Below-normal Vuli harvest in the Northeast to extend current lean season

KEY MESSAGES

- The ongoing Vuli harvest in northern Tanzania is expected to be below average following an erratic rainy season and early-season flooding due to heavy El Niño rains. A below-average Vuli season will extend the lean season to June/July, when the Masika green harvest starts.

- Following a delayed start of season in central and southern areas, above-average rainfall has provided adequate rains for cropping activities and the main Msimu harvest is likely to be near normal. Areas that are currently facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity are likely to move into Minimal (IPC Phase 1) with the start of the harvest in April/May.

- Emergency food distributions for refugees and asylum-seekers from Burundi and DRC are currently planned through June 2016. Minor harvests will begin in April/May for refugees who were able to plant prior to the start of the season. With refugees continuing to arrive, this population is expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) after June, with certain households in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the absence of humanitarian assistance.

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<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>CURRENT ANOMALIES</th>
<th>PROJECTED ANOMALIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Central Rift Valley in Singida, Dodoma, Shinyanga, and Tabora Regions</td>
<td>- The Msimu rains started three to four weeks late, leading to delayed planting and reduced labor opportunities. Households are currently dividing their time between their own plots and casual labor, providing below-average incomes.</td>
<td>- With the late start of season, the green and main harvests are likely to start later than usual. Households relying on purchases with limited incomes will face seasonally increasing maize prices. Many households will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) until the start of the green harvest in April/May.</td>
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<td>Refugees and asylum-seeker receiving areas in Kigoma Region</td>
<td>- An additional 4,268 refugees were registered in Tanzania since January 31, for a total estimated population of 197,013, according to UNHCR. Political instability and violence continue to drive people out of Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A third refugee camp has been opened and inadequate funding remains the main constraint to food access.</td>
<td>- Access to basic services such as health care, water, and shelter are expected to be constrained given the likely continued arrivals to the camps. Incomes will remain low but minor harvests will begin in April/May for some refugees who arrived before the start of season in November 2015.</td>
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<td>Northeastern bimodal areas</td>
<td>- The below-average Vuli bean and maize harvest is continuing to constrain household food availability following the poor 2014/15 Masika harvest that left a significant population Stressed (IPC Phase 2).</td>
<td>- Reduced production may trigger an earlier-than-normal price increase that will coincide with limited incomes.</td>
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PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2016

Markets and Stocks: Maize, dry bean, and rice prices have been mixed, due to dwindling stocks across main producing and consumption markets and to reduced maize demand from Kenya. The National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) did not purchase cereals during the 2015/16 production season and national reserves have been drawn down from 400,000MT to 90,000MT during this past consumption year. Replenishment will likely start in July/August once the main Msimu harvest begins. Government purchases, combined with anticipated higher-than-normal demand from East and Southern African countries, may lead to elevated but stable cereal prices. Rice imports are ongoing, providing rice consumers with alternative source and thus stabilizing prices. Bean production was reduced by heavy rainfall during growth and harvesting periods in December/January, and supply and prices have slightly decreased following start of green harvest in the bimodal areas.

Below-average Vuli harvest expected in northern bimodal areas: Due to erratic and poorly-distributed rainfall during the October 2015 – January 2016 rainy season, the ongoing Vuli harvests are likely to be significantly below the 5-year average. Rainfall has continued after the harvest during a normally dry period and is forecast to remain above average during the upcoming March – June 2016 Masika season. While the ongoing rainfall will benefit permanent crops and cassava-growing areas, recent flooding around the Lake Victoria region has made land and paddy preparation more difficult. With the start of land preparation for Masika season, labor-dependent households will have access to increased incomes. Households that are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to consecutive below-average harvests will remain Stressed until the Masika green harvests begin in June 2016.

Dodoma, Shinyanga, Tabora, and Singida Regions: Following a delayed start to the rainy season in Central and Rift Valley areas, the Msimu rainy season picked up in January/February and total rainfall is forecast to be near average. Though planting was delayed and staggered, weeding activities will be completed by early March. Lowland areas that normally grow rice will have adequate moisture to support paddy production. However, ongoing rainfall is constraining other income-generating activities like firewood collection and charcoal-making, and incomes from chicken sales will remain low following the outbreak of New Castle disease in September/October 2015. Households have already started to deplete their savings due to the poor 2015 Msimu harvest that forced households to rely on market purchases much earlier than normal. Maize prices have been seasonably increasing, and households are currently at the peak of the lean season as they remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) until the green harvest begins in April/May 2016.

Heavy rainfall in maize-producing Southern Highlands: Heavy rainfall in the Southern Highlands has led to flooding, displacing 1,000 families and submerging maize and paddy fields in Morogoro, Iringa, and Rufiji districts. While rice paddies should be able to recover, severe water logging may lead to reduced maize yields in local areas. Government and local NGOs are providing short-term food and health assistance to affected households. The remainder of the season through May 2016 is forecast to be average to slightly below average, resulting in near-normal cumulative rainfall totals favorable for crop development.

Asylum seekers and refugees in Nyarugusu and Nduta Camps in Kigoma Region: The number of refugees from Burundi has continued to increase, with 4,068 additional refugees arriving in February. Incomes remain low, as labor opportunities are severely limited. However, refugees who were in camps before the start of season in November 2015 were able to plant cassava, potato, and beans, which will improve their incomes and food availability with the start of harvest in April/May. New arrivals and those who were relocated to the Nduta and Mtendeli camps in Kibondo District were unable to plant and will therefore be facing IPC Phase 3 in the absence of emergency assistance, which is planned through June 2016. Overall, Kasulu and Kibondo districts are currently facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity with the ongoing humanitarian assistance but will move to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) as of July 2016 with the expected continual increase in arrivals.

Minimal (IPC Phase 1) is expected through the end of September 2016 in most other areas. Food consumption will remain normal with adequate household and market stocks, low food prices, and casual labor opportunities remaining available due to ongoing cultivation in both bimodal and unimodal areas.

ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING
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