KEY MESSAGES

- Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are projected to persist through at least January 2019 across large areas of Somali Region, as drought recovery continues amidst recent conflicts. In addition, ethnic conflicts in Oromia along the Somali border and between West Guji of Oromia and Gedeo of SNNPR have caused significant displacement, restricting typical access to food and income sources. As a result, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes, only in the presence of humanitarian assistance, are projected to continue.

- The Belg harvest has begun, replenishing household stocks, except in portions of eastern Amhara and southern Tigray, where it is delayed. Despite a dry spell from mid-July to early August across large areas of Amhara and Oromia, Kiremt rainfall is expected to support overall average Meher production. With the harvest beginning in November, this is expected to improve food availability, ease staple food prices, and improve outcomes, particularly in portions of southern Tigray, northeastern Amhara, and eastern Oromia.

- The ongoing Karan/Karma rains in northern pastoral areas, despite some parts that received below-average rainfall, are expected to improve pasture and water availability, leading to better livestock body conditions and productivity. While milk production is projected to improve, it will remain below average, due to poor conception rates. Regardless, these seasonal improvements are expected to allow northern Afar and Sitti Zone of Somali Region to move from Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) in the presence of humanitarian assistance to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) beginning in October.

CURRENT SITUATION

Southeastern pastoral areas (Dollo, Jarar, Korahe, Liben, and Shebelle zones of Somali Region)

- Pasture availability/water resources: The Hagaa dry season (June to September) is ongoing in southeastern pastoral areas, but pasture and browse remain at above-normal levels, following the above-average Gu season. Remote sensing products are in line with field observations, as vegetation conditions (see Figure 1) are average to above average across most parts of Somali Region. The main water sources, such as berkas and deep wells, are fully replenished; however, according to IOM, there is reportedly less water available for IDPs in Dollo and Jarar zones. Livestock body conditions remain average, and there has been no reported atypical livestock migration nor livestock disease outbreaks. Since there were no camel and cattle births during the 2018 Gu season, there still is not yet camel nor cattle milk in these areas, and goats are no longer lactating.
• **Prices:** The seasonally low supply of food grain from central markets, following below-average production from riverine and agropastoral areas, and the existing political unrest, which has disrupted market access and commodity flows, has increased staple food prices. According to the Somali Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office (DPPCO), the price in July for a 50 kg sack of maize in Gode and Warder markets was 50 and 77 percent higher compared to July 2017, respectively; and 43 and 49 percent higher compared to the five-year average, respectively. Improved livestock body conditions and a low supply in the market have led to higher livestock prices. In July, DPPCO reported that the average price of a goat was 25 and 50 percent higher than during the same month last year in Gode and Warder markets, respectively, and 44 and 33 percent higher than the five-year average, respectively. As a result, terms of trade (TOTs) improved by about 19 percent compared to last year but still remain about nine percent below average.

• **Nutrition:** According to the most recent Somali Region ENCU report, from December 2017 to May 2018, the proxy Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) caseload increased by 28 percent in Korahe Zone compared to the same previous year’s period due to a combination of factors, including a measles outbreak in some woredas and previous drought effects. In Dollo Zone, there have been some reported slight improvements in nutritional status due to better coverage of nutrition interventions by partners, but the absence of camel milk is largely preventing further improvements. The Regional total number of malnourished children admitted to therapeutic feeding program (TFP) sites in May 2018 was approximately 25 percent higher compared to May 2017 and remained 300 percent higher than the average during the 2011-2016 period, with the largest increases in Shebelle and Afder zones.

• **New displacement:** Since August 4, due to unrest in Somali Region, there have been significant numbers of newly displaced. According to OCHA, as of August 17, more than 141,000 people have been displaced, with over 35,000 IDPs in Jijiga city, who are entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance.

**Eastern Amhara and southern Tigray Belg-growing areas**

• **Rainfall performance:** The *Kiremt* (June to September) rains started on time, except in a few localized areas, and the amount and distribution were normal through early July. However, from mid-July through early August, rainfall amounts were below average. Overall, the cumulative rainfall from the start of the season through August 10 across most areas was average to above average (see Figure 2).

• **Crop conditions:** According to the July multi-agency *Belg* seasonal assessment report, of the typical 205,227 hectares of land planted in Amhara and southern Tigray for crops harvested during the *Belg*, only 74 percent of the area was planted due to the delayed start of the *Belg* rains. The report also highlighted, due to the poor amount and distribution of *Belg* rains (55 to 70 percent of normal as per CHIRPS), only 52 percent of normal production is expected to be harvested. Currently field crops are at varying stages of growth. Most *Meher* crops are at seedling and vegetative stages, whereas *Belg* crops are at ripening and harvesting stages.

• **Staple food prices:** As household stocks have remained depleted from the previous *Meher* harvest, coupled with the more than one month delay in the *Belg* harvest, staple food prices have seasonally increased since March 2018. In July, according to price data from the NDRMC, sorghum prices in Woldia in North Wello were higher by 40 and 23 percent compared to July 2017 and the five-year average, respectively.

• **Nutrition:** Generally, the nutrition status for children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) has remained stable or marginally improved since last year. According to ENCU, the average monthly number of SAM admissions declined from 866 in November 2017 to 753 in May 2018. This drop was mainly attributed to nutrition intervention programs.
like the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP) by WFP and improved food and cash income sources from the 2017 Meher and Belg seasons.

**Lowlands of East and West Hararghe of Oromia Region**

- **Rainfall performance:** Kiremt rainfall also started on time in these areas, but in July, most lowland woredas of East and West Hararghe zones experienced a long dry spell and below-average rainfall. According to CHIRPS data, cumulative rainfall from June 1 to August 10, indicate that it was 25 to 30 percent below the long-term average in these areas.

- **Crop conditions:** Most Belg crops are fully mature and being harvested. This year’s harvest is estimated to be average but higher than last year despite flooding that occurred, Fall Armyworm (FAW) infestations, and waterlogging that caused some lower crop yields. Despite existing moisture levels from June and July, Meher planted areas in East and West Hararghe were only about 60 percent of average by the end of July, according to DPPB, largely owing to the ethnic conflict in bordering areas with Somali Region, which disrupted land preparation and planting. Currently, most Meher crops are at the seedling and vegetative stages; however, in areas like Mieso, Gumbi Bordede, and Ancar woredas, the crops have suffered from moisture stress due to the July dry spell. FAW infestations also remain an issue in these areas.

- **Prices:** The supply of grains in local markets remains seasonally low, and coupled with conflict along bordering areas with Somali Region, transportation costs have risen, in turn, increasing staple food prices. For example, in June in Chinaksen of East Hararghe, sorghum and maize prices were 25 and 36 percent higher, respectively, while in Mieso of West Hararghe, sorghum was 62 and maize 38 percent more than June 2017. Livestock prices have also risen in many local markets due to improved body conditions and higher numbers of livestock traders. On average in July in Anchar market in West Hararghe, oxen and goat prices were 29 and 53 percent higher, respectively, compared to the same time last year.

- **Nutrition:** Conflict has disrupted livelihoods in bordering woredas with Somali region, which has restricted poor household food access, affecting the nutritional status of children and PLWs. In June, a total of 12,418 malnourished children in Oromia Region were admitted to a TFP. Admissions were significantly higher compared to both the previous month and last year, with a reported increase in East Hararge by 17.1 and 58.3 percent, respectively. In West Hararge, admissions were up by 46.4 percent compared to May and by nearly the same amount compared to June 2017.

**Northern pastoral areas (Afar Region and Fafan and Sitti zones of Somali Region)**

- **Rainfall performance:** The Karan/Karma (July to September) rains generally started on time, except in northeastern parts of Afar Region where they were late by about 20 days. According to CHIRPS, the cumulative rainfall received between June 1 and August 10 ranged from near average to 45 percent above average in central and southern Afar and Sitti Zone of Somali Region. However, during the same period, the rains were 15 to 30 percent below average in northeastern Afar and some parts of Fafan Zone in Somali Region.

- **Pasture availability/water resources:** With the rains, pasture and browse continue to improve to normal levels over most northern pastoral areas and water points have been replenished. Generally average vegetation conditions persist (see Figure 1), except in some areas bordering Amhara and Tigray regions, where it is slightly below normal. As a result, livestock body conditions and productivity remain normal, and no abnormal livestock movements nor disease outbreaks have been reported. However, in northeastern Afar and some parts of Fafan Zone in Somali Region, livestock body conditions are only fair and milk production remains below normal.
• **Prices:** As in other areas, the supply of cereals in local markets is seasonally low and reflected in staple food prices. According to DRMC and ETBC data, maize prices in July were 13 and five percent higher in Asayita and Dire Dawa markets, respectively, compared to May 2018, and 13 and 20 percent more than the five-year average, respectively. Livestock prices are also on an increasing trend due to improved body conditions and a low supply of livestock in local markets. For instance, in July, the average price for a goat in Assiyita and Awash markets was 49 and 27 percent higher, respectively, compared to the five-year average. As a result, the overall livestock-to-cereal TOTs are favorable for pastoral households, improving incomes.

• **Nutrition:** Generally, the nutrition status for children under five years of age and PLWs has remained stable, but in some areas there has been a slight deterioration. In Afar Region as a whole, the total TFP admissions in May increased by about seven and eight percent compared to May 2017 and the five-year average admission rate, respectively. The areas of greatest concern, where a significant malnutrition caseload was reported recently, include portions of Berhale and Teru woredas of Afar; Erer, Shinile, and Ayisha woredas of Sitti Zone in Somali Region, where milk production has remained below-average, following consecutive poor seasons.

**Displacement in border areas of Somali, Oromia, and SNNP regions**

• Continuous conflict and violence along bordering areas of Somali and Oromia regions and between Gedeo of SNNPR and West Guji of Oromia have caused significant displacement. As a result, this has disrupted seasonal crop cultivation and pastoral activities, constraining households' food and income access. According to the 11th Round (May to June 2018) of the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, more than 1.2 million people have been displaced, of which 52 and 42 percent are from Oromia and Somali regions, respectively. More recent figures from an August 17 OCHA report indicate the number of displaced has fallen slightly in Gedeo Zone of SNNPR to about 695,000 people, while over 189,000 are displaced in West Guji Zone in Oromia, and they are highly dependent on humanitarian assistance.

**Humanitarian assistance**

• According to the latest OCHA funding update for Ethiopia, as of August 10, only 38 percent of emergency food and non-food requirements from the 2018 Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan (HRDP), targeting a total of 7.88 million beneficiaries, has been funded. As a result, this has led to delayed and inadequate humanitarian assistance delivery countrywide. Since the launch of the HDRP in March 2018, up to four rounds of food assistance have begun to be dispatched and distributed depending on the area. The Government of Ethiopia, through the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), has also distributed cash to an average of 2.5 million beneficiaries across several regions of the country for the first two rounds. In Somali Region, insecurity-related issues from the conflict and flooding during the Gu season also constrained food dispatches and distributions. WFP food dispatches for the third round in Somali Region began on July 10. As of August 26, according to a report from the Food Prioritization Committee, only eight percent had been dispatched due to delays caused by insecurity. WFP continues to provide food assistance to conflict-related IDPs in East and West Hararghe zones in Oromia Region, while JEOP and NDRMC are assisting IDPs in West Guji Zone of Oromia and those in SNNPR. In Amhara Region, according to the latest reports, JEOP has distributed more than 40 percent of the fourth round food allocations.

**UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS**

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET’s most likely scenario for the Ethiopia Food Security Outlook for June 2018 to January 2019 remain unchanged, except the following assumption:

• According to the latest models and forecasts from NOAA and USGS, Deyr/Hageya (October to December) rainfall in southeastern Ethiopia is likely to be average in terms of cumulative totals. However, given the likely El Niño and IOD neutral conditions, the rainfall totals may tend toward above average.

**PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2019**

• **Southeastern pastoral areas [mainly Dollo, Korahe, Jarar, Shebelle zones of Somali]:** Substantial improvements in food security remain limited in these areas as most poor households have low livestock holdings, representing their primary source of food and income. In September, livestock export prices are expected to fall as the Hajj season ends, and with the likely continued staple food price increases, livestock-to-cereal TOTs are projected to disfavor pastoralists. Based on the most recent distribution
reports and field information, WFP is still expected to deliver assistance through September. With the anticipated average Deyr season, milk availability from all animal species is still likely to improve during the October to December period, but total milk production will remain below average because of low herd sizes. Therefore, most households in these areas are projected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through January 2019. However, there is a high likelihood that some of the worst-affected households, particularly IDPs, could be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) until the Deyr rains begin.

- **Most Belg-dependent agricultural areas of eastern Amhara and southern Tigray:** Poor households are not expected to meet their minimum basic food needs until they can harvest the delayed Belg production. As a result, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist through September. Thereafter, food availability is expected to substantially improve with Meher harvests. Increased migration labor opportunities to Meher-surplus areas will also allow poor households to generate additional cash income. As purchasing power improves with the gradual decline in staple food prices from November onwards, these areas are likely to improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1), as the majority of poor households are expected to meet their basic food and non-food needs. However, in woredas along the Tekeze River Catchment of Amhara and Tigray, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are projected through January 2019, following consecutive seasons of below-average production.

- **Lowland areas of East and West Hararge, Bale, and Guji zones of Oromia:** With the Belg harvest underway in some of these areas, despite its low overall contribution in comparison to the Meher harvest, it is still expected to relatively improve household food availability when fully harvested. Similarly, improved livestock production and income from agricultural labor are supplementing household income to improve food access. Poor and very poor households in lowlands of East and West Hararghe, Bale, Guji, West Guji, and Borena zones are likely to remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the presence of humanitarian assistance through September 2018, and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between October 2018 and January 2019, following the likely below-average Meher harvest. However, displaced people from ethnic conflict and social unrest are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the scenario period, as most of them missed the agricultural season crop cultivation and their livestock has been looted.

- **Gedeo of SNNPR and West Guji of Oromia:** Displaced populations, who have been affected by the ethnic conflict in these areas, are expected to not have typical access to crop production, agricultural labor opportunities, and petty trade activities through at least January 2019. As a result, they are expected to remain highly dependent on humanitarian assistance for their minimum food needs. Some may be able to earn income through livestock sales, but this is not expected to be sufficient. Therefore, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected throughout the scenario period.

- **Northern pastoral areas:** The Karan/Karma rainy season is expected to support better livestock body conditions, but since the total number of births, beginning in September, is expected to remain low, following below-average conception rates, total milk production will remain below-normal until the Dirraac/Sugum rainy season (March to May 2019). As a result, with below-average food and income from livestock products, combined with expected sustained above-average staple food prices through at least November, poor households’ food and income access is expected to remain constrained. The majority of households are expected to remain dependent on planned and funded humanitarian assistance and social support to meet their minimum basic foods, maintaining most of these northern pastoral areas in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through September. Between October and January 2019, as seasonal improvements occur from the Karan/Karma rains, including increased milk availability, households are projected to move to Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

- **Most parts of SNNPR and western and central areas of Ethiopia:** These areas are expected to remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity throughout the scenario period. Following average 2017 Meher production in western and central agricultural areas, and the current Belg harvest in SNNPR, food availability and access remain adequate, supported by agricultural labor opportunities and income from livestock sales. From November onwards with the 2018 Meher harvest, household stocks will be replenished.

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**ABOUT THIS UPDATE**

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET's Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).