FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Above-average “2020A” season crop production forecast due to abundant rains
- Localized production shortfalls of beans and maize expected due to excess moisture
- Torrential rains triggered floods and landslides in some northeastern, central and eastern areas between October and December, damaging local livelihoods
- Above-average aggregate cereal production obtained in 2019 due to favourable weather conditions
- Prices of cereals at high levels, prices of other staple foods generally low
- Food security conditions generally favourable, except for flood-affected vulnerable households, internally displaced persons and refugees

Above-average “2020A” season crop production expected due to abundant rains

Harvesting of the “2020A” season crops, representing about 35 percent of the yearly crop production, is underway and will be concluded in February. The September-December 2019 “short rainy season” was characterized by a timely onset, with a favourable impact on planting activities and by exceptionally abundant precipitation, with cumulative seasonal rains estimated at 40-100 percent above the long-term average over most cropping areas. The heavy precipitation had a positive impact on crop establishment and development, illustrated by good vegetation conditions (see ASI map). An above-average crop production is forecast, driven by ample harvests of tubers and bananas. However, the heavy precipitation is expected to result in localized production shortfalls of beans and maize due to excess moisture. In addition, the torrential rains triggered flooding in lowlands and landslides, mainly in northeastern Cibitoke and Bubanza provinces and in eastern Bujumbura Rural and Bujumbura Mairie provinces between October and December, causing crop losses, damage to infrastructure and the displacement of about 8 000 individuals.

Above-average aggregate cereal production obtained in 2019 due to favourable weather conditions

The February-May 2019 “long rainy season” was characterized by below-average precipitation in February and March, with some negative impacts on vegetation conditions. Subsequently,
abundant rains in April and May over most cropping areas brought cumulative seasonal amounts to above-average levels and boosted yields. As a result, the “2019B” harvest, representing about 50 percent of the yearly crop production and concluded in July, was estimated at above-average levels. Similarly, the minor “2019C” season harvest, accounting for about 15 percent of the yearly crop production and gathered in September in marshlands and irrigated areas, was above average, as adequate rains in June and July recharged water sources.

Earlier in the year, the “2019A” season harvest, representing about 35 percent of the yearly crop production, was estimated at above-average levels due to favourable weather conditions.

Accordingly, the 2019 aggregate cereal production is put at about 326 000 tonnes, similar to the 2018 output and about 10 percent above the average of the previous five years.

### Prices of cereals at high levels, prices of other staple foods generally low

According the Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi (ISTEEBU), the year on year food inflation rate for food products stood at 6.5 percent in November, mainly driven by prices of bread and cereals, which were 14.8 percent higher year on year. Despite adequate domestic availabilities, the relatively high levels of cereal prices is partly due to sustained maize demand from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where an upsurge in violence disrupted agricultural operations and resulted in significant production shortfalls. The annual rate of increase of prices of pulses was just 0.7 percent, while prices of fruits (including plantains and cooking bananas, important staples in the local diet) declined by 9.3 percent on a yearly basis.

### Food security conditions generally favourable, except for flood-affected households, IDPs and refugees

Food availability has improved since last December, when the “2020A” season crops started to be available for local consumption, ending the lean season. However, in the flood-affected areas, local livelihood systems have been damaged and most vulnerable households are reported to face IPC Phase 3: “Crisis” levels of food insecurity, with households either suffering food consumption gaps or marginally able to meet minimum food requirements only by depleting essential livelihood assets.

Since civil unrest erupted in April/May 2015, thousands of Burundians fled their homes. As of late November 2019, about 390 000 refugees still sheltered in neighbouring countries, mainly in the United Republic of Tanzania as well as in Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Since late September 2017, an influx of returnees has started and, as of late November 2019, about 80 000 people returned to the country with the support of the humanitarian community. Similarly, the number of IDPs declined from 143 000 to 103 000 between November 2018 and November 2019. However, the number of IDPs increased again to 108 000 in December, following the floods and landslides. Most of the displaced are food insecure, depending on community support and food assistance.

Similarly, refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, fleeing conflict in the Grand Kivu Region and estimated in late...
November at about 84,000 people face food insecurity, as they have limited livelihood opportunities and mainly rely on humanitarian assistance.

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