How Severe, How Many, and When: In the current period – July to September 2019 – around 0.67 million people are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and require urgent humanitarian assistance. 2.9 million people are estimated to be in IPC Phase 2 (Stress) and require livelihood support. In the projected period, which covers the lean season from October 2019 to March 2020, 1.06 million people are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3, and 3.58 million people are estimated to be in IPC Phase 2. The districts that are classified under Phase 3 which are likely to require urgent action are concentrated in the southern districts. Three districts are in Phase 3.

Where and Who: The most affected districts are in the southern region, in total 15 in number, and the worst off are located within the area affected by the floods.

Why: The main drivers of food insecurity in Malawi this season include floods, dry spells, infestations of the Fall Armyworm, and high prices for staple foods compared to last year and the 5-year average.

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY CURRENT AND PROJECTION MAPS

KEY FOR THE MAP

IPC Acute Food Insecurity
Phase Classification
(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
The Malawi economy is estimated to grow by 5 percent in 2019, primarily driven by growth in the agricultural sector. Annual inflation is expected to continue to decline, averaging 8%, owing to continued macro-economic stability.

The current food insecurity is mainly driven by climatic shocks such as Cyclone Idai, which resulted in flooding in the districts that border Mozambique in the southern parts of Malawi. It is estimated that 975,000 people were affected by the floods. The 15 affected districts were Balaka, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Nsanje, Phalombe, Thyolo, Zomba districts in the Southern Region and Dedza and Ntcheu in the Central Region. However, unlike in Mozambique, the impact has been minimal, except for a few pockets, where complete wash away of the crops and destruction of the harvest was experienced. In addition, a few other districts in the central region had dry spells, which were not significant in severity. The other drivers were price shocks – the price of commodities remained high compared to the same period last season. A few districts experienced Fall Armyworm infestations and other minor crop pests. Over and above, the poor and very poor households remained stricken by high levels of poverty that compromise their ability to manage household food security.

The country received early and more rains this year compared to last year. A few districts reported dry spells during the growing season. Floods were experienced mostly in the southern part of the country and a few isolated areas in the central and northern regions.

All districts in the central region and southern regions registered an increase in maize production over the last year. In the north, all districts reported an increase in production, except for Karonga, Nkahata Bay and Rumphi districts. An increase in production was attributed to good rainfall distribution, despite the heavy rainfall in the south that occurred when the crop had matured. Farm gate prices for most crops improved slightly, but remain generally low for farmers to have good gross margins. All districts reported incidents of Fall Armyworm, but with a minimal impact on crop performance. Irrigated crop is projected to increase due to increased residual moisture, resulting from the high rainfall experienced in the year.
Key outcomes and results for the current period
The food consumption score (FCS) reflects 54% of the households having an acceptable FCS, while 36% having a borderline FCS and 10% having a poor FCS. Those that were not adopting any coping strategies were 61%, while those adopting stress coping strategies were 21% and crisis coping strategies were 14%, with only 2% adopting emergency coping strategies. Acute malnutrition by GAM was within normal ranges with an average GAM of 3.1 percent.

The population estimated to be in acute food insecurity Phase 3 (Crisis) and above for the same time period last year has dropped from 2.2 million in 2018 to 673,000 in the current period. About 76% of the households are in IPC Phase 1 (Minimal food insecurity), while 25% are in IPC Phase 2 (Stress) and 5% in IPC Phase 3 in the current season running from June to September 2019. The total population in need of urgent action is approximately 673,000 people.
In the projected period, some districts usually experience floods, however, the intensity is not expected to be severe according to the climate forecast, which indicates normal to above normal rainfall. Winter production is likely to increase due to adequate residual moisture following the expected rainfall levels. Although according to international forecast by NOAA (October 2019-January 2020), there is a likelihood of El Niño (50%-55%) occurring, which could result in below normal rainfall in Malawi, the uncertainty of its occurrence would most likely result in near average rainfall conditions. Considering this, the 2019/20 growing season would most likely be normal, resulting in good availability of labour opportunities for the poor and very poor households. Agricultural labour rates will likely be normal to above normal in most northern and central Malawi districts. However, rates might be lower in southern districts, having experienced heavy rains and flooding in 2019. Income from the sale of cash crops (e.g. tobacco, cotton, soya beans, etc.) will be average in most northern and central districts, but remain below normal in some southern districts.

During the projected period, corresponding to the lean season, prices are expected to increase seasonally as households deplete their stocks. Higher prices are likely in the southern part of the country, typically experiencing production deficits and in the areas affected by floods in 2019. Staple maize price is projected to be above the 5-year average during the lean season but is estimated to remain below 250 Malawian Kwacha per Kg in most of the areas. Irrigated crop is projected to increase due to increased residual moisture resulting from the high rainfall experienced in the year. Prices of commodities are likely to be affected by the weakening Malawian Kwacha, with expected higher prices of staple food commodities.

Based on available nutrition data, the level of acute malnutrition will most likely remain stable in most areas through January 2020. The overall level of acute malnutrition is expected to remain within acceptable (<5 GAM) thresholds through the period with slightly high levels in the areas that experienced floods and where Global Acute Malnutrition could deteriorate to Alert levels.

The 2019 IPC analysis was completed in June and provides the population in the various phases. The map indicates three districts that are projected to be in Phase 3 (Crisis) during the period October 2019 – March 2020. These include Balaka, Neno and Nsanje. The population in Phase 3 and above during this period is projected to be 1,063,000 representing 7% of the total rural population of the country.
Key outcomes and results for the projected period

Between October 2019 and March 2019, it is estimated that 7 percent of Malawi’s rural population (1,063,000) will require humanitarian assistance to manage their food needs and to some extent recover lost assets because of the cyclone effects. The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA 2019, Malawi) has outlined the needs per sector, and for the food security, immediate food needs are key.

The population projected to be in Phase 1 is 10,086,000 (68%), in Phase 2, 3,585,000 (24%) and 1,063,000 (7%) in Phase 3. This will bring the total population requiring humanitarian assistance to 1.06 million people from October 2019 to March 2020.
Response Priorities

Urgent action is needed for the population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) to save and protect their livelihoods and reduce their food consumption gaps. Resilience building programmes for the populations in Phase 1 (Minimal Food Insecurity) and 2 (Stress) should be promoted to ensure that their assets and livelihoods are secured. Households in districts that suffered destruction and crop loss due to floods may require support for recovery and reconstruction. To cushion the household against further deterioration to a worse phase, Disaster Risk Reduction and recovery programmes should be immediately activated to support the families. This could include:

- **Support for farm inputs in such areas will boost production for the next production season.** Disaster Risk Reduction and resilience programming, as highlighted in the National Resilience Strategy, should be scaled up to prevent the worsening of the poverty and food security situation.

- **Promote nutrition sensitive interventions that will improve diversity.** This can be achieved through; provision of key messages on healthy eating, food budgeting, processing and preservation, and the promotion of Integrated Homestead Farming (IFH) alongside key WASH interventions. Nutrition sensitive interventions are a priority in the areas that experienced floods to boost households’ access to nutritious foods. The focus of the interventions should be on supporting children under 5 as well as enhancing dietary diversity across the board in all areas.

- **Resource mobilization and linkages to development, social protection and Disaster Risk Reduction programmes.**

- **Current recovery responses and approaches by various stakeholders need to be continued to sustain and improve food security and household welfare.**

- **Intensify control of the Fall Armyworm through strengthening extension messages, enhancing development and dissemination of the messages, promoting plant wise concepts (plant clinics), farmer training on management of the Fall Armyworm and provision of pesticide and protective gear.**

- **Promote irrigation farming through provision of farm inputs, rehabilitation of irrigation schemes and promotion of sustainable climate SMART agriculture technologies e.g. use of solar powered panels.**

Situation Monitoring and Update of Activities

The key factors to monitor will include:

(i) The price changes for key commodities
(ii) Levels of acute malnutrition
(iii) Infestation of Fall Armyworm on the winter crop
(iv) Inflation and impact on the Malawian Kwacha
(v) Possibility of flooding at the beginning of the next rainy season
Process and Methodology

The MVAC TWG conducts Annual Assessment and Analysis from May to June. This year, the TWG held a workshop to refine the tools to enable an integrated assessment and analysis. Several surveys were integrated to happen at the same time and synchronized through harmonized tools and coordination. The main surveys undertaken were; the Household food security survey, the HEA data collection, and the Market survey.

The TWG then carried out an analysis of the data collected from the surveys to prepare the indicators for the IPC analysis. Overall data analysis was carried out using the IPC protocols based on the new version (Version 3.0).

Analysis was based on the four regions: North, Central, East and South. Each district was independently analysed but compared with the neighbouring districts in the same region.

Upon completion of entries into the ISS, a technical consensus process involved each region presenting their outcomes and reviewed by the facilitators and the plenary before the team concluded the analysis.

Limitations of the analysis

- Inconsistent data for some districts (one district is always not analysed as it is on an island and inaccessible (Likoma District).
- The entire exercise takes a long time and to have the participants present throughout is always a challenge.
- Nutrition Survey had not been conducted and as such, the survey could only use GAM by MUAC, which was part of the Household Food Security Questionnaire.

Sources
