

There are clear signs of a worsening food security situation in many regions of Somalia, as a result of a failed Deyr season and the start of the *La Nina* weather phenomena. While *La Nina* was predicted for the wider East Africa and Horn of Africa, Somalia so far seems to be hardest hit. FSNAU data comparing average rainfall in the last part of November shows parts of the country received only 0%-15% of normal levels. The impact of poor performance of the Deyr rains can be seen in crop failure in most of the southern crop producing regions and considerable water and pasture shortages in the key pastoral areas of the country which is causing deterioration in livestock conditions. Two million people are already in Humanitarian Emergency and Acute Food and Livelihoods Crisis in the country and with the impending drought situation, the number will likely increase.

Those affected have suffered several consecutive seasons of below average rainfall and therefore their capacity to withstand the current crisis and an upcoming harsh *Jilaal* dry season is quickly eroding. New areas of crisis have already emerged such as Gedo, Juba, and the Agro-Pastoral areas of Shabelle and Bakool regions. Food production (cereals, milk and meat) in the country has drastically reduced leading to increased food prices, which will subsequently lead to an increase in the number of food insecure populations in Somalia in early 2011. Malnutrition rates in south Somalia are already increasing. A recent survey in the Jubas indicate rates of 30% acute malnutrition, which is double the threshold used to release emergency assistance.

Main geographic areas of concern include:

- Sool & Sanaag: 30,000 pastoralists in Sanaag region are currently in crisis due to the previous seasons of rain failure and with the current Deyr rain failure these numbers are expected to increase. Sool region is now going into crisis.
- Bari and Nugal Regions: Very low rainfall has led to very limited availability of pasture and water for livestock. This has led to out migration to the border areas of Ethiopia and reduced body conditions for those pastoralists that cannot afford to move their herds far distances..
- Central Regions: Although many parts of Central received reasonable rainfall during the *Gu* 2010 the coastal areas of Central Regions (Mudug, Galgadud) did not and with the current rain failure are in crisis. Due to the limited opportunities for out migration of small ruminant livestock (goats and sheep), many have already died and body conditions for those remaining is quickly deteriorating. Coupled with increasing cereal prices and a reduced value for livestock, the current 8,000 livestock in crisis is likely to increase further. For the other areas in Central region, the positive impact of the *Gu* which reduced the numbers in crisis from 324,000 to 244,000 people has been short lived. With cereal prices increasing and livestock body conditions deteriorating the numbers are likely to rise again. Due to the positive effects of the *Gu*, by November 2010, the nutritional situation showed an improvement with 15% acute malnutrition as opposed to 22% earlier in the year; however this is likely to deteriorate in the coming months.
- Hiraan: Epicentre of the crisis and is in its 9th consecutive season of below normal rainfall and with 62% of the population in crisis the situation is likely to deteriorate further as households do not have the means to cope. Poor rainfall has resulted in increased cereal prices with severe water shortages contributing to crop failure and the deterioration of pasture.
- Lower Shabelle: Dependent on rain-fed rivers flowing from the Ethiopian highland which also is affected by *La Nina*. This is expected to lead to below normal crop production. This is coupled with reduced labour opportunities for poor households, landless seasonal laborers and IDPs who rely on this for household income.
- Juba: Recent nutrition data indicates a nutrition crisis in all three livelihoods in Juba. For the **Riverine** livelihood, that had suffered from severe flooding in the last season and with the current poor rains, the poor continue to experience severe food shortages at the household level. For agro pastoral and pastoral livelihoods, the nutrition situation has **significantly deteriorated to Very Critical** from 6 months earlier, following the failure of the short rains. Pastoralist families have split with the boys and men taking the livestock in search of pasture, leaving the women and children at home with limited food. For the agro pastoralists, who rely predominantly on subsistence agriculture, the poor rains have led to crop failure and with limited alternatives the poor households are also faced with a severe food shortage at the household level.

Drought Response Coordination

Agriculture & Livelihoods and the WASH Clusters have developed a drought response position and shared it with all cluster members (<http://ochaonline.un.org/somalia>). To improve coordination mechanism and information sharing between the various members of the humanitarian community and other stakeholders including local authorities – a coordination system has been put in place. Information flow between field and the Nairobi level will be maintained to ensure rapid implementation of the drought response plans. Where OCHA has a presence, OCHA field staff will lead inter-agency field coordination and provide information to cluster chairs. In other locations,

cluster focal points will take the lead. Recommendations on project proposals for specific locations and response will be fed through the cluster leads together with project proposals from implementing partners. The cluster review committees will then recommend projects on an expedited basis to the emergency window of the Common Humanitarian Fund.

- Following the emerging reports of the impending drought, the Humanitarian Coordinator has released \$4.5 million from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) for immediate drought response. Response and coordination plans to the impending drought are progressing. The Agriculture and Livelihoods Cluster members met on 29 December and recommended 16 proposals to the CHF for consideration. These proposals are expected to cover drought affected communities in Hiraan, Galgaduud, Mudug, Bakool, Lower and Middle Shabelle, Lower Juba, Gedo, Sool and Sanaag regions. The WASH cluster is expected to finalize the vetting process of the proposals and recommend them to OCHA by 12 January. The proposals are expected to be implemented by mid January.

FSNAU is in the process of concluding a country wide assessment following which a better understanding of the affected population will be available. Preliminary results from the assessment will be available towards the end of January 2011.

Response priorities

The Response priorities at this point in time cover Livestock, Agriculture and WASH sectors. The Nutrition and Food clusters are liaising with Livelihoods and WASH clusters to integrate possible interventions in those sectors if necessary.

Suggested interventions include:

- Access to water using a voucher system;
- Water trucking when absolutely necessary and where alternative is possible (to be accompanied by a phase-out strategy);
- Rehabilitation of strategic boreholes;
- Supporting pastoralists through livestock purchases;
- Mass veterinary treatment/vaccination programmes, as weakened livestock are much more susceptible to disease;
- Fodder production and distributions;
- Cash-for-Work projects in key affected areas; and
- Scale up food aid and nutrition interventions areas, as appropriate.

Challenges

- Access: should increased distributions of food be deemed necessary, WFP can logistically provide food within a very short period of time; however access may not be possible in some regions.
- WFP has warned of a possible food commodity shortfall. A break in the food pipeline is anticipated from January through June 2011 including additional requirements of a potential beneficiary caseload due to drought. Major breaks in the food pipeline are expected to start from March 2011.
- Pastoralists need to migrate further to access water and pasture for livestock. This could increase resource-based conflicts.
- Increased displacement due to food insecurity may occur.

Note on the Post Deyr assessment

The assessment for the post Deyr season, which started around 10 December 2010 has been concluded, and the data analysis is currently being done. The preliminary results will be available on 28 January. Once the Post-Deyr assessments are shared, a new plan of action will be devised

Key Messages

- Call on authorities controlling drought-affected areas to provide immediate access for response;
- Call on donors to provide early funding for WFP

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