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# Executive Overview of Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa August 29, 2007



## FEWS NET Alert Status

### Highest Priority—Urgent Action Required

**Chad:** Heavy August rains have increased the threat of flooding and waterborne diseases and decreased humanitarian access to displaced populations in parts of the east. Early harvests in some southern areas have improved food security for refugees from the Central African Republic.

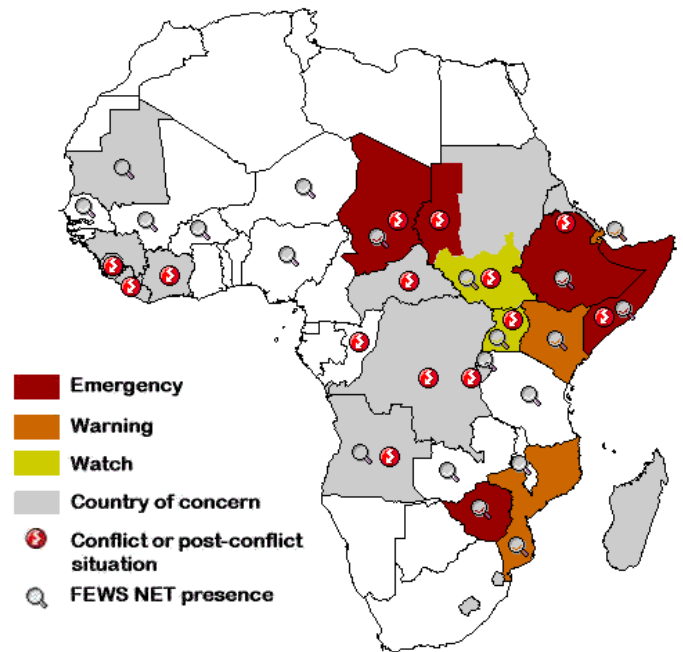
**Ethiopia:** Current restrictions on trade and movement in Somali Region could lead to a humanitarian crisis among pastoral and agropastoral populations in Warder, Korahe and parts of Fik, Degehabur and Gode zones, unless the restrictions are lifted or food aid is provided.

**Somalia:** In the south, the August *gu* harvest was the lowest in 11 years. Low food availability will further restrict food access, which is already limited by market and trade disruptions, civil insecurity and displacement, especially in the Shabelle regions. Food security has improved for pastoralists and agropastoralists in Gedo and Juba Valley.

**Zimbabwe:** Government efforts to curtail rampant price increases by imposing price controls have made basic food and non-food commodities scarce or unavailable. Food access for poor households continues to diminish at an alarming rate, especially in urban and southern areas.

Emergency

## Food Security Alerts in Africa



### Urgent Action Required

**Djibouti:** Already high food prices are expected to increase further in September, and many poor urban households will be extremely food insecure. Continued rains are needed through September to improve inland conditions for animals and prevent a pastoral food security crisis.

**Kenya:** Pastoral food security is better than normal this dry season due to improved conditions for livestock and increased milk production. Favorable October to December rains are needed to sustain improvements and prevent food security from worsening in early 2008 in eastern areas.

**Mozambique:** In the south, 520,000 people require food assistance until the next harvest (March 2008) due to high food prices, low food availability and slow emergency response. Another 140,000 are at risk of food insecurity if the second-season harvest is poor or food prices increase.

Warning

## Significant Events Timeline



## Food Aid Needs and Beneficiaries

Country	Population at Risk	Food Aid Beneficiaries
Chad	732,370 (incl. 150,000 IDPs)	549,370 (incl. 176,850 purchasing subsidized food)
Djibouti	150,000	121,250
Ethiopia	8 million (estimated)	7.5 million (PSNP + emerg.)
Kenya	2.4 million	924,000
Mozambique	660,000	192,000
Somalia	1.5 million (incl. IDPs)	150,000
South Sudan	1.7 million	1 million
Uganda	1,457,000 (incl. IDPs)	1,457,000
Zimbabwe	Not available	455,000 (WFP and C-SAFE)

### Preparedness and Monitoring Required

**Sudan (southern):** Although flooding will worsen household food security along rivers and flood plains through November, food security will likely improve in December with the increased availability of pasture, water and fish and the potential for a good flood-recessional crop.

**Uganda:** IDPs are likely to continue to return home through the end of 2007, and many will cultivate a second-season crop. Still, humanitarian assistance will be needed for further recovery. In Karamoja, the September harvest and improved mobility will likely improve food access.

Watch

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**Season progresses well in most of the Sahel; irregular rainfall affects Mauritania, Senegal**

The early start of the 2007/08 agricultural season across much of the Sahel was followed by prolonged periods of dryness, necessitating replanting and the use of more-costly shorter-cycle crops that are in limited supply. Prolonged dry spells also caused localized crop failures in some areas, particularly in Mauritania and Senegal. The Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), the movement of which pushes moist southern air northward, creating the rainy season in the Sahel, began its northern ascent into the region as early as April, one month before rains normally begin. While the early ascent of the ITCZ allowed parts of the region (northern Nigeria, southern Chad and southern Niger) to begin planting activities early, it was not uniform (Figure 1), causing other parts of the region, including much of Senegal and Mauritania and parts of Mali and Burkina Faso, to plant crops up to a month later than normal.

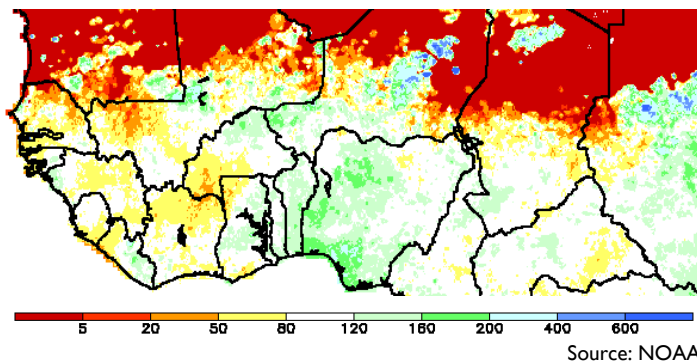
Since the last dekad of July, rainfall has increased significantly across much of the region (Figure 2), supporting ongoing agricultural production and improving pastoral conditions. Increased rainfall has also caused flooding in localized areas of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, which may increase the amount of land available for off-season flood-recession and market-gardening activities from November to April. The current agricultural season follows two consecutive years of excellent harvests across much of the Sahel. These harvests have allowed households to replenish grain reserves and have kept cereal prices low, except in Mauritania and Senegal, where last year's below-average harvests have led to poor availability of and high prices for local cereals. Prices for imported goods, from which these countries normally source at least half of their cereal needs, are also high.

In Nigeria and parts of southern Niger and Chad, rains began in April and have progressed normally, and average to above-average cereal production is expected. In eastern Chad and in north-central Niger, civil conflict has reduced access to seeds and fertilizers, decreasing production prospects in these areas. In northern Niger, civil insecurity, including use of landmines, and the government's recent declaration of a state of alert for the area have reduced access to markets for seeds, milk and livestock. The increased insecurity has also limited humanitarian access. Persistent insecurity will inhibit important flows of cereals from the country's southern production zones to northern populations and of livestock from northern areas to markets in the south.

Although inconsistent rains at the start of the season led to slight planting delays in Burkina Faso and Mali, rainfall has improved across these countries since July, allowing for the continuation of planting activities and the regeneration of pastures. The delayed start of the current agricultural season has not significantly influenced cereal prices in these countries, and average to slightly above-average harvests are anticipated this year, provided rains continue until the end of October and pest conditions remain calm.

While the progression of the rains has been strong across much of the region, the start of season in Senegal and Mauritania was significantly delayed, with some areas of both countries registering no rain as late as the last dekad of July. The late start of season delayed planting activities and will likely prolong this year's hunger period, as crops will not have matured by the normal harvest time. Both Senegal and Mauritania already face tenuous food security conditions after a poor 2006/07 agricultural season. The availability of local cereals is significantly diminished as the hunger season continues, and already high prices for imported goods continue to rise. Last year's poor production has also reduced the availability of seeds for planting this season, further compromising this year's production prospects. In pastoral areas, poor distribution of rainfall has prevented pasture regeneration, leading to overgrazing of existing pastures and increasing the potential for conflict between agriculturalists and pastoralists. Reduced pasture availability and high prices for animal feed are also contributing to a deterioration of animal body conditions and decreased milk production. In the most-affected areas, pastoralists are engaging in distress sales or slaughter of livestock to defray the costs of maintaining herds. While both Senegal and Mauritania normally import more than half of their cereal needs, significant rainfall deficits and poor pasture regeneration will likely cause another below-average season in both countries and will further increase the vulnerability of the already food insecure households, which depend on their own animal and plant production to sustain their livelihoods.

**Figure 1.** Rainfall as percent of normal, May 1 to Jul 10, 2007



**Figure 2.** Rainfall as percent of normal, May 1 to Aug 27, 2007

