IGAD BI-ANNUAL MEETING ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Report

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IPC Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions

IGAD

About IFRAH

IGAD Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience Analysis Hub (IFRAH) integrates some of the existing food security and resilience units already existing within IGAD. These include the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG), Resilience Analysis Unit (RAU) and Integrated Phase Classification (IPC). The rationale for this is the need to harness the interlinkages and synergies of the FSNWG, RAU and IPC analyses along with those of IGAD Specialised Institutions such as IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) and IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) as a basis for an early warning system that can trigger early action and prevent emergencies.

The goal of IFRAH is to contribute to efforts by IGAD and Member States to achieve strengthened analytical capacities and institutional mechanisms needed to support decision making processes on food security, nutrition and resilience in the IGAD Region. Thus IFRAH seeks to bring together information on food security, nutrition, conflict, climate shocks including climate change, displacement, market access and prices, human, animal and plant health among others, from a range of relevant sources to inform decision making and support the building of resilience to shocks in the region.

CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND

The IGAD Region remains one of the most vulnerable regions to food insecurity in the world[1] . In 2019, of the 135 million people estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC[2] Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity in 55 countries analysed across the globe, 27.6 million were from the IGAD Region – Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda[3]. Climatic shocks, conflict and macro-economic shocks remain the main drivers of food insecurity in the region.

High levels of malnutrition also persist in the region. In 2019, about 9 million children under the age of 5 years in the region suffered acute malnutrition, 2.3 of them severely so, according to UNICEF. In addition, an estimated 13.6 million – or 1 in every 3 – were stunted.

Moreover, the IGAD Region is one of the world's largest producer and host of internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees who, due to limited livelihood opportunities and degraded coping mechanisms, are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. UNHCR estimates that the region currently hosts up to about 8 million IDPs and 4 million refugees[4], some protracted, after having been displaced for up to more than 10 years[5].

Of even greater concern now is the unprecedented shocks of desert locusts and the COVID-19 global pandemic which have not spared the IGAD Region. Second-generation of desert locust swarms have recently formed and continue to spread in northwest Kenya and in large parts of Ethiopia and Somalia[6]. At the same time, measures to mitigate spread of the COVID-19 pandemic are driving economic slowdowns causing loss of livelihoods, especially among urban and peri-urban populations who predominantly derive their livelihoods from the informal sector, and hence limiting their access to food. In light of this, experts are warning of a food security and nutrition crisis of an unprecedented magnitude.

It is against this background that IFRAH, in collaboration with the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Global Support Unit (IPC GSU) – East and Central Africa and with the support of the Government of Sweden, brought together IGAD Member States and partners to jointly discuss the food security and nutrition situation in the region, and to propose practical response actions for decision makers in support of improved food security and nutrition across the region.

1.2 Objectives of the meeting

Specifically, the meeting provided a forum for IGAD Member States and partners to:

- Discuss individual country food security and nutrition analyses, including the potential combined impact of observed floods, desert locust invasion, COVID-19 pandemic and protracted food insecurity from past shocks on the food and nutrition security situation in the region
- Share experiences, best practices and lesson learnt in developing and utilising IPC, country teams or other partners-led analyses
- Discuss appropriate strategic response actions to address food insecurity and malnutrition in the region
- Presentation of the IGAD Regional Food and Nutrition Security Response Strategy
- Discuss the IPC regional analysis calendar, work plan as well as new developments such as virtual trainings and analyses

Notably, there have not been any formal regional forums for IGAD Member States and partners to specifically jointly discuss their food security and nutrition analyses and share their experiences, lessons learnt and best practices in developing and utilising these analyses, as well as discussing practical strategic response actions that are being or can be undertaken to address food insecurity and malnutrition in the region.

1. IDDRSI. IDDRSI Strategy 2019 – 2024. 2019
2. 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 1), Stressed (IPC 2), Crisis (IPC 3), Emergency (IPC 4) and Famine (IPC 5)
3. FSIN, FAO, IGAD, IPC, WFP et al. Global Report on Food Crises – Regional Focus on the IGAD Member States. 2020
4. UNHCR. Refugees, Asylum seekers, Refugees, Returnees and IDPs. January 2020.
5. Njuki.C and Abera. W. Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration Challenges in the IGAD Region. 2018.
6. Locust Watch

2. OVERVIEW OF THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION IN THE IGAD REGION

Initial analyses by IGAD and partners had projected that about 24-25.4 million people in the region would face Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) in 2020, largely as a result of weather extremes, conflict and insecurity and economic shocks[7]. However, it is likely that this figure will significantly change in light of the ongoing desert locust invasion, emergence of COVID-19 pandemic and widespread flooding and landslides witnessed in almost the entire region.

The worst desert locust invasion in decades has affected all IGAD countries with varying severity. As ongoing climatic and ecological conditions in parts of the region provide a conducive environment for breeding of the pest, new generations are developing and spreading, threatening to adversely impact crop yields and pasture generation, hence livestock productivity. Inadequate control owing to limited institutional and technical capacities is exacerbating the situation.

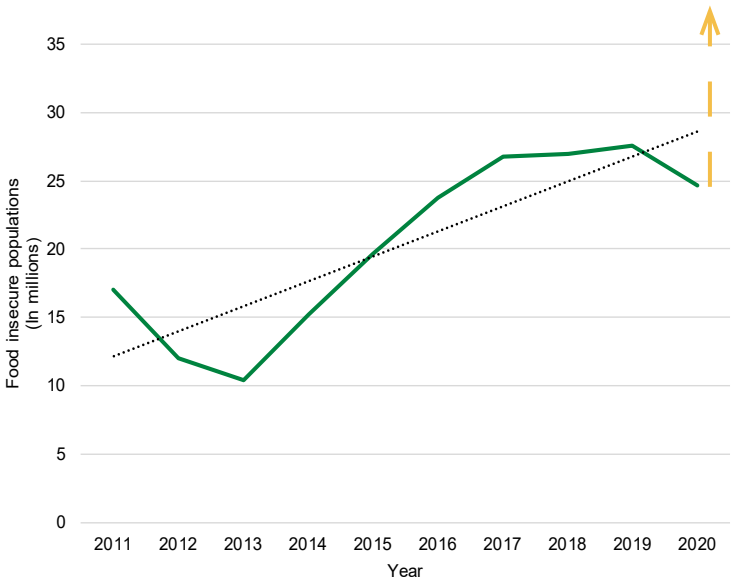
At the same time, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on global and regional economies and food systems is driving significantly high numbers of acutely food insecure people in Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+). The majority of the food insecure people as a result of the pandemic are likely to be in rural areas but the majority of increases are likely to be among the urban and peri-urban poor mainly living in informal settlements.

Further, enhanced March-May 2020 seasonal rains caused riverine and flash floods and landslides in parts of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda leading to loss of lives, displacement, disruption of livelihoods, damage of productive assets and destruction of infrastructure among others. In total, an estimated 2.4 million people were affected, including over 700,000 displaced and over 500 killed.

It is therefore estimated that the number of people facing Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) in the region has increased (from the initial projection of 24-25.4 million) and will continue to increase significantly through 2020 as a result of the compounding impact of the desert locust invasion, COVID-19 pandemic, climatic shocks including flooding, and protracted impacts of past shocks.

Of great concern are the rural, urban and peri-urban poor, those who are already acutely food insecure, displaced populations and other vulnerable groups disporoportionately affected by the multiple shocks, who are likely to be dependent on humanitarian assistance.

Food insecurity trends in the IGAD Region



7. IGAD, FSIN et al. IGAD Regional Food Crises Report.2020

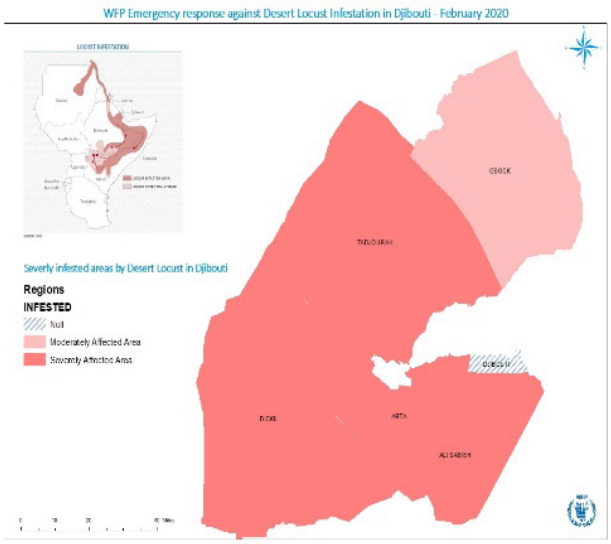
3. COUNTRY SPECIFIC FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ANALYSES

The below analyses, presented by technical experts from Member States, integrated the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, desert locust invasion, climatic shocks such as floods, conflict and insecurity and protracted food insecurity from past shocks[8].

3.1 Djibouti

All six regions of Djibouti, that is Ali-Sabieh, Arta, Dikhil, Obock, Tadjourah and some peri-urban areas of Djibouti City, have been affected by the desert locust since it first invaded the country in December 2019. Earlier estimates indicated that the damage caused by the locusts on crops and pasture equates to about USD. 5 million[9].

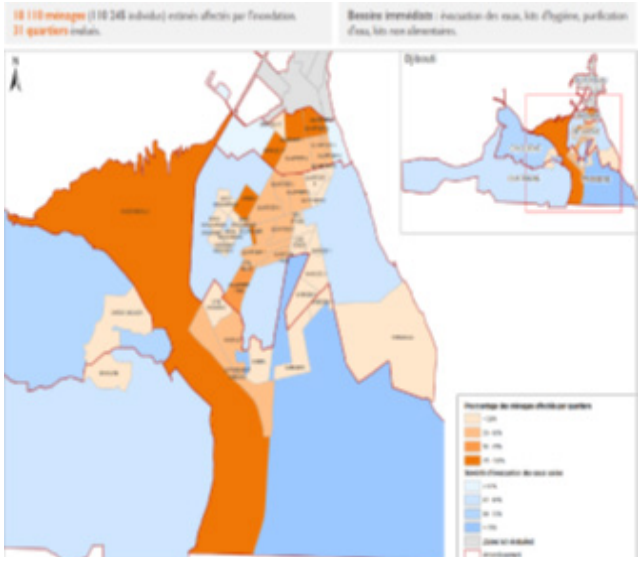
While at the time of reporting no desert locusts were reportedly present in the country, possibly owing to control efforts, a second generation invasion is probable with breeding ongoing in neighbouring countries.



The pandemic and its related control measures have significantly impacted the economy of Djibouti, and hence the livelihoods and food security of especially vulnerable populations. At the time of this meeting, an estimated 33,754 people had lost their jobs, 20,000 in the formal sector and 13,754 in the informal sector. Resultantly, this has had negative implications on the welfare of more than 200,000 people – 50,000 households in the capital and 15,000 households in rural areas.

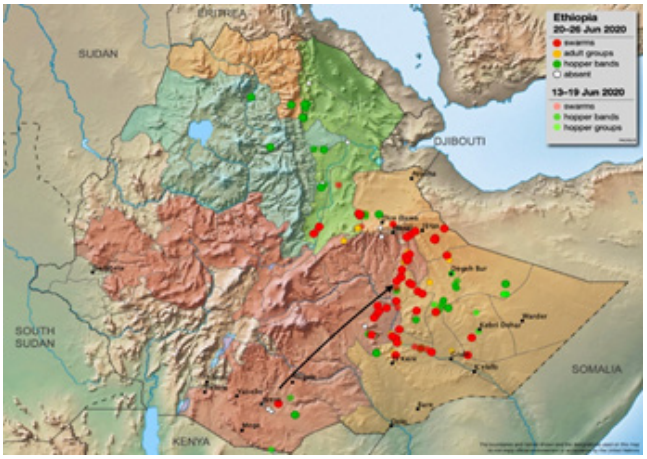
Floods witnessed in April 2020 caused displacement, disrupted livelihoods and destroyed productive assets, aggravating food insecurity in the country. The worst affected areas were Gobaad and Hanle' in Dikhil Region, Attar-Ambouli in the outskirts of Djibouti City and the localities of Bankoule, Sagallou and Kalaf in the northern part of the country.

Approximately 110,254 people (about 18,110 households) in urban areas and 6,000 people (about 1,000 households) in rural and peri-urban areas, including agro-pastoralists, were affected.



3.2 Ethiopia

Despite control efforts, desert locusts have been spreading in Ethiopia in vast numbers posing considerable threat to agricultural production, livestock feed and forest cover, and hence livelihoods and food security. At the time reporting, immature swarms were active in eastern Ethiopia between El Kere and Jijiga, owing to local breeding and arrivals from northern Kenya, and in northern Rift Valley, specifically Afar. Hopper bands were also active in the highlands of Amhara and Tigray.



The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to exacerbate the already precarious food security situation in the country. Like in other countries in the IGAD Region, poor economic performance linked largely to the pandemic, will likely impact livelihoods ultimately aggravating poverty and food insecurity in the country. In this regard, it is estimated that **15 million people have been impacted so far and require emergency humanitarian assistance and livelihood support. In the worst-case scenario, this figure could go up to as high as 18 million.**

While early and above average rains witnessed in the country since February 2020 presented positive prospects for the Belg[10] harvest, they conversely triggered localised floods, mudslides, flash floods and river overflows, causing loss of lives, displacement, infrastructure and crop damage.

Additionally, the June 2020 Flood Contingency Plan projects that 2,066,683 people will be affected by river and flash floods during the Kiremt season[11]. About 434,154, representing 21%, of these will likely be displaced.

3.3 Kenya

The worst desert locust invasion in about 70 years is threatening to cause a substantial deterioration in food security in Kenya. Wetter than normal conditions since October 2019 have continued to favour breeding and survival of the pest leading to infestation in 28 of the 47 counties in Kenya by February 2020. At the time of reporting, about 2-15% of pasture and browse had so far been damaged in Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Turkana and Wajir counties. In addition, around 1-5% of crops had been damaged in Garissa, Kirinyaga, Kitui, Machakos, Mandera, Marsabit (Saku) and Tharaka Nithi counties.

Nonetheless, significant gains have been made in the fight against the pest. For instance, at the time of reporting, intensified control operations had helped contain second-generation swarms to only four counties in northern Kenya, that is Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu and Turkana. However, it is highly probable that the swarms will spread northward to Ethiopia and South Sudan, due to prevailing winds.

Measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 are adversely impacting livelihoods and hence food security and nutrition of vulnerable populations. Markets disruptions, owing to the pandemic, have also impacted livestock and food prices. In the ASALs, this has resulted into unfavourable livestock-to-cereals terms of trade (ToT). Some of the populations of concern include the urban and peri-urban poor who rely on the informal sector and/or daily wage for their livelihoods, the already acutely food insecure in rural areas and those affected by floods.

April-May 2020 rains triggered widespread flooding in 36 counties as well as landslides in the Rift Valley, Central and Coastal regions. This caused destruction of over 10,000 acres of farmland and approximately 230,000 people were affected, including at least 200 killed and over 120,000 displaced.

Overall, it is estimated that millions of people in the country are currently acutely food insecure following the cumulative impact of COVID-19, desert locust infestation, observed floods and below average rains in past years.

3.4 Somalia

While there is no risk of famine at the moment, the level of acute food insecurity has significantly increased owing to desert locust invasion, socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, flooding and insecurity. **An estimated 2.7 million people are facing crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) and it is projected that 3.5 million will face similar levels of acute food insecurity between July and**

September 2020.

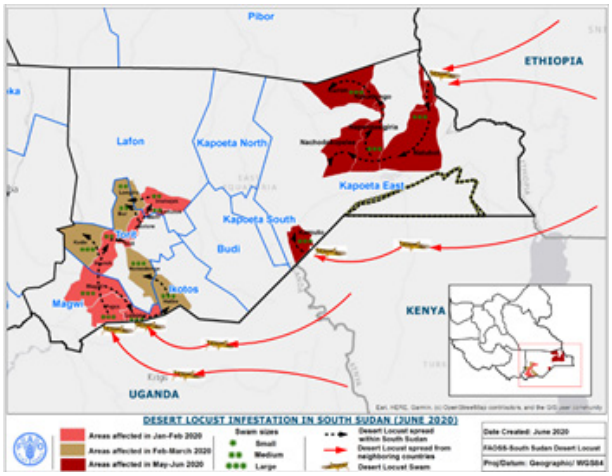
Desert locusts have been active in Somalia since mid-2019 posing a substantial threat to the country's already fragile food security situation. So far, it is estimated that 247,000 ha of pasture and cropland has been infested in north west Somalia. Widespread infestation has also been reported in north east and central Somalia and the risk of further expansion to southern Somalia in Bakool, Bay and Gedo regions is high. While pasture loss so far has been moderate and localised owing to above average rains (2019 Deyr[12] and 2020 Gu[13]), a 10-15% reduction in the 2020 Gu season crop harvest is likely due to the pest's damage in agricultural areas. Exacerbating this is widespread cricket, cowpea beetle and fall armyworm infestations.

COVID-19 related restrictions are having adverse socio-economic impacts in the country. Livestock exports, the largest traded commodity in Somalia, are expected to decline by 30-50% through September 2020 as Saudi Arabia announces restrictions around this year's Hajj pilgrimage. External remittance flows into Somalia are also expected to decline by 30-50% through September 2020. As a result, a 20-30% decline in the total income of poor households, more so the urban poor and IDPs, is likely.

Intensified Gu rains triggered riverine and flash floods across many parts of the country, affecting over 1 million people and displacing around 412,000 people. Further, close to 50,000 ha, about 17% of agricultural land cultivated across Somalia every season, has also been inundated in Bakool, Bay, Hiran, Lower Juba, Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba and Middle Shabelle regions. Overall the 2020 Gu season crop harvest is expected to be 20-30% below the long-term average due to the combined impact of floods, desert locust and other pest infestations, and extended dry spells in some agro-pastoral areas.

3.5 South Sudan

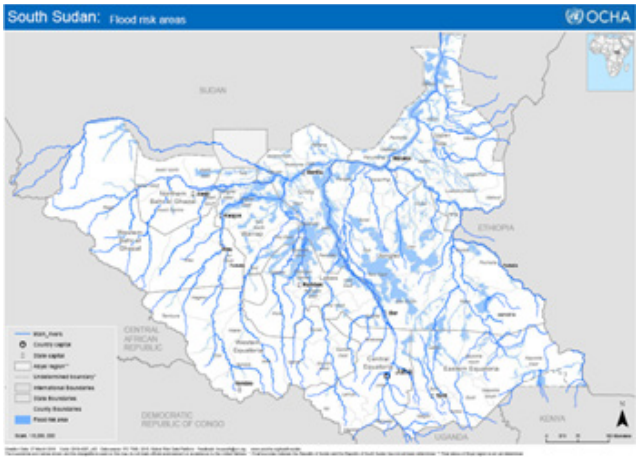
Since its arrival in January 2020, the desert locust has caused damage to crops, pasture and trees, especially in the Eastern Equatoria State. Likely to exacerbate the situation is the current wet and warm conditions which present a conducive environment for breeding of the pest. In addition is the probable arrival of second-generation swarms from northern Kenya through South Sudan's Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states.



Reduction in oil revenue following a fall in global oil prices and spill over of market disruptions globally and in China associated with the pandemic have initiated an economic slowdown. Consequently, peoples' livelihoods have been disrupted, negatively impacting their purchasing power. Spikes in food prices, due to a combination of stockpiling and supply shocks, have as well been reported, again limiting households' purchasing power. Movement restrictions, including border closures, and associated clearance procedures are also impacting humanitarian assistance logistics thereby exacerbating food and nutrition gaps among vulnerable populations.

Early and above average rains since April 2020 have so far triggered floods in parts of the country, especially Boor and Pibor, displacing more than 70,000 people. As the rains continue, other areas at risk of flooding include parts of northern Bahr el Ghazal and Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Upper Nile and Warrap states. It is anticipated that the effects thereof, including loss of lives and assets, displacement, loss of crops and livestock, disruption of livelihoods and increased morbidity, will surpass those of 2019.

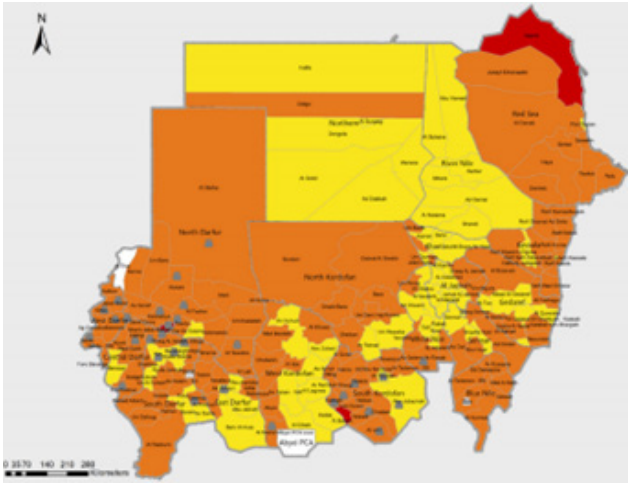
8. Based on presentatios by technical experts from Member States
9. Government of Djibouti - MAEPE-RH and FAO. Appeal to the International Community; Desert Locust Invasion in Republic of Djibouti. January 2020
10. Short rains season in Ethiopia between February and May
11. Long rains season in Ethiopia between June and September
12. Short rains season in Somalia between mid-September and December
13. Main rains season in Somalia between mid-March and June



On account of the cumulative impact of the above factors, conflict and insecurity and protracted food insecurity from past shocks, it is therefore likely that the number of people in the country facing Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) has and will continue to surpass the earlier May-July 2020 IPC projection of 6.5 million people.

3.6 Sudan

The IPC estimates that 9.6 million people will experience Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) through September 2020, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, macro-economic shocks and conflict.



At the time of the meeting, desert locust infestations were reported in Red Sea, River Nile and Northern states, including the Nile basin. Damage to pasture and winter crops has so far been negligible. Nonetheless, the situation should be monitored as isolated adults in Nile Valley could spread if the July-September 2020 rainfall performance is above average as predicted.

Measures to curb the spread of the pandemic have been disrupting access to food and other essentials among affected populations. This is following reduced operational capacities of infrastructural facilities such as roads, seaports and airports affecting trade and market systems and ultimately commodity prices as well as livelihood opportunities, as the country's economy hits a slowdown. Depreciation of the Sudanese Pound, exacerbated by the COVID-19 prevention measures, has also been driving up the cost of food imports limiting the ability of vulnerable populations from accessing adequate and high quality food.

Populations of concern include IDPs (estimated to be 1.89 million), returnees, refugees from neighbouring countries and those living in conflict-affected areas. In addition are vulnerable agro-pastoral and pastoral communities in rural areas of eastern, northern and western Sudan, as supply chains of food suppliers are affected, as well as vulnerable urban and semi-urban residents (25%) in Jazeera, Khartoum, White Nile, Red Sea State and other major towns in the country.

Flash floods are expected in prone areas due to above average July-September 2020 rains. This will likely disrupt agricultural activities and lead to outbreaks of diseases such as malaria and cholera.

3.7 Uganda

The impact of the desert locust on food security in Uganda has been minimal given the pest arrived in the country after the harvest season. However, spread of second-generation swarms from north west Kenya into, especially the north eastern part of the country, is likely.

Similar to other countries countries in the region, COVID-19 is also affecting food security in Uganda. Disruptions to supply chains has led to increase in prices of some food commodities especially cereals, limiting access

among vulnerable populations. Reduced availability of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizer has also been reported in some markets – this will likely affect production. Economic slowdown associated with the pandemic has in addition disrupted livelihoods, especially in urban areas, exacerbating poverty rates and in turn limiting food access and dietary diversity among affected populations. Horticulture farmers have also been significantly affected as high post-harvest losses associated with lockdowns in export markets impact their incomes.

Above average March-May 2020 rains caused floods in parts of the country including Bundibudyo, Kasese and Ntoroko. It is estimated that at least 12 people were killed, over 1,500 acres of farmland in Kasese inundated and hundreds of livestock killed as a result. Subsequent rising water levels in Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga and River Nile also led to displacement of households, especially fishing communities in Bukana, Lolwe, Masolya, Rwabitoke and Sigulu islands, disrupting their livelihoods. Other notable effects included loss of crops such as beans, sweet potatoes and cassava, and outbreak of vector- and water-borne diseases.

4. FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION RESPONSE ACTIONS

4.1 Response actions in IGAD Member States

Alarmed by a potential rise in food insecurity and malnutrition owing to the cumulative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, desert locust invasion, climatic shocks including floods, conflict and insecurity, economic shocks and protracted food insecurity from past shocks, IGAD Member States and partners are mounting efforts to keep agriculture smoothly running as an important business and source of livelihoods, markets well supplied with affordable and nutritious food, and households still able to access food despite movement restrictions and livelihoods disruptions.

Some of the response actions that IGAD Member States and partners are undertaking or plan to undertake include:

- In-kind food assistance
- Cash transfers, both conditional and unconditional
- Strengthening of food reserves
- Provision of agricultural inputs
- Cash for work programmes especially in urban areas
- Nutrition programmes for children under the age of five years and pregnant and lactating women experiencing acute malnutrition
- Impact assessments
- Subsidisation of essential goods such as water and electricity, and
- Other social safety nets.

4.2 IGAD Food Security and Nutrition Response Strategy

Cognisant of the multiple shocks the region is facing, IGAD through the IGAD Food Security Taskforce has developed a food and nutrition security response strategy to inform and guide efforts towards significantly reducing the food insecurity and malnutrition posed by these shocks.

The following short-term interventions are proposed in the strategy and it is expected that these will support urgent humanitarian and livelihoods needs of affected and vulnerable populations through revitalised and sustained food production and supply to ensure access to and affordable food for majority of the population:

- Support humanitarian assistance and livelihood support for all vulnerable populations in pastoral, urban and rural areas
- Improve and sustain nutrition security among all vulnerable groups of people during food crises
- Promote and facilitate regional trade and cross-border access to markets
- Safeguard pastoralists and pastoral assets
- Enhance regional multi-hazard response coordination and advocacy to address challenges brought about by climatic shocks and pests and disease outbreaks
- Operationalise the IGAD Disaster Response Fund (IDRF)
- Establish a Regional Operations Centre for Emergencies (ROCE)

5. STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ANALYSIS IN THE IGAD REGION

Each year, millions of people in the IGAD Region experience acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance. To reverse these trends, effective policies, projects and programmes are needed, and data and information is central to this. Timely data and information of:

- Who are the food insecure and malnourished?
- How many are they?
- Where are they?
- Why are they food insecure and malnourished?
- How is the situation likely to evolve and what are the risk factors?

among others can better shape interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. As such, efforts to address key food security and nutrition related data and information gaps need to be scaled up to enable interventions to be more needs-based, strategic and timely.

The below SWOT analysis was informed by a panel discussion of experts from partner organisations and presents some bottlenecks and opportunities - around key areas such as data collection, analysis, situation monitoring, coordination, communication and dissemination - for improving food security and nutrition analysis in the region.

5.1 SWOT analysis of IPC and other food security and nutrition analytical approaches in the IGAD Region

STRENGTHS

- Most up to date and reliable nutrition analysis
- Up to date IPC analysis (V3.0) protocols
- Considerable number of food security, including IPC analysts and trainers in Member States and at the regional level, backed by IPC GSU
- Analyses aligned with decision making processes - Humanitariaan Needs Overview (HNO), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP)

WEAKNESSES

- Delayed data collection
- Poor data quality
- Weak methodologies affecting sampling
- Low frequency data collection
- Long procedures for endorsement of analysis particularly in the case of IPC analysis delaying decision making
- Limited technical capacities. For instance, limited IPC analysis capacity in country Technical Working Groups
- Lack of coordinated early warning and monitoring systems
- Short projection periods of analysis
- Delays in situation updates

OPPORTUNITIES

- Emerging innovations:
  - -IPC virtual analysis
  - -mVAM
  - -Remote sensing
  - -GIS
- IPC analytical approach already rolled out in seven of the eight IGAD Member States
- IPC GSU available to support Member States in terms of building capacities, coordination and implementation of the IPC analytical approach

THREATS

- Political disruptions such as elections and civil unrest
- Limited resources for conducting assessments; assessments can be costly

5.2 Proposed areas of intervention

Data collection:

- Streamline data collection tools and methodologies
- Adapt new ways of data collection such as Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)
- High frequency data collection
- Increase surveillance in malnutrition hotspots
- Explore other robust survey methods such as the Simple, Spatial, Survey Method (S3M). In Sudan, it allowed for increased coverage and inclusion of other indicators
- Use of process indicators not always outcome indicators such as Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) and Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) to assess nutritional vulnerabilities
- Use of District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) / Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) to enhance quality, coverage and sustainability

Anaysis:

- Establish a calendar for analysis aligning with seasonality and disaster management decision making needs
- Capacity build analysis teams

Anticipatory Action:

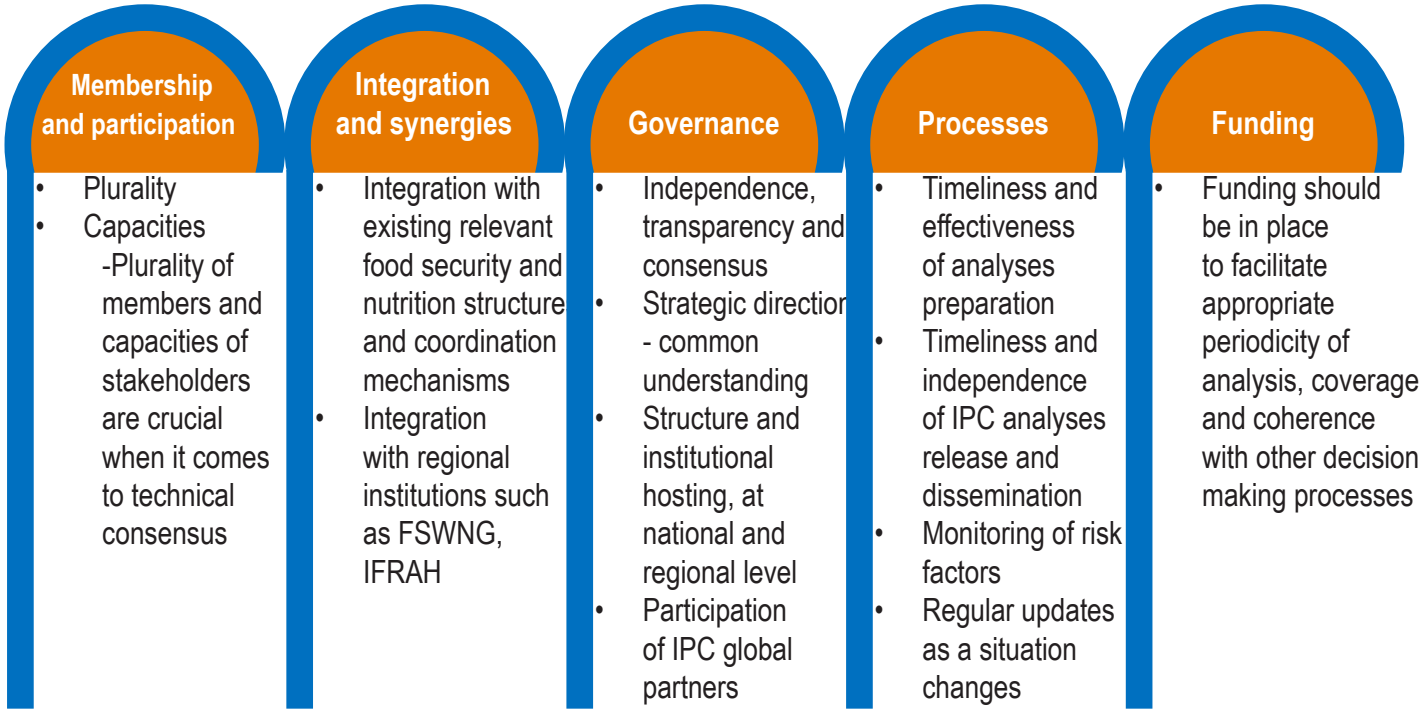
- Set up monitoring mechanisms for identifying risk factors, assessing needs and informing anticipatory actions
- Conduct ground-truthing for triangulation of projected situations
- Provide longer projections which can be updated in case of risks or hazards
- Use of historical data for projections. For instance, UNICEF in partnership with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is using previous survey data to model and make projections on tracer indicators

5.3 IPC institutionalisation

The IPC, designed to fill critical gaps in food security and nutrition analysis, presents an opportunity for strengthening food security and nutrition analysis in the IGAD Region. It provides a common classification system "common currency" of the nature and severity of food security and nutrition situations promoting comparability from one area to another, transparency of evidence, strategic decision making and strong linkages between information and action.

So far the use of the IPC analytical approach and classification to determine the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity and malnutrition has been rolled out in seven out of the eight IGAD Member States but there is a need for its further institutionalisation.

Below are some key areas for prioritisation:



5.4 World Bank recommendations for effective food security and nutrition early warning

According to the World Bank, **inadequate early warning systems, limited investments and weak institutional and technical capacity** are the three main drivers of food insecurity related emergencies in the region. Further, **institutional, technical, and sustainability and financial challenges** are the three main factors that limit the effectiveness of early warning systems in the region.

Given the relevance of the report to the agenda of this meeting, a summary of its key findings and recommendations is hereby provided for consideration.

5.4.1 Institutional challenges

- Lack of effective early warning systems working groups to coordinate EWS activities
- Slow institutionalisation of the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) at the national level
- Policies that outline roles and responsibilities for early warning systems actors both at regional and national levels are generally weak
- Many countries have sector policies, however the sectors still operate in silos because of lack of overarching early warning policies
- Several early warming tools such as the IPC have not been fully endorsed by all Member States to provide guidance on systematic data collection, data sharing, monitoring, and agreed action triggers
- Most early warning information is not translated to local languages to directly benefit community-based users
- Lack of regular regional food balance sheets (RFBSs) and national food balance sheets (NFBSs)
- Weak monitoring of grain markets, cross-border trade, and commodity price monitoring at both regional and national levels
- No plans to integrate parallel early warning systems such as Market monitoring by WFP, FEWS NET, EAGC, RATIN, etc.

Recommendations

- **Develop and strengthen food security information systems** at both regional and national levels. Within this:
  - Information should contribute to inform ongoing programs, as well as to improving the effectiveness of early warning systems, emergency preparedness and response capacity
  - IGAD should consider establishing a food security information system, taking into consideration lesson learnt from similar initiatives
  - This effort should be supported by a data sharing framework and a one-stop food security information hub such as an Emergency Operation Center (EOC) that is accessible to relevant stakeholders
  - The regional food security information system should be replicated in each of the Member States
- **Support the strengthening of early warning systems legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks, improving coordination** and ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities within and across the four components of effective early warning systems[14]. This includes:
  - Developing common methodologies and procedures for data collection
  - Data management
  - Data sharing across geographical borders
  - Developing effective strategies for the timely dissemination of actionable warnings
- Promote south-south knowledge exchanges

5.4.2 Technical challenges

- Lack of a Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) system
- Weak food security information systems and absence of data sharing frameworks at both regional and national levels
- Limited technical capacity
- Regarding IPC, there are challenges around comparability of outcome indicators considering that while some countries use actual food security outcome indicators, other make inferences due to lack of actual up to date data
- Regarding climate data, there is limited coverage of weather observation networks, as well as challenges around downscaling GHACOF forecasts to local levels such as villages

Recommendations

- **Technical capacity development and investment** to enable collection of high-quality data. This entails among others:
  - IPC training and capacity buidling targeting food

security focal persons and senior management
    - Improved data collection for crop, livestock and vulnerability assessments etc.
    - Harmonisation of vulnerability assessment analyses (VAA) and IPC methodologies or at least agreement on minimum indicators to ensure quality assurance and comparisons

5.4.3 Sustainability and financial challenges

- Lack of clear funding mechanisms for early warning systems because early warning programs take a reactive rather than a proactive approach:
    - Because early warning is considered an emergency response activity, funding tends to be ad hoc and therefore competes with development funds during an emergency response
    - In cases where early warning systems rely on international assistance – tends to be project-based – they often face challenges around financial sustainability once the external funding ceases
- Limited public-private partnership (PPP) yet such partnerships would reduce over reliance on international donors

Recommendations

- **Strengthen public commitment** and mainstream early warning systems considerations into agricultural and food security policies, budgetary allocations and planning frameworks
    - This will require evidence-based advocacy to regional and national leaders and cooperation with development partners on the benefits of early warning systems
- **Support the development of tools to support vulnerable households and communities** to establish household community systems that can respond to emergencies
- **Organise senior management orientation trainings on IPC main tools and protocols** to strengthen instutitonalisation of the IPC analytical approach

14. Risk Knowledge, Monitoring and Warning Service, Dissemination and Communication, and Response Capability

6. CONCLUSION

The number of people facing Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) in the IGAD Region has increased (from the initial projection of 24-25.4 million) and will continue to increase, significantly so, following the compounding impact of the desert locust invasion, COVID-19 pandemic, weather extremes including flooding, and protracted impacts of past shocks. IGAD Member States and partners are therefore mounting efforts to keep agriculture smoothly running as an important business and source of livelihoods, markets well supplied with affordable and nutritious food, and households still able to access food despite movement restrictions and livelihoods disruptions.

Cognisant of the fact that each year millions of people in the IGAD Region experience food insecurity and malnutrition requiring urgent assistance, targeted action is needed to reverse these trends. Such action requires among others:

- Timely, accurate and reliable data and information that is easily accessible across sectors for analysis of food security and nutrition situations
- Adequate capacity to analyse available food security and nutrition data and disseminate forthcoming information to decision makers in good time for informed action
- Strengthening institutional structures for better coordination of information for consensus building and harmonised approaches; existing methods and tools for food security and nutrition analysis should be harmonised for efficiency

The IPC, which can be viewed as a unifying system of food security and nutrition analysis that actors in a country can follow, presents an opportunity for strengthening food security and nutrition analysis in the IGAD Region. In addition to filling food security and nutrition data and analysis gaps, the IPC also provides important guidance to emergency, medium and long term interventions.

Finally, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, actors are encouraged to make use of both emerging and existing innovations such as IPC virtual analysis and mVAM to conduct food security and nutrition analysis.

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