# ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook

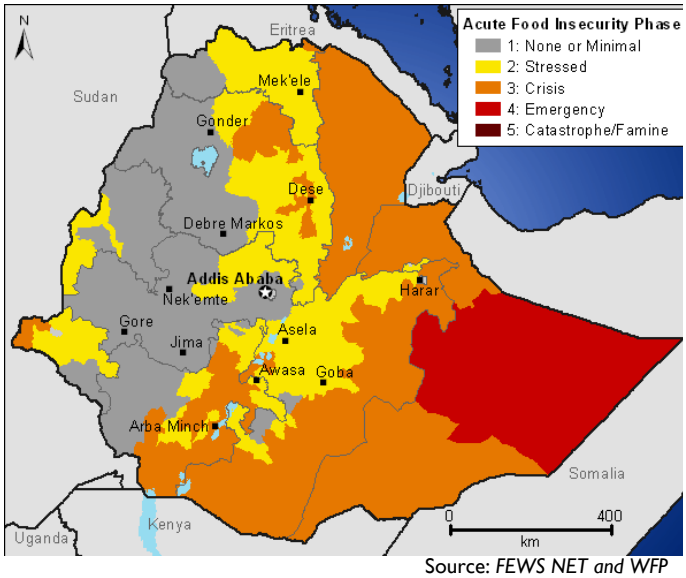
## April to September 2011

*Beginning in April 2011, FEWS NET is transitioning to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification's (IPC) Household-based Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, which is scheduled for release with IPC version 2.0 in July 2011. For more information see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale.*

- Currently, the total number of people requiring humanitarian assistance is estimated at 3.2 million. According to the revised Humanitarian Requirement Document released in April 2011, the number of people requiring emergency assistance in southern Somali, the lowlands of Oromia, and southern SNNPR is about 2 million. More than 60 percent of the needs are in Somali, followed by the lowlands of Oromia.

- The performance of the 2011 *belg/gu/genna* (February to May) rains has been below normal to date, which is likely to result in poor or no *belg* harvest prospects. The poor rains have exacerbated food insecurity in the southern and southeastern pastoral and agro pastoral areas, and caused major food security concerns in the *belg* cropping areas of the country in general and the major sweet potato and coffee-dependent zones of the Southern region in particular, where seasonal moisture deficits of 50 to 100 mm have been recorded. Humanitarian needs are therefore likely to increase significantly in the coming months.

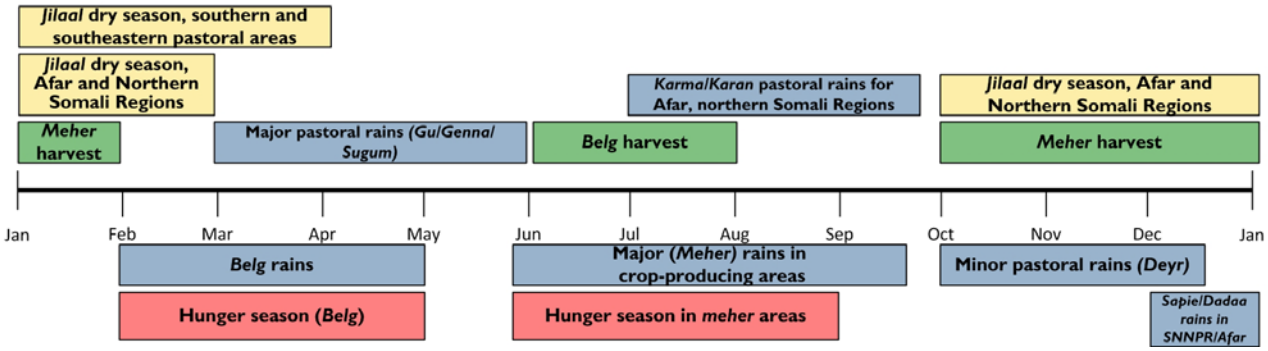
**Figure 1.** Current estimated food security outcomes, April 2011




Source: *FEWS NET and WFP*

- Staple cereal prices have risen atypically in recent months, largely in the pastoral and agro pastoral areas as well as cropping areas of the Southern region, despite an average to above-average 2010 main season harvest. The poorly performing current rains and increased fuel prices are likely to create further upward pressure on food prices.

### Seasonal calendar and critical events

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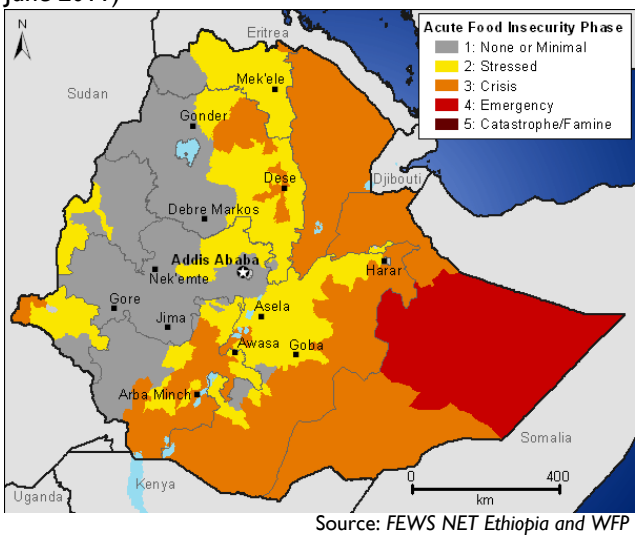
## Most likely food security scenario (April to September, 2011)

The overall food security situation in most parts of the country is deteriorating as depleting stocks from the 2010 main *meher* harvest are compounded by price increases leading to increased needs for humanitarian assistance. However, in the western parts of the country where the 2010 main harvest was above average, no acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) is expected throughout the scenario period.

Current cereal prices are above long-term (2006-2010) averages as well as 2010 prices. Most importantly, the rate of increase over recent months has been even higher. For example, in February 2011 the average price for white maize in Addis Abeba was higher than the long-term average by 28 per cent; in March, the price for white maize was 40 percent higher than the previous month. Livestock to cereals terms of trade are deteriorating as a result of declining livestock prices against the increasing staple prices in the drought-affected pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of the southern and southeastern parts of the country. According to the Central Statistical Agency (CSA), such trends coupled with increased fuel prices have escalated the annual general inflation rate from 16.5 percent in February to 25 percent in March 2011.

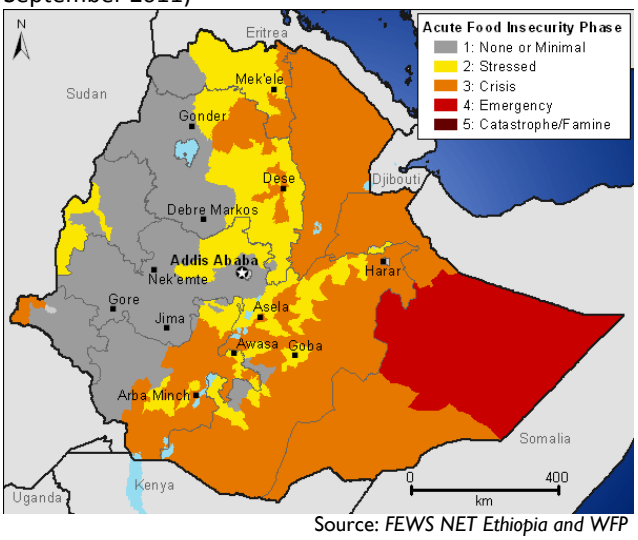
In an effort to stabilize prices, the government has introduced a number of measures. It has reinstituted the export ban on maize, and instead is encouraging exporters to collect maize from surplus-producing parts of the country to supply the local markets. The government has also instituted a program to deliver wheat at fixed prices to factories/millers that provide wheat flour to bakeries, in an effort to stabilize prices and improve food access to poorer households in urban centers. The program is intended to continue through the end of this year.

**Figure 2.** Most-likely food security outcomes (April to June 2011)




Source: *FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP*

**Figure 3.** Most-likely food security outcomes (July to September 2011)




Source: *FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP*

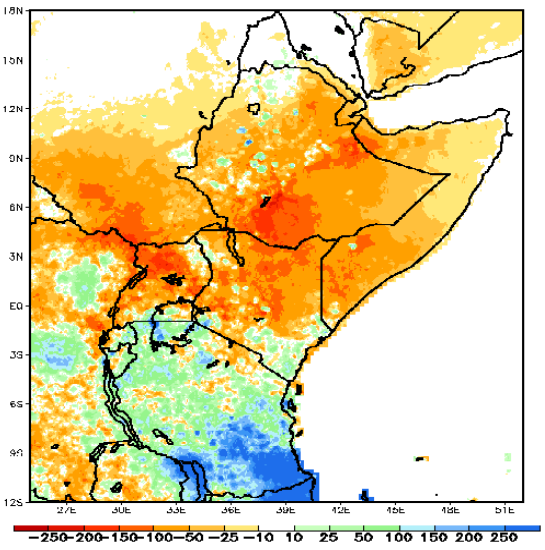
The rains were late by four to eight weeks and erratically distributed in the cropping and pastoral and agro pastoral areas. The rains have been inadequate for water replenishment and regeneration of pasture, and have significantly affected *belg* season agricultural activities. The seasonal moisture deficient in southern and northeastern Ethiopia is estimated to be 50 to 100 mm, accounting for only 5 to 25 percent of the long –term average (Figure 4). Following the failure of two seasonal rains (October to December 2010 and February to May 2011) and increasing staple prices, emergency assistance will remain crucial during the 2011 consumption year.

The most likely scenario for April through September 2011 is based on the following major assumptions:

- Critical pasture and water shortages in the southern and southeastern pastoral and agro-pastoral parts of the country;
- The February to May (*gu/genna/belg*) rains will continue to be below-normal in Somali, Afar, southern and southeastern Oromia, parts of southern Tigray, SNNPR and the major *belg* producing highlands of Amhara in the remainder of the season;

- Failure of sweet potatoes and the *belg* harvest in the major root crop-dependent zones of SNNPR will increase the levels of food insecurity among the poorer households;
- A below normal or completely failed *belg* harvest will extend the lean season in the *belg* cropping highlands of Amhara and eastern Oromia until the next meher begins in October;
- Prices for staple foods will continue to increase throughout the outlook period despite the price stabilization measures being taken by the government,
- Ongoing internal displacement of people in parts of Gambella is expected due to continued internal clan conflicts and civil insecurity in South Sudan;
- Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) resource transfers are assumed to take place as per the plan, through June. But the distribution is expected to be extended for two to three months (until at least August) as a result of late delivery of resources or increased relief needs in the PSNP woredas;

**Figure 4.** Precipitation Anomaly (mm)
Based on NOAA/CPC RFE Climatology Method
(February 1– April 25, 2011)




Source: *NOAA/FEWS NET*

- The 2011 *kiremt* (June to September) rains are expected to improve water and pasture availability and enhance *meher* agricultural activities though the long cycle crop planting has been affected by delayed and inadequate *belg* rains.

Poorer households over much of the country are therefore estimated to face Stressed (IPC Phase 1) to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity throughout the outlook period (Figures 2 and 3). While the current level of food insecurity will persist through June, the magnitude and severity of the food insecurity situation is expected to further deteriorate during the July to September scenario period.

***Meher* crop producing areas**

Despite the average to above average 2010 *meher* harvest, many localized areas in the **eastern *meher* producing areas** of eastern parts of Tigray and Amhara, parts of the Rift Valley, East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia region were affected by weather-induced shocks. During the 2010 *kiremt* (July to September) season, hailstorms, heavy rains, flood, pests and crop diseases caused crop losses in many woredas of South Wello and Oromia Eastern Lowland Sorghum and Cattle, Merhabete Lowland Sorghum and Teff and North East Woynadega Mixed Cereal Livelihood Zones (LZs) of Amhara and Arsi Bale Wheat, Barley and Potato LZ of Oromia. Moisture stresses also affected crops in Coffee Chat and Maize, Chat Vegetable and Groundnut LZs of West and East Hararghe, Abijata –Shala-Jido Agro-Pastoral livelihood zone of Oromia, Enderta Dry Midland, Erob Mountain, and Eastern Plateau LZs in Tigray Region.

Many woredas in these LZs will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through June as stocks from the previous harvest are running out. However, food insecurity among poorer households is expected to deteriorate to Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) between July and September as their market dependence will be restricted by high cereal prices.

Delayed onset and below-normal 2011 *belg* (February to May) rains in the main *belg* dependent highlands of North and South Wello zones of Amhara and East and West Haraghe and Arsi zones of Oromia has affected planting and performance of planted crops. Abnormal livestock deaths, increased school dropouts and admissions to Stabilization Centers (SCs) and Outreach Therapeutic Programs (OTPs) are already being reported in East and West Hararghe, particularly in Burka Dhimtu, Daro Lebu, Hawi Gudina, Midhega Tola and Fedis woredas. Although the upcoming *kiremt* rains are expected to alleviate the prevailing critical water shortages in several lowland woredas of East and West Hararghe zones, thousands of households in all these zones are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the outlook period due to the poor *belg harvest* prospects and poor capacity to compensate for food needs through purchases, given increased prices.

**SNNPR**

Unlike in the eastern highlands, the 2010 *kiremt* (June to September) rains ceased slightly earlier than normal in most parts of **Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)**. Although the overall production of the season (*meher*) was normal across the region, the harvest in localized areas, including Alaba Special Woreda, was below average. The early end to the rains affected the growth of sweet potatoes in the major root crops dependent LZs of Gamo Gofa Maize and Root Crops, Southern Cereals, Enset and Root Crops and Wolayita Maize and Root Crops. In these LZs, despite timely planting of the crop (September/October-November) and close to average *sapie* (December/January) short rains, inadequate moisture and long dry spells in the current season have caused a complete failure of the sweet potato harvest, which normally should have begun in March. Sweet potato is the major crop which bridges the food gaps for poorer households between the April and June lean season in these LZs.

*Belg* is the main production season in the following livelihood zones: Amaro Coffee and Enset, Awassa Chat and Enset, Badewacho-Alaba Maize, Bilate Basin Agro-Pastoral, Dawro-Konta Maize and Root Crop, Gamo Gofa Enset and Barley, Gamo Gofa Maize and Root Crop, Kedida-Badewacho Coffee, Southern Special Woredas Lowland Cereal, Omo Valley Maize and Sorghum, Southern Cereal, Enset and Root Crop, Sidama Maize Belt, and Wolayita Maize and Root Crop. The main *belg* crops are maize, haricot beans, Irish potato, barley/wheat. Maize is normally harvested green in June while haricot beans and vegetables will be available for consumption beginning in May. Small amounts of other root crops like taro, yams, cassava, Irish potatoes, wheat and sorghum are also grown. The *belg* harvest contributes up to 80 percent of annual crop production in some of these LZs, namely Special Woredas of Konso, Amaro, Burji and Derashe. The *belg* rains this year are delayed by more than two months on average affecting planting of *belg* crops, long cycle *meher* crops (maize and sorghum), fresh planting of *enset* (false banana, the major staple in the region) and flowering of coffee in the main coffee producing LZs, the poorer households normally generate 40 to 45 percent of their annual income from coffee labor in the major coffee dependent areas. If the rains do not improve in the remainder of the season, farmers will most likely shift to short maturing, low yielding *meher* crops, leading to a reduced harvest.

Monitoring reports suggest that cereal prices have been increasing over the last couple of months. The average price for maize in Hadiya zone for example rose by 25 percent in March since the beginning of the year. The same is true in Tembaro woreda of Kembata Tembaro zone, where maize and sweet potato prices increased by 61 and 114 percent respectively from January to March 2011. Poorer households are forced to reduce meal frequency and food intake which could affect malnutrition rates. Other coping strategies include increased sale of firewood and charcoal, despite adverse environmental effects. Given the high food price increases, failure of sweet potatoes, poor prospect of green harvests and other vegetables from the current season, many poor households in the region are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the April to September scenario period.

**Somali Region and the Oromia/SNNPR Lowlands**

Following a failed *deyr/hageya* (October to December) rains in 2010 in the seven *deyr* receiving zones of southern Somali, lowlands of Borena, Guji and Bale zones of Oromia and South Omo zone of SNNP region, the late onset of the *gu/genna* (April to June) rains extended the dry season. A few localized areas received small showers in the second dekad of April in Somali and the rains in the lowlands of Oromia and South Omo are very erratic and intermittent.

In Somali, some pasture is only available in pockets of Warder, Moyale, Gashamo, Fik and Aware woredas. These areas have received large inflows of animals from within and communities from neighboring countries (Somalia and Kenya). In the rest of the woredas pasture availability is very scarce. Severe water shortages are also being reported in all livelihood zones including the Riverine and parts of Lowland Hawd, Korahey-Gode and Degahbur Pastoral and Agro-pastoral LZs. Most areas are relying on water trucking for human and animal consumption. While water trucking is common during the end of the *jilaal* season, needs have been longer than usual this year. More than 190 water trucks are operational across the region but inadequate compared to emerging needs. The price of water has significantly risen depending on the distance to water sources. In Danot and Gashamo woredas, the price of a barrel of water has increased by 80 percent over the last few months, making poor households vulnerable to critical water insecurity.

Increased animal deaths have been reported in Mustahil, Kelafo and Ferfer woredas of Gode zone. The food security situation in Korahe and Warder zones is exacerbated by limited access to cross border trading, which has also contributed to price hikes. Conflicts among the pastoral communities and subsequent migration are increasing in Bokh, Danot, Geladi, Dobaweyn, Shilabo and Kebridehar woredas. Several informal schools remained closed and the rate of dropouts is

increasing as water issues have intensified. Resources in the dry season grazing areas are exhausted in most of the woredas of Degehabour zone due to the pastoral livestock movements across the border. People are also selling more animals than normal to purchase water to preserve the rest of their herds. Increasing death of livestock, mainly sheep and goats, is being reported in woredas such as Gunagado, Gashamo and Aware. Death of animals including camels, which is unusual for this season, is also reported in Salahad, Lagahida and Mayumuluka woredas in Fik zone. The severity of water problems has even affected relief food distributions, as the target households are moving from place to place in search of water. In woredas such as Fik and Hamero, the food distribution points are deserted as people have totally moved out of their areas. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance has recently increased to 1.3 million from 1.08 million in February.

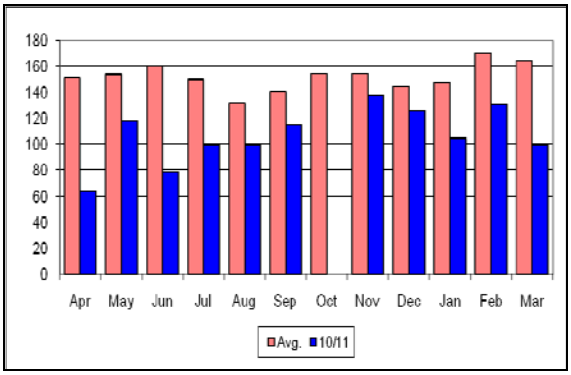
Severe water and pasture shortage is also a major problem in the Borena, Guji and Bale lowlands. People are traveling atypically long distances (5 to 6 hours) from their villages in search of water as the nearby ponds have already dried up and the ongoing water rationing is not sufficient. Livestock have already migrated to areas where water and pasture availability is relatively better. However, resources are rapidly depleting, leading to increased rate of animal deaths. Pasture and water shortages are critical, mainly in Dire, Teltele, Dhas, Dilo, Moyale, Yabelo, Dawe Serar, Rayitu and Dawe Kachen woredas. Livestock body condition is deteriorating and affecting prices. Due to deteriorated body condition and increased death of livestock, market supply is low despite the need to sell more animals to purchase food. Severe pasture scarcity in most of the woredas in South Omo has also triggered early livestock migration to Mago Park, Woito River and Omo valleys. Heavy concentration of livestock around water points and pasture land is posing risks of disease outbreak, where back leg and Anthrax have reportedly killed 1,100 livestock in Hamer Woreda alone. The capacity of households to cope with the emerging situation is very minimal over the outlook period as the current levels of food insecurity are already critical.

Around the end of April, sufficient and improved coverage of rainfall was reported in many areas of Somali, except in the southern and eastern parts of the region. Although the rains will likely improve pasture and water in some areas, inadequate coverage of rains will nonetheless increase livestock movements in search of water and pasture. There are growing concerns of disease outbreaks as a result of the concentration of animals in some places. Using unsafe water for drinking is also likely to cause human disease outbreaks. The situation is similar in the neighboring lowlands of Oromia region, which received fairly distributed rains in the last week of April. These rains will result in some improvements in water and pasture conditions, and goat conceptions (cattle conceptions are unlikely to be improved), but in general the impact of these recent rains on food security in the outlook period will be minimal. Declined market supply and increasing cereal prices over the June to September lean season will coincide with the dry season in these areas of concern until the next rains begin in October 2011. Hence, millions of people in these areas will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the scenario period, while those who are in the inaccessible parts of Somali will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

**Afar and Northern Somali Region**

With the exception of areas affected by flooding during the 2010 *kiremt* (June to September) rains, the season in **Afar Region** was favorable for regeneration of pasture and replenishment of water points. However, in addition to those areas affected by floods (Dallol, Koneba, Telalak, Dalifagie and parts of Dews), some woredas were affected by localized drought and early cessation of the *kiremt* rains, including Argoba Special Woreda, Bidu and Mile woredas. After the long dry season since mid-September, the *sugum* (mid-March to May) rains have not started yet leading to deteriorating pasture and water availability especially in zone 2, 4 and 5. The chronic water shortage in Bidu, Afdera, Kori and Elidaar is intensifying. Water trucking interventions are ongoing by the regional government, but very inadequate compared to the magnitude of the problem. Serious water shortages are reported in Kori, Bidu, Teru, Elidaar and Erebti woredas of Teru and Elidaar Pastoral Livelihood Zones; water points have dried up and boreholes are not functioning. High rates of school dropouts and livestock migration are reported in these woredas. Thus abnormal migration of people and livestock is expected soon if the dry weather continues and interventions are delayed.

**Figure 5.** Terms of Trade: Kg Maize per shoats-local in Jijiga Market




Source: *SC-UK/FEWS NET*

Currently, pastoral household have increased the sale of livestock with depressed prices against the increasing food prices. A higher number of malnourished cases are reported in the northern parts of the region due to limited access for livestock products as a result of losses caused by repeated droughts. The number of children admitted to Therapeutic Feeding Programs (TFP) increased from 196 in December 2010 to 385 in January 2011. The number of TFP sites increased from 53 in September 2010 to 96 in January 2011.

In **northern Somali (Jijiga and Shinile)**, the *gu* (mid- March to May) rains in 2010 and *karaan* (July to mid September) rains were near normal to normal in Jijiga and normal to above-normal in Shinile zones. However, over the course of the September to March dry season, water shortage problems emerged in many areas, particularly in the woredas of Shinile Pastoral Livelihood zone (Ayisha, Shinile, Erer, Dambel, Meiso and Afdem), Jijiga Agro-pastoral Livelihood zone (Kabribaya, Awabre and Babile) and in Harshin-Dagahbur East Pastoral LZ of Harshin, the only *deyr* (Oct to Dec) receiving woreda in Jijiga zone. Water trucking is ongoing in most of the affected woredas, but not with the capacity to address actual needs. A barrel of water sold at 10 birr in December 2010 is currently sold at 100 birr in Harshin woreda, where the nearest water source is Qaho valley which is 107 KM from Harshin town. Pasture and water availability is declining, affecting the physical conditions of livestock and early migration to long distance water points and grazing areas is being reported. Animals are concentrated in areas such as northern Erer, Shinile, southern Dambel of Shinile zone and Fafan and Dakata valley in Jijiga zone. In addition, cereal prices are increasing while livestock prices are decreasing (Figure 5).

The upcoming karma/*karan* (July to September) rains are anticipated to be normal. However, immediate recovery of pastoral food security and livelihoods is not expected despite the fact that the rains will improve water and pasture conditions and allow smooth agricultural activities in the agro-pastoral areas. Income from sale of livestock and milk availability will be poor to enhance household food security as a result of increased livestock deaths and losses at the start of the next rains. This, in combination with increasing prices, especially during the June to September lean period, and diminished resilience to cope, will expose poorer households in Afar and northern zones of Somali to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the April to September scenario period.

**Gambella**

The overall food security situation in **Gambella region** is stable as a result of the good harvest in 2010. However, in woredas such as Gog, Jor, Akobo, Wonthoa and Jikawo, where the *meher* harvest was below normal due to flooding and pest damages, food security is deteriorating. Food assistance was also inadequate in these woredas in spite of the needs identified during the November/December 2010 seasonal assessment. The rains started in March across the region though they were followed by a short dry spell until the second week of April. The performance to date is sufficient to facilitate land preparation and planting of long cycle *meher* crops (maize and sorghum) in Gambella Mixed Agricultural and Gambella Agro-pastoral LZs. Green maize harvest is expected from July/August in these areas while sorghum and dry maize harvests begin in August and September, respectively, assuming that the 2011 *kiremt* rains will be normal and favorable. Livestock production and productivity is expected to be normal due to improving pasture and water availability. However, the *belg* rains in Gambella Coffee, Honey and Cereal LZ are poor, affecting planted maize. This will affect the availability of the green maize harvest in June and July. Local agricultural labor, an important means of income for the poorer households, will be limited during the May and June lean months during which purchases peak as household stocks normally run out.

Poor and very poor households in most of the region are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) until the green harvest begins in June/July. The *belg* growing woredas (Godere and Mengesh) will also be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to poor *belg* prospects. However, food security will improve and no acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) is expected during the July to September outlook period. Whereas households in the conflict-affected woredas of Akobo, Wontoa, Lare and Jikawo will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the outlook period as a result of ongoing conflicts and subsequent displacement.

**Table 1:** Less likely events over the next six months that could change the above scenarios.

| Area | Event | Impact on food security outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| Gambella Region | • Reduced incidences of internal and cross border conflicts | • The food security situation for the population who are currently in crisis due to conflict improves to no acute food insecurity level |
| All affected areas | • Effective and adequate humanitarian response transfers through the PSNP, food and non-food interventions | • reduced malnutrition<br>• prevented negative coping strategies<br>• prevented livelihood disruption and loss of assets |