

## FSNWG Food Security and Nutrition Situation Update

### Key messages

- An estimated **26.2 million people in 7 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG<sup>1</sup>** in the Eastern and Central Africa Region are currently severely **food insecure (IPC<sup>2</sup> Phase 3+)**, and require urgent food assistance. Of these, an estimated **22.5 million are from 4 of the 8 IGAD Member States** (see Table 1).
- **Desert locust upsurge, COVID-19 pandemic, floods** and other climatic shocks, **macro-economic shocks** and, **conflict** and **insecurity** continued to be the main drivers of food insecurity across the region.
- **COVID-19 cases have been on the rise in the region**, resulting in loss of lives, economic slowdowns and disruption and/or complete loss of livelihoods, consequently compromising food access among vulnerable populations.
- **Delivery of essential nutrition services is being disrupted across the region, risking an increase in morbidity and mortality rates** in the coming months. Vitamin A Supplementation (VAS) programmes have been the worst affected.
- **Domestic currencies have weakened against the dollar, owing to reduced forex earnings, hence increasing the cost of imported foods in the region.**
- In South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia, ongoing

above average July to September rains and associated **severe flooding** have **displaced thousands of families, disrupted transportation of commodities and destroyed private and public infrastructure.**

In South Sudan, floods have disrupted commodity transport from Juba which has led to even more dramatic increases in hinterland markets – as high as 33% increase in the price of maize in Kapoeta or a 71% increase in price of imported sorghum in Renk.

In Sudan, floods from heavy rains have left over 557,000 people, including 170,000 IDPs affected in 17 out of 18 states, and urgently require humanitarian assistance (OCHA).

- As at 31st July 2020, **there were 12.7 million displaced people in the region**, excluding those in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); that is **8.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)** and **4.6 million refugees and asylum seekers**. COVID-19 cases continue to be confirmed among displaced populations in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Rwanda and Uganda
- The **2020 October to December (OND) seasonal rains are forecast to be below average across roughly 90% of the region, presenting poor prospects for crop yields and pasture regeneration**; this also creates significant risk of scarcity of grazing resources in the first quarter of 2021.
- **Conflict epicentres are increasingly forming in areas affected by floods, climatic shocks, displacement and food insecurity.** Aggravating the situation is COVID-19 as measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus spur social conflict.

<sup>1</sup> The East and Central Africa **Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG)** is a multi-stakeholder regional forum, co-chaired by IGAD and FAO, mandated to provide adequate and timely information on food security and nutrition situation to planners and decision makers to ensure interventions are well coordinated to save lives, safeguard livelihoods and build resilience of at-risk populations in 13 participating ECA member countries.

<sup>2</sup> The **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** is a set of standardized tools used to classify the severity of food insecurity using a widely accepted five-phase scale, that is, Minimal (IPC Phase 1), Stressed (IPC Phase 2), Crisis (IPC Phase 3), Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Famine (IPC Phase 5).

**Table 1: Food insecure population estimates (million)<sup>3</sup>**

Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
Ethiopia	10,295,846	6,497,082	1,976,708	-	8,473,790
Kenya	3,469,363	871,864	112,679	-	984,543
Somalia	2,930,000	3,048,000	401,000	-	3,449,000
Sudan	15,900,000	7,400,000	2,200,000	-	9,600,000
<b>IGAD total</b>	<b>32,595,209</b>	<b>7,400,000</b>	<b>4,690,387</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22,507,333</b>
Burundi	3,108,000	817,000	42,000	-	859,000
CAR	1,619,209	1,608,758	753,979	-	2,362,737
Tanzania	1,845,763	481,036	7,625	-	488,661
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,168,181</b>	<b>39,168,181</b>	<b>5,493,991</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,217,731</b>

## Sector updates

### Food security situation and outlook

In August, the food security situation in the region continued to deteriorate significantly owing to the combined impact of COVID-19 and its associated economic slowdowns, desert locust invasion, floods and other climatic shocks, conflict and insecurity, protracted food insecurity from past shocks and other shocks affecting the region.

Based on most recent IPC analyses, an estimated 26.2 million people in Burundi, CAR, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Tanzania are currently severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3+), and require urgent food assistance. Given the adverse effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations in urban and peri-urban areas, this figure could potentially be higher due to limited analyses in these and other areas without recent analyses.

Sudan and Ethiopia have the highest number of food insecure people. According to the just finalised IPC analysis in Ethiopia, food access, especially among vulnerable populations, has been compromised due to serious macro-economic challenges that have caused the local currency to deteriorate, resulting in high inflation rates and increases in the prices of key staple foods. In addition, the country is hosting an estimated 1.8 million IDPs and 1.4 million recent returnees, both climate and conflict induced, who are facing significant food gaps. Meanwhile, the number of woredas (districts) impacted by desert locusts have reached 76, making the country the epicenter of infestation in the region.

### Nutrition

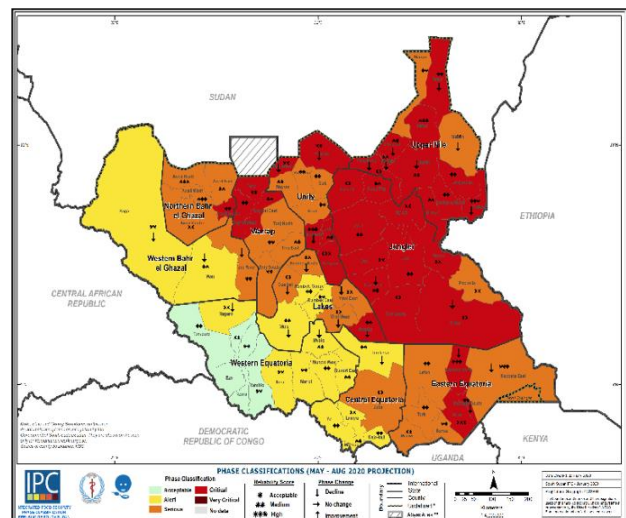
Delivery of essential nutrition services is being disrupted across the region, risking an increase in morbidity and mortality rates in the coming months. Supplementation of Vitamin A programmes have been the worst affected. For instance, according to UNICEF, Burundi has seen a 29% decline in Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) treatment and VAS, Kenya a 40% decline and South Sudan a 21% decline in the first half of the year compared to a similar period in 2019. The disruptions have not solely been a result of COVID-19, but other factors such as stock outs in Kenya and insecurity in South Sudan have also played a role.

<sup>3</sup> This is based on recent IPC analyses. Countries which do not have recent analyses have been left out. Analyses in Ethiopia, Somalia, DRC, Kenya and Sudan take into account the effects of COVID-19. More country analyses are expected in the Sept Situation Update.

Ethiopia has been flagged as a country of concern following a significant increase in SAM admissions observed in the past few months. Notably, SAM admissions in the first half of the year were 12.2% higher in comparison to a similar period in 2019. Key contributing factors include COVID-19 effects, food insecurity, cholera and measles outbreaks and the gradual adoption of the revised MUAC cut-off. Despite an increasingly precarious food security and nutrition situation in the country, there is still a USD6.4 million gap in the nutrition supplies required for 2020.

In Kenya, major interruptions in provision of essential nutrition services continue to be reported, with 32% decrease in MAM admissions and 22% decrease in SAM admissions recorded in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) in July this year compared to July 2019. Some key contributing factors include COVID-19 effects and scale down of outreaches.

In South Sudan, high levels of malnutrition persist. The national Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence stands at 12.6% with 1.3 million children projected to be wasted, including 290,000 of them who are projected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition. Moreover, an estimated 58 counties in the country are projected to be in IPC Acute Malnutrition (AMN) Phase 3 and 4. Within this, counties in Greater Upper Nile and parts of Eastern and Warrap States are projected to predominantly be in IPC AMN Phase 4. High morbidity, food insecurity, poor infant and young child feeding practices and poor WASH services and practices are the main contributing factors.



**Figure 1. South Sudan IPC Acute Malnutrition Projections (May - August 2020). Source: IPC.**

### Market and Trade

Overall, the prices of staple commodities exhibited a mixed trend following harvests in some parts of the region; and tightening supplies, some of which were flood-induced, as supply chains were disrupted, in other parts of the region.

In Uganda for instance, early harvested bean prices recorded an increase due to increased demand and below average harvests while maize and cassava prices recorded a decline due to increased availability from harvests. In the Karamoja region however, prices of most commodities either remained stable at high levels or continued to increase due to tightened supplies ahead of local harvest.

Maize prices declined seasonally in Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania and remained stable in Burundi and Ethiopia due to increased availability as a result of either ongoing or recent harvests.

Conversely, maize prices increased in South Sudan and Sudan as supplies tightened. Notably in South Sudan, ongoing floods triggered by heavy rains have disrupted the transportation of commodities from Juba leading to substantial increases in hinterland markets – so far a 33% increase in the price of maize has been recorded in Kapoeta and a 71% increase in price of imported sorghum has been recorded in Renk.

In Somalia, livestock prices remained stable owing to availability of pasture, browse and water.

In relation to forex, domestic currencies have weakened against the dollar, owing to reduced forex inflows attributed to the effects of COVID-19 on the global economy, hence increasing the cost of imported foods. For instance, in Ethiopia and Kenya, the Ethiopian Birr and Kenya Shilling respectively have been under pressure to depreciate on account of reduced exports and capital flow remittances.

Cognisant of the supply chain challenges posed by the effects of COVID-19, the East African Community (EAC) has launched the **Regional Electronic Cargo and Driver Tracking System (RECDTS)** in selected border points in collaboration with Member States National Focal Points on COVID-19 and TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) to allow easy movement of the truck drivers. This tracking system is expected to be a key component that supports the region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic by facilitating sharing of EAC COVID-19 test certificates for cross border truck drivers/crews electronically on the platform.

### **Displacement**

The region continues to witness an increase in the number of displaced population with the main push factors being conflict and/or insecurity and climatic shocks. As at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, there were about 12.7 million displaced people in the region<sup>4</sup>, excluding those in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); that is 8.1 million IDPs and 4.6 million refugees and asylum seekers. Eighty-one percent (81%) of these were women and children below the age of 18 years.

COVID-19 cases continue to be confirmed among displaced populations in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Rwanda and Uganda raising serious concerns about the vulnerability of these populations, more so considering the crowded conditions and poor health services that characterise some refugee and IDP settlements.

Funding shortfalls continue to cause food ration cuts among refugees. So far, food assistance has reduced by about 10-30% in six countries – 10% in Djibouti, 16% in Ethiopia, 30% in Kenya, 30% in South Sudan, 17% in Tanzania and 30% in Uganda – affecting over 3.2 million refugees or 72% of the total refugee population in reference countries. Aggravating the effects of these food ration cuts are the socio-economic/livelihood impacts of COVID-19 in the region. Relatedly, inadequate resources have caused cuts in the provision of school meals as take-home rations to school age refugee children during schools' closures in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan where school feeding programmes have been existing.

In relation to nutrition situation of displaced populations, there is a high likelihood of deterioration in nutrition situation, mainly owing to the negative impacts of COVID-19. So far reductions in MAM, SAM and Pregnant and Lactating Women's (PLW) programmes' admissions have been noted. Specifically, program data from some refugee sites has indicated around 50% reduction in SAM, 30% reduction in MAM and 25% reduction in PLW admissions in the period March-July 2020 compared to a similar period in 2019. This is particularly alarming considering that even before the emergence of COVID-19, high levels of acute malnutrition, stunting and anaemia were still being reported in refugee sites across the region, including in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

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<sup>4</sup> This figure is from UNHCR Regional Bureau countries: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

## Climate update

Between June and August, wetter than average conditions have been recorded over parts of Uganda, western and coastal Kenya, southern coastal Somalia, much of Ethiopia, South Sudan, much of Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti, according to ICPAC. Northern parts of Sudan, part of south eastern Ethiopia, and north eastern Somalia recorded drier than average rainfall conditions.

In September, wetter than usual conditions are likely to be recorded over northern and south western parts of Sudan, eastern South Sudan, northern, eastern, and south western Uganda, western Kenya, and parts of central and south western Ethiopia, while average rainfall conditions are likely to be recorded over much of the eastern Kenya, eastern and western Tanzania, much of Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, southern and eastern parts of Sudan, southern areas of Uganda, much of Eritrea and Djibouti. On the other hand, drier than average conditions are expected over small areas in southern parts of Somalia, south-eastern Ethiopia and western Eritrea.

## Forecast for October-December 2020 season

According to a seasonal forecast released by ICPAC during GHACOF56, most parts of East Africa are predicted to have drier than average rainfall during the Oct-Dec 2020 season (see Figure 7), driven by La Niña conditions and a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) phenomenon.

The north-eastern coasts including north-eastern Somalia and north-eastern Sudan are likely to experience average to wetter than average rainfall conditions.

La Niña is also expected to bring about drier than average conditions in the equatorial regions, increasing the probability of experiencing warmer than average temperatures over much of the region.

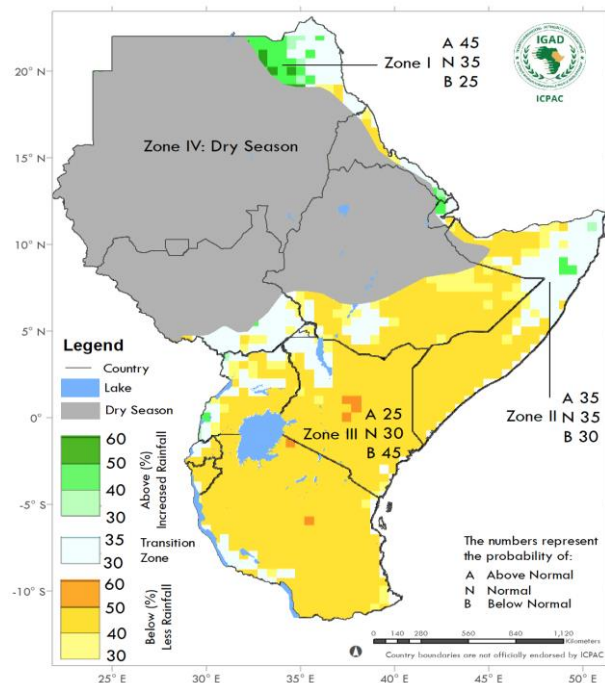


Figure 7. OND 2020 Rainfall Outlook.

Source: IGAD/ICPAC

The FSNWG will prepare an alert on possible deterioration of food security and nutrition situation in relation to the anticipated poor season.

## Conflict Update

Armed conflicts, violent extremism, ethnic violence and localised inter- and intra- communal violence continue to disrupt peace and security in the region. Notably in Ethiopia, of the about 1.8 million IDPs recorded in the country as of end of July 2020, 1.2 million were displaced due to conflict. In July alone, up to 461 conflict-related incidents were witnessed in the IGAD region including violent attacks (involving gun battles and explosions), protests, riots and demonstrations.

Generally, an increasing number of violent attacks incidents, illicit financial and human trafficking across various border crossings in the IGAD region have been observed. In addition, conflict epicentres are

increasingly forming in areas affected by floods, climatic shocks, displacement and food insecurity. Aggravating the situation is COVID-19 as measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus spur social conflict in the form of increased domestic violence, rising cases of under-age marriages and pregnancies.

### Issues of concern

**Desert locust upsurge, COVID-19 Pandemic and widespread flooding** remain issues of concern across the region. Notably, active **desert locust** swarms continue to be reported in many parts of Ethiopia and Somalia, and a few places in Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. Climatic conditions, particularly above average rainfall and seasonal winds, and ecological conditions, particularly the availability of green vegetation – including crops and pastures, in parts of these countries are responsible for continued breeding and spread of the locust. Desert locust summer breeding is ongoing in northern Ethiopia, parts of Sudan, Somalia, and coastal regions of Djibouti and Eritrea, and across the Red Sea in Yemen and nearby countries. The upcoming October-December rains across the equatorial region of the GHA provides another risk for locust movement from the northern breeding areas when seasonal winds change course from southerly to northerly directions. The risk of significant damage to both crops and rangelands therefore remains very high due to continuing locust breeding and likelihood of swarms migrating.

The economic impacts of **COVID-19 pandemic** continue to impact on national economies and household food and income sources especially among the poor and very poor. While there is an ongoing gradual lifting of the earlier-introduced measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the effects of the disruptions caused by these measures such as loss of livelihoods especially among the urban and peri-urban dwellers who predominantly work in the informal sector, fall in remittances and disruption of food systems are top among the drivers of food insecurity.

**Widespread flooding**, driven by above average rains in Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia have also caused considerable impact on livelihoods of affected populations. For example by mid-August, heavy rain in the highlands of Amhara and Tigray triggered river and flash flood in Afar region of Ethiopia, and the backflow of the Tendaho dam and overflow of Awash river resulted flooding in 11 woredas since the end of July 2020. According to the regional flood task force, an estimated 67,885 people were affected and 40,731 (60 per cent) were displaced and in need of immediate humanitarian assistance as of 15 August 2020.

### Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends:

- Continued coordinated planning, resource mobilization and response by all concerned actors to effectively address food consumption gaps among populations categorized in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+). Furthermore, in light of ongoing ration cuts among displaced populations who tend to rely significantly on humanitarian assistance, there is need for redoubling efforts around resource mobilization. Scaling up of resilience building efforts are also recommended including among the urban and peri-urban informal settlements.
- With the region continuing to witness a rise in the number of new COVID-19 infections, including among displaced populations, surveillance and treatment of positive cases needs to be stepped up.
- The FSNWG further recommends institutional, infrastructural and technical investments for large scale control operations of the desert locust, as well as, increased regional and inter-regional coordination given the issue of cross-border locust migrations.
- The FSNWG will continue to monitor all issues and provide updates for proper planning and action.

## Announcements

- A team is drafting a Special Report (Alert) on the looming drought in the region; members are free to join by writing to Brenda and/or Jasper.
  - The next FSNWG Meeting will take place on Thursday 24 September 2020.
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## Contacts

For questions and /or any other feedback, please contact the FSNWG Secretariat through:

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