to the surging waters. The hardest hit regions were Zinder, Maradi and Agadez (OCHA, September 2019). In the Diffa region, in addition to the border conflict with Nigeria, heavy floods in October on irrigated pepper and rice crops damaged livelihoods and food availability.

In pastoral areas, drought led to a sharp decline in the availability of pasture, which significantly reduced the purchasing power of livestock farming households (FEWS NET, December 2019). The production of biomass (defined as ‘above-ground dry plant matter’) decreased between 2018 and 2019, with major and recurrent deficits over the last few years in the regions of Tillabéri, Tahoua, Zinder and Diffa, which is having a grave impact on the livelihoods and food security status of pastoralists (ACF, 2019). The 2019–2020 pastoral season recorded a deficit of more than 11 million tonnes of dry matter (Ministère de l’Agriculture, 2019).

**NUTRITION OVERVIEW**

According to the IPC Acute Malnutrition analysis in December 2019, 918,360 children were acutely malnourished and in need of treatment. The analysis was conducted at the department level in five regions (Agadez, Diffa, Dosso, Maradi and Zinder) and at the regional level in the remaining three (Tahoua, Niamey and Tillabéri). Tahoua region was classified in Serious phase and Niamey and Tillabéri in Alert. Out of the 34 departments analysed in the other regions two were classified in Critical, 19 in serious and 13 in Alert (see IPC Acute Malnutrition map).

At 45.7 percent, stunting levels were ‘very high’ in children aged 6–59 months, reaching 55.4 percent in Maradi and 52.9 percent in Zinder (SMART, 2019).

This grave malnutrition situation can be largely attributed to child feeding practices. Just 21.1 percent of children under six months were exclusively breastfed and only 6.3 percent of children aged 6–23 months received the minimum acceptable diet for their growth and development (SMART, 2019).

Anaemia was another major concern for malnutrition, affecting 61.2 percent of children aged 6–59 months and 45.1 percent of reproductive-age women (SMART, 2019).

The limited access to WASH services presented a challenge. Only half of households had access to an improved source of drinking water within a 30-minute walk round trip from their home. The gap between rural (44 percent) and urban areas was significant (84 percent) (UNICEF and WHO, 2017).

The deteriorating security situation in bordering areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria limited access to health services. As of 18 December 2019, four health centres and 47 health posts had closed due to insecurity in crisis-affected areas (WHO, December 2019). The high prevalence of malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory infections were also some of the major contributors to malnutrition in at least 18 out of the 34 departments analysed (IPC AMN 2019). In 2019, a total of