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East Africa

Burundi

This country is monitored by FEWS NET staff in a neighboring country

Key Message Update

Limited distribution of inputs may reduce poor households' Season A yields

October 2018

Key Messages:

Below-average rainfall from September to mid-October delayed Season A planting in central and eastern Burundi, but forecasted average cumulative precipitation through December is likely to support average harvests. The availability of above-average Season C harvests in marshland areas and carry-over Season B stocks nationally is sustaining Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes in some provinces. However, most provinces are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) – particularly in the East, where poor households in border communes have limited ability to cope with recurrent climate hazards and resources are under increased pressure due to the influx of returnees.

Key informants report that agricultural livelihoods intervention programs were unable to adequately distribute improved inputs – especially seeds – to poor households due to the Government of Burundi's three-month suspension of international NGOs. This may negatively impact poor households' Season A crop yields, despite adequate rainfall. Although the health sector and child malnutrition programs are not affected, field implementation without NGO partners may cause service delivery challenges. The impact on local staff wages, vendor revenues, and foreign exchange reserves may also disrupt economic activities.

According to the Burundi Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (ISTEEBU), staple food prices in September were 4.1 and 15.6 percent below August 2018 and September 2017 prices, respectively. This is due to above-average food supply and runs contrary to normal season trends. Low food prices and seasonal increases in the daily agricultural labor wage boosted household purchasing power in September. However, food prices have begun to moderately increase in October and are expected to rise until the Season A harvest.

Congolese refugees living in settlements continued to receive humanitarian food assistance that maintained Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes in October. Given the risk of funding shortfalls, these refugees would rapidly deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) if ration cuts occur. At the end of September, the estimated number of IDPs declined to 150,000 and the number of returnees increased to 52,000 (OCHA). As most IDPs and returnees have few assets and are living in drought- and flood-prone communes, it is expected that most are Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

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