stability.

See Map 1 for the geographic distribution of food insecure areas.

2. Outlook: mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016

District Food Security Networks, based on current conditions and likely scenarios, have forecasted whether the food security situation will improve, remain stable or deteriorate during the period of mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016. Owing to production drops in summer crops, the lean season effect, the persistent impact of the earthquakes on food security and livelihoods, the fuel crisis, road blockades, and high market prices, DFSNs anticipated that a significant number of VDCs will be classified as moderately food insecure or worse off in this upcoming period.

In the far western region, the DFSN in Bajura indicated a potential deterioration in the food security situation, with 10 VDCs possibly being classified as severely food insecure (Phase 4) and 17 VDCs likely to be classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3) due to the lean agricultural period, limited wage employment opportunities, less remittance inflow, possible food price hikes and the phasing out of the Rural Construction and Infrastructure Works (RCIW) programme. Similarly, in the Karnali, the DFSN in Mugu projected that the 12 VDCs currently classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3) might become severely food insecure (Phase 4) because a large (85 percent) production drop in summer crops. Furthermore, DFSNs anticipated that 7 VDCs of Dolpa, 17 VDCs of Humla, 12 VDCs of Mugu and 10 VDCs of Kalikot will likely be classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3). In all of these districts, DFSNs attributed the scenario to production drops in summer crops and food price hikes.

DFSNs in the earthquake-affected districts of the central hills anticipated an improvement in the food security situation with the number of highly food insecure (Phase 3) VDCs decreasing to 28 during mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016 as compared to 71 in the current cycle. As reported by the DFSNs, the summer crop harvest (maize, paddy, millet and potato), post-earthquake recovery interventions of the government and non-government agencies, and income from on-farm and off-farm activities and remittances were the key factors contributing to the positive outlook. The

district-wise distribution of forecasted highly food insecure (Phase 3) VDCs during mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016 is as follows: Dolakha (11), Ramechhap (12), Rasuwa (2) and Nuwakot (3). In Gorkha, however, the DFSN forecast that 20 VDCs currently classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3) will continue in the same classification.

Likewise, DFSNs predicted that 410 VDCs in 23 districts might be classified as moderately food insecure (Phase 2) in the period of mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016. The number of VDCs by district likely to be classified as moderately food insecure is as follows: Achham (19), Baitadi (13), Bajhang (27), Darchula (20), Doti (18), Dolpa (16), Humla (10), Jumla (16), Kalikot (20), Salyan (18), Dailekh (10), Surkhet (10), Jajarkot (11), Dhading (5), Sindhuli (23), Dolakha (23), Ramechhap (22), Rasuwa (12), Nuwakot (28), Kavre (32), Sindhupalchowk (33), Taplejung (15) and Khotang (9).

District Food Security Networks forecasted that the rest of the country will be classified as minimally food insecure (Phase 1) in the next four-month period. In this period, households will utilize food stocks maintained through the harvest of summer crops (paddy, maize, millet) and will continue to have regular income through wage labour, agriculture and livestock product sales and remittances. However, the ongoing unrest in the Terai and snowfall-induced road blockades in the mountains might hinder the smooth functioning of markets and lead to further food price hikes.

Details of the current food security situation (mid-July to mid-November 2015) and the food security outlook (mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016) will be available in the Nepal Food Security Bulletin Issue 46 at www.neksap.org.np.

3. Background and methods

The Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKSAP) operates nationwide, including District Food Security Networks in 74 of 75 districts (only Kathmandu is not included). NeKSAP is implemented by the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) and World Food Programme (WFP) with the strategic guidance of the National Planning Commission (NPC) and with funding from the European Union (EU). Additional partners include the Central Bureau of Statistics, FAO, Unicef, the National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat, ICIMOD and the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

District Food Security Networks (DFSN) use the NeKSAP food security phase classification method to classify the severity and causes of acute food insecurity in Nepal¹. By adopting the phase classification method, DFSNs use a set of standard procedures and tools to reach a consensus and classify the food security situation into five phases:

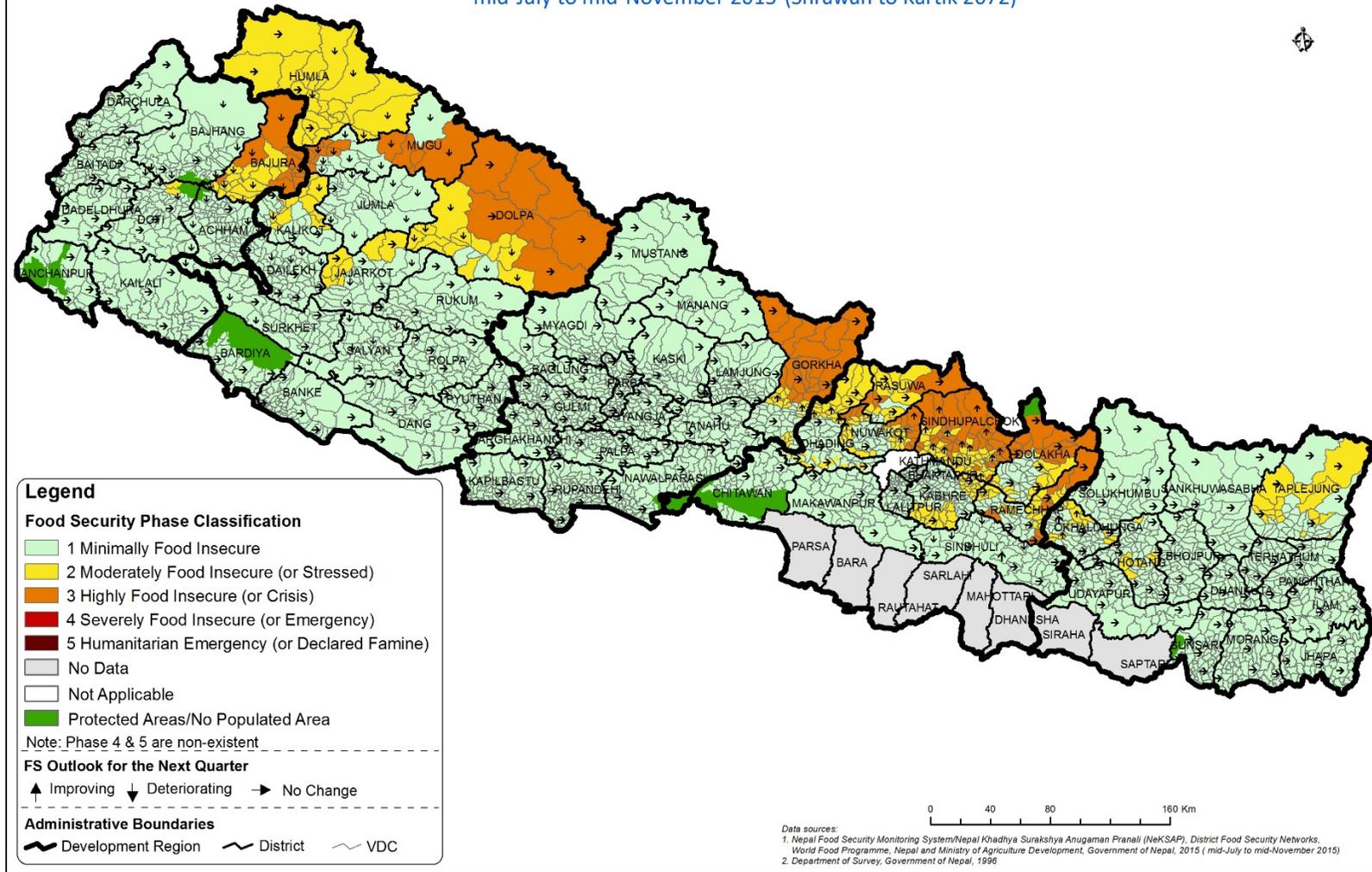
- Minimally food insecure (Phase 1): where households can secure food and non-food needs without shifting livelihood strategies;

¹ For a comprehensive picture of the food security situation in Nepal, additional information on chronic food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty from other sources, including the 2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), 2010/11 Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS), 2014 Small Area Estimation of Food Insecurity and Undernutrition in Nepal and 2014 IPC Chronic Food Security Analysis, should be consulted.

- Moderately food insecure (or Stressed) (Phase 2): where households are able to meet minimum food needs with traditional coping strategies but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in irreversible coping strategies;
- Highly food insecure (or Crisis) (Phase 3): where food consumption gaps are higher and households can meet minimum food needs only with accelerated depletion of livelihood assets;
- Severely food insecure (or Emergency) (Phase 4): where households are unable to meet food and non-food needs without losing livelihood assets; and
- Humanitarian emergency (or Declared Famine) (Phase 5): where almost all households have an extreme lack of food and other basic needs and starvation, destitution, irreversible loss of capital resources and loss of life are evident.

Food Security Situation of Nepal

mid-July to mid-November 2015 (Shrawan to Kartik 2072)



Map 1: Food security situation of Nepal (mid-July to mid-November 2015)