



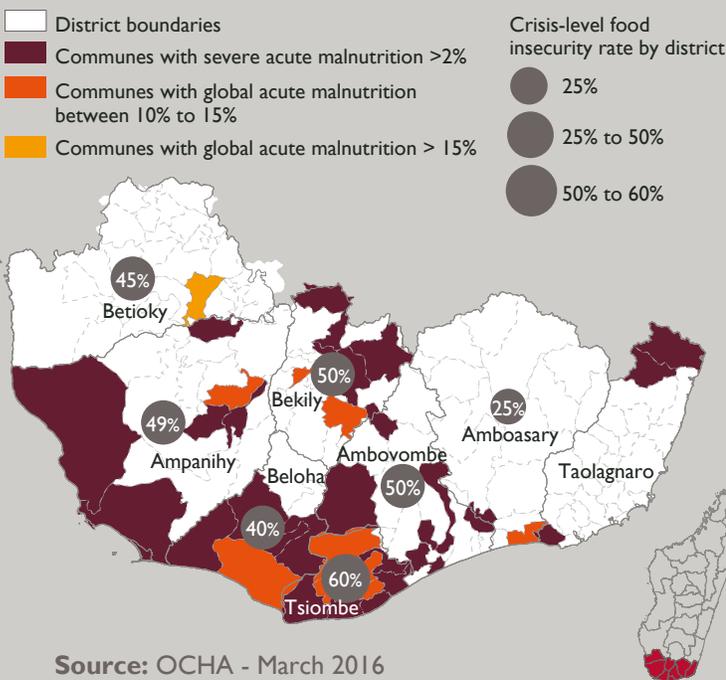
PHOTO: USAID

# MADAGASCAR

## IN THE DEPTHS OF A DROUGHT

Since 2013, Madagascar has been experiencing a prolonged and deepening drought in the south of the country. This crisis has left over one million people without enough food to eat, forcing them into increasingly desperate actions to survive. The southern part of Madagascar is the poorest part of the country, with 90% of the population earning less than \$2 per day. Due to a semi-arid climate the region is vulnerable and rain dependent, with a population that relies mostly on rain-fed agriculture and livestock.

### PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE FACING A FOOD CRISIS



### A DROUGHT-STRICKEN SOUTH

The El Niño phenomenon, a climate cycle in the Pacific Ocean with a global impact on weather patterns, and mounting climate change effects have deepened the impacts of the drought on the Malagasy people. Southern Madagascar is hotter, there is not enough rain, and when the rain comes it is erratic.

These impacts have combined with pre-existing drought conditions to produce one of the driest rainy seasons in 35 years, making the chances for a successful crop by local farmers increasingly tenuous. 80% of crops from the May – June harvest are expected to fail.

The situation also has further societal impacts. A lack of adequate nutrition and access to clean water for sanitation brings higher numbers of childhood illnesses (diarrhea, upper respiratory infections, fever, malaria), and school attendance is affected as children are forced to collect food and water from sources that are now further from home.

Food insecurity is expected to escalate in terms of severity and magnitude in the next lean season (December 2016 to February 2017).

## HOW THE DROUGHT IS AFFECTING PEOPLE

The drought crisis has led to large percentage crop losses, a lack of food, and depleted stocks of seed. Forced into a corner, people do what they must to survive. This hierarchy of coping strategies is shown to the right, with initial actions to eat less preferred foods or eat less. Many people in Southern Madagascar are now driven to taking more extreme actions, like eating the seeds that are intended to provide future crops, or migrating out of the area, often to large urban centers where they face limited possibilities for employment.



### “SEEDS FOR SUPPER”

USAID surveys in the region have found that families are turning to increasingly desperate actions, such as eating seeds. We spoke with one family (pictured below) who shared what they are doing to survive.

- Q** How many children do you have?
- A** Two girls and ten boys.
- Q** What did you do with the seeds you got at the agricultural fair last month?
- A** We had to eat them. There was no rain and we were hungry. We boiled them.
- Q** How long did the people in the village wait before consuming the seeds?
- A** People generally only waited two days to one week. Children weren't aware that these seeds were for planting.
- Q** What did you eat yesterday?
- A** Rice and beans we got from CRS, and cactus.
- Q** Do you have any animals?
- A** No. I had six goats and four sheep, but the drought lasted too long and I had to sell them all last year.



**220,000** people supported by funding from the United States since 2014



**35** years since Madagascar has had such a dry rainy season



**25% – 75%** lower rainfall than the 20-year average, depending on region



**80%** losses predicted for the May-June 2016 harvest



**47%** of the population of Madagascar's south face crisis-level food insecurity



**12%** of children under five suffer from acute malnutrition in 2015, a rate expected to worsen in 2016

## HOW THE UNITED STATES IS HELPING

The United States is the largest donor of food assistance in Madagascar. Since 2014 the United States government has contributed \$7 million in emergency funding to provide aid for over 220,000 people, mainly in the south. We have provided food, seeds and nutritional supplements for acutely malnourished children and young mothers in communities in Androy, Anosy and Atsimo Andrefana. To support local farmers and the Malagasy economy, much of the food and all of the seeds, livestock and nutritional supplements were purchased in Madagascar.

In May 2016 the United States announced an additional \$8 million of emergency food assistance.

Types of support provided by USAID since 2014:

- Life-saving food aid
- Seed distribution and promotion of improved seed varieties
- Farm supplies and tools
- Livestock and training in animal husbandry
- Specialized nutritious supplements for malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women