



KENYA Food Security Outlook Update

November 2011

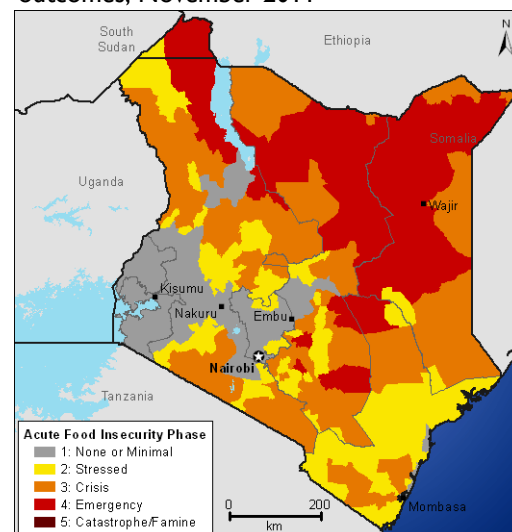
Key messages

- The 2011 short rains began early and have been above normal in drought-affected areas, resulting in substantial improvements in availability of water, browse and pasture in pastoral areas and cropping lowlands of the southeast and coastal areas. However, excessive rains have resulted in localized flooding, causing loss of lives and livelihood assets, displacement, and disruption of road transport in Kilifi, Kwale, Malindi, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa, Laikipia, Turkana and West Pokot. An estimated 3.75 million people are at Stressed, Crisis, or Emergency levels of food insecurity (Figure 1).
- Gradual improvements in food security for severely drought-hit pastoral households in the north and northeast and the southern Maasai rangelands have started to manifest, after close to 70 percent of livestock returned to wet-season grazing areas from mid-October through early November. Livestock markets have become more active, while modest improvements in terms of trade have occurred. Most pastoral households will be classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) at the end of November, though a significant proportion of very poor and poor households will remain at Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels. However, the change is expected to occur after pastoral livelihood productivities stabilize, as livestock settle back in wet-season grazing areas and recover from long trekking distances.
- The food security status of short rains-dependent households in the southeastern and Coastal lowlands is expected to improve by the end of November due to increased farm labor opportunities and improved availability of short cycle crops and milk, coupled with ongoing interventions. As a result, the majority of households will be classified in the Stressed phase (IPC Phase 2). Currently the majority of poor and very poor households remain at Crisis levels.

Pastoral conditions

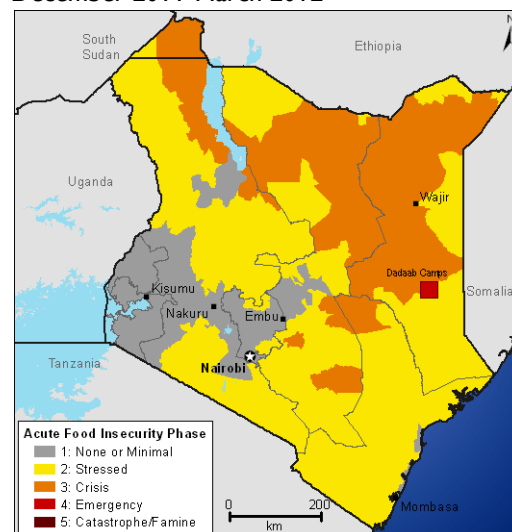
The 2011 short rains started about three weeks earlier than usual and have been evenly distributed and above normal. As a result, environmental conditions have improved significantly. However, rainfall deficits of about 50 mm will most likely prevail in these areas starting in December 2011. Currently, most surface water sources are nearly half full and distances to water for domestic use have normalized in many places. Subsequently, livestock migration to the wet-season grazing areas has intensified. An estimated 70-80 percent of livestock that left the northeast pastoral areas have returned back to Garissa District and are continuing to return in Wajir, Mandera and Isiolo districts. The migration of livestock out of the dry-season grazing areas of Ijara, Tana River and Lamu has eased tensions in those areas. However, livestock raiding occurred in northern and eastern Samburu and central Isiolo in

Figure 1. Estimated current food security outcomes, November 2011



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Estimated food security outcomes, December 2011-March 2012



Source: FEWS NET

For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Scale, please see www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale

This report provides an update to the October 2011 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions in Kenya through March 2012. The next Outlook report will be released in January and will cover the January to June 2012 period.

November, resulting in 20 deaths, displacement of 500 households, and loss of livestock. Households in Isiolo, Mandera, Marsabit, Wajir, Garissa and Tana River have also lost livestock due to enhanced rains at the start of the season. For instance, in Isiolo, mortality rates for goats and cattle rose by 0.3 and 0.9 percent, respectively, in October.

Livestock productivity for animals that did not migrate is below normal. Cattle and goat conditions are fair in the north and northeast and fair to good in the northwest and southern pastoral areas. Livestock prices are increasing in Mandera, Garissa, Tana River, Narok and Laikipia. Goat prices have increased by 15-50 percent in Garissa, Mandera, Laikipia and Narok while cattle prices have risen by five percent in Isiolo and Garissa; by 20-30 percent in Laikipia and Baringo; and by up to 170 percent in Mandera in October as compared to September. Livestock prices are generally above 5-year averages for October, across the pastoral livelihood with the exception of Isiolo and Garissa where goat and cattle prices are 10-30 percent below five-year averages. Above-average livestock prices may be driven by greater desire to restock after heightened mortalities during the last season. Conflict is suppressing livestock trade in Isiolo, leading to lowered prices. The purchasing capacities of pastoralists has improved by 15-30 percent in Garissa, Baringo, Narok, Laikipia and Mandera - households are able to access a 90-kilogram bag of maize from the sale of 2-5 goats compared to 3-6 goats in September. However, prevailing terms of trade are 10-15 percent below the 5-year average in Turkana, Laikipia and Narok and by 50-70 percent in Tana River, Trans Mara, Mandera, Isiolo and Garissa.

The Arid Lands Resource Management Programme (ALRMP) surveillance data show that close to 30 percent of the children in Turkana, Samburu, Mandera and Isiolo are 'at risk of malnutrition' (MUAC<135mm). Despite ongoing blanket supplementary feeding in most districts, the proportion of children at risk of malnutrition is above respective 5-year averages in Turkana, Samburu and Baringo by 10 percent and by 30-65 percent in Garissa, Mandera and Isiolo. Persistently high malnutrition levels highlight the importance of addressing other underlying factors, such as poor hygiene and child feeding practices. High morbidity incidents that include rising malaria and dengue fever in Mandera, may also have contributed to heightened malnutrition in pastoral districts.

Improvements in pastoral food security are expected to start consolidating because access to livestock products and short-cycle vegetables is increasing, purchasing capacities are improving, food and non-food interventions are on-going, and conflict is easing in northwestern pastoral areas. However, likely outbreaks of water and vector borne diseases, disruption of transportation due to the increased rains, and heightened insecurity along the Kenya-Somalia border may moderate improvements. Most households are expected to face Stressed or Crisis levels by the end of November.

Marginal agricultural farm households in the southeastern and coastal lowlands

The majority of households in the southeastern and Coastal lowlands have finished planting the key short rains crop, which accounts for up to 70 percent of annual output in the cropping lowlands. Crop germination is reported to be good across the lowlands. In Mwingi, Kitui, Taita Taveta and Kwale, nearly half of the crop is at first weeding stage - the relatively advanced stage is attributed to early planting. Intensified farm activities have increased farm labor opportunities by up to 30 percent and household income has increased by 10-15 percent in Mwingi, Mbeere, Tharaka, Lamu, Kwale, Malindi and Taita Taveta over the past month. As a result, most households have reduced employment of destructive coping strategies, as depicted by declines up to 20 percent in the coping strategy index in Mbeere, Kwale and Mwingi. In addition, food and non-food interventions have also increased during October. Improved household food access is illustrated by the decrease in children 'at risk of malnutrition' by 5-20 percent in Taita Taveta, Kwale, Meru North, Mwingi, Tharaka and Nyeri. These rates are below the five-year average across the southeastern and Coast lowlands districts.

Food security is expected to continue improving, as livestock productivity will pick up following improved availability of water, pasture and browse, while maize prices should continue declining through the long and short rains harvests. Availability of short-cycle crops will increase significantly while access to farm and off-farm labor opportunities should be sustained by the upsurge in farm activities. Most households are likely to move to Stressed levels in December.

Dadaab refugees' food security prospects

The number of refugees entering Kenya has declined markedly in recent weeks due to ongoing heavy rains that have impeded transport, and the Kenyan military operation in southern Somalia. Heightened insecurity has also led to suspension of non-essential services such as provision of transport for asylum seekers by the International Organization of Migration (IOM), causing further reduction in refugee numbers. According to UNHCR, the number of refugees entering Kenya declined to about 100 people during the first week of November, compared to 3,400 people per week in mid-

October. The new arrivals are not registered but have incorporated into families that are fully registered as refugees and are sharing their food rations. According to UNHCR, about 5,000 refugees in Ifo II East and West extension camps have lost their shelters after severe flooding. Several latrines have also been washed away in the Dadaab refugee camp complex, predisposing refugees to outbreaks of water-borne diseases. An upsurge in acute watery diarrhea cases has already been reported in the camps. Further disease outbreaks would heighten already worrisome levels of malnutrition. Escalation of insecurity and probable attacks on convoys by retaliating militia from Somalia could jeopardize delivery of services.

Flood-affected populations

Enhanced rains during October resulted in flash floods, leading to loss of life and livelihood assets. Nearly 10 people lost their lives in the Coastal, Western and Central Rift Valley flood-plains, while several households were temporarily displaced in central Turkana, eastern Garissa, southern Mandera and northeastern Wajir. Livelihood assets including livestock were washed away by floods in Moyale, Marsabit, Wajir, and Mandera, while roads and bridges were destroyed in Baringo, Marakwet, West Pokot and Turkana. There is a high risk of water-borne disease outbreaks, such as cholera, due to water contamination. Transport costs are anticipated to rise due to poor infrastructure while market access may be impeded, leading to low incomes and commodity shortages in West Pokot, Laikipia, and parts of Marakwet. Food security of flood-affected households remains precarious because of the sudden loss of productive capacities in spite of interventions.

Prospects for national cereal supply and prices

Harvesting of the long rains maize crop in the Rift Valley highlands has been slowed by enhanced rains in the ‘grain basket’. Though wholesale maize prices are 25-45 percent below July peak prices, they remain 70-85 percent above the October five-year average. Maize retail prices have declined marginally in the southeast and Coastal lowlands, attributed to ongoing relief food distributions and localized harvesting in agropastoral zones. However, maize prices are above five-year averages by margins ranging from 50-80 percent in Garissa, Baringo, Mandera and Samburu, by 120-170 percent in Laikipia, Tana River and Turkana and by 70-110 percent in Mbeere, Nyeri, Mwingi, Malindi and Kwale markets. Maize prices are expected to decline through March 2012, primarily due to an increase in domestic supply from both the long and short rains harvests. In addition, the millers’ purchase price is 10 percent lower than National Cereal and Produce Board (NCPB) buying price, which will exert downward pressure on overall maize prices because farmers prefer to sell their crop to millers because of more rapid payments and less stringent quality requirements. Increased availability of short cycle crops, milk, and ongoing interventions is expected to ease pressure on maize prices in the marginal agricultural and pastoral areas.

Ongoing interventions and impacts

WFP’s Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) is scaling up its operations in November to reach 2.8 million people in the pastoral and marginal agricultural areas through general food distributions, Food for Assets and Cash for Assets. An additional 900,000 beneficiaries will be targeted under the unconditional cash transfers programme and general food rations in districts previously targeted by the GoK. About 462,000 children below five years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers are also targeted under nutrition interventions. Planned food distributions for October were hampered in some districts by delayed deliveries and distributions attributed to a combination of insecurity, impassable roads and operational challenges.

Seasonal calendar and critical events

