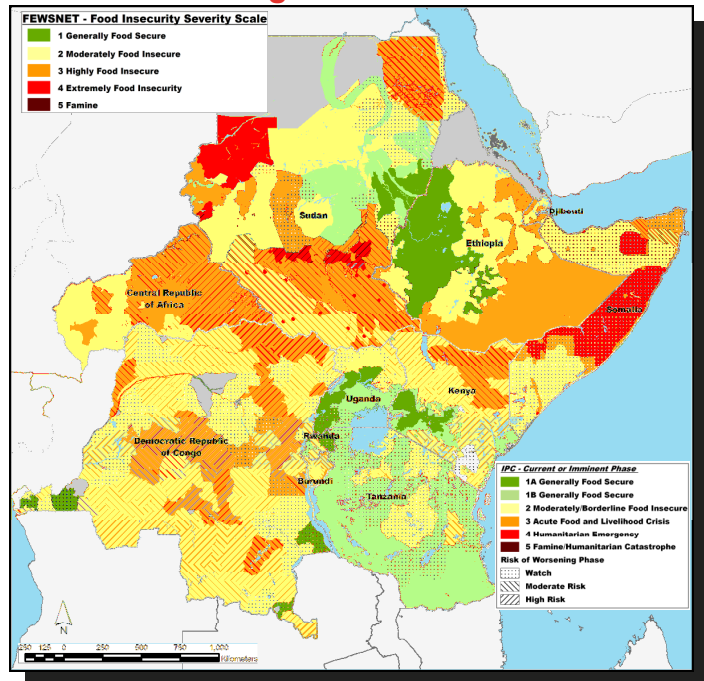


Regional food security situation and outlook

Persistent drought continues to cause food insecurity in most parts of the region



Sources: IPC Technical Working Groups and FEWS NET
The maps for Uganda, Rwanda, Northern Sudan, CAR and DRC will be updated soon.
The names and boundaries on this map do not imply any official endorsement or acceptance by the UN

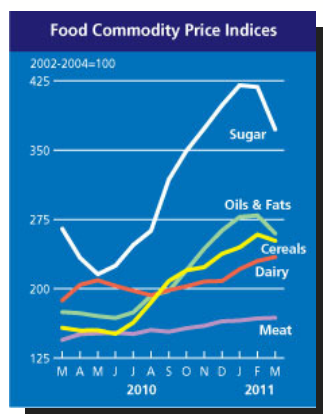
The ongoing drought in the eastern part of the region, mainly due to the effect of La Niña phenomenon during last season, continues to cause notable levels of food insecurity.

The onset of the current March-May rains has been delayed and poorly distributed in the region thereby exacerbating the dry conditions. Households in the pastoral and marginal cropping areas face food insecurity also due to the increasing staple food prices, high fuel prices and declining purchasing power. **Notable food insecurity situation persists throughout central Somalia.** The January/February 2011 crop harvests in southern Somalia were only 20 percent of the average, while water and pasture availability are extremely poor. A rainfall deficit is currently being experienced in most parts of the country as the Gu rainy season is yet to start.

In Ethiopia, the February-May rains have begun late and have been erratically distributed. The southern and south-eastern pastoral and agro-pastoral parts of the country face critical shortages of water and pasture. Food insecurity among the poor and very poor households in these areas is becoming increasingly alarming. Prices of staple foods remain high in the above-mentioned areas, despite an average to above-average 2010 main season harvest.

The agro-pastoral areas of north-eastern Kenya are experiencing erratic rainfall distribution both in time and space. A majority of the very poor and poor households are unlikely to meet their required food needs until the next harvest in September 2011. Currently about 1.4 million pastoralists face moderate to acute food insecurity in these parts of the country.

Food insecurity to intensify in the region



Source: FAO-GIEWS

According to the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) six months seasonal rainfall forecasts, a normal to below normal April-June rains has been predicted in the eastern Horn of the region. However, the June-September seasonal rainfall is likely to be favorable, especially for Ethiopia and Sudan.

Warmer-than-normal surface temperatures (+0.5 to +1 °C) are also forecasted for the eastern and northern sector of the region during this period, which may have some adverse impacts on rangeland resources (water deficits and poor pasture conditions).

Most of the March to May rains in the eastern Horn are usually expected in April, but the reduced precipitation so far received in April will most likely intensify food insecurity in these areas. The increasing fuel prices and tightening of markets are predicted to lead to further staple food price increases thereby increasing food insecurity among the poor and very poor across the region until June/July 2011.

The global food commodity price indices show a marked drop in the prices of cereals, sugar and oils and fats. The prices of dairy products are on the increase, while meat prices remain stable (FAO-GIEWS). However, in the east and central African region the prices of imported cereals are stabilizing but still above the 5-year average in most markets partly due to high fuel prices. The prices of local staples are showing significant increases in most markets in the eastern Horn, due to high fuel prices and increased demand especially during the on-going lean season (FEWS NET).

MAS website and Cross-border Markets Profiles online

The launch of the website of the FSNWWG Market Analysis Subgroup (MAS) coincides with the release of the **Cross-border Market Profiles**, developed under the joint WFP, FEWS NET and FAO, Regional Cross-border Trade Monitoring initiative of MAS. The profiles are accessible through a user-friendly dynamic map.

More features are available on the website, as the links to external price tools and selected relevant documentation, and more will be added in the coming weeks, as a price watch and data and reports from the MAS cross-border monitoring initiative.

www.disasterreduction.net/mas

For more information on MAS and the Regional Cross-border Trade Monitoring initiative, please contact fsn-gha-workinggroup@fao.org.



Recommendations for actions

- Constantly monitoring the situation to inform decision makers for timely and prompt response to mitigate the ongoing drought.
- Implementation of large-scale emergency assistance to address current and likely food insecurity.
- Holistic multi-sectoral, livelihood-based approach

Farmer and Pastoralist Field Schools: Participatory learning about ecosystems

A Farmer (or Pastoralist) Field School (FFS & PFS) can be described as a ‘school without walls’, where groups of about 25 land users learn through experiential and participatory learning techniques about themselves and their ecosystem in their own context.

The direct result being improved decision-making capacity and enhanced local innovation processes. The group meets regularly (usually weekly) under the guidance of a trained facilitator. The approach is currently applied by a large



Group exercise on HIV and Gender issues at a Master Training in Kisumu, Kenya. (Karine Garnier)

number of field actors in the region, including some 30 NGOs. In Tanzania, Rwanda (MOA) and Kenya (Forest Department) the approach has also been mainstreamed in public extension services.

All Learning is by doing i.e. through practical hands-on activities. The field, animals and the landscape is the main learning ground, around which all activities are organised. The learning is problem based where participants apply different analytical methods to help them gain the ability to identify and solve problems they may encounter in their daily life and Discovery-based learning tools triggers a spirit of curiosity and innovativeness. A core activity is to establish and monitor comparative experiments that are monitored over a longer period of time through the ecosystem analysis exercise, a cornerstone activity that involves making field observations, data collection and analysis, and finally come up with recommendations. In drought affected areas the approach has proven



An FFS group in Burundi presenting their own analysis of the local food security and nutrition situation. (Deborah Duveskog)

particularly useful in facilitating a transition from emergency and relief mode to more longer term development. Groups have successfully experimented and come up with locally adapted solutions for water management, fodder conservation and production, livelihood diversification and livestock management that have assisted in risk prevention and mitigation. Alongside technological impacts social empowerment has also been noted with improved gender relations, increased self confidence and cooperation, conflict management and negotiation skills as important outcomes of the learning process.

Accountability in humanitarian operations in focus

Accountability was a keyword when “Transparency International Kenya” and “The Sphere Project” launched two handbooks on standards and preventing corruption humanitarian operations on April 14 in Nairobi.

The launch of the two books was hosted by the annual meeting of the Inter Agency Working Group on Disaster Preparedness for East and Central Africa (IAWG). IAWG is a forum to respond to humanitarian crisis in the region combined by regional organizations of UN-agencies as well as NGOs and the Red Cross.

The handbook “Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations” was launched by Transparency International Kenya (TI-Kenya). “TI-Kenya believes that addressing corruption is an integral element humanitarian aid, in accountability, quality assurance and equitable access”, said Samuel Kimeu Executive Director of TI-Kenya.

“Everybody knew that there is corruption in humanitarian operations but this hadn’t been systematic analyzed”, explained Roslyn Hees, Senior Advisor and co-author of the handbook. That’s why Transparency International started 2005 with corruption risk mapping process which finalized in the “TI handbook on Good Practices and Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations”.

The now launched Handbook is a condensed version of this book. Hees named it “cargo-pants pocket” because it should follow humanitarian staff in the field and is not meant for the bookshelf. The handbook should not that much act as set of standards but as an operational manual which provides humanitarian staff tools with those they are able to type out corruption risk in the field, she added.

The second handbook that was launched on the IAWG-meeting is on the other hand very much a book on standards.

“Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response” defines minimum standards how humanitarian operations should be executed in a proper way. Thus the book too points out the rights of the disaster-affected population to a life with dignity, protection and assistance.

This handbook, which represents a cornerstone for accountability in humanitarian action, was launched not only in Nairobi but simultaneous on 30 other events worldwide by the “Sphere Project”

“The humanitarian sector must be aware of this risk (corruption) and promote accountability in all their operations”, UN Resident Representative Mr. Aenas Chuma said in connection to the launch meeting

The 2011 edition of the handbook includes a new chapter on protection which considers the safety of affected population as an integral part of humanitarian response. Climate change, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and early recovery services and livelihoods are issues which are too addressed in the handbook.

“The Sphere Project” was created by a group of humanitarian non-governmental organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The first trial edition on minimum standards humanitarian operations was published in 1998. For this third edition the book got completely re-written by over 600 international experts. Arabic, French, Spanish, Russian and German versions of the Handbook will be released by 23 June 2011.

For Further Information

- Market Analysis Subgroup (MAS): <http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/mas>
- Inter-Agency Working Group: <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iawg-nairobi>
- The Sphere-Project: <http://www.sphereproject.org>
- Regional Food Security Update: http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/La_nina
- Global Prices: <http://www.fao.org/giews>
- Farmer Field Schools: <http://www.farmerfieldschool.net>

Upcoming Events	Date	Event	Location
	26 April	Drought Cycle Management Meeting	Nairobi, Kenya
	27 April	WFP/UNICEF Donor Consulting Meeting	Nairobi, Kenya
	12 May	FSNWG monthly meeting	Nairobi, Kenya
	12 May	RHPT-Meeting	Nairobi, Kenya
	17 -18 May	Drought Cycle Management Annual Meeting	Addis Adaba, Ethiopia

Several International NGOs and UN Agencies have underlined their interest in developing a regional food security and nutrition coordination mechanism, technically supported by FAO. As a result of this request, a thematic working group - the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group - was established in 2005 with the participation of CRS, IFRC, Save the Children, OCHA, World Vision, Concern Universal, OXFAM, FAO, FAO/FSAU, FEWS NET, WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF. The FSNWG now covers 12 countries: Burundi, CAR, Djibouti, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. In the future, the FSNWG will be co-chaired by IGAD. For more information, please contact the FAO Sub-Regional Emergency Office for Eastern and Central Africa (REOA): fsn-gha-workinggroup@fao.org