FEWS NET
FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK

BURUNDI Remote Monitoring Update — February 2013

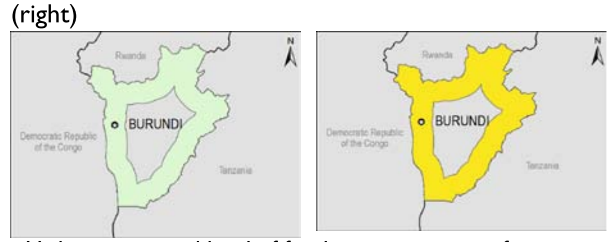
Season 'A' harvests improve food availability and access for poor households

KEY MESSAGES

- Season 'A' harvests in Burundi are almost complete. Most households across the country are consuming their own food production and will face Minimal/None (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes through June 2013. However, returnees living in rural integrated villages, refugees living in camps, and poor households living in warm lowlands and hauts plateaux humides areas will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between March and the next harvests in late June.

- Due to the recent harvests, prices for maize and beans (two important food staples for poor households) have been stable or declining compared to December prices although they have remained 33-89 percent and 7-26 percent above the five-year average, respectively. The exception is Bujumbura were January prices for almost all commodities increased (3-9 percent) compared to December.

Figure 1. Estimated food security outcomes, February to March 2013 (left) and April to June 2013 (right)



Highest estimated level of food insecurity in significant areas of concern using IPC 2.0 Area Reference Tables:

- Phase 1: Minimal
- Phase 2: Stressed
- Phase 3+: Crisis or higher
- ! Severity significantly mitigated by assistance

Source: *FEWS NET*

These maps represent acute food insecurity outcomes in significant areas of concern relevant for emergency decision-making. They do not necessarily reflect outcomes across the country or chronic food insecurity. Visit http://www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale for more.

ZONE	CURRENT ANOMALIES	PROJECTED ANOMALIES
National	• The prevalence of banana Xanthomonas wilt, cassava mosaic, and cassava brown streak has been above average across the country.	• These diseases will continue to damage crops, especially in southeastern areas.
	• Relatively high staple food prices have been noted at markets across Burundi, with prices being about 17 and 73 percent above the five-year average.	• Food prices are expected to follow normal seasonal trends but remain well above the five-year average.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JUNE 2013

Throughout the country, season 'A' harvests are nearly complete with slightly to moderately below-average production levels in many areas. In the southeast marshlands and the northwest, above-average rainfall from October to December caused localized flooding, soil erosion, and waterlogging. These wet conditions negatively impacted crop development, particularly for beans which require drier soil conditions compared to maize. In addition, banana Xanthomonas wilt, cassava mosaic, and cassava brown streak are unusually prevalent this year, and have resulted in slightly below-average crop production. Finally in some parts of the northwest, especially Cibitoke, an early end to the rainy season caused an approximately 60 percent crop failure of about 8,000 ha planted with maize, beans, sorghum and peanuts. Despite this below-average production, most households are currently able to meet their food needs through their own food stocks.

Due to the recent harvests, prices for maize and beans (two important food staples for poor households) have been stable or declining at most markets compared to December. However, prices for these two commodities still remain 33 to 89 percent and 7 to 26 higher than the five-year average, respectively. The exception is Bujumbura where staple prices in January compared to last month increased by 9, 6, 4 and 3 percent for beans, sweet potato, cassava flour and maize, respectively. During the next several months, prices are expected to follow normal seasonal trends. During the February to

March period, prices will remain relatively stable as most households rely on their own food production. Prices will then increase from late March to June when households become more dependent on market purchases.

On January 27, 2013, a large fire burned down Bujumbura's central market. Media reports indicate that approximately 5,000 merchants were affected, and that food prices in the capital city increased dramatically in the days following the fire. More information is needed to determine the exact impacts, if any, that this fire will have on food insecurity outcomes in Bujumbura and the surrounding areas. However due to this fire, food prices in Bujumbura may start increasing before March. The government and donors have started setting up a provisional market and have stated that they intend to provide assistance to fire victims.

Labor opportunities have been seasonally low as the harvest is now over. However, land preparation for next season will begin in late February and will provide additional labor opportunities. Wages from casual labor, the most important economic activity for the poor, will remain at normal levels throughout the next six months. This, coupled with increased food prices during the lean season, will mean that household purchasing power will decline. While most households are currently consuming their own production, this declining purchasing power will reduce market food access starting in March when household food stocks start to deplete. However in most areas of the country, households will be able to use their normal livelihood strategies to meet essential food and non-food needs.

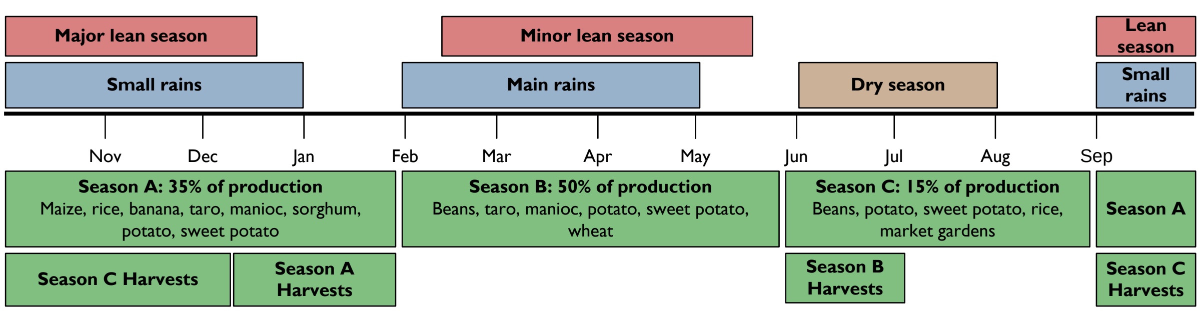
Except for areas of concern (warm lowlands, the hauts plateaux humides zones, rural integrated villages, and refugee camps), households will face Minimal/None (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes through June 2013.

Warm lowlands, the hauts plateaux humides zones, returnees, rural integrated villages, and refugee camps

During November and December, approximately 33,819 returnees from the Mtabila refugee camp in Tanzania returned to Burundi. Many of these returnees are still residing in transit centers and are reporting that they are receiving inadequate humanitarian assistance. Until these returnees, as well as refugees from other countries living within Burundi, are able to rebuild their livelihoods, they will likely face difficulties meeting their basic food needs and will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

In addition, warm lowlands and the hauts plateaux humides zones will be most greatly affected by the below-average season 'A' harvests. Between February and late March, households in these zones are expected to be food secure (IPC Phase 1). However, after households deplete their food stocks earlier than normal in late March, households are expected to engage in atypical coping strategies to meet essential food and non-food needs. At this time, at least 20 percent of households in these areas will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

SEASONAL CALENDAR IN A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: *FEWS NET*

ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING

In remote monitoring, a coordinator typically works from a nearby regional office. Relying on partners for data, the coordinator uses scenario development to conduct analysis and produce monthly reports. As less data may be available, remote monitoring reports may have less detail than those from countries with FEWS NET offices. More at http://www.fews.net/Pages/remote-monitoring.aspx?l=en.