October 2019). However above-average precipitation improved pasture availability for livestock in most rangelands (FAO-GIEWS, December 2019).

The number of people affected by seasonal floods was unusually high in 2019, reaching 300,000 in 32 out of 34 provinces (OCHA, December 2019). However, the floods had minimal impact on the national 2019 cereal harvest (FEWS NET, June 2019), which was one-third above that of the 2018 drought-reduced harvest and 7 percent above the five-year average. Winter wheat planting was expected to be above average due to abundant rains (FAO-GIEWS, December 2019).

**NUTRITION OVERVIEW**

The number of acutely malnourished children under 5 years of age increased by 25 percent since 2018 to an estimated 2.5 million children, with 690,000 of them being severely malnourished and in need of life-saving treatment. The findings of the most recent nutrition surveys across the country show that 25 out of 34 provinces (Kapisa, Wardak, Nangarhar, Laghman, Bamyan, Paktika, Paktia, Kunar, Nuristan, Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Samangan, Balkh, Sar-e-Pol, Ghor, Daykundi, Uruzgan, Zabul, Jawzjan, Faryab, Helmand, Badghis, Herat, Farah) had an under 5 wasting prevalence above emergency thresholds (>15 percent) (OCHA, December 2019).

Rapid nutrition assessments in IDP settlements found ‘high’ child wasting levels at 11-13 percent in Badghis, and close to 11 percent in Herat (ANC, July 2019). Population displacement and poor water and sanitation conditions trigger disease, particularly diarrhoea, and raise the risk of malnutrition. Around 563,000 PLW were under-nourished (OCHA, December 2019). The overwhelming majority (92 percent) of rural women faced problems accessing health care services, with distance and cost the major barriers (DHS 2015).

Drivers for malnutrition include sub-optimal childcare and feeding practices, poor access to health services, sanitation and safe water, acute food insecurity and the negative impact of conflict-related shocks. Only 16 percent of children aged 6-23 months receive the minimum acceptable diet for their development with around half receiving an adequate number of meals, and only 24 percent a nutritionally diverse diet (at least four food groups) (DHS 2015). Outbreaks of measles and the Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever continued to affect most provinces. Afghanistan remains one of the last countries yet to have eradicated polio (OCHA, December 2019).