

## FSNWG Food Security and Nutrition Situation Update

### KEY MESSAGES

- In September, the food security and nutrition situation further deteriorated in most parts of the East and Central Africa (ECA) region. The situation would have been worse without humanitarian assistance and government-led support which was crucial in preventing the worsening of the acute food security and nutrition situation in some affected areas.
- An estimated 54.5 million people in ECA were severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) in September, comprising of over 42 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 12 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). This figure is 14.9 million people above those in Crisis or worse food insecurity during the same time last year.
- An estimated 3.6 million children are projected to be severely malnourished in ECA, requiring urgent treatment services.
- Climatic shocks (particularly floods in Sudan, Ethiopia and South Sudan, and erratic rains in Somalia), conflict/insecurity, economic shocks (particularly inflation and currency depreciation), and the Desert Locust upsurge, exacerbated by COVID-19, were the major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Approximately 12.7 million people remain displaced: 4.6 million refugees and asylum seekers and 8.1 million internally displaced persons in 11 Eastern Africa countries.

### SECTOR UPDATES

#### Food security situation and outlook

In September, the number of food insecure people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance (IPC Phase 3+) continued to rise despite generally favourable weather patterns during the past months, due to a combination of many shocks and compounded by COVID-19. An estimated 54.5 million people in ECA were severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3+), the majority of whom were from the DRC (40 percent), Sudan (18 percent) and Ethiopia (16 percent). This includes an estimated 42.1 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 12.4 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). In addition, approximately 80.7 million were estimated to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2), requiring livelihood support and resilience building. There were no people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in ECA in September.

The above figures exclude countries without recent analyses, which includes Djibouti, Eritrea and Rwanda. In most countries, humanitarian assistance played a significant role in moderating the scale of acute food insecurity, although considerable improvements have not been achieved due to the effects of multiple ongoing shocks.

#### Food Security Outcomes (September 2020)

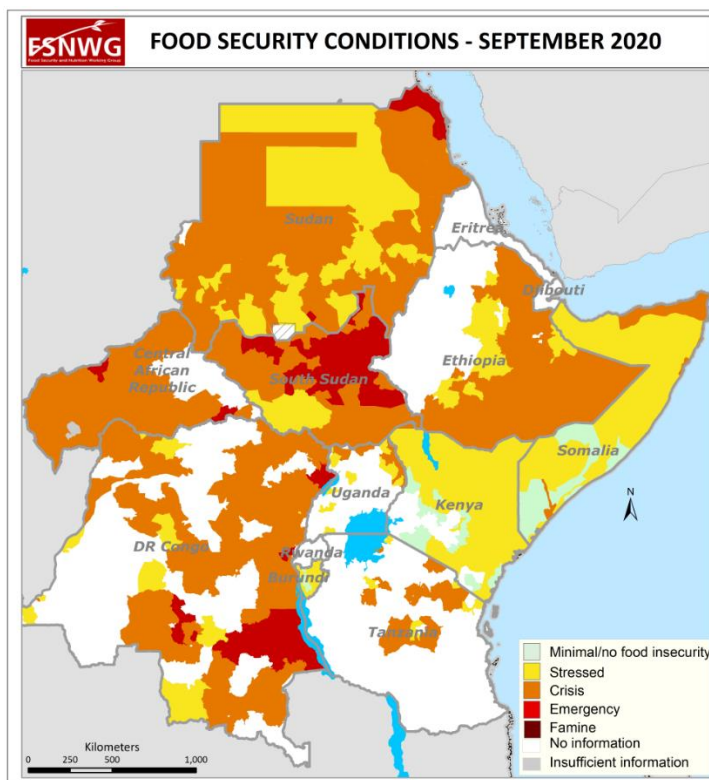
Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
Burundi	3,293,345	713,462	42,054		755,516
CAR	1,757,000	1,521,000	408,000		1,929,000
DRC	29,024,132	16,131,386	5,703,327		21,834,713
Ethiopia	13,007,693	7,064,142	1,441,541		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
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,735,174</b>	<b>42,094,061</b>	<b>12,373,730</b>		<b>54,467,791</b>

Source: IPC and FSNAU/FEWS NET (Somalia): Presented at the FSNWG on 24 September 2020

### Areas of concern

The DRC, Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan currently have the highest levels of food insecurity (in terms of total affected population), driven mainly by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, economic challenges and inflation, conflict and insecurity, the Desert Locust upsurge and climate shocks (particularly floods).

Other countries with significant acute food insecurity are CAR, Somalia and Uganda.



### Nutrition

There are continued concerns with regards to the burden of wasting which remains high across the region, with an estimated 3.6 million severely wasted children every year across the IGAD countries who require urgent treatment. For instance, in Somalia alone, 849,900 children are severely malnourished and require urgent treatment. The highest burden for malnutrition remains in Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Kenya.

Several disruptions in the delivery of essential nutrition services were noted in the first half of 2020, with variations by country and by intervention. To ensure continued service delivery, programme adaptations continues to be made in the delivery of wasting treatment services, including dispensing larger ration sizes to reduce the frequency of clinic visits, delivering treatment services through community health workers, and implementing family MUAC for continued early identification of children in need of treatment. With these adaptations, services for severe wasting have been maintained or increased in Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, while there have been reductions seen in South Sudan and Kenya. However, it should be noted that there are various reasons for reductions seen, including insecurity, stock-outs and resource shortfalls.

Delivery of vitamin A supplementation (VAS) services has been worst-affected across the region, due to the suspension of Child Health Days and campaigns as a consequence of COVID-19 related restrictions. This has resulted in a large drop in VAS coverage (of 54% across Eastern and Southern Africa, comparing semester one of 2020 to semester one 2019), putting thousands of children at increased risk of mortality and morbidity. Thanks to increased efforts to reach caregivers with messaging and advice on safe infant and young child feeding practices in the context of COVID-19, a greater number of mothers and caregivers have been reached over the first half of 2020 compared to the first half of 2019.

### Market and Trade

In September, staple food prices in the region showed mixed trends: they increased above 5-year average in Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan partially due to inflation, and decreased in Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania compared to the previous month. Prices remained stable, meanwhile, in Djibouti. On the other hand, livestock prices increased at many pastoral markets and were at higher than the

five-year average due to favourable rangeland conditions and corresponding livestock body conditions. However, supply interruptions triggered by closure of the Somali-Kenya border resulted in lower livestock prices in border markets compared to 5-year average.

COVID-19 has prompted governments to impose some border restrictions which are significantly interrupting cross-border trade. However, the EAC Regional Electronic Cargo and Driver Tracking System (RECDTS), launched at various border points, has gradually helped to unlock truck delays across borders. The tracking system is meant to facilitate prompt sharing of EAC COVID-19 test certificates electronically for cross border truck drivers and crews.

During the October-December period, the significant depreciation of local currencies, particularly in South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia and Burundi, is expected to persist and will likely continue to exert upward pressure on the cost of imported goods and contribute to inflationary effects. Overall, prices are expected to follow seasonal trends but remain above five-year average levels in many countries.

The limited availability of wage labour opportunities and reduced household incomes among the urban poor are likely to continue to limit economic access to food. While the gradual re-opening of economies is likely to jumpstart regional trade, slow-paced recovery in aggregate demand and cross-border restrictions continue to impede cross-border trade, and are likely to keep regional trade at below-normal levels. Goat and sheep prices are projected to remain above average at most pastoral markets due to good body conditions given availability of water and feed resources.

### **Displacement**

An estimated 12.7 million people remain displaced in 11 ECA countries, of whom 4.6 million are refugees and asylum seekers and 8.1 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs). Due to significant humanitarian funding gaps, approximately 3.3 million refugees (72 percent of the total refugee caseload) are facing food ration cuts ranging from 10-30 percent, thereby exposing vulnerable refugees to food insecurity and malnutrition. Additionally, only about 28 percent of refugees continue to receive full food rations (2100 Kcal/person/day). On the other hand, as of 31 July, 2020, an estimated 74,286 refugees had voluntarily returned to their homes in South Sudan, Burundi and Somalia, according to UNHCR.

### **Conflict Update**

The COVID-19 pandemic, political tension and economic shocks have been the main drivers of insecurity within the region. COVID-19 has destabilized countries, especially in terms of managing treatment options and spread of the disease where citizens found violating COVID restrictions have been violently arrested by state agencies. Political tension has been witnessed in many countries, resulting from political mandates (such as general elections), inter-communal violence and armed hostilities, and conflict between governments and opposing factions. In countries where general elections are soon approaching, the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered preparations. Some politicians have flouted the COVID-19 measures put in place by governments and have engaged in physical mass campaigns, which have resulted in some violent arrests.

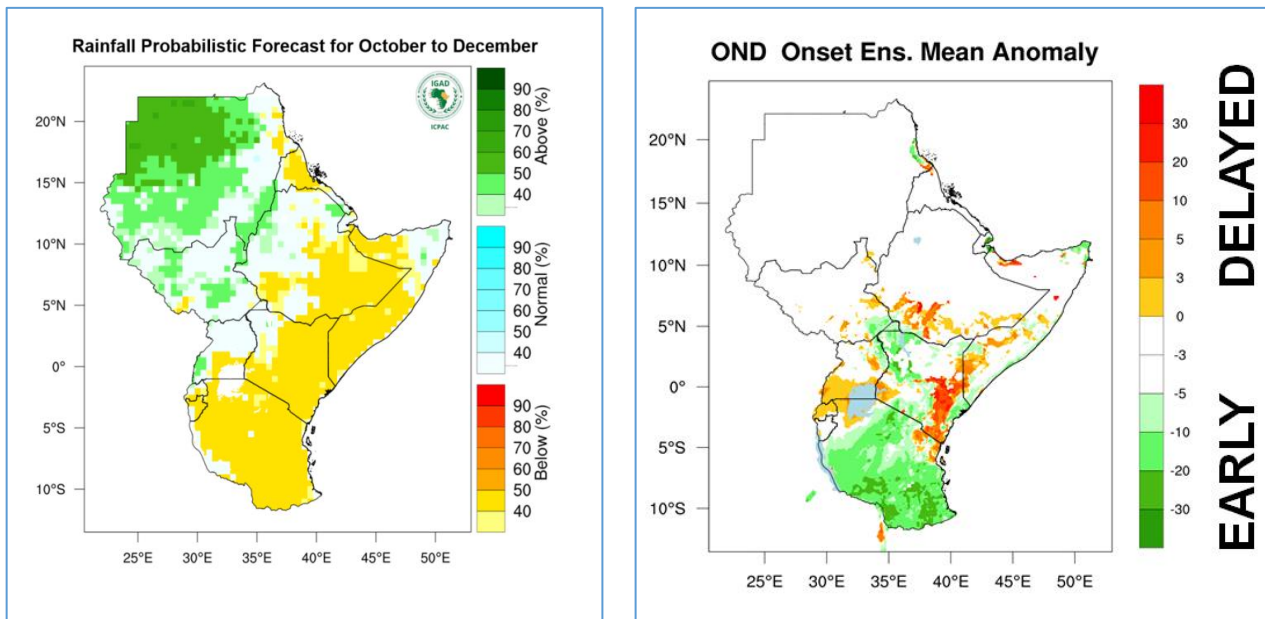
### **Climate update**

Although rainfall across most parts of the region was generally above average in September, below-average rains are forecast for the October to December 2020 season, characterised by a late onset, severe and frequent dry spells and a generally poor seasonal distribution. These expected poor rainfall conditions are likely to be driven by weak La Niña conditions, coupled with a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) forecast for this period.

More specifically, the recent Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF) forecast the following conditions, by country:

- **Wetter than usual conditions** are expected over south-central parts of South Sudan, north-eastern and far-western Ethiopia and the south-western Uganda;
- **Average rainfall conditions** are likely over much of Uganda, north-western Kenya, Djibouti, and southern, central, and northern Ethiopia;

- **Drier than usual conditions** are likely over Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, much of south-eastern Uganda, Kenya, southern and north-western Somalia, much of south-eastern Ethiopia, and much of Eritrea. Much of Sudan normally remains dry during the Oct-Dec period.



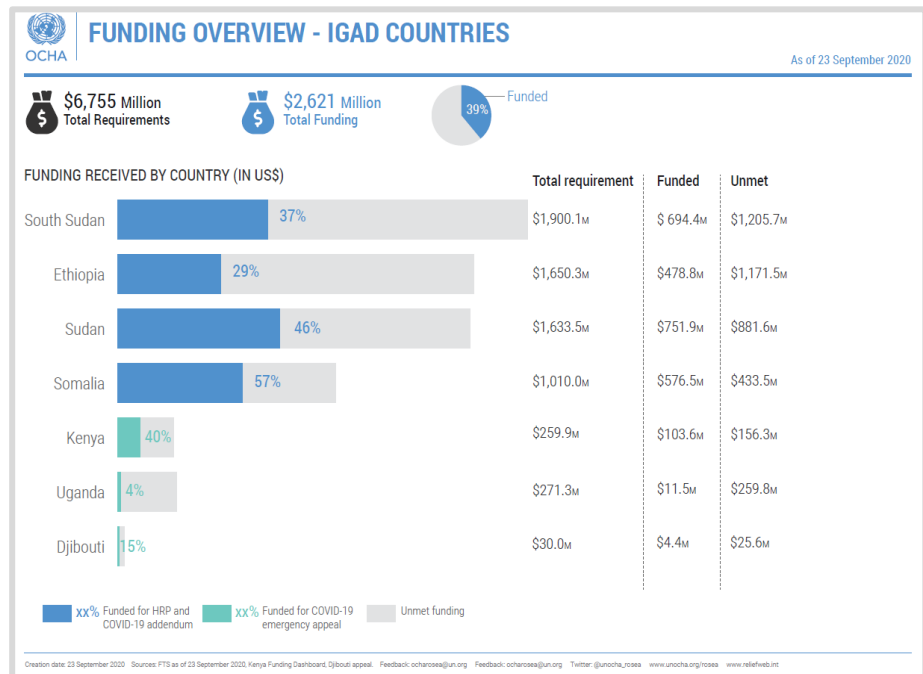
Source: ICPAC (GHACOF 56)

The anticipated poor October - December season is likely to worsen the already precarious food security situation across vulnerable communities. Please refer to the latest [post GHACOF 56 FSNWG Alert](#) for more information on the impact of the forecast poor rainy season.

### Humanitarian funding update

Humanitarian funding gaps remained a limiting factor to the provision of assistance to affected populations across the region.

As at 23 September, humanitarian response plans have only been funded at 37 percent in South Sudan, 29 percent in Ethiopia, 46 percent in Sudan and 57 percent in Somalia, leaving a funding gap of approximately 58 percent across the four most affected IGAD countries.



Source: UN-OCHA

### ISSUES OF CONCERN

The Desert Locust upsurge, economic shocks, the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread flooding remain key issues of concern across the region:

1. The Desert Locust upsurge and continued breeding, particularly in northern Ethiopia, is cause for concern with regards to the ongoing crops/harvest. Although most countries are now more prepared than they were at the onset of the current invasion last year, continued summer breeding in the Red Sea coastal areas, as well as in eastern parts of Sudan, northern Ethiopia, parts of Yemen and northern Somalia poses a significantly threat for a re-invasion of the October-December seasonal crops and pastures, particularly when winds change course late October and November. Significant crop and pasture losses are possible, which could worsen the food security situation in affected communities.
2. Although governments have substantially lifted COVID-19 restrictions, the economic impacts of this pandemic continue to impact both national economies and household food and income sources, especially among the poor and very poor. Households that were affected during the past several months by disruptions caused by COVID-19 measures (e.g. loss of livelihoods, declines in remittance levels, disruptions to food systems) have yet to recover.
3. In September, flooding intensified in South Sudan, Sudan, and Ethiopia, driven by above-average rains, and caused considerable impacts on the livelihoods of affected populations.
  - a. In South Sudan, some 800,000 people were affected by floods by the end of September, according to [OCHA](#). Of these, approximately 368,000 people were displaced. Most flood-affected people were unable to tend to their lands and livestock. In Jonglei State alone, floods affected 72 percent of livestock in four assessed counties and some 27,000 hectares (or half of cultivated land) in the State were damaged.
  - b. In Sudan, torrential rains and floods combined with the overflow of the River Nile and its tributaries caused devastating damages to the agriculture and livestock sectors. In rainfed agricultural areas, around 2.2 million hectares of planted cropland was flooded, representing 27 percent of cultivated areas in the 15 States. Half of the damaged cropping area was under sorghum, the main staple food. The production loss due to the flood-related crop damage is estimated at 1.1 million tonnes in rainfed areas, according to [FAO](#).
  - c. In Ethiopia, floods have caused damages, particularly in Afar, Oromia, SNNP, Amhara, Gambella, Sidama, and Somali regional states, displacing more than 1.1 million people from 33 zones and 110 woredas, according to the [National Disaster Risk Management Commission \(NDRMC\)](#).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the current situation and forecasts, the FSNWG recommends the following actions:

- Intensify and effectively target humanitarian assistance to populations in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse in order to reduce their consumption gaps, treat acute malnutrition, save lives and protect livelihoods. Livelihood interventions are also required for the people in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity.
- Urgently treat and support integrated nutrition interventions for the affected children under the age of five, as well as pregnant and breast-feeding mothers, in order to enhance recovery and prevent further deteriorations in the nutritional situation across the region.
- As new shocks continue to emerge, putting many people at risk, there is need for building national and regional capacities for continuous monitoring of evolving shocks, and in food security information management and emergency preparedness. Joint collaborations between governments, donors and the private sector are highly encouraged. With this in mind, the FSNWG will continue to monitor the situation and provide regular updates.
- The FSNWG further urges governments, development partners and humanitarians for anticipatory action in response to the below-average rainfall forecast for the October-December 2020 season, as many lives and livelihoods are at stake.

- The FSNWG calls for additional funding to guarantee that adequate levels of humanitarian assistance, including among the refugees and asylum seekers whose food rations have been affected due to funding shortfalls, are maintained.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next FSNWG meeting will take place on Thursday, 29 October 2020.
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## **CONTACTS**

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

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