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## Brief on the Food Security Situation in Nepal

Reporting period: Mid-March to mid-July 2017

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Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)

Nepal Food Security Monitoring System

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**Note:** The impact of the heavy rainfall on 10-13 August and subsequent flooding across the country is not included in this brief. NeKSAP is releasing situation update on the floods separately.

### 1. Situation during the reporting period: mid-March to mid-July 2017

#### Overview

District Food Security Networks (DFSN) in 74 districts met in July 2017 to review the food security situation between mid-March to mid-July 2017 (the Nepali months of *Chaitra*, *Baisakh*, *Jestha*, and *Asadh* 2073/74) and provide an outlook for the food security situation between mid-July to mid-November 2017 (the Nepali months of *Shrawan*, *Bhadra*, *Asoj*, and *Kartik* 2074). DFSNs classified each Village Development Committee (VDC) and municipality in their district based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)<sup>1</sup> 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 9 VDCs as highly food insecure (Phase 3), 158 VDCs as moderately food insecure (Phase 2), and 3,200 VDCs and municipalities as minimally food insecure (Phase 1). See **Map 1** for the geographic distribution of food insecure areas. The DFSN analytical outputs were validated and endorsed through five NeKSAP regional debriefing meetings held between 2-7 August 2017.

#### Highlights

Since the April-May 2015 earthquakes, DFSN meetings have reported a gradual improvement in the overall food security situation in the affected districts of the western, central and eastern regions. In the current reporting period DFSNs cited the harvest of winter crops (wheat, barley, potato) and resumption of livelihood activities as major factors contributing to an improvement in the food security situation. Nevertheless, DFSNs classified some VDCs in northern Gorkha as highly food insecure (Phase 3).

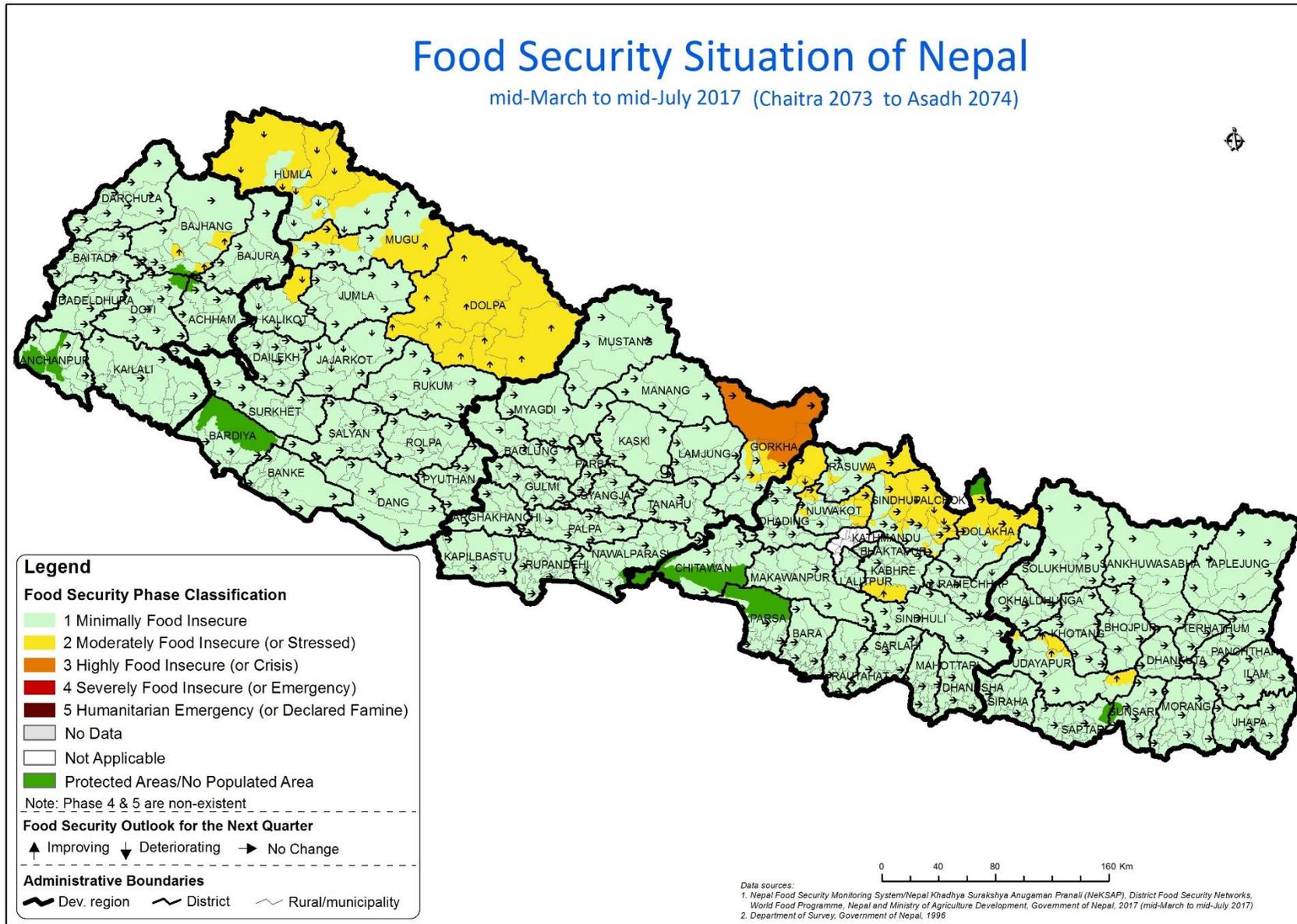
DFSNs in the mid- and far-western regions also reported that the food security situation has improved in this period compared to the last reporting period (mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016) and the same period last year (mid-March to mid-July 2016)<sup>2</sup>. In these areas, DFSNs did not classify any VDC as highly food insecure (Phase 3) and the number of VDCs classified as moderately food insecure (Phase 2) also decreased to 53 as compared 149 during the last reporting period (mid-November 2016 to mid-March 2017). DFSNs attributed the improvement largely to the recent harvest of winter crops (wheat and barley) in May and June.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the food security situation in the mid- and far-western hills and mountains had significantly deteriorated during mid-November 2015 to mid-March 2016 because of the poor summer crop production. The food security situation was even worse during mid-March to mid-July 2016 because of the winter drought that severely affected winter crop production in those areas.

Map 1: Food security situation of Nepal (mid-March to mid-July 2017)



## Results

- The DFSN in Gorkha classified 9 Village Development Committees (VDCs), namely Bihi, Chhekampar, Chumchet, Kerauja, Lho, Prok, Samagaun, Sirdibas, and Uhiya, as **highly food insecure (Phase 3)** and estimated that roughly **2,400 people** in those VDCs 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. The DFSN in Gorkha attributed the situation to the lasting impacts of the April-May 2015 earthquakes and other factors affecting the food security situation, including the slow pace of recovery, poor shelter conditions, and poor sanitation and hygiene. These VDCs are in high-altitude areas where crop production in general is low and production of winter crops is even lower and hence households are not able to meet their food needs by their own production. Moreover, market infrastructure in these remote areas is poor and the price of food and other essential goods is relatively high.
- DFSNs also classified a large number of VDCs and municipalities (158) in 13 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. The distribution of moderately food insecure (Phase 2) VDCs is as follows: 11 in Udyapur, 5 in Dhading, 12 in Dolakha, 10 in Kavrepalanchowk, 20 in Nuwakot, 2 in Rasuwa, 36 in Sindhupalchowk, 9 in Gorkha, 3 in Kalikot, 12 in Humla, 23 in Dolpa, 9 in Mugu, and 6 in Bajhang.
- DFSNs classified all other VDCs and municipalities (3,200) 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 harvest of winter crops (wheat, barley, potato) 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 2017

### 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 2017 (the Nepali months of *Shrawan*, *Bhadra*, *Asoj*, and *Kartik* 2074). Maize and paddy, two important cereal crops, will be harvested in this period: maize in September and paddy in November. Because of the erratic and insufficient rainfall during paddy transplantation so far this season, the first advance estimate (as of 3 August 2017) forecasted paddy production at 3,363,800 mt, a 36 percent decrease compared to the production level of 5,226,647 mt in 2016.

### Results

DFSNs forecasted that during mid-July to mid-November 2017 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) will increase to 37 (from 9 currently) and the number of VDCs likely to be classified as moderately food insecure (Phase 2) will decrease to 150 (from 158 currently).

- DFSNs projected that 37 VDCs in 5 districts (3 in Kalikot, 12 in Humla, 5 in Dhading, 8 in Sindhupalchowk, and 9 in Gorkha) may be classified as **highly food insecure (Phase 3)**. Most of these VDCs are high mountain areas where food stocks maintained through winter crops have already started to be depleted and summer crops, maize and paddy, will be harvested only after September and November respectively. Hence, households in these VDCs might experience a transitory food gap, especially during August to September. Moreover, during the monsoon season, earthen roads and trails in these areas may be damaged and affect the supply chain of food and other essential goods to markets, leading to higher prices.

- DFSNs predicted that 150 VDCs in 9 districts (24 in Dolakha, 20 in Nuwakot, 12 in Ramechhap, 2 in Rasuwa, 28 in Sindhupalchowk, 9 in Gorkha, 27 in Kalikot, 15 in Humla, and 13 in Jajarkot) are likely to 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 meet their food needs through winter crop stocks and market purchases. The harvest of maize in September will also replenish household food stocks.

### 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 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 2016 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.