

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 and UK aid from the UK government

1. Current situation: mid-March to mid-July 2016

Overview

District Food Security Networks (DFSN) in 74 districts met in June and July 2016 to review the food security situation between mid-March to mid-July 2016 (the Nepali months of Chaitra, Baisakh, Jesth and Asadh) and provide an outlook for the food security situation between mid-July to mid-November 2016 (the Nepali months of Shrawan, Bhadra, Ashwin, Kartik). DFSNs classified each Village Development Committee (VDC) and municipality in their district based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)¹ method as either minimally food insecure (Phase 1), moderately food insecure (Phase 2) or highly food insecure (Phase 3). In this round there were no VDCs classified as severely food insecure (Phase 4). Overall, DFSNs classified 212 VDCs as highly food insecure (Phase 3), 376 VDCs (including 5 municipalities) as moderately food insecure (Phase 2), and 2,779 VDCs and municipalities as minimally food insecure (Phase 1). See **Map 1** for the geographic distribution of food insecure areas.

The food security situation in this period was affected by seasonality (winter lean period), weather events (severe drought in the mid-and far-western hills and mountains), production decreases in summer and winter crops, and the continuing impacts of the April-May 2015 earthquakes. Furthermore, landslides, road blockades, disruptions to supply chains, and associated price hikes were a recurring phenomenon in the hills and mountains during the early monsoon period in June and July which affected food security. On the other hand, the resumption of cross-border trade with India from January/February onwards and the harvest of winter crops, especially wheat, in April/May improved food availability and access in many areas.

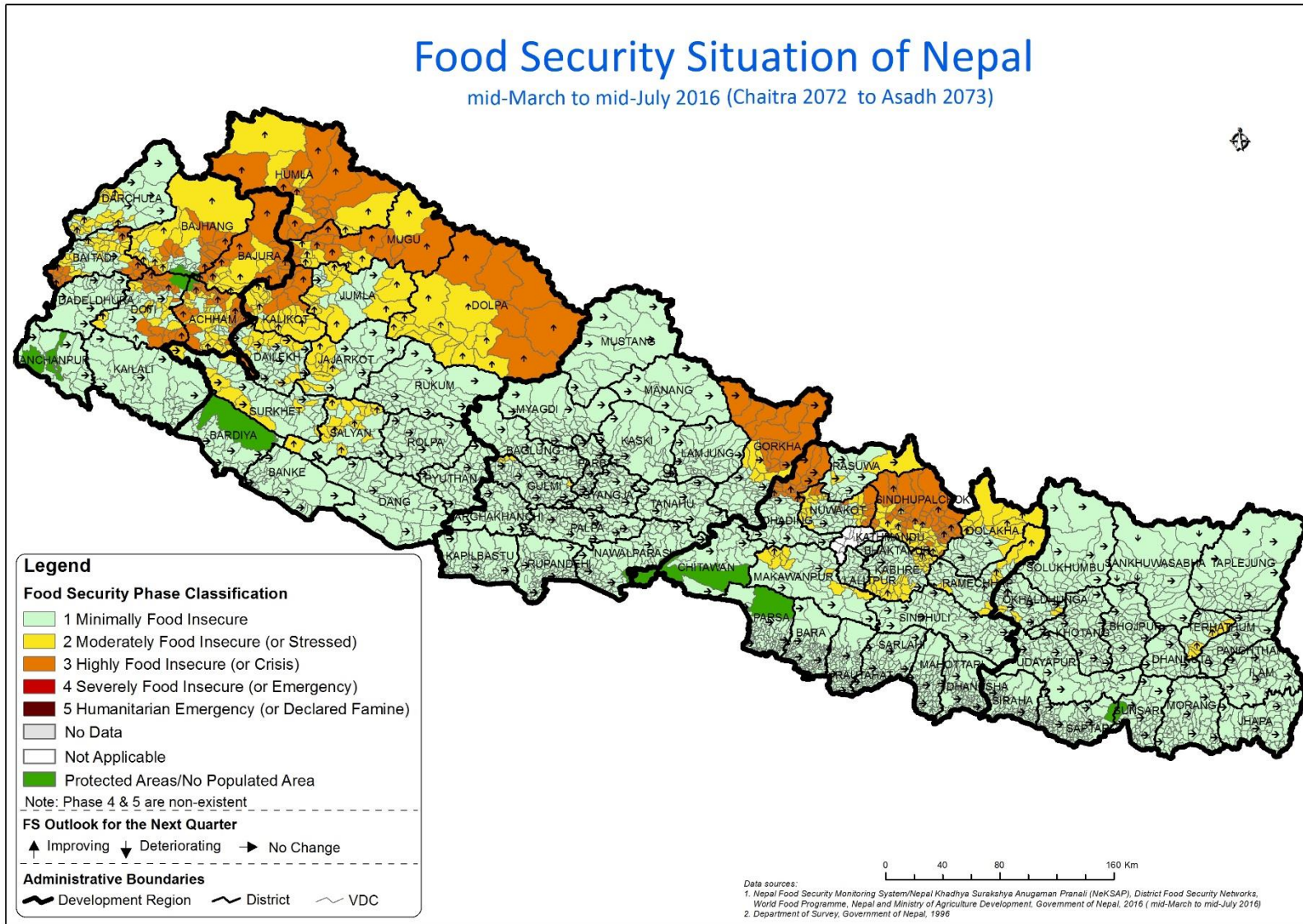
Highlights

Since the April-May 2015 earthquakes, District Food Security Networks (DFSN) have reported a gradual improvement in the food security situation in the affected districts of the western, central and eastern regions. However, post-earthquake reconstruction has been slow in some districts. For example, in the most recent meetings, DFSNs classified a number of VDCs in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Sindhupalchowk as highly food insecure (Phase 3). Most of the VDCs classified as Phase 3 are in remote areas with marginal agricultural land and poor road and market infrastructure. Compared to the DFSN meetings in March 2016, most of the earthquake affected districts reported an improvement except in Sindhupalchowk. In Sindhupalchowk, the DFSN attributed the deteriorating situation to a decrease in wheat production (10-15 percent according to the DADO), grain storage problems, difficult physical access to markets, price hikes, and limited access to drinking water.

In many districts of the mid-and far-western regions the winter drought led to a significant decrease in winter crop production (e.g., a decrease in wheat production up to 36 percent in Bajura, 43 percent in Bajhang and 50 percent in Baitadi compared to last year) and also affected other agriculture and forest based livelihood activities. As a result, DFSNs in Dolpa, Humla, Mugu, Kalikot, Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura and Doti classified a large number of VDCs as highly food insecure (Phase 3). Additional districts in the mid- and far-western hills were also affected by the drought, though not as severely as the districts mentioned above.

¹ District Food Security Networks (DFSN) use the NeKSAP food security phase classification method to classify the severity and causes of acute food insecurity in Nepal. 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; **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.

Map 1: Food security situation of Nepal (mid-March to mid-July 2016)



Results

- DFSNs classified 212 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in 13 districts (25 in Achham, 14 in Baitadi, 16 in Bajhang, 14 in Bajura, 18 in Doti, 6 in Dolpa, 19 in Humla, 8 in Kalikot, 14 in Mugu, 16 in Dhading, 13 in Gorkha, 9 in Nuwakot and 40 in Sindhupalchowk) as **highly food insecure (Phase 3)** and estimated that roughly **430,000 people** in those districts 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 the depletion of household food stocks in the winter lean period, subsequent production drops in winter crops, monsoon induced landslides and road blockades and associated supply chain offsets and price hikes, and the lasting impacts of the April-May 2015 earthquakes. DFSNs in the earthquake affected districts also reported grain storage and drinking water supply problems due to the damage to houses and water supply systems. In the mid-and far-western mountain districts, DFSNs also reported a decrease in the collection of *yarchagumba*, which is a major source of cash income in those districts and a key seasonal livelihood.
- DFSNs also classified a large number of VDCs and municipalities (376) in 26 districts as **moderately food insecure (Phase 2)**. Phase 2 is 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. Though wheat was harvested in this period, many districts reported a decrease in production and hence, DFSNs attributed the decrease in wheat production² to the current (Phase 2) food security situation. The distribution of moderately food insecure (Phase 2) VDCs is as follows: 30 in Achham (including 2 municipalities), 23 in Baitadi, 14 in Bajhang, 11 in Bajura (including 1 municipality), 13 in Dailekh, 20 in Darchula, 12 in Dolakha, 17 in Dolpa, 12 in Doti, 7 in Gorkha, 5 in Gulmi, 8 in Humla, 9 in Jajarkot, 14 in Jumla, 21 in Kalikot, 33 in Kavre, 10 in Makwanpur, 10 in Mugu, 23 in Nuwakot, 5 in Okhaldhunga, 12 in Ramechhap, 2 in Rasuwa, 18 in Salyan, 30 in Sindhupalchowk (including 2 municipalities), 10 in Surkhet, and 7 in Terhathum.
- DFSNs classified all other VDCs and municipalities (2,779) 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 cereals maintained through the recent winter crop harvest and remaining stocks of summer crops 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.

2. Outlook: mid-July to mid-November 2016

Overview

District Food Security Networks, based on current conditions and likely future scenarios, have forecasted the food security situation for the period of mid-July to mid-November 2016 (the Nepali months of Shrawan, Bhadra, Ashwin, Kartik). Maize will be harvested in August/September and the paddy harvest will start from October onwards. With timely monsoon rains, the paddy transplantation rate has been high and the prospects for summer crop production appear good.

Results

Overall, DFSNs anticipate that the food security situation will improve during the period of mid-July to mid-November 2016 largely due to the upcoming maize and paddy crop harvests. DFSNs forecasted that during mid-July to mid-November 2016 no VDCs are likely to be classified as severely food insecure (Phase 4) and the number of VDCs likely to be classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3) and moderately food insecure (Phase 2) will also decrease to 27 (from 212 currently) and 216 (from 376 currently) respectively.

² According to MoAD, nationwide wheat production in 2015/16 decreased by 12 percent compared to 2014/15. Districts in the mid-and far-western regions, which were affected by the winter drought, experienced even greater wheat production decreases.

- DFSNs projected that 27 VDCs (13 in Gorkha, 5 in Dhading and 9 in Nuwakot) might be classified as **highly food insecure (Phase 3)**. DFSNs attributed the outlook to the continued impacts of April-May 2015 earthquakes. These VDCs are remote with poor road and market infrastructure and marginal agricultural land. Moreover, household food stocks from the recent April/May winter crops will likely be depleted early and maize will not be harvested until later in the summer, which may lead to household food gaps in July.
- DFSNs predicted that 216 VDCs and municipalities in 15 districts (25 in Achham, 16 in Bajhang, 13 in Dailekh, 11 in Dhading, 12 in Dolakha, 6 in Dolpa, 7 in Gorkha, 19 in Humla, 8 in Kalikot, 14 in Mugu, 23 in Nuwakot, 2 in Rasuwa, 10 in Sankhuwasabha, 40 in Sindhupalchowk, and 10 in Surkhet) may be classified as **moderately food insecure (Phase 2)**.
- DFSNs forecasted that all other areas of the country will be classified as **minimally food insecure (Phase 1)**. In those areas, households will replenish food stocks through summer crop harvests and will continue to receive income through on-farm and off-farm sources. Furthermore, DFSNs did not anticipate any natural and human induced disasters that might affect the food security situation except for landslides and road blockades and subsequent supply offsets during the monsoon period.

3. Background

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) with the strategic guidance of the National Planning Commission (NPC). The World Food Programme (WFP) provides technical assistance for NeKSAP with funding from the European Union and UK aid from the UK government. Additional partners include the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), FAO, Unicef, the National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS), the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (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 Nepal (see Footnote 1) every four months (March, July and November) and on an ad hoc basis in the event of a large-scale disaster, such as the April-May 2015 earthquakes. For a comprehensive picture of the food security situation in Nepal, additional information on chronic food insecurity, undernutrition and poverty from other sources, including the 2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), 2010/11 Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS), 2015 Small Area Estimation of Food Insecurity and Undernutrition in Nepal, 2015 IPC Chronic Food Security Analysis, and 2014 Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, should be consulted in conjunction with information from NeKSAP.