

Second consecutive below-average rainy season likely to aggravate high levels of existing food insecurity

Dear Member,

In September 2020, FSNWG issued an alert about a forecast poor October – December 2020 rainy season, which indeed materialized with below-average cumulative rainfall totals, poor harvests, and a deterioration in pastoral conditions across parts of the region. This was followed by a late start to the March-May 2021 rainy season in many areas, with drier than usual conditions recorded across south-eastern, eastern, and northern regions of Kenya, north-western Uganda, southern South Sudan, north-central and central Ethiopia, and southern Somalia, as of 20 May (Figure 1). Rainfall has been particularly poor in Kenya and localized areas of north-central Ethiopia, where [many areas have received less than 55% of normal rainfall](#).

Though heavy rains fell over parts of the region in early May, these rains were in many cases too little too late, particularly for marginal cropping and agropastoral areas where insufficient rainfall at key points for crop development can have serious impacts on crop yields. While rains, in general, increased in late April and early May, an exceptionally dry start to the season delayed crops, and these delays will likely affect crop production, especially in central-eastern Kenya, central-eastern Ethiopia and southern Somalia. Meanwhile, in pastoral areas, [current water levels of livestock watering points are, in many cases, at watch, alert or near-dry stages](#), particularly in Kenya, despite it being the end of the rainy season when watering point levels should be at their highest levels.

Real-time food security monitoring systems in Kenya and Somalia are also showing deteriorations. More specifically, [April 2021 early warning bulletins produced by NDMA in Kenya](#) show that Turkana, Marsabit, and Mandera counties face “alarm” conditions. Wajir, Tana River, Samburu, Lamu, Laikipia, Kitui, Kilifi, Isiolo, Garissa, Baringo counties, meanwhile, face “alert” conditions. Similarly, [FSNAU-Somalia’s Early Warning Early Action Dashboard](#) is showing major deteriorations of monitored indicators, particularly in southern Somalia.

The rainy season in eastern Kenya, southern and central Somalia, and the Somali region of Ethiopia is near its end, with minimal rainfall levels typically received during the month of June. For these areas, the probability of additional rains filling current moisture deficits is slim. However, in other areas of the region, rains will continue into the next months. In these areas, the recent GHACOF 58 found an increased likelihood of above-average rains, which could drive a partial recovery in those areas (Figure 2).

A poor March to May season is likely to exacerbate the already concerning food security and nutrition situation across the region, driven by the combined effects of conflict, displacements, COVID-19, economic shocks and weather extremes. As of April 2021, **32.4 million** people faced Crisis or worse food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) and required urgent humanitarian action in the IGAD region. This is in addition to over **50 million** people facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes.

The nutrition situation is also deteriorating with Pibor, Akobo West and Tonj North counties in South Sudan, recording a prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) above the emergency threshold (15%). Worsening prevalence of global acute malnutrition compared to previous years have also been observed in Karamoja, Uganda and Ethiopia (especially in the Tigray and Somali regions).

ACTION REQUIRED

Implementing the right set of actions at the right time of the crisis is key for addressing climatic shocks. Evidence has shown that acting early is more effective, dignified, and less expensive than responding later once the impacts of a crisis have been felt by local communities. Additionally, the human and economic costs of growing food and nutrition insecurity, rising poverty rates, and increased resource-based conflict in an already highly vulnerable context can be devastating.

With this in mind, FSNWG calls for partners and governments to urgently put in place anticipatory action programmes, including safety nets, to protect affected households from the expected impacts of the ongoing poor rainy season. Preparations should also be made now for emergency food, nutrition, and livelihood assistance programmes given expectations of growing food insecurity and needs in the coming months in affected areas.

For countries with existing humanitarian response plans (HRPs), FSNWG calls for a significant scale-up of contributions as the response to date remains underfunded. As of 1 June 2021, only [between 20 to 35% of the total funding requirement for the 2021 HRPs](#) in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan has been met.

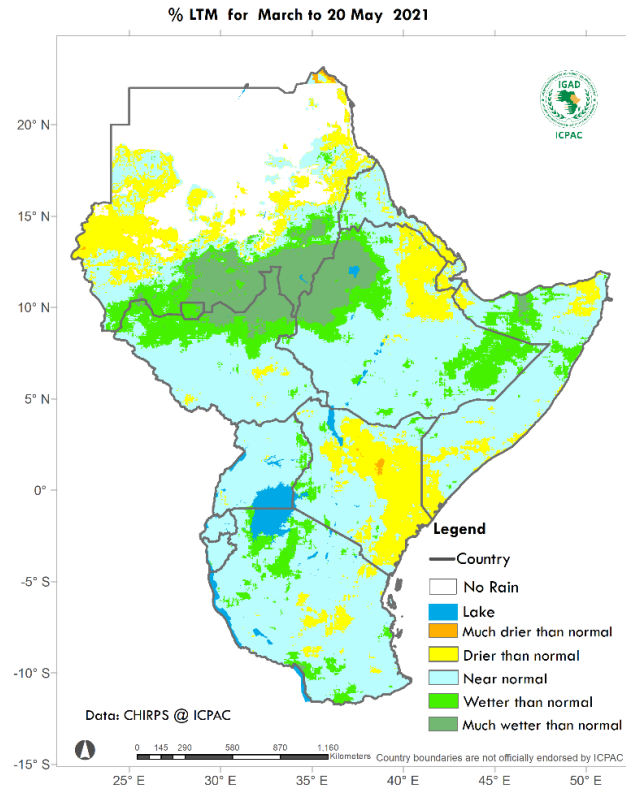
In all other countries, FSNWG encourages governments and partners to implement anticipatory action programmes. While the recent release of funds for anticipatory action by the [UN Central Emergency Response Fund's \(CERF\) in Somalia and Ethiopia](#) is an excellent start, a significant scale-up of programmes is urgently needed given the scale of expected needs.

Table 1: Populations facing acute food insecurity, as of April 2021

Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
Djibouti	389,000	167,000	27,000		194,000
Ethiopia	17,353,112	10,279,333	2,592,136		12,871,469
Kenya	4,802,500	1,185,600	238,600		1,424,200
Somalia	2,497,200	1,451,000	149,800		1,600,800
South Sudan	3,138,000	4,668,000	2,411,000	108,000	7,187,000
Sudan	17,407,791	5,800,371	1,296,808		7,097,179
Uganda	4,542,829	1,630,877	371,860		2,002,737
Total for IGAD countries	50,130,432	25,182,181	7,087,204	108,000	32,377,385
Other ECA countries					
Burundi	3,955,432	1,206,500	128,129		1,334,629
CAR	1,756,781	1,520,732	407,877		1,928,609
DRC	40,779,169	20,533,697	6,728,624		27,262,321
Total	46,491,382	23,260,929	7,264,630		30,525,559
Grand total	96,621,814	48,443,110	14,351,834	108,000	62,902,944

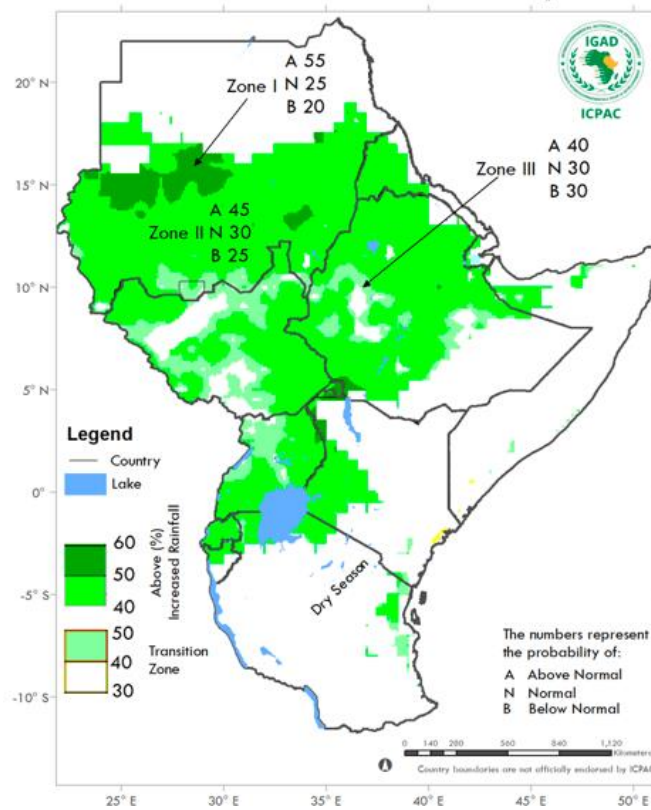
Source: Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)

Figure 1: Cumulative March to 20th May 2021 Rainfall Performance (% of long-term mean or LTM)



Source: ICPAC

Figure 2: June to September 2021 Rainfall Forecast



Source: GHACOF 58