

Anticipatory Briefing Note – 23 March 2016

# ETHIOPIA

## Drought and food insecurity

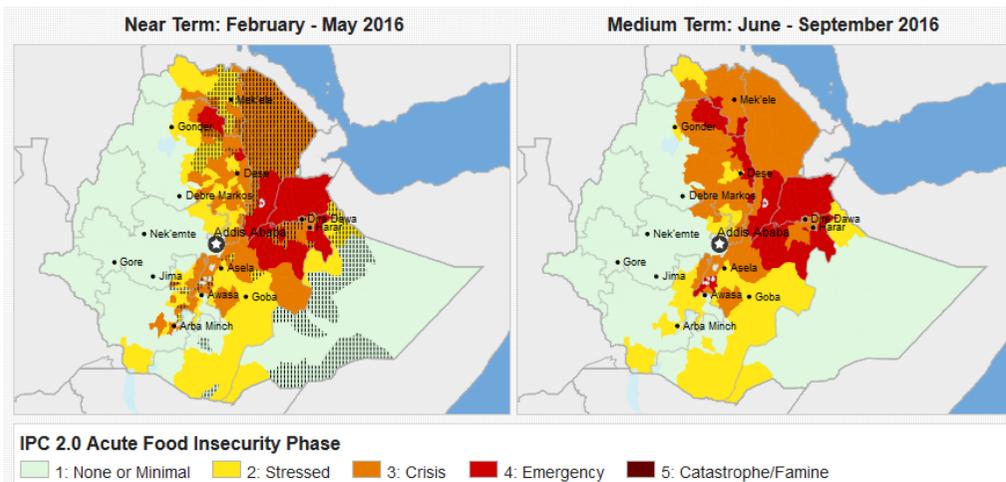


Need for international assistance	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

### Crisis overview

Ethiopia is affected by the worst drought for 50 years, with over 10.2 million people in need of food assistance as of March 2016, compared to 2.9 million in the beginning of 2015. In 2016, the number of people in need is expected to reach over 15 million. Most of the regions of Amhara, Oromia, and SNNPR are reported to be at least in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity. In the most affected areas, over 75% of *meher* cropping production has been lost, one million livestock have died, and over 1.7 million are reportedly at risk due to poor body conditions. *Meher* cropping represents 90% of the country's total grain production, which accounts for 80% of Ethiopian agriculture.

### Food security projections for Ethiopia, February–September 2016



Source: FEWSNET 18/03/2015

### Key findings

#### Anticipated scope and scale

El Niño is expected to last at least until April/May 2016, exacerbating the food insecurity caused by the upcoming lean season. Over 15 million people are expected to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2016.

Poor households in affected areas in southern Afar and Sitti zone in Somali region, in East and West Hararghe zones in Oromia, and in Wag Hemra and North Wollo in Amhara region, are expected to remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) until September

#### Priorities for humanitarian intervention

**Food** is a priority with 10.2 million in need of humanitarian assistance in March 2016, compared to 2.9 million at the beginning of 2015. Projections indicate that the number of people in need of assistance might reach over 15 million in 2016.

**Nutrition** support is also increasingly necessary. Forecasts indicate a 2016 target of treating 450,000 people for severe acute malnutrition, compared to 350,000 in 2015.

**WASH** interventions, in terms of restoration of non-functioning water sources, water treatment, and purification of wells and ponds, are also primary needs given the severe impact of the drought on harvesting and pastoral activities.

#### Humanitarian constraints

Main constraints are caused by the lack of adequate transportation and water infrastructure.

In some areas the deterioration of the security situation might also hinder the access to affected populations.

#### Limitations

Quantitative information about IPC Phases in the most affected regions is lacking. Numbers of refugees in the country vary according to different agencies and organisations.

## Crisis impact

Since June 2015, Ethiopia has been currently facing the worst drought for 50 years (FEWSNET 18/03/2016). The failure of *belg* rains between March and May, and *kiremt* rains between June and September, together with other effects of El Niño, have impacted food security, in particular in agro-pastoral communities, in southern Afar, northern Somali, eastern Amhara, and eastern Oromia (FAO 09/03/2016 IFRC 04/01/2016). (See calendar at the end of this report for more information on seasonal patterns.)

In March 2016, over 10.2 million people are suffering from food insecurity, compared to 2.9 million in February 2015. Projections indicate that the number is likely to rise to around 15 million in 2016. El Niño is expected to last at least until April/May 2016, with the start of the lean season and *diraac/sugum* rains. Peak assistance needs are expected between June and September 2016 (FEWSNET 18/03/2016 WFP 04/03/2016 FAO 09/03/2016 FEWSNET 29/02/2016 UNICEF 18/02/2016). Refugees and IDPs are particularly exposed to food insecurity issues (ECHO 12/2015).

**Food:** Worst-affected areas of meher cropping – in eastern and central Ethiopia – have recorded harvest losses of 70% or greater (FEWSNET 18/03/2016 OCHA 09/03/2016). Poor households in affected areas in southern Afar and Sitti zone in Somali region, in the agricultural lowlands of East and West Hararghe zones in Oromia, and in Wag Hemra and North Wollo in Amhara region, are expected to remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) until September (FEWSNET 18/03/2016 WFP 04/03/2016). Broader areas of eastern Tigray and Amhara, central and eastern Oromia, and northern SNNPR will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through September (FEWSNET 18/03/2016).

**Livelihoods:** Herds in several parts of Afar and Somali regions have been decimated by pasture and water scarcity in 2015. As of March 2016, at least a million livestock have died, with over 1.7 million more considered at risk (FAO 15/03/2016). Drought-affected small-holder farmers requiring emergency seed support have almost doubled since December 2015, to 3.3 million in March (USAID 16/03/2016 FAO 15/03/2016 OCHA 10/02/2016). Poor households in many affected areas have already run out of own-production stocks, in many instances three months or more earlier than normal (FEWSNET 18/03/2016). In Afar and Somali region, worsening livestock body conditions resulted in reduced livestock prices in February compared to 2014 and 2015, while the price of staple foods increased due to decreased supplies in local markets (USAID 16/03/2016 FEWSNET 18/03/2016).

**Health:** As of March 2016, many water sources, including wells, have reportedly dried out, pushing people to use water from unsafe sources, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases (USAID 03/03/2016). In Moyale woreda of Borena zone (Oromia) and in Moyale woreda of Liben zone (Somali), 149 new cases of acute watery diarrhoea were reported in January and February 2016 (OCHA 07/03/2016 OCHA 18/02/2016).

As of 31 January, measles outbreaks have been reported in 13 districts of Ethiopia, including nine in Oromia. As of 22 January 2016, 31,000 measles cases have been registered in the country (OCHA 07/03/2016).

As of 31 January, a scabies outbreak, with more than 300,000 reported cases, was ongoing in Amhara and Tigray regions. A local outbreak of meningitis C has been reported ongoing in Kule refugee camp in Gambella region (OCHA 31/01/2016). Poor government funding (3%), poor access to WASH services, and inadequate drug stocks are all challenges to health services (OCHA 29/02/2016).

**Nutrition:** As of March 2016, 2.2 million children under five and pregnant/breastfeeding mothers suffer from moderate acute malnutrition, more than double the number of 2015. Over 450,000 children are in need of treatment for severe acute malnutrition (USAID 16/03/2016 OCHA 14/03/2016). Because of poor livestock body conditions, milk production is extremely low, which affects children's nutrition (FAO 15/03/2016 FEWSNET 18/03/2016). Lack of safe drinking water resulting in increased incidence of diarrheal diseases has exacerbated acute malnutrition (USAID 16/03/2016).

**WASH:** 5.8 million people require emergency water supply and sanitation (USAID 16/03/2016 OCHA 09/03/2016 ECHO 04/03/2016). Severe water shortages are reported throughout the country, but especially in Amhara, Oromia, and in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' region (SNNPR). In some areas, women and girls are travelling up to 30km (six hours) per day to reach the nearest water source. Livestock deaths mean they have to carry the load themselves (Save the Children 18/12/2015, OCHA 02/11/2015). In Fafan zone in Somali region, it was reported that 30% of boreholes are not functional, and in one district, 13,500 people are relying on one borehole for water (Oxfam 24/02/2016 Salesian Missions 24/02/2016). Water treatment and rehabilitation of non-functioning water supply systems are key priorities. In Oromia, water trucking has been provided since October 2015 (OCHA 04/01/2016). Water sources, including wells, are dry, forcing some community members to drink unsafe water from open sources (ECHO 04/03/2016 USAID 03/03/2016). In 2015, only 28% of the population in Ethiopia had access to sanitation facilities (WASH Alliance 2015).

**Education:** According to the Ethiopian government, as of 24 February, 2.1 million students have been affected by drought (Ethiopian Government 24/02/2016). The drought has caused thousands of schools to close and many children to drop out of school (UNHCR 15/02/2016). Many children are unable to attend school regularly because they must spend time searching for water. 1.3 million people need education supplies (Salesian Missions 24/02/2016 World Vision 22/02/2016 UNICEF 16/02/2016 Government 11/12/2015).

**Protection:** Violent clashes and tensions between clans over access to limited resources were reported in December 2015 (ECHO 23/12/2015 IOM 14/12/2015).

Food insecurity is also reported to be increasing child marriage rates: families are getting girls married earlier so they do not have to provide for them. Generally in Ethiopia, two in five girls get married before they are 18, and one in five before they are 15 (Population Growth 30/12/2015; Girls Not Brides 2015).

### Impact on critical infrastructure

The lack of a constant waterflow might affect the hydroelectric power generation in the country (All Africa 31/12/2015).

### Vulnerable groups affected

Ethiopian rural populations are more exposed to lack of improved drinking water as only 48.6% of the rural population has access to improved drinking water, compared with 93.1% in urban areas (2015 estimations, CIA Factbook 2015).

Refugees and IDPs are particularly exposed to food insecurity issues (ECHO 12/2015). UNHCR indicates the total number of refugees to be over 732,000 as of 29 February 2016 making it the country hosting more refugees in Africa, due to continued influxes generated by the unstable security situations in neighbouring countries (UNHCR 29/02/2016 ECHO 16/12/2015).

Over 80% of new refugee arrivals are women and children, with many children being unaccompanied and vulnerable (UNHCR 29/02/2016 ECHO 16/12/2015).

Women are at risk of turning to survival sex to obtain food.

Child labour and child marriage are increasing as livelihoods are strained, and many children have to walk longer distances in order to fetch water, increasing the rate of school dropouts (Salesian Missions 24/02/2016 UNICEF 16/02/2016 Government 11/12/2015).

Over 425,000 people are in a situation of protracted displacement. Between August 2015 and January 2016, the effects of the drought have reportedly displaced approximately 260,000 individuals from Afar, Oromia, and Somali; however, more than 80,000 displaced people had returned to areas of origin by the end of January (USAID 03/03/2016 IOM 14/12/2015).

### Humanitarian and operational constraints

Ethnic clashes and insecurity, together with poor infrastructure and challenges in transportation, regularly affect humanitarian access to areas of the country (SIDA 01/2015; UNHCR 29/05/2015).

## Aggravating factors

### Lack of adequate water infrastructure

Despite Ethiopia usually being considered a country with many water resources, the water supply to the population and for agricultural purposes is limited due to a critical lack of infrastructure for the distribution and management of water (All Africa 31/12/2015).

### Political stability and security

Ethiopia has relative political stability, however several areas are insecure. The approach of Ethiopian government towards the respect of civil rights and freedom of expression has often been criticised, especially regarding ethnic minorities. During emergencies, this approach has frequently led to partisan distribution of food.

Clashes between government forces and the Ogaden National Liberation Front have persisted since 1994 in Somali region, and the Oromo ethnic group has been oppressed for decades. For these reasons, the country is frequently exposed to episodes of civil unrest. In mid-December, violent protests broke out in the capital Addis Ababa, against the urban planning strategy of the government, which envisaged confiscating land from Oromo farmers in the area around the capital in order to expand the city's urban territory. On 12 January, the Ethiopian government decided to abandon the expansion plan, but protests persisted and in February they escalated. As of 25 February, some hospitals have been closed for three months in Ambo, west of Ginchi, in Oromia, because of clashes between federal security forces and Oromo protesters. By 10 March 2016, over 200 civilians were reported to have been killed by government forces (Open Democracy 18/01/2016; Africa Cradle 2015; Advocates for Human Rights 2009; All Africa 20/04/2015; UNPO 01/06/2015; US News 23/12/2015; The Guardian 18/12/2015; International Crisis Group 01/01/2016; HRW 27/01/2016 Africa Confidential 18/03/2016; International Business Times 10/03/2016; AFP 25/02/2016).

### Poverty

Despite great economic progress since 2000, over 40% of the population still lives below the poverty line. According to some analyses, this is due to a lack of policy stability and because most of the spending focused on boosting the development of urban areas. Rural areas, despite hosting 82% of the country's population, have not received the same level of attention for development. Around 25% of the people living in rural areas are chronically affected by lack of food (World Bank 01/2015; BBC 16/04/2015; Addis Standard 01/03/2016).

## Key characteristics of host population and area

**Demographic profile:** Population 96.96 million; 78 million in rural areas. 19.5% of the population live in urban areas (CIA Factbook 2015) 42% of the total population is under 14 years old, 55% is between 15 and 64 years old. 50.2% of the population is female (Trading Economics 2010; World Bank 2014).

**Food security:** Poor households in pastoral southern Afar and Sitti zone in Somali region and in the agricultural lowlands of East and West Hararghe Zones in Oromia are facing Emergency food security outcomes. Tigray, Amhara, Afar, Oromia, Somali and SNNPR regions are in Crisis food security outcomes (FEWSNET 12/2015).

**Nutrition:** An estimated 450,000 children will suffer from SAM and 2.2 million people experience MAM in 2016 (OCHA 14/03/2016).

**Health:** Infant mortality rate: 53.37 deaths/1,000 live births (2015 estimations, Maternal mortality ratio: 353 deaths per 100,000 live births (CIA Factbook 2015); Under-five mortality rate: 68/1,000 live births (UNICEF 2012);

**WASH:** Access to improved sources of drinking water in urban area: 93.1%, in rural area: 48.6% of the population; Access to improved sanitation facilities in urban areas: 27.2%, in rural areas: 28% (2015 estimations, CIA Factbook 2015)

**Lighting and cooking:** In rural areas, kerosene, fuelwood and candles are used for lighting (Lighting Africa 08/2012). Wood is the most important energy source for cooking: 85% of the population use it (World Vision 2011 Cleancookstoves 2016)

**Literacy:** Total adult literacy rate is 49.1% (male: 57.2% female: 41.1%) % (2015 estimations) (CIA Factbook 2015)

## Response capacity

### Local and national response capacity

The government and partners are scaling up the provision of humanitarian assistance as well as adjusting development projects in order to meet the most immediate needs. While water trucking is being provided, longer-term projects to develop more sustainable water systems are being implemented. National humanitarian response is coordinated by the National Disaster Risk Management Coordination Commission (NDRMCC), formerly the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (OCHA 2015; 21/03/2016; Government 11/12/2015; USAID 03/03/2016; The Guardian 10/03/2016; Cimmyt 03/03/2016). The government has also established structures at *kebele* level, the smallest administrative unit, in order to be able to respond quickly to local situations (All Africa 18/11/2015; Government 11/12/2015).

At least 13 local NGOs are involved in the emergency response (Government 11/12/2015).

### International response capacity

Over 50 humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies, INGOs, ICRC, IFRC, IOM, and the Ethiopian Red Cross, are operating in the country and supporting the government-led response. Additionally, governmental agencies of several other countries are partnering Ethiopian government in implementing projects for development and agricultural support (Government 11/12/2015; USAID 03/03/2016; The Guardian 10/03/2016; Cimmyt 03/03/2016).

### Population coping mechanisms

Households' resilience to drought has been stretched by the *belg* failure and by the erratic *meher* rains (Government 11/12/2015).

Traditional coping mechanisms used by rural households include migration to less affected areas, but almost all areas are affected, and poor roads make traditional migration routes and grazing and watering areas more difficult to access (The Guardian 10/03/2016). Other coping mechanisms used by rural households include livestock sales, requesting grain loans, sale of wood or charcoal, small-scale trading, selling crop residues, reduction of food consumption, consumption of wild plants, relying on remittance from relatives, selling of clothes and dismantling of parts of their houses for sale (The Guardian 10/03/2016 FEWSNET 18/03/2016; Science Alert 07/04/2015).

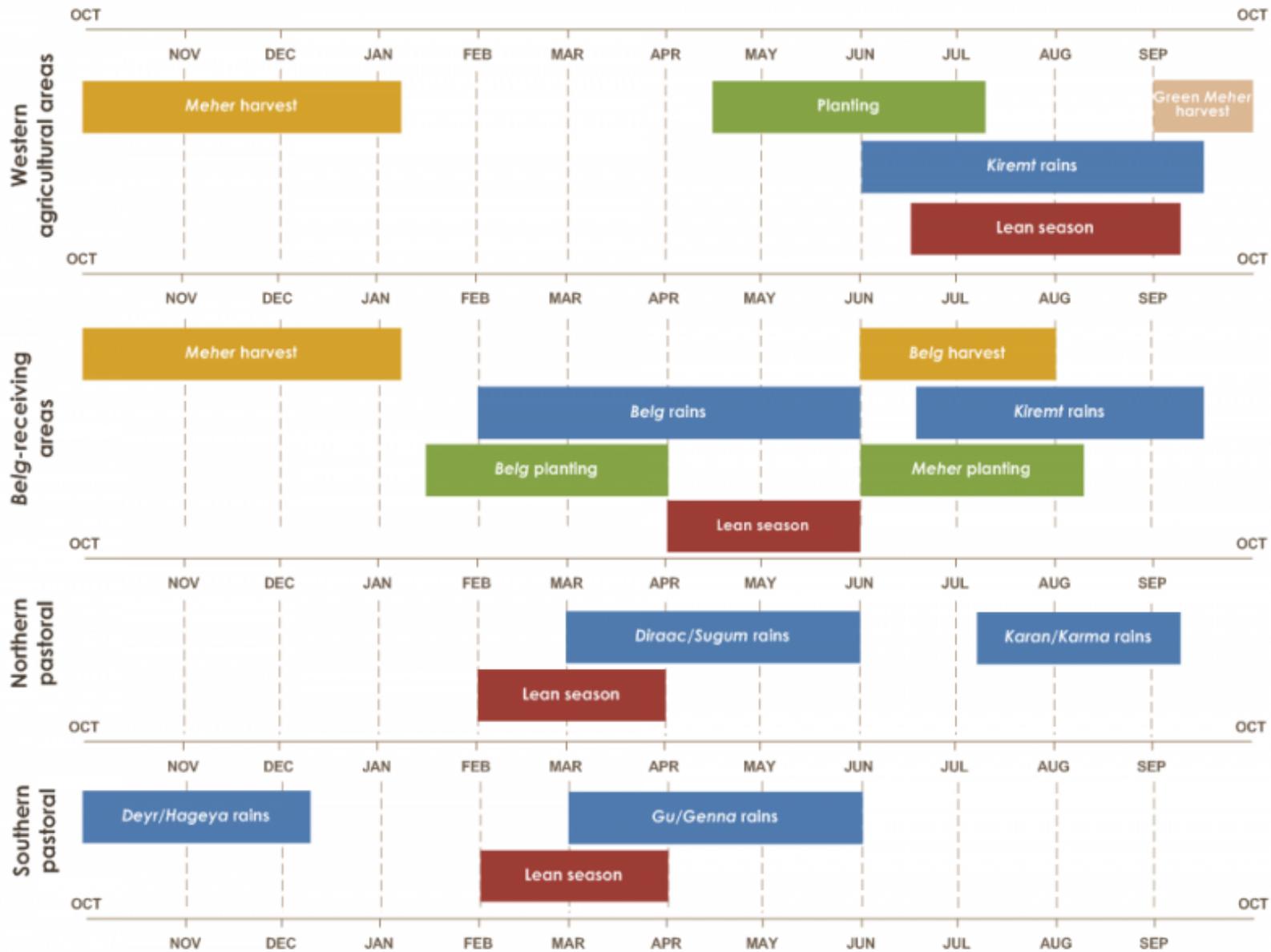
## Information gaps and needs

Quantitative information on the IPC phases of food security in the different regions seems to be lacking.

## Lessons learned

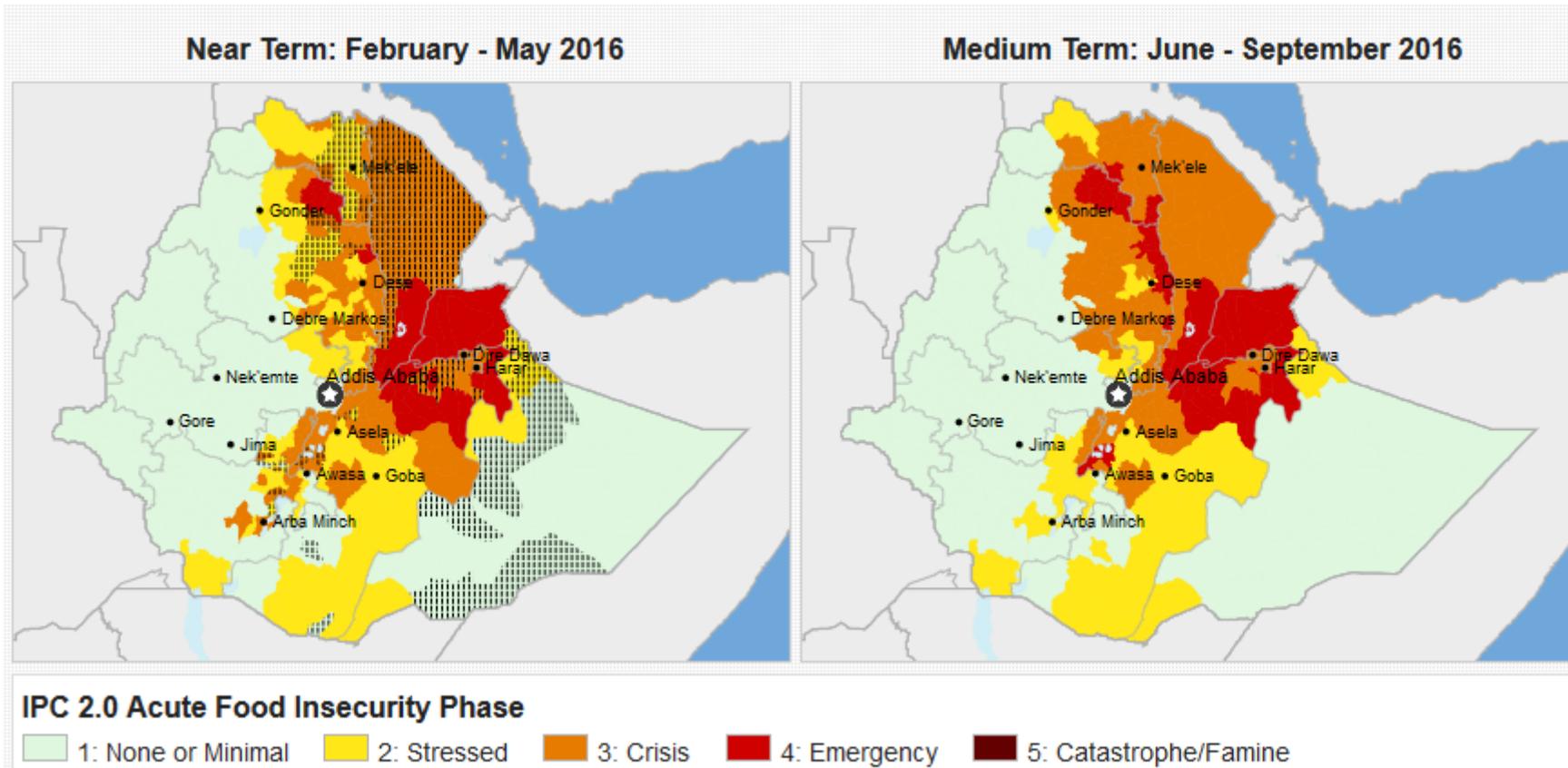
- The response to the 2011 drought proved that the strategy of relying on the Productive Safety Net System, which enables the chronically food insecure rural population to resist shocks, worked well for a scaled-up response to a particularly bad drought shock (The Guardian 10/03/2016).
- Although water trucking proved inefficient in 2011, it saved human lives and livestock. Despite repeated criticism of the extent of water trucking in parts of Ethiopia, there seem to be few alternatives once surface and underground water stores are used up (Tufts University 05/08/2014).

# Seasonal calendar



Source: FEWSNET 30/01/2015

Food security projections for Ethiopia, February–September 2016



Source: FEWSNET 18/03/2015