Economic instability, poor rainfall, crop pests, and livestock and crop diseases undermine food security in Zimbabwe. More than 90 percent of rural households in the country depend on agriculture as their primary livelihood.

**SITUATION**

- Approximately 2.3 million people in rural Zimbabwe were facing Crisis (IPC 3) or worse levels of acute food insecurity between July and September, according to the most recent IPC analysis.* This figure is projected to rise to nearly 3.6 million from October to December, a period which includes the lean season when food is most scarce.

- Zimbabwe is currently coping with the effects of the 2018/2019 drought, which has diminished crop production and negatively impacted livelihoods. Poor and erratic rainfall caused both a decrease in the area harvested and average yield of crops, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Additionally, landfall of Tropical Cyclone Idai in March triggered flooding in localized areas of eastern Zimbabwe, causing crop loss. According to FAO, 2019 maize production was approximately 40 percent below Zimbabwe’s five-year average with similar declines in the production of other crops and livestock conditions.

- Additionally, macroeconomic volatility increasingly constrains food access for both rural and urban households in Zimbabwe. As of August, the annual inflation rate was approximately 300 percent, while the food-price inflation rate was nearly 400 percent, according to the UN.

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*The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a standardized tool that aims to classify the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries, ranges from Minimal (IPC 1) to Famine (IPC 5).

**RESPONSE**

- The United States remains the largest bilateral donor of emergency humanitarian assistance in Zimbabwe. With $113.7 million in Fiscal Year 2019 support from USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (FFP), the UN World Food Program (WFP) provides in-kind food assistance and cash transfers for food to vulnerable populations during the lean season. WFP also carries out productive asset creation activities to strengthen infrastructure—such as dams and irrigation systems—that increase households’ resilience to shocks and gradually reduce the need for seasonal food assistance.

- Additionally with FFP support, WFP provides emergency food assistance to populations affected by Tropical Cyclone Idai and refugees—primarily from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, and Burundi—living in Zimbabwe.

- FFP also supports multi-year development activities through World Vision and Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture. These multi-year programs aim to improve the nutritional status of children younger than five years of age, expand and diversify agricultural production, increase household income, and help communities prepare for disasters through risk-reduction activities.

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*Metric tonnage does not reflect funding for vouchers or cash transfers