

Alert on Impact of Below normal Oct-Dec 2020 Rains on Food Security and Nutrition

A further deterioration of food security and nutrition conditions anticipated due to forecasted below average Oct-Dec 2020 rainfall

Summary

A poor October-November-December (OND) season is expected, characterized by late onset, below average rains and long severe dry spells, amidst the compounding impacts of COVID-19, desert locust infestations, and economic shocks – presenting poor prospects for crop and livestock performance across the region, hence a possible risk of further deterioration of food security and nutrition outcomes. The FSNWG therefore urges all partners to take note of this imminent crisis and plan for urgent action to mitigate anticipated negative impacts on pastoral and agriculture livelihoods.

La Nina and negative IOD to drive below average rainfall across Eastern Africa

According to a **seasonal forecast** released by ICPAC during **GHACOF56**, **most parts of Eastern Africa are predicted to receive below average rainfall during the Oct-Dec 2020 season** (see Figure 2). This (lower than average rainfall) is **driven by forecasted La Niña conditions coupled with a weak negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) phenomenon**. In addition to the forecasted below average rainfall, **onset will be late and dry spells will be long and severe**. These impacts are expected to **negatively impact crop, livestock and fish production**. This is especially so due to the fact that the region majorly depends on rain fed agriculture and pastoral (livestock) production which are highly vulnerable to climate variability.

Long dry spell episodes are predicted in **Southern Somalia, Belg areas of Ethiopia** (southern Somali and Oromia regions), **most parts of Kenya and Tanzania**, parts of **Central and Eastern Equatoria of South Sudan**, and **eastern, southern and central Uganda**. Late onset will be experienced in much of Rwanda, South-western Uganda, Lake Victoria region, eastern Kenya, localised parts of central and southern Somalia and Southern Ethiopia. On the other hand, early onset of rains is expected in localised areas of western and north western Kenya, much of Tanzania, and south-eastern South Sudan. Overall, the forecasted poor season is likely to result in below average crop production among subsistence farmers. Among the pastoralist livelihoods communities, poor milk and meat production and reduced kidding and calving are common with such poor seasons. Similarly, such poor rains will have undesirable impacts on Terms of Trade. More importantly, a failed OND season will likely spark inter-communal conflict between pastoral communities due to scarcity of water and pastures, and could lead to atypical cross border migrations.

Should this forecast materialise, below average crop and livestock productivity will negatively impact households' nutrition status and purchasing power, aggravating the food insecurity and malnutrition situation of especially vulnerable households. This risks adding to the humanitarian needs of the communities in the region, whose resilience has already been weakened by the effects of desert locust invasion, widespread flooding and COVID-19 pandemic among other traditional shocks in the region. If the anticipated scale of the forecasted rainfall deficits materialises, the number of food insecure people requiring urgent humanitarian assistance (IPC Phase 3+) will undoubtedly increase, and so do the number of households requiring livelihood support and resilience building (IPC Phase 2). Herders in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, whose livelihood heavily depends on the quality of seasonal rainfall, will particularly be the most affected. Similarly, the late onset and below average rainfall will majorly affect **Belg receiving areas of Ethiopia**, who predominantly pursue pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods. In particular, the agro-pastoral households engaged in cropping activities are likely to

experience a below average harvest of the Mehr crops such as Teff, fruits and vegetables, which are planted in September.

Other areas of concern are the **eastern part of Uganda** which has recently become very vulnerable to climatic shocks. In Teso region and surrounding areas which are forecast to receive below average rains, below average food production will lead to early depletion of household stocks from own production, declined income from crop sales, triggering atypical coping mechanisms early 2021 as poor households turn to markets to access food.

Communities living in the Riverine areas of Somalia (and particularly Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions) are, arguably, one of the least resilient communities to drought disasters. They practice agro-pastoralist livelihood, cultivating mainly (rain-fed) sorghum and maize and at times sesame and cowpeas. The cropping and agro pastoral livelihoods of the arid and semi-arid areas of **Kenya** depend on short rains (OND) to plant maize, beans and green grams. Southern parts of **South Sudan** depend on July-November rains for production of sorghum, maize, groundnuts, soya beans and cassava as well as livestock rearing. Cassava, which is the main crop for Equatorial maize and cassava livelihood zone and groundnuts are the main crops that will be affected by a below average rains in South Sudan, since the cereals are harvested in September through December. In **Uganda's** Teso region and surrounding areas, below average rains will impact on yield of sorghum, millet, cassava, sweet potato and groundnuts – all of which are important staples and a major source to income generation.

It is worth noting that households' purchasing power in the region is already vulnerable owing to the impact of COVID 19 on livelihoods that led to loss of income sources of employed populations, livestock traders, self-businesses and casual wage earners. As such an increase in prices of food commodities will further limit vulnerable households' access to food, worsening their food and nutrition insecurity.

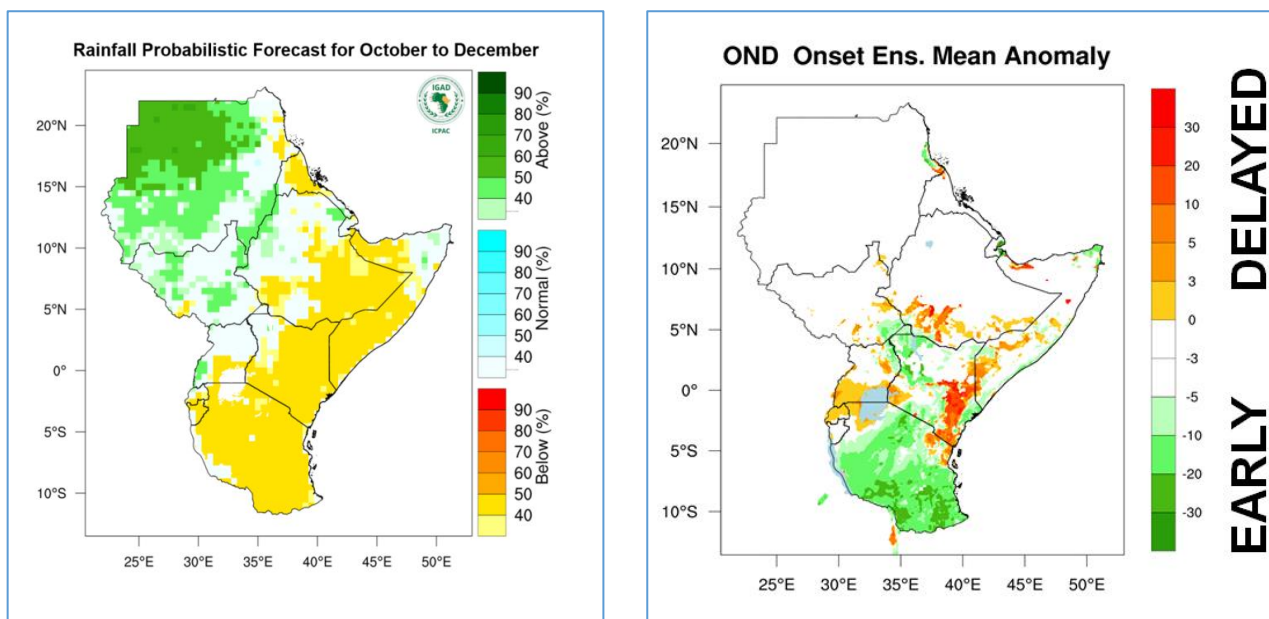
As at end of September, in addition to over **80.7M** people in **IPC Phase 2** (Stressed), there are approximately **54.5M** people in **IPC Phase 3+**, requiring urgent humanitarian food assistance, in East and Central Africa (ECA) countries. This comprises of 42.1M people in **IPC Phase 3** (Crisis) and **12.4M** people in **IPC Phase 4** (Emergency). These figures **exclude** countries without a recent analysis, which includes Rwanda, Eritrea and Djibouti.

Food Security Outcomes (Sept 2020)

Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
Burundi	3,293,345	713,462	42,054		755,516
CAR	1,757,000	1,521,000	408,000		1,929,000
DRC	29,024,132	16,131,386	5,703,327		21,834,713
Ethiopia	13,007,693	7,064,142	1,441,541		8,505,683
Kenya	5,113,187	695,728	43,373		739,101
Somalia	3,010,000	1,705,000	400,000		2,105,000
South Sudan	3,285,000	4,735,000	1,745,000		6,480,000
Sudan	15,900,000	7,400,000	2,200,000		9,600,000
Uganda	4,499,054	1,647,307	382,810		2,030,117
Tanzania	1,845,763	481,036	7,625		488,661
Total	80,735,174	42,094,061	12,373,730		54,467,791

Source: IPC (Presented at the FSNWG 24 Sept 2020 & FSNAU/FEWS NET (Somalia))

The Oct-Dec 2020 Seasonal Forecast



Source: ICPAC (GHACOF 56)

- **Wetter than usual conditions** are expected over much of South Sudan, western border of Ethiopia, south eastern parts of Eritrea, north eastern Ethiopia, and south western border of Uganda;
- **Average rainfall conditions** are likely to be recorded over much of Uganda, north western Kenya, Djibouti, and areas in southern, central, and northern Ethiopia;
- **Drier than usual conditions** are likely to be experienced over Tanzania, much of south-eastern Uganda, Kenya, southern and north western Somalia, much of south eastern Ethiopia, much of Eritrea, and few areas in south western and south eastern South Sudan.

Contacts

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