



RATIN

Food Situation Analysis in East Africa.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Kenya	3
2.1 Food prices and Terms of Trade	4
3. Tanzania	4
4. Uganda	6
5. Rwanda.....	6
6. Burundi.....	7

1. Introduction

According to reports on the regional food security analysis by RATIC, most parts of East Africa are facing the worst food crisis. Drought is worsening following successive failed rains. The price of staple foods has risen to unaffordable levels for many people, and weak animals and the collapse of livestock markets have reduced people's income and ability to buy essentials.

The latest food situation in general is not impressive as food shortages in Eastern African projected to affect up to 20 million people, an increase of three million since April 2011. This can be attributed to the continuing drought and other factors that have severely limited farming activities in many areas of the region. This is according to a report released on 22nd August 2011, by FAO on food supply and crop prospects in sub-Saharan Africa.

Countries like Burundi, Kenya and Tanzania have been hard hit by the drought. Most of the countries that face food emergencies of varying intensity include Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda among other Eastern Africa countries.

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2. Kenya

Over 2.4 million Kenyans are affected by the crisis - mainly in the southern agricultural areas and the northern pastoralist regions, such as Turkana and Wajir. People in these areas rely on their livestock as their main source of income and nutrition, but the drought has left the animals weak, dying and hard to sell.



FAO estimates that nearly 3.3 million people need urgent food aid. Some starvation-related deaths have been reported among children in the hardest hit areas of the country. Kenya currently needs 8 million bags of Maize to avert the current food shortage. The report shows that farmers are of particular concern because they are facing the failure of the fourth consecutive rainy season. The current drought has aggravated an already severe scarcity of water and pasture, resulting in large livestock and crop losses. With the exception of parts of Western Province and

Nyanza Province, the rest of the country, including the 'bread-basket' Rift Valley Province, has received little or no rainfall, leading to widespread crop failures. The long drought has drained water reservoirs and the Government has rationed power and water.

2.1 Food prices and Terms of Trade

Food prices especially those of cereals are at record levels across most livelihoods outside the harvesting epicenters. Maize prices are up to 130 percent above normal in most markets and up to 105 percent above normal in the southeastern and coastal cropping lowlands.

However, prices of horticultural crops have declined markedly in the cropping highlands across the country, providing some respite from the cereal prices in the main cropping livelihoods. For example, the price of potatoes in Eldoret market is Ksh. 1,540 per 110-kg bag compared to an average of Ksh. 3,600 between March - June, 2011.



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3. Tanzania

Some areas in Tanzania have acute food shortages. The Government has declared 13 of 20 mainland regions drought-affected. More than 800,000 people in the country need food assistance.

During the 2010/2011 agricultural season, maize, rice and beans in the southern highlands grain basket areas (Mbeya, Southern Iringa, Ruvuma and Rukwa) and southern eastern areas (Mtwara and Lindi) has been normal to above normal, filling most the national cereal needs in Tanzania.

However, central areas (Dodoma, Singida, Parts of Tabora), Lake Victoria areas (Shinyanga, Mara and Mwanza) and northeastern areas (Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Tanga and Manyara) of Tanzania have experienced below normal production of maize, rice, sorghum, millet, sweet potatoes, cassava, and beans. The harvesting began in May and is still ongoing in bimodal rainfall in the northern and northeastern areas.

Food crop prices (maize, sorghum, beans) have remained high despite the ongoing harvest. This is attributable to increasing transportation cost, regional high demand of grain crops (mainly rice, maize and beans), and the anticipated national cereal production deficit of 6 percent, as forecasted by the Ministry of Agriculture Food security and Cooperative (MAFC).

The Government of Tanzania began providing food assistance to vulnerable population and supplying maize from the National Food Reserve Agency to the market in an attempt to reduce increasing food prices. However, this intervention has not caused a significant fall in food prices. Currently there are 145,800 MT in the strategic reserves, down from the all time high of 210,000 MT that was reported in December 2010. The average level of stocks for the past five years is 180,000MT. There are normal stock levels at this time of the year. However, the reserves will likely fall further following the MAFC preliminary forecast that identified 56 districts that have populations that are at risk of food insecurity and will need food assistance from.

Households in Shinyanga, Mwanza, Mara, Dodoma, Arusha and Manyara typically consume food from their own production until November. However, because of the shortfall in production this year, households will likely shift their food sources from their own production to the market as early as August.

Prices are currently high and increasing upwards. Typically, prices are expected to start increasing in September/October when the lean period starts. The increase in food prices at this time of year comes as households become more dependent on the market for food because of the shortfall in food and cash crops production.

Increasing food prices will limit access to food for poor households that normally rely on their own production and risk exhausting additional resources. Normally, low food prices during the harvest period facilitates food procurements for pastoralists, but this year the stubbornly high food prices have resulted in unfavorable terms of trade between livestock and grain. For the previous three consecutive seasons, these areas have been experiencing below normal production that have reduced household stocks and undermined their purchasing power.



The Government is distributing food at this time when households were expected to have adequate stocks from their own harvests and accessing food from markets at low food prices. The next harvest is expected in February 2012 for bimodal areas and April for unimodal areas. Food prices will most likely continue to rise due to demand for food supplies need to neighbor countries of DRC, Rwanda, South Sudan, Burundi and Kenya that are having active informal cross border trade with Tanzania. The government has intensified crackdown of illegal food traders

moving food to districts neighboring Kenya, but field reports indicate that maize is still exported to Kenya. Ongoing harvesting of maize in the districts of Rombo, Moshi and Hai will most likely continue to keep cross-border trade active and further increase pressure on markets that will keep prices up.

The ongoing food security crisis in the Greater Horn is contributing to the food price increase as attributed to market speculation. There are speculations that Traders from Kenya and Tanzania are purchasing maize in local markets and holding them anticipating to sell later. The Kenya maize market does depend on Tanzania maize supplies. Increased cereal demand following influx of refugees and the need for maize to feed the drought affected areas is most likely to attract more maize and rice from Tanzania thus contributing significantly to the price increase that will further complicate food access to low-incomes households.

4. Uganda

It is expected that the average but delayed rains in Northern Uganda are expected to result in average crop harvests in August and September. The first season harvest and planting of second season crops are overlapping, and the above-normal rains expected during the harvest could affect drying and quality of produce. Household access to food is expected to improve through December in northern Uganda but livelihoods are expected to remain stressed due to the low resource base.

Harvests of pulses and vegetables are increasingly improving household food security in Karamoja. The main cereal harvest starting in September is expected to further bolster food access. However, the continued closure of livestock markets in Amudat and Nakapiripirit districts due to foot and mouth disease (FMD) remains a concern.

Price declines have followed the harvest of some crops such as beans. However, maize prices are 208 percent above the five-year average, a record high. Though maize harvests starting in late July are expected to improve market supplies, price declines are likely to be modest and short-lived due to high regional demand arising from large deficits. The prices of other staples such as matooke and sorghum are expected to decline through September but remain above the five-year average. Matooke prices are expected to rise from October through December, but other staples are expected to increase briefly in October before declining again through December.

5. Rwanda

Prices of staple foods, which have been steadily rising since March, have started to stabilize following the harvest. However, prices remain much higher than the five-

year average and last year. Despite these high prices, no acute food insecurity following the ongoing Season B harvests (June to July).

Starting in October, food security is expected to deteriorate in Eastern agro-pastoral and semi-arid pastoral zones (Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Kayonza, Kirehe) and the East Congo-Nile Highland Subsistence Farming Zone (Nyabihu, Ngororero, part of Muhanga, Nyamagabe and Nyaruguru) as stocks from the Season B harvest decline and staple food prices continue to rise.

6. Burundi

Remarkable improvements in food security drives have been recorded in Kirundo and Cankuzo areas due to the above-normal 2010 B harvest which were brought on by a good long-rains season and good rangeland conditions. The most important production increase was observed on cereal; six percent above season 2010 B. However, the improved food security conditions remain fragile because of limited national food availability which is not expected to cover the entire country's needs until December 2011. The upcoming year will result in strong dependence on regional markets, which may exhibit high food prices and relatively lower stocks than normal.

Food prices remained high in July 2011 compared to the short-term average. The main causes of increase are the low level of food stocks, the high price levels of other commodities (fuel, sugar, transport, etc.), and the BUF devaluation compared to the US Dollar. The size of the population that is most at risk of food insecurity is expected to increase as they rely on more expensive food markets to meet their household food needs.

The dry season began in the third decade of June, but abundant rains have been observed in the Kirundo area during the second decade of June 2011. Recent rains ensured the resumption of late sowings of tubers (sweet potato and cassava) and maize, as well as improved the pasture conditions and production of bananas. These rains in particular slowed down the harvest of bean and sorghum.



2011B, the largest harvest of the seasons, have contributed to the improvement of the nutritional level because of diet improvement in terms of quantity and quality.

This nutritional improvement should continue until the next lean season - generally starts at the end of August.

The latest good harvest suggests that households in Kirundo and Cankuzo are food secure. The forecast indicates that commercial food imports will be low in both areas, suggesting that food availability in the localized areas of the depression du Nord and Est are likely to become lower than needs. Higher prices of food are expected in the coming months, most especially beans and cassava, in the absence of government intervention to increase imports or alleviate VAT on food commodities. The impacts will likely persist into the early January 2012 in those two areas.