

Major food security Emergency expected through 2016

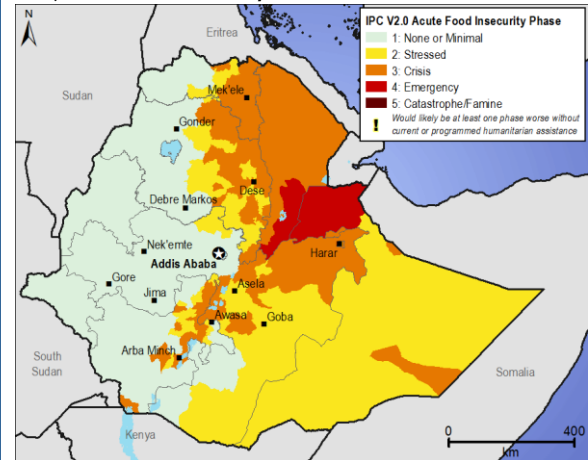
KEY MESSAGES

- The ongoing El Niño contributing to the worst drought in more than 50 years in Ethiopia has led to well below average *Meher* harvests in most eastern cropping areas. It has also contributed to massive livestock deaths, poor livestock body conditions and very low livestock production in Afar and northern parts of Somali Region. Between January and March 2016, large populations in the east of the country will experience very significant food consumption gaps.
- Poor households in pastoral southern Afar and Sitti Zone in Somali Region and in the agricultural lowlands of East and West Hararghe Zones in Oromia are worst-affected by the drought. As many households face extreme difficulty meeting their minimal basic food needs through at least March 2016, these zone are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity. Larger areas of Tigray, Amhara, Afar, Oromia, Somali and SNNPR will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Emergency food assistance is required to protect household food consumption.
- Across much of the east and south of the country, rainfall performance has been much better and near normal harvests is expected for the current season. These areas will be in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phased 2) acute food insecurity through March 2016.

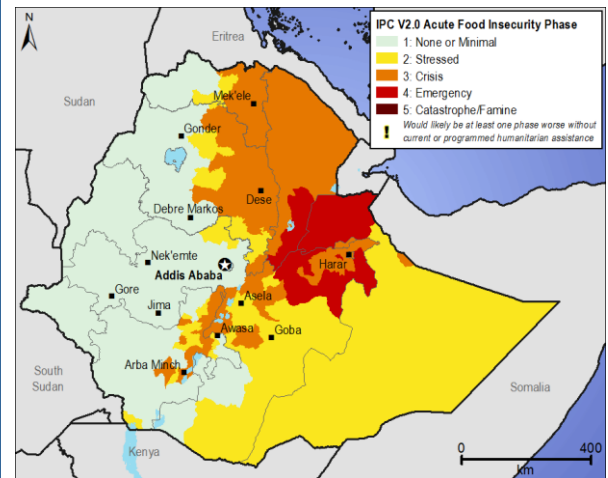
CURRENT SITUATION

- The cumulative amount of rainfall in November and December was above average in most parts of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). In particular, some places in Burji and Amaro woredas received heavy rains in early November that caused flash flooding in localized areas. These rains in November and December were unseasonal for some areas, including Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Kambata Tambaro Sidama, Gedio, Hadiya lowlands, negatively affecting crop maturation in some areas. In other areas, however, the abundant rainfall was favorable for late-planted crops in earlier stages of development. November/December rains were also favorable for root crop (sweet potato and taro) plantings.
- While some harvesting of late-planted crops is expected to continue through January, most *Meher* crops are harvested in SNNPR. Harvest production is well below average, with up to 75 percent losses in worst-affected *Meher* cropping areas in eastern and central Ethiopia following El Niño-related poor 2015 rainfall. The reduction in production is much higher in lowland areas where limited June to September rainfall was most severe. Similarly, Kiremt season production of cash crops (coffee, fruits) is also below-average.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2015



Projected food security outcomes, January to March 2016



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. To learn more about this scale, click [here](#).

- Most of Sitti (Formerly Shinile) Zone in Somali Region and Afar remained seasonally dry in November and December although surface air temperature declined compared to the previous months. This has further aggravated the scarcity of pasture, browse and water availabilities, significantly threatening the livelihoods of pastoral and agropastoral households. According to the Afar Pastoral and Agricultural Development Bureau, more than half a million livestock deaths have been seen and more than 1.7 million livestock are found at risk. Livestock feed interventions are ongoing in identified priority one woredas in Afar and northern Somali, though the feed interventions are not able to meet all needs. Atypical livestock outmigration from Afar Region continues to nearby areas in Amhara, Tigray and Oromia Regions. Livestock products including milk are not available in most pastoral households. Water rationing operations are ongoing in nine woredas of Afar and four woredas of Sitti Zone of Somali. The total water trucking requirement in Central and Eastern Oromia Region also reached to 54 woredas of which 41 of them are in East and West Hararghe. Livestock prices are continuing to decline due to the increase in number of livestock sold coupled with low livestock body conditions in drought affected areas of northeastern parts of Amhara and Tigray Regions as well as Afar and Sitti Zone in Somali Region. For instance, in November the price of an average sized sheep/goat in Abala, Awash Fentale and Asaita markets decreased by 64, 66 and 65 percent respectively compared to the same period last year.
- Despite erratic distribution and longer dry spells (7 – 10 days) between rainy days, the cumulative rainfall amount for October to December *Dyer/Hagaya* rains was normal in most southern and southeastern pastoral areas. This has improved water and pasture availability in most *Dyer/Hagaya* areas. Accordingly, livestock body conditions and productivity has improved. The improved water and pasture availability attracted livestock migration from Bakool Region of Somalia to southern parts of Shebelle Zone. However, the rain ceased earlier in southern parts of Somali and most of these areas had no rains since November 17.
- In southern pastoral woredas in Omo Zone in SNNPR, typical flood recession farming has not taken place due to the absence of flooding from the Omo River. On the other hand, sesame and maize has been planted in flood recession areas in all flood recession farming areas of Shebele Zone in Somali Region. In addition, cash crops like onion, sesame and fodder were also planted in irrigated farming areas in Shebele Zone.
- Normally, staple prices in November show some decline following the *Meher* harvest. However, this year prices of grains in most eastern areas of Ethiopia remained high as with previous months or showed slight increases in November compared to October prices. The abnormal increase in November is associated with the below-average *Meher* harvest that has affected supply of new harvests to market. Moreover, prices for most food commodities in most eastern areas of Ethiopia are higher than same period last year and the five-year average. For example, the wholesale maize price in Hosanna market in SNNPR is five percent higher in November than October and 12 percent higher than October 2014. Similarly, the retail price for wheat in November in Abala, Awash Fentale and Asaita market in Afar Region increased by 45, 11 and 38 percent respectively compared the same period last year.
- Following humanitarian intervention and household food access from meager *Meher* production, nutritional conditions in October showed a slight improvement compared to September in most parts of Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR. Accordingly, the regional total number of malnourished children admitted to the Therapeutic Feeding Program (TFP) in SNNPR in October is 27 percent lower than September admissions. Similarly, OTP admissions in East Hararghe in October 2015 are lower by 41 percent compared to September 2015.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Most assumptions used to develop the most likely scenario for the [October 2015 to March 2016 Outlook](#) remain unchanged.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MARCH 2016

- **Agricultural areas of Eastern Amhara, Tigray, Central and Eastern Oromia, and Rift valley areas of SNNPR:** The below average agricultural production obtained in 2015 due to inadequate rainfall during both Belg and Kiremt seasons is severely limiting household food availability from harvests. Livestock sales and agricultural labor opportunities are also down significantly, restricting household incomes and capacity to purchase. Early depletion of the meager harvest stocks and the decline in income from labor, coupled with the anticipated staple food price increase, particularly from January onward, will keep households from meeting their minimal basic food needs through at least March 2016 as they remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Households in lowlands of the Abay river catchment and some households in the midland of central

Oromia with somewhat better production are Stressed (IPC Phase2) in December, but will move to Crisis (IPC Phase3) beginning in January 2015.

- Poor households in the lowlands of East and West Hararghe Zones suffered crop failure for two successive seasons and have little to no crop harvests to consume. Livestock production is well below normal, affecting food and cash income access. As poor households in the lowlands of East and West Hararghe Zones experience larger food consumption gaps in their diet, they will face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity beginning in January 2016.
- **Pastoral areas of Afar and Sitti (formerly Shinile) Zone of northern Somali Region:** During the remainder of the dry season through March 2016, livestock production and productivity is not expected to improve, with livestock body conditions remaining poor. With limited kidding, lambing, or calving likely, herd sizes will not grow. Cereal prices will likely begin to rise in January due to low *Meher* production in nearby highlands and in many of the eastern parts of the country. Labor income is also likely to remain very low during the dry season until March. Households will continue to be unable to purchase adequate quantities of food and poor households in southern Afar and Sitti Zone will remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) through at least March 2016. Poor households in other parts of Afar will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through at least March 2016.
- **Southern and southeastern pastoral areas (southern Somali, Southern Oromia and the lowlands in South Omo Zone in SNNPR):** Although there was some flooding in October in localized areas, affecting planted crops and access for livestock feed in November and early December, floods receded later in December, increasing availability of pasture and browse. This will in turn increase household milk access and income from livestock product sales. Poor households in these areas are expected to move from Crisis (IPC Phase 3) to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) beginning in January 2016. Areas that experienced less flooding had good seasonal rainfall for the last three consecutive seasons, contributing to good crop and livestock production. As a result most households are able to meet at least their minimal food needs and will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through at least March 2016.
- **High and mid-lands of SNNPR, Western Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and much of Benishangul Gumuz and Gambella:** Most of the west of the country has seen average agricultural production in 2015. In high and mild land areas of SNNPR, although seasonal production is below average, the harvest obtained from the *Meher* season is likely to meet the food consumption requirement of most households through March 2016. Therefore, most western parts of the country and some high and mid-lands areas of SNNPR are likely to remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity through March 2016. Due the expected early depletion of own stock and increase in food prices beginning in January, mid and highland areas in Segen Zone, Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Hadiya, Kambata Tambaro, Gedeo, and Sidama are likely to move from Minimal (IPC phase 1) to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) beginning in January 2016.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This monthly report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates FEWS NET's quarterly Food Security Outlook. Learn more about our work [here](#).