FEWS NET: harvests starting in October will maintain or improve acute food insecurity

The latest FEWS NET Sudan Food Security Outlook Update for August 2017 indicates that in much of Sudan harvests starting in October will maintain or improve acute food insecurity to Minimal (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels between October 2017 and January 2018. New IDPs in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, West Kordofan, and refugees from South Sudan will likely remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity as continued displacement limits access to land for cultivation and to seasonal agricultural labour opportunities, according to the FEWS NET report.

There were prolonged dry spells lasting two to three weeks in July—as well as reports of a late onset of rainfall in some areas—in eastern and northern parts of North Kordofan, North Darfur, West Darfur, and northern parts of Kassala and Gadaref states. These dry spells, as well as reports of a late onset of rainfall in some areas, has reportedly delayed planting and/or caused wilting of newly germinated seedlings, according to FEWS NET.

In central and western parts of the Jebel Marra area, the ability of IDPs to cultivate is likely to be reduced due to insecurity, displacement far away from farms, and a lack of agricultural inputs, including seeds and tools. Access to seasonal agricultural labour opportunities by IDPs in conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur is also likely to be below normal, FEWS NET said.

Projected food security outcomes (Jul-Sept 2017)

Source: FEWS NET
Projected outcomes through January 2018

August is the peak of the lean season in Sudan when access to food is reduced due to exhaustion of food stocks, seasonal increases in staple food prices, and limited access to markets during the rainy season. The number of food insecure people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity levels is slightly higher than usual due to the influx of refugees from South Sudan and poor 2016 harvests in South Kordofan and parts of North Darfur, FEWS NET reported. In addition, people in areas controlled by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan and the Jebel Marra area will not be able to meet their minimum food and non-food needs due to displacement, lack of access to livelihood activities, and lack of access to humanitarian assistance. These areas will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity, with households facing wider food consumption gaps through September 2017 and associated high levels of acute malnutrition. Parts of Red Sea and Kassala will also likely be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through September, according to FEWS NET.

Harvests starting in October will improve household access to own-produced food; improve staple food supply in markets; lead to seasonal declines in staple food prices; and bring about additional income through agricultural labour, the report said. In addition, access to food will improve due to increasing access to milk from livestock and improved access to wild foods. As a result, many areas will return to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food insecurity.

Almost 460,000 South Sudanese refugees have arrived in Sudan since mid-December 2013

Almost 460,000 South Sudanese refugees—fleeing hunger and violence in South Sudan—have arrived in Sudan since December 2013, according to the latest UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) Population and Operational Update (31 August 2017). About 182,000 refugees arrived in 2017 so far. The majority of new arrivals are women and children.

Despite the continued influx of South Sudanese refugees into the country, only 22 per cent (US$ 48 million) of the $221.7 million needed for the Sudan response under the revised South Sudanese Regional Refugee Response Plan has been received. As a result of low funding, UNHCR expects challenges in delivering basic assistance to new refugees from South Sudan. Meanwhile, up to 60 per cent of South Sudanese refugee children in Sudan are estimated to be out of school. Education support is critically needed for ensuring children have an education, and it also serves to enhance their protection.

South Sudanese refugee influx into South Darfur continues

The refugee influx into South Darfur continues with approximately 241 South Sudanese refugees arriving in the state every day with a total of 3,509 refugee arrivals in Buram and El Radom areas in August. The majority of new arrivals are women and children.
Commission for Refugees (COR) and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) have been transporting the new refugees to El Radom reception centre. Reports indicate that there are an additional 700 refugees in Kafia Kinji, however, UNHCR and COR are unable to transport them to El Radom due to washed-out roads following the recent rains.

**Refugees in Khartoum state are in need of assistance**

On 28 August, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in Sudan, UNHCR Deputy Representative, and representatives from COR and the Commission for Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (CVHW) visited the Bantiu refugee site in Jebel Aulia locality of Khartoum State to assess the living conditions of an estimated 17,000 South Sudanese refugees currently living there. Immediate needs were identified, including water, sanitation, shelter and health services. These needs were exacerbated by the heavy rainy season and recent unplanned relocations from other sites in Khartoum since May. UNHCR and the HC have submitted a request to COR and CVHW for an immediate, rapid inter-agency needs assessment and further access to the refugees to allow UNHCR and partners to address needs and alleviate the suffering of the refugees living there.

**Assistance continues for those affected by floods in White Nile State**

UNHCR continues the distribution of emergency household supplies to assist people affected by flooding in White Nile State. So far, UNHCR has provided emergency household supplies to over 2,200 families (an estimated 11,000 people) from the host community. Supplies include cooking sets, jerry cans and plastic sheeting. The distributions are a part of the state’s flood response plan led by HAC and SRCS.

**Heavy rains continue to trigger floods in Sudan**

An estimated 97,000 people (19,335 families) across the country have been affected by heavy rains and flash floods, according to reports from the government’s Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). Floods have affected 12 states (El Gazirah, Central Darfur, East Darfur, Khartoum, River Nile, North Darfur, Northern, Sennar, South Darfur, South Kordofan, West Kordofan and White Nile).

According to the FEWS NET Global Weather Hazard Summary for 8 to 14 September 2017, the third consecutive week of above-average rainfall over Sudan has resulted in floods, damages to infrastructure, and displaced populations. The areas most affected by overflowing rivers this past week include Sennar, El Gedaref, and White Nile states. More than 100mm of rain fell over parts of the region last week and a dam has reportedly broken along the White Nile.

Next week, a decrease in rainfall is forecast over eastern Sudan and South Sudan, which is expected to provide much needed relief to saturated ground conditions. However, another week of heavy rainfall over western Ethiopia is expected to sustain the risk for flooding along the Nile River basin, the FEWS NET report stated.
DFID contributes GBP£3 million ($3.8 million) for aid to South Sudanese refugees and host communities

UNHCR received a GBP £3 million (approximately $3.8 million) contribution from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), according to a press statement issued on 29 August. This contribution will be used to provide humanitarian assistance to 150,000 South Sudanese refugees and 15,000 people from host communities in the country. The funds will support work in education, water and sanitation, registration and shelter covering the three states of White Nile, South Kordofan and East Darfur.

The UK Government has given over £11 million pounds (close to $16 million) to support critical basic needs for South Sudanese refugees in Sudan since conflict erupted in South Sudan in 2013.

UN funds allocate $21 million to assist thousands of people in newly accessible areas in Sudan

The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF) have together allocated $21 million to address the most critical humanitarian needs and increase self-reliance of communities in newly accessible areas in Darfur’s Jebel Marra area, as well as in South Kordofan and Blue Niles states, according to a press release issued on 31 August 2017.

Aid organisations will support vulnerable people in these areas where access was previously limited. These funds will enable humanitarian partners in Sudan to provide life-saving food support, nutrition, water and sanitation, health and other assistance to thousands of children, women and men in these newly accessible areas. This response will address both immediate needs through emergency, life-saving assistance and strengthen resilience of the most vulnerable and their communities to future and recurring shocks.

CERF and SHF funding contributions come at a time when funding for the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2017 for Sudan is very low. The 2017 HRP appeals for $804 million, of which about $200 million has been received so far.