



# KENYA FOOD SECURITY UPDATE – DECEMBER 6, 2006

## Food security summary and implications

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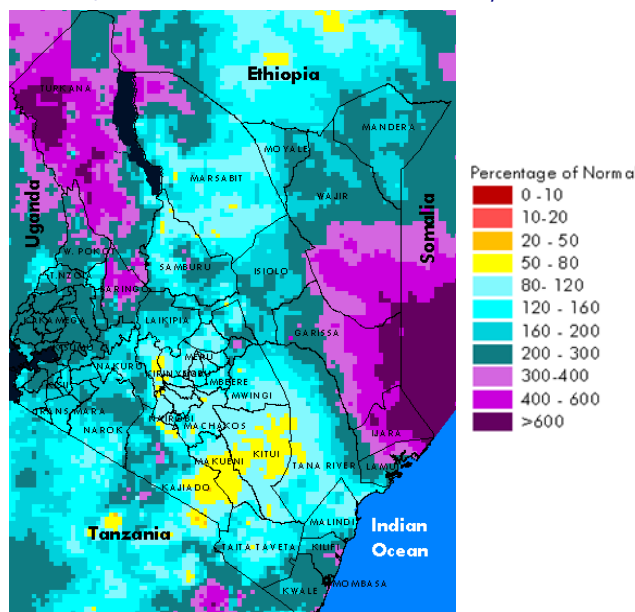
Food security prospects are generally improving for the majority of pastoral and farming households, following heavier-than-usual short rains, soon after a succession of poor or failed seasons over the past four years. Significant improvements in key pastoral and cropping indicators are being reported across the country. However, rains have been excessive in parts of the pastoral, lakeshore and coastal districts, disrupting any potential improvements in food security by displacing households and destroying lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure. The recovery of many of the flood-affected households is dependent upon a relenting of the rains, coupled with emergency food and non-food interventions aimed at saving lives and livelihoods while restoring the productive capacities of pastoral and farm households.

## Current hazard summary

- Flooding has intensified in the coastal, pastoral and lakeshore regions, causing deaths and displacing thousands.
- The threat of an outbreak of water-borne diseases has risen as sanitary conditions deteriorate.
- Harvesting of the long rains maize crop is interrupted by unseasonable rains, pre- and post-harvest losses have been reported.
- Flooding has rendered roads impassable, disrupting trade and the provision of relief supplies.

## Flooding intensifies as heavy rains continue across the country

**Figure 1: Cumulative Short Rains 10 October – 30 November, 2006; as a Percent of Normal: Source: USGS/FEWS NET**



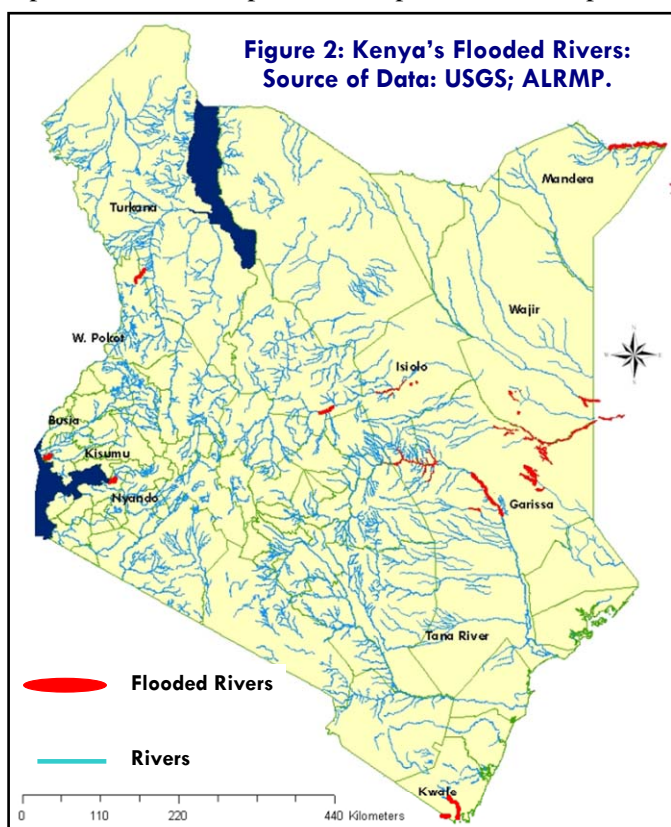
Heavy rains that began in mid-October continued through early December across the country with devastating consequences. Rains have been especially heavy in the coastal, eastern pastoral and lakeshore regions of the country, causing severe flooding in localized areas of these regions. Cumulative rainfall from the onset of the rains to the present has exceeded respective long term means, many times over in some cases (see Figure 1). The prognosis for the coming weeks and months point to continued rains through early 2007, though with reduced intensity. The forecast for the next two weeks also indicates that the rains are likely to ease, with a gradual shift of the ITCZ toward the south of the continent.

The flood affected areas are situated in the coastal Kwale, Kilifi and Mombasa districts; the pastoral districts of Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, Ijara, Mandera, Turkana and Isiolo and the lake shore districts of Busia, Nyando and Kisumu (see Figure 2). Apart from heavy rains in the epicenters of the flooded areas, exceptionally heavy rains in adjacent highland areas have accentuated flooding in the lowland areas,

particularly around the River Tana and Lake Victoria. In the flooded areas of all these districts, lives have been lost, families displaced, crops damaged and key supply routes cut off. The process of estimating of the number of people affected by floods has been complicated by the inaccessibility of several of the flood-affected areas. Estimates of flood affected people by various institutions range from 300,000 to as many as 730,000 people. The disparity in estimates indicates the need for a better way to assess the impact of sudden-onset disasters, including estimates of the number of people affected. Various population groups and communities are affected in different ways by such disasters, and appropriate interventions should be made according to how they are affected. Ironically, a significant proportion of the flood-affected households was severely drought affected and remain under the emergency operation for both food and non-food interventions.

### Excessive rains in localized areas likely to mitigate improvements in pastoral food security

Pastoralists outside flooded areas have experienced significant improvements in local environmental conditions. These improvements are expected to improve livestock productivity and household food security in the coming months. Water



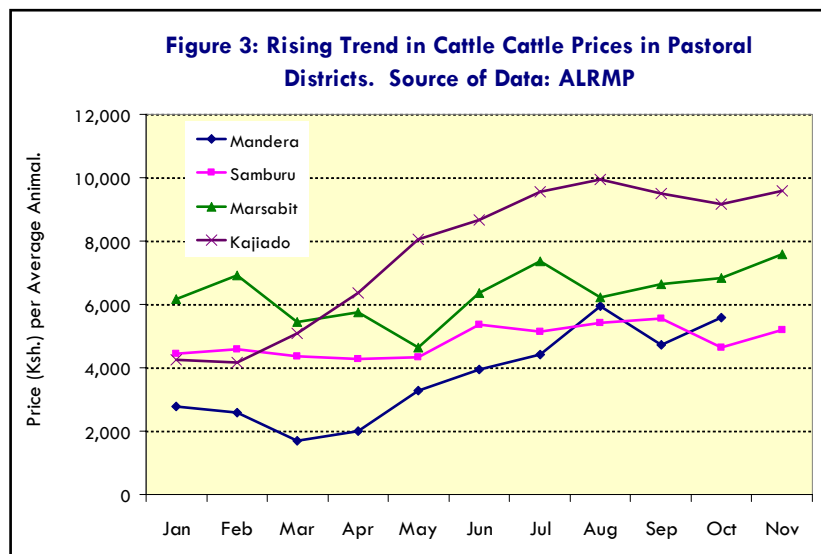
sources have all recharged, and water is readily available to livestock and pastoralists. Pasture and browse have also regenerated to an extent not seen in recent years. Pastoralists no longer need to trek long distances in order to feed their livestock, and livestock body conditions have visibly improved. However, the quality of water is problematic, especially in areas where flooding has occurred, as in Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, Ijara and Isiolo districts. The threat of an outbreak of water borne diseases in these areas is significant.

While the majority of pastoralists have migrated back to normal wet-season grazing areas, a proportion were displaced and had to move away from flooded areas. Pastoral areas most affected by floods are located in Garissa, Mandera, Wajir, Ijara, Tana River, Mandera and Marsabit districts (see Figure 2). In most of these districts and in adjacent areas, roads have also been rendered impassable for both pastoralists and traders.

The Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP) has indicated that livestock, the small animals in particular, are reproducing once again. Kidding and lambing has risen markedly in almost all pastoral districts as has milk availability. Improvements in milk availability have coincided

with a marked decline in rates of child malnutrition across pastoral districts. Though still at alarming levels, the rates of malnutrition, measured using the middle upper arm circumference, have declined across most pastoral districts by margins ranging between 5-10 percent, over the previous month. In contrast, little calving has occurred, as cattle will take a longer time to recover from the impacts of the debilitating drought that has only just ended. The ALRMP has also indicated that excessively wet and cold conditions are tempering the rapid recovery of the small animals by causing an upsurge in foot rot and caprine pleuro pneumonia.

The prices of all species of livestock outside the flooded and inaccessible areas have increased markedly, yet remain lower than respective long term means (see Figure 3). Prices in Marsabit, Samburu, Kajiado, Mandera, Garissa and Wajir districts have increased by margins ranging from 7-20 percent. Current favorable conditions, coupled with the anticipation that rains will continue beyond the normal end of the season in December, have encouraged pastoralists not sell their animals. Many pastoral households, especially in the northeast, are keen to rebuild their herds, after suffering substantial livestock losses during the prolonged drought that ended with the onset of the current short-rains season. However, livestock prices have fallen in flooded areas, many of which are temporarily inaccessible to both traders and livestock sellers. Meanwhile, prices of food commodities have risen substantially in flooded areas, compromising the purchasing capacities of pastoralists who should otherwise be experiencing favorable terms of trade. Dramatic increases in food prices of over 200 percent in localized flooded areas suggest that even pastoral households who had retained some



purchasing power are finding it difficult to afford cereals and other food commodities that are increasingly scarce in market centers. Most are now depending on relief food, including air drops.

So far, livestock mortalities in flooded areas are low, and should the rains relent and roads begin to re-open, recovery of pastoral livelihoods should begin to take hold in the flooded areas.

Pastoral rangelands, particularly those in the northwest and southeast, have not experienced excessive rains. These areas, which include parts of Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu and Moyale, most of Isiolo, Kajiado and Narok, anticipate major improvements in food security in the coming

months. Key grazing fundamentals including water, pasture and browse are expected to last through most of 2007, should the prognosis for continued rains hold. However, one good season is unlikely to make up for the devastation that pastoral livelihoods have endured over the past years. Several more good seasons including a combination of emergency and livelihood-support interventions are required to ensure that gains from the current season are consolidated.

### Access to drought and flood affected populations problematic

An estimated 2.4 million persons, including 541,000 school children, were retained under the emergency operation (EMOP), based on recommendations from the long rains assessments of August 2006. During November, a full food basket was planned for the EMOP beneficiaries. Some of these distributions have extended into December in Coast and Northeastern provinces due to the floods and lack of road access. In total, WFP distributed approximately 15,500 MT to 1.4 million beneficiaries. The number includes some 248,815 beneficiaries in the flood affected districts of Garissa, Ijara, Isiolo, Kwale, Mandera, Tana River and Wajir. Actual numbers of beneficiaries that were reached are likely to rise once all the figures are tallied. In the flood affected districts, WFP managed to distribute 4,100 MT of food. Some 541,000 school children continue to receive nutritious meals in 1,377 primary schools in 15 EMOP districts. WFP Kenya is temporarily expanding its beneficiary coverage under the EMOP by an additional 350,000 people to provide food assistance to the flood-affected. WFP will also temporarily provide assistance to Ijara District where roads have been cut-off.

In response to the most critical needs, the GoK, the Kenya Red Cross, UN agencies and NGOs have instituted a combination of food and non-food interventions. These interventions include the provision of shelter and medicines and the repair of key roads and bridges. At the onset of heavy rains in early November, WFP, the Kenya Red Cross and the district authorities in Kwale had to respond quickly to the increasing number of people displaced or stranded by flooding, as most of the access roads became impassable. The Kenyan air force availed them a helicopter, which dispatched some 11 MT of WFP-provided food, including maize, CSB, high energy biscuits, pulses and vegetable oil. In addition, the helicopter carried non-food items such as blankets, kitchen utensils, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, and water jerricans.

WFP with UN partners (FAO, UNICEF) and with the representatives of the Government (Ministries of Health and Public Works, Office of the President) carried out an aerial assessment of the flooded areas at the end of the first dekad of November. The assessment team flew over the coastal districts, Garissa, Ijara and Machakos. A further assessment, using a helicopter to reach marooned areas, took place in the third week of November. The multi sectoral team collected information on food, livestock, roads, sanitation and water. The worst-hit districts include Garissa, Isiolo, Kwale, Mandera, Tana River and Wajir.

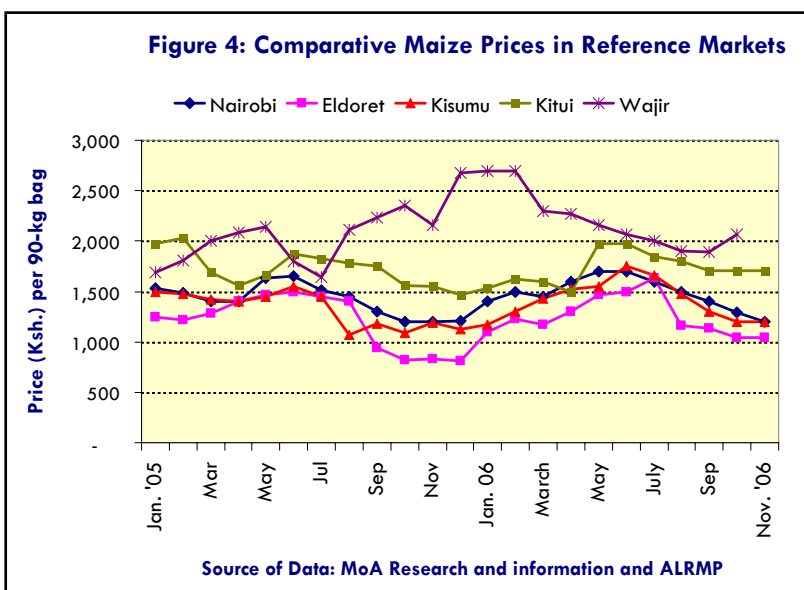
Because a number of main access roads to Northeastern Province have been washed out, a WFP Special Operation was approved at a total value of USD 11.5 million to provide air support to UN and NGO partners, in Kenya and Somalia, in response to the flooding. The initial funding for the air operation, some USD 5.5 million, was secured from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund in support of WFP Kenya and Somalia. An additional USD 6 million is required to keep the air operation at full capacity. Part of these funds was used to airlift in high energy biscuits from Italy to the flood affected

areas of Kenya. Flooding in northeastern and coastal districts has not only hampered the ongoing relief operation but has affected the movement of commercial supplies. It remains critical to open access to key roads, such as the Garissa to Wajir to Mandera route, WFP staff continues to liaise with the Ministry of Public Works and the Kenya Roads Board to prioritize road repairs and explore alternative routes for food aid deliveries by road.

### Crop prospects are favorable though pre- and post harvest losses have been reported

The 2006/07 short-rains cropping season is well underway in key short-rains areas, including the western, eastern and southern highlands as well as the southeastern and coastal lowlands. The start of the short-rains season is characteristically staggered, as will the stages of crop development. The short-rains season began in late September in western Kenya, and the stage of maize development is fairly advanced, ranging between the tasselling and the milking stages. However, the crop is mostly at the second weeding stage in other short rains areas outside the west. In coastal areas where floods damaged the early planted crop, particularly in Kwale and Kilifi districts, maize has only just passed the post-germination stage.

Of the estimated 2.52 million MT total national long rains output for 2006, 90,000 MT has not been harvested. Much of what remains in the field – and some of the crop already harvested in November – has not been able to dry because of the heavy and unseasonable rains. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has reported that a significant proportion of the crop that is still in the field is likely to suffer damage. The risk of Aflatoxin poisoning arising from consumption of improperly dried and stored grain is causing concern within the MoA, after rains continued uncharacteristically in key growing areas well into the harvesting period.



Overall national maize supply is favorable, and the MoA has indicated that the current national supply of 1.4 million MT is sufficient to meet local demand for up to 6 months. Farmers are holding 790,000 MT, just over 50 percent of the total stock; traders 250,000 MT; millers 160,000 MT; and the National Cereals Produce Board (NCPB) 200,000 MT, most of which is intended for the Strategic Grain Reserve. In addition, RATIN estimates indicate that 9,000 MT of maize were imported into the country from Uganda and Tanzania during November.

Maize prices have remained stable or marginally declined, a trend likely to continue through the end of the short-rains harvest in March 2007, following assumptions that the short-rains harvest will be good. Figure 4 illustrates the trend in maize prices

in key reference markets. The increase in the supply of maize, short cycle vegetables and other food commodities is expected to improve food availability and greatly improve the food security among drought-affected and deficit-producing households. However, dramatic and unusual increases in food commodity prices have been reported in localized areas where markets are cut off by floods especially in parts of the coastal Kwale and Kilifi and the pastoral Mandera, Marsabit, Wajir, Tana River, Garissa, Ijara and Isiolo districts. Many of these areas also suffered severe drought that is now compounded by the negative impacts of floods, further deepening food insecurity among pastoral and farm households.

### Conclusion

Significant improvements in food security are anticipated in most areas of the country outside areas that have not been flooded. Livestock are showing considerable recovery, and their prices are rapidly rising while rates of child malnutrition are declining and incidences of conflict have markedly declined. Unfortunately improvements have come at a price: excessive rains have caused considerable damage to livelihoods, infrastructure and even cost lives in several pastoral, coastal and lakeshore districts, accentuating food insecurity for households that were also drought-affected before the floods struck. While emergency interventions are ongoing, the restoration of livelihoods and institution of activities intended to improve the capacities of households to cope with future poor season are crucial.