
Brief on the Food Security Situation in Nepal

Reporting period: Mid-July to mid-November 2017

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

Nepal Food Security Monitoring System

Nepal Khadhya Surakshya Anugaman Pranali (NeKSAP)

With support from UK aid from the UK government

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

Overview

NeKSAP Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and/or District Food Security Networks (DFSNs)¹ held meetings in most of the districts across Nepal in December 2017 to review the food security situation between mid-July to mid-November 2017 (the Nepali months of *Shrawan*, *Bhadra*, *Asoj*, and *Kartik* 2074) and provide an outlook for the food security situation between mid-November 2017 to mid-March 2018 (the Nepali months of *Mangsir*, *Paush*, *Magh* and *Falgun* 2074). Following the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)² method and restructured local government arrangement, DFSNs and/or TWG in 63 districts classified each ward (5,340) in 601 rural/urban municipalities as either minimally food insecure (Phase 1), moderately food insecure (Phase 2) or highly food insecure (Phase 3). In this round, there were no areas classified as severely food insecure (Phase 4). Overall, the DFSNs classified 42 wards as highly food insecure (Phase 3), 331 wards as moderately food insecure (Phase 2), and 4,967 wards as minimally food insecure (Phase 1). Please, refer to **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 18-26 December 2017.

Highlights

Heavy monsoon rainfall during 10-13 August 2017 triggered severe flash floods and landslides in 35 out of 75 districts in Nepal. An Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) conducted in 28 districts revealed that floods and landslides claimed 141 lives, injured 117 persons, displaced 460,900 people, and left 24 missing. Damage to houses, infrastructures, and productive resources was severe; roughly 65,000 houses were destroyed and 120,100 houses were partially damaged (Nepal Red Cross Society, IRA Compilation Report, 20 August 2017). The Post Flood Recovery Need Assessment Report of NPC (November 2017), indicated that 35 districts were affected, of which 18 districts were severely affected (Banke, Bara, Bardiya, Chitwan, Dang, Dhanusha, Jhapa, Kailali, Mahottari, Makwanpur, Morang, Nawalparasi, Parsa, Rautahat, Saptari, Sarlahi, Siraha and Sunsari).

¹Data published for 63 districts as the Technical Working Group (TWG) and/or District Food Security Network (DFSN) meetings were not organized in Jumla, Dailekh, Arghakhanchi, Rukum East, Baglung, Darchula, Lamjung, Palpa, Manang, and Kathmandu districts. During the review of report, some anomalies were noticed in the TWG/DFSN meeting process and data in Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi and Dhanusha districts.

²District 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.

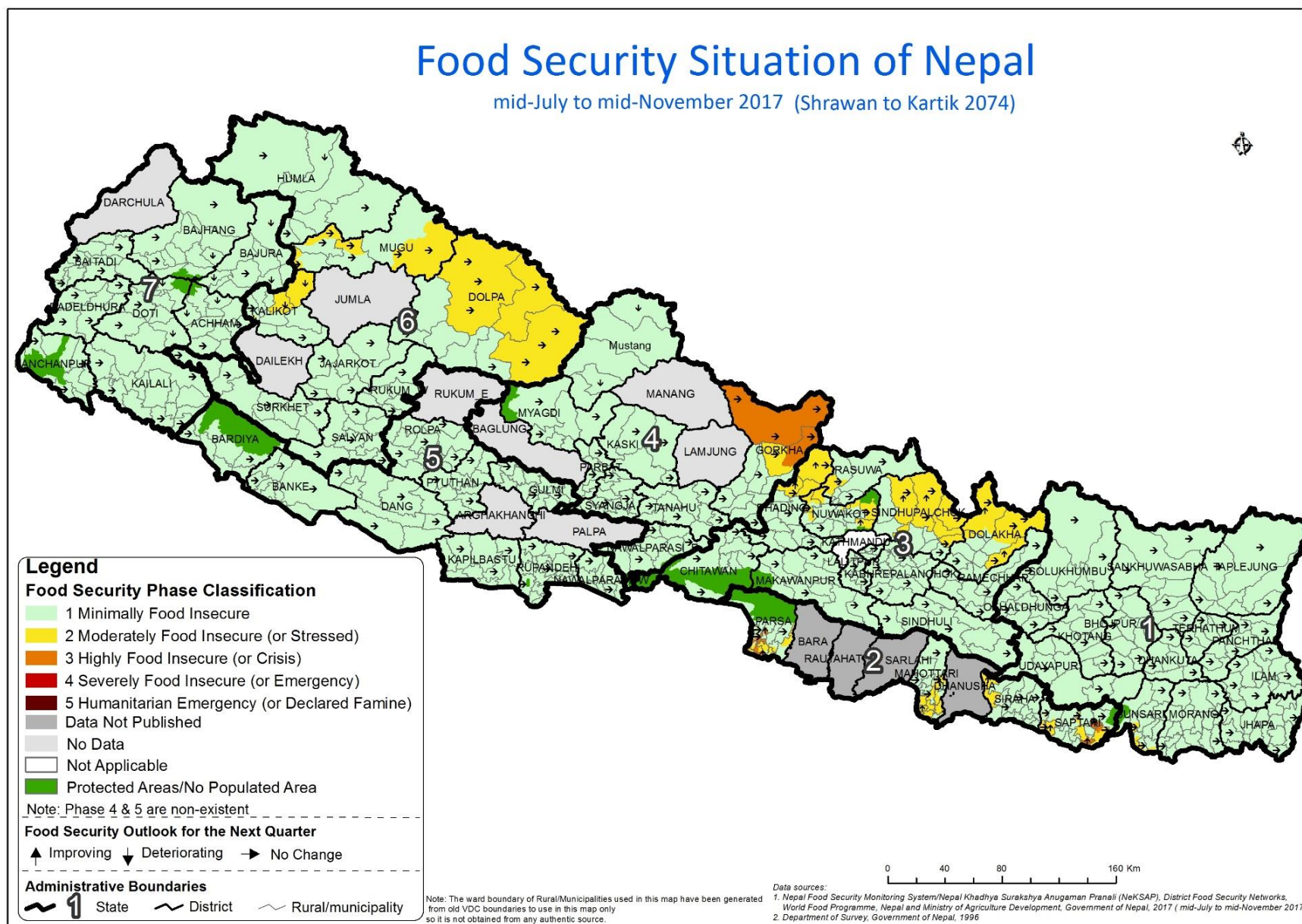
More than 190,000 houses were destroyed or partially damaged, displacing tens of thousands of people and rendering many homeless. Household assets and food grains were damaged and affected communities faced shortages of food, water as well as many non-food items. Many suffered infections from contaminated water.

NeKSAP organized ad-hoc DFSN meetings in the 15 flood affected districts³ during 23-29 August and 9-17 September and classified the then 8 village development committees (VDCs) of Saptari as severely food insecure (Phase 4), 256 VDCs as highly food insecure (Phase 3), 373 VDCs as moderately food insecure (Phase 2) and 404 VDCs and municipalities as minimally food insecure (Phase 1) out of the 1,041 total VDCs and municipalities in those districts. The recent rounds of DFSN meetings held in those districts have reported an improvement in the food security situation, particularly in Morang, Sunsari, Siraha, Mahottari, and Banke, with none of the areas being classified as Phase 3. Similar improvements are reported in Saptari - areas previously classified as Phase 4 have now improved to Phase 3.

Since the April-May 2015 earthquakes, the 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 crops (maize, potato, early paddy) and resumption of livelihood activities as major factors contributing to an improvement in the food security situation. Nevertheless, the DFSNs classified some areas in northern Gorkha as highly food insecure (Phase 3).

³Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusa, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Chitwan, Banke, Bardiya, and Kailali.

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



Results

- The DFSNs in Province 2 and 4 classified 42 wards in 12 municipalities of 3 districts (9 wards in Gorkha, 17 in Parsa and 16 in Saptari) as **highly food insecure (Phase 3)** and estimated that roughly **51,000 people** in those areas 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 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. The DFSNs in the flood affected districts, attributed the current situation to the impacts of August floods, which led to significant damage to the household food stocks and other means of livelihoods like standing crops, vegetables, fish and livestock. For instance, the DFSN in Parsa reported damage to fish ponds, vegetables and paddy worth NPR 456 million. The DFSNs also reported health, sanitation, and child malnutrition issues affecting food security in the post-flood period. For instance, a report published by the District Health Office (DHO) indicate that the prevalence of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) is at 14.4 percent in Saptari district⁴.
- The DFSNs also classified a large number of wards (331) in 14 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) wards are as following: 18 in Dhading, 13 in Dolakha, 22 in Dolpa, 5 in Gorkha, 19 in Kalikot, 61 in Mahottari, 13 in Mugu, 22 in Nuwakot, 26 in Parsa, 2 in Rasuwa, 44 in Saptari, 47 in Sindhupalchowk, 23 in Siraha, and 16 in Sunsari.
- The DFSNs classified all other wards (4,967) in 63 districts as **minimally food insecure (Phase 1)**, a situation where households can secure food and non-food needs without shifting or changing their 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 wheat, maize, 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-November2017 to mid-March 2018

Overview

The District Food Security Networks, based on current conditions and likely future scenarios, have provided an outlook of the food security situation for the period from mid-November 2017 to mid-March 2018 (the Nepali months of Mangsir, Paush, Magh and Falgun2074). The total production of maize - an important summer crop of hills - was 2,555,847mt. This was a 9.4 percent increase over the last year's 2,336,675 mt, this is anticipated to partly replenish the household food stock. Paddy - the most important cereal crop - will be harvested during this period (November/December). Owing to the erratic and insufficient rainfall during paddy transplantation followed by heavy floods leading to bank cutting and standing crop damage, paddy production is expected to decrease. The second advance estimate of 2017 paddy (as of 20 November 2017) forecasted a production of 4,969,700 mt, a 4.9 percent decrease compared to the production level of 5,226,647 mt in 2016.

Results

The DFSNs anticipated that during mid-November 2017 to mid-March 2018 no areas are likely to be classified as severely food insecure (Phase 4) and the number of wards likely to be classified as highly food insecure (Phase 3) will decrease to 28 (from 42 currently); the number of wards likely to be classified as moderately food insecure (Phase 2) will decrease to 181 (from 331currently).

- The DFSNs anticipated that the food security situation will improve in the flood affected districts and deteriorate in Kalikot district of Karnali. DFSNs projected that 28 wards in two districts of Province 4 and 6

⁴ Based on DHO service statistics.

(9 in Gorkha and 19 in Kalikot) may be classified as **highly food insecure (Phase 3)**. The cold wave during winter is a seasonal phenomenon in *Terai*, and might exacerbate situation in flood affected areas in the region. In Kalikot, the DFSNs cited the winter lean period, depletion of household food stocks and poor incomes from Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) as major factors contributing to the food security outlook. The improvement in the flood affected districts is attributed to the crop harvest and post-flood interventions.

- The DFSNs have projected that 181 wards in 12 districts (16 in Achham, 13 in Bajhang, 29 in Bajura, 22 in Dolpa, 13 in Doti, 5 in Gorkha, 7 in Humla, 13 in Mugu, 25 in Mustang, 17 in Parsa, 16 in Saptari, and 5 in Sindhupalchowk) are likely to be classified as **moderately food insecure (Phase 2)**.
- The DFSNs have forecasted that all other areas of the country will be classified as **minimally food insecure (Phase 1)**. In those areas, households are likely to meet their food needs through winter crop stocks and market purchases. The harvest of maize in September will also likely replenish household food stocks.

3. Background

The Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKSAP) operates nationwide, including the District Food Security Networks in 74 of 77 districts. 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), Food and Agriculture Organization (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).

The 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) which takes place every four months (March, July and November) as well as on ad-hoc basis during emergencies such as the April-May 2015 earthquakes and August 2017 floods. 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.