

Acute malnutrition persists in Somalia while 870,000 people remain food insecure

September 3, 2013, Nairobi/Washington – The number of people in crisis in Somalia is at its lowest since famine was declared in Somalia in 2011, thanks to successive seasons of average to above average rainfall, low food prices and sustained humanitarian response but acute malnutrition continues to pose a threat to hundreds of thousands of children especially in the country's south, latest findings indicate.

A joint report by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSNAU), a project managed by UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) indicates an estimated 870,000 people will be in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and Phase 4) from August to December 2013. The situation has significantly improved since 2011 when 4 million Somalis were in extreme food security crisis. The recent figures also represent a continued improvement since January when an estimated 1,050,000 people were in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4). Improvements are attributed to a near average July/August 2013 *Gu* harvest, increased livestock prices, increased livestock herd sizes, improved milk availability, low prices of both local and imported staple food commodities, higher purchasing power from income from labor and livestock sales, and sustained humanitarian interventions over the last six months.

However, nearly 2.3 million additional people beyond those requiring more urgent assistance, one-third of Somalia's population, are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2); their food security remains fragile. This group of households may struggle to meet their own minimal food requirement through the end of the year, and they remain highly vulnerable to major shocks that could push them back to food security crisis.

Persistent Malnutrition

Critical levels of acute malnutrition (Global Acute Malnutrition rates exceeding 15%) persist in many parts of South-Central Somalia and among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Nutrition survey results indicate that more than 206,000 children under the age of 5 are acutely malnourished. About two-thirds of these children are in Southern Somalia, where very high rates of malnutrition persist. Assessment results indicate that morbidity is a major factor behind the critical levels of acute malnutrition in South-Central Somalia and among IDP populations.

As a result, lifesaving humanitarian assistance and livelihood support remain vitally important between now and December to help food insecure populations meet their immediate food needs, protect livelihoods, and build resilience.

Areas of Concern

IDPs constitute 72 percent of the 870,000 people in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4). Most of these people live in settlements in very poor living conditions and rely on marginal, unreliable livelihood strategies. For agropastoral households in Hiraan, central Somalia, an early end to the March to June *Gu* rains along with poor distribution resulted in a very low harvest. Poor households currently have no cereal stocks. They depend on market purchases of food, often on credit or on limited amounts of social support. Poor households are expected to fall into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the October to December lean season.

Poor pastoral households in Coastal *Deeh*, in central Somalia are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through at least the end of the year. Low livestock ownership will limit their income. With limited access to humanitarian assistance, many households are taking on additional debts to buy food.

In the Sool Plateau Pastoral Livelihood Zone in northeastern Somalia, poor households are likely to divert funds to purchase water during the remainder of the *Hagaa* dry season through October. High water expenditures are likely to increase debts among the poor. Improved milk and water availability will follow the start of the October to December *Deyr* rains. However, most poor households are likely to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

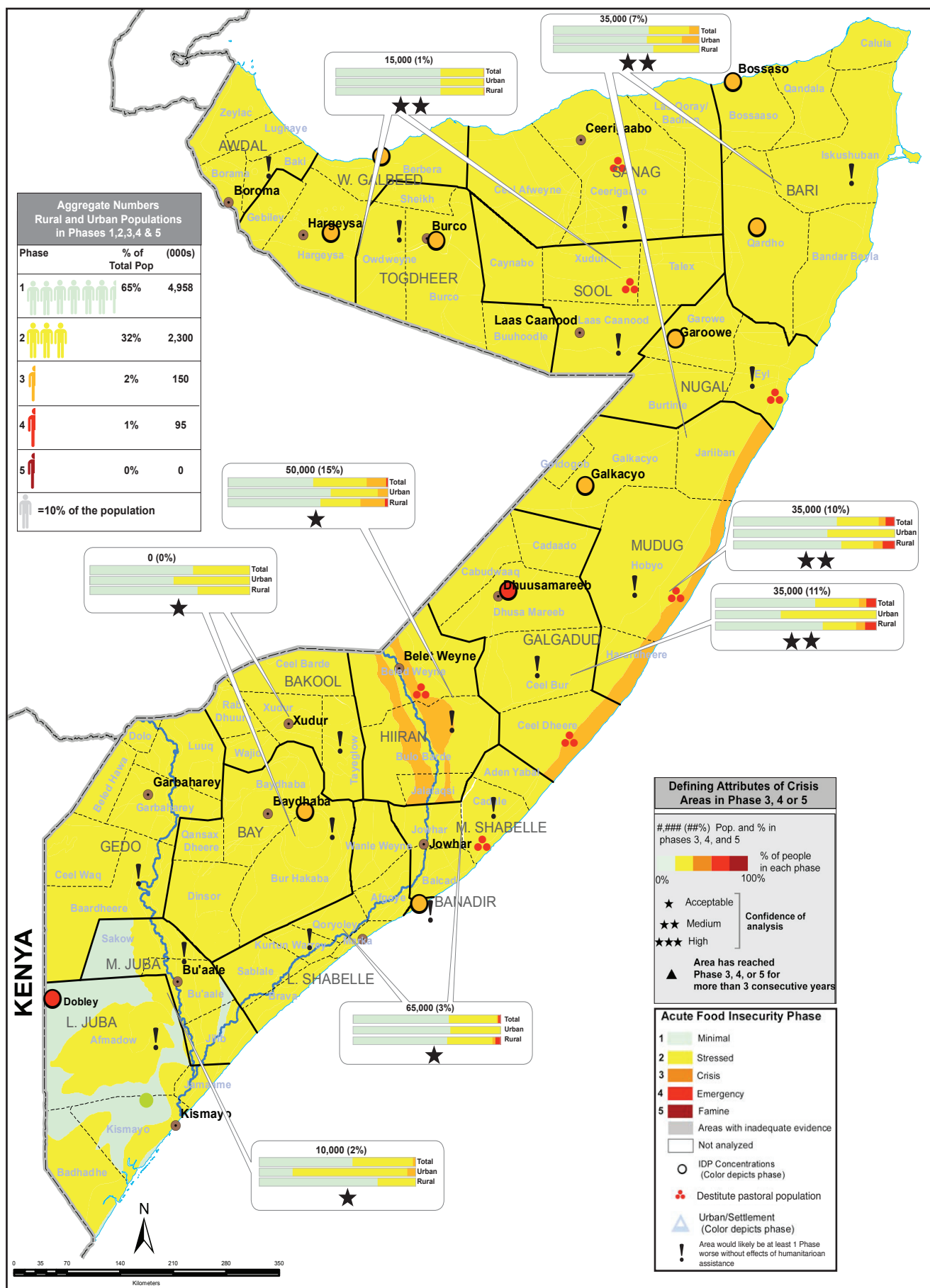
As critical levels of malnutrition persist in many areas, care for the malnourished will be less available in the areas of South-Central Somalia following the withdrawal of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) over security concerns.

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Somalia Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview Rural and Urban and IDP Populations: August-December, 2013



FSNAU Funding Agencies



Common Humanitarian Fund Somalia

Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit - Somalia <http://www.fsnaui.org>

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The boundaries and names on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The regional & District boundaries reflect those endorsed by the Government of the Republic of Somalia in 1986.