

Famine ends, yet 31% of the population remain in crisis

NAIROBI/WASHINGTON FEBRUARY 3, 2012 – Recent analysis by FAOS’s FSNAU and FEWS NET confirm that Famine outcomes no longer exist in Southern Somalia, **yet nearly a third of the population remain in crisis, unable to fully meet essential food and non-food needs**. Based on the latest assessment findings, Mogadishu IDPs, Afgoye IDPs, and agropastoral households in Middle Shabelle (populations formerly classified as IPC Phase 5 – Famine) have now improved to Emergency-level food insecurity (IPC Phase 4). This is the result of substantial humanitarian assistance provided and the start of the *Deyr* harvest, which is expected to be substantially higher than average. Both factors have mitigated the most extreme food deficits and reduced mortality levels. Nonetheless, as of February 3, **2.34 million people remain in crisis, with 73% (1.7 million) residing in the southern regions**, where humanitarian access remain very limited. Multi sectoral response, at scale, is required for all those in crisis and any significant interruption to humanitarian assistance or trade could result in a reversal of the gains made.

The expected improvement in food security outcomes is largely due the *Deyr* harvest, which reached 200% of the post war average, and was the result of very good rains coupled with substantial multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance. The well-above average harvest has led to a significant reduction in local cereal prices in the most vulnerable areas in the south, improved purchasing power for pastoralists, and increased agricultural wage labour opportunities for poor agropastoral households. Juba, where prices of local cereal prices remain well above average due to flood damage to crops and trade restrictions, is an exception. The urban poor population in the south, have also benefitted from reduced cereal prices.

The massive scale-up of emergency response since September/October has also had a significant impact on food access, acute malnutrition, and mortality levels. Among Mogadishu IDPs, the level of acute malnutrition has dropped from 45% in August to 20% in December. Death rates have declined since August but remain at the Famine threshold of 2 deaths per 10,000 population per day, highlighting the continued impacts of the 2011 famine and insecurity. Due to security restrictions, updated nutrition and mortality data was not collected in December/January for other regions of Southern Somalia. However, indirect information from health centers and feeding programmes suggests an improved situation from August 2011, though acute malnutrition levels likely remain higher than 20%. Two regions are of particular concern. In Lower Juba and Bakool, high numbers of acutely malnourished children continue to be reported and access to treatment services remains severely restricted. An estimated 325,000 acutely malnourished children are currently in need of specialized nutrition treatment services in Somalia, 70% of whom are in southern regions.

In the central and northern regions, most areas also benefited from good rains which lead to both improved pasture conditions and purchasing power for pastoralist households, with the exception of coastal pastoral populations who remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Currently 95,000 rural people remain in Emergency and 195,000 people are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in these regions. The majority of those are poor pastoralists who have yet to recover their herd sizes following the consecutive seasons of poor rainfall and require emergency livelihood support at scale. Livestock exports through northern ports continue their positive trend since the lifting of the livestock export ban in 2009, with the highest exports recorded in 2011 to date.

In the most-likely scenario, FEWS NET and FSNAU assume that the April-June *Gu* rains will be average. However, risk of a poor season remains, and populations in southern regions continue to be extremely vulnerable to both price and rainfall shocks following the devastating effects of the recent famine. As a result, large numbers of people are likely to remain in Crisis until the August 2012 *Gu*-season harvest. In fact, the number of people in Crisis is likely to increase from May in Juba, Shabelle, and Bay regions, when the benefit of the current harvest will be reduced. Continued, large-scale, multi sectoral response is critical to prevent this deterioration and a reversal of recent gains. Any additional shocks, including a continuation or expansion of humanitarian access restrictions, poor *Gu*-season rainfall, additional displacement, disease outbreaks, trade restrictions, or large-scale return of refugees from Kenyan and Ethiopian refugee camps, could cause a rapid decline in nutrition and mortality outcomes throughout southern Somalia.

FSNAU and FEWS NET will continue to monitor conditions and outcomes and report on the situation. More detailed reports on the Post-*Deyr* assessment and the outlook through June will be published in February. Updates on the start of the next rainy season will be released in late April 2012. All information will be made available through www.fews.net and www.fsnau.org.

| Assessed and Contingency Population in Crisis and Emergency | Number affected | % of Total population | Distribution of populations in crisis |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Assessed Urban population in Crisis and Emergency | 550,000 | 7 | 24% |
| Assessed Rural population in Crisis and Emergency | 990,000 | 13 | 42% |
| IDP in settlements* (out of UNHCR 1.3million) to avoid double counting | 800,000 | 11 | 34% |
| Estimated Rural, Urban and IDP population in crisis | 2,340,000 | 31 | 100% |

*Bossaso, Berbera, Galkayo, Hargeisa, Garowe, Kismayo, Afgoye, Mogadishu and Burao

Somali Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview Rural and Urban Populations: February 3rd 2012

