

Reference Date: 18-April-2011

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Diraac/sougum rains started late and weather forecasts are not favourable until May
- Food security likely to deteriorate for pastoralists and poor urban households until June/July

Unfavourable prospects for diraac/sougum rains

The onset of diraac/sougum rains (March to May) is late in pastoral inland areas, especially in western Dikhil region where the season is usually expected to start at the end of March. Early meteorological forecasts point to below average rains along the season, with likely negative impact on pasture and water availability. Animal body conditions and production of milk, an important source of food for pastoralists, are also expected to worsen.

Relatively improved rains were reported around the capital city and coastal areas and are expected to improve local water and pasture conditions. If these rains continue in the following weeks. Significant livestock migrations toward these areas may occur with clustering of animals in limited zones and consequent risk of spreading diseases and escalating conflicts on the use of grazing resources.

Food security situation likely to deteriorate

The poor performance of diraac/sougum rainy season is expected to negatively impact the overall food security situation, mainly of pastoralists. at least until June/July 2011, when karan/karma rains usually begin in inland areas.

Prices of main staple commodities have generally increased since late last year. In wholesale markets of Djibouti city, average price of wheat flour increased by 17 percent between January and February 2011, reaching about USD 620 per tonne, well above the average price of USD 400 in mid-2007, just before the food price crisis.

Some 120 000 people, mainly small-scale farmers and herders living in northwest, central and southeast parts of the country, are estimated to be requiring humanitarian assistance following four consecutive poor rainy seasons that resulted in substantial decline in livestock holdings and severely disrupted local livelihood systems. Food insecurity is also expected to increase in urban areas where access to food for poor households is limited by high food prices, low remittances and few employment opportunities.

