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FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK (FEWS NET)

**QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REPORT
JULY – SEPT 2007**

20 NOVEMBER 2007

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The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) IQC is a five-year USAID-financed activity awarded to the Chemonics International Consortium, consisting of The Food Economy Group (FEG), Intana International, Michigan State University (MSU), and WebFirst Inc., on September 29, 2005. The FEWS NET activity is a set of integrated activities intended to: 1) deliver early warnings of hazards, food insecurity, vulnerability to food insecurity, and famine; 2) increase the quantity and improve the quality of information used to make comparable food security and vulnerability monitoring, needs assessments, preparedness, and contingency and response planning; and 3) develop national and regional emergency early warning and food security monitoring and assessment capabilities. The overall goal of the activity is to help prevent food insecurity and famine through early identification and warning to decision-makers.

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Early warnings of hazards, food insecurity, vulnerability to food insecurity, and famine delivered through routine reporting, special reporting, and briefings. Monthly food security updates were developed for all countries and regions with a FEWS NET presence. These reports serve as the primary routine information products that provide early warnings of hazards affecting food security. During this quarter, more focused information products were prepared as well, such as alert statements for countries experiencing significant levels of food insecurity, Executive Overview Briefs (EOBs) which provide targeted information to senior decision-makers in USAID, and the new Food Security and Assistance Forecast product designed to assist the Office of Food for Peace (FFP) with programming and planning. In addition, a series of briefings were held with various USAID offices both in Washington and the field. These briefings allow customized input by FEWS NET staff to directly inform specific food security situations and decisions.

Quantity and quality of information used to make comparable food security and vulnerability monitoring, needs assessments, preparedness, and contingency and response planning increased and improved. In the previous quarter, a six-month global food security outlook was delivered to USAID and other partners. During this quarter, the lessons learned from that experience were incorporated into guidance for field staff in preparation for the next round of outlooks. During this quarter a series of milestones related to implementation of the integrated systems initiative (ISI) were achieved, further solidifying the infrastructure needed to strengthen the quality and quantity of information used for decision making. The ISI will form the backbone of the data and information flow between the field and the home office, and will be connected to the new FEWS NET website. In addition, the last quarter of FY 2007, involved a significant effort to move the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) process forward with major partners FAO, WFP, Save the Children, CARE, and Oxfam. FEWS NET provided a major revision of the joint IPC proposal that FAO is developing for EU funding and engaged in an active technical dialogue on the future development of the system.

National and regional early warning and food security monitoring and assessment capabilities developed. FEWS NET's greatest asset is its dedicated and hard-working staff. A significant amount of partner capacity building was done informally in the course of FEWS NET's day-to-day work, through joint field trips, assessments, and reporting. Numerous examples of FEWS NET's support to international and local network partners are included in this report.

REVIEW OF THE QUARTER'S ACTIVITIES—FIELD

The following is a summary of the quarter's activities by task order. During the reporting period, numerous activities were undertaken in each region, and summaries of some of the most significant and major activities and accomplishments are included below.

Task Order 1—Africa

Ethiopia. Between June and September, Ethiopia collaborated with the government of Ethiopia's Livelihoods Integration Unit (LIU), Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA), Save the Children-UK, USAID and the World Food Program (WFP) to collect livelihoods-based baseline data in the Amahara Region. As a result, core food security data sets will be updated, leading to a more comprehensive and up-to-date database available for improved food security monitoring. Also, as an active member of the Flood Task Force, FEWS NET/Ethiopia prepared a flood contingency plan in collaboration with the DPPA, WFP, Save the Children-UK (SCUK), Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), the National Metrology Agency (NMA), and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The flood contingency plan was based on the outlook for the main rainy season which led to improved preparedness for the flooding that occurred between June and September. Although the rains and flooding this year were higher than last year, damage due to floods was mitigated due to better preparedness.

GHA. A focus of the past quarter in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) was working to improve regional coordination and contributing to the harmonization and standardization of food security analysis tools in the region. In order to do this, three Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) meetings were conducted to discuss a broad range of regional issues, to plan the regional analysis workshop and to improve the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) tool. As a result, information will be more readily available for decision-making on food security issues, while early warning and food security monitoring and assessment capabilities will be improved.

Zambia. The FEWS NET Zambia office conducted trainings on assessments in this quarter in response to both floods and a prolonged dry spell in parts of country in 2006 and 2007. In collaboration with WFP, this office conducted a training program for enumerators on collection of in-depth vulnerability information in July. Participants included VAC members, additional government staff from Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Health and graduates from the Agricultural College. This training taught participants to utilize multi-sectoral instruments (household, community, and district questionnaires) developed by the VAC core team in June, of which FEWS NET was a key contributor. The instruments evaluate key issues including food security, health, education, water and sanitation, environment and infrastructure. Participants then used these tools to collect data in forty-five districts for analysis of the impact of floods and prolonged dry spells. Core VAC team members and the FEWS NET Zambia office completed an in-depth vulnerability assessment report in August based on the data collected. The findings were presented collaboratively by FEWS NET and WFP to the Disaster Management Consultative Forum comprised of donor heads of UN agencies, government departments, and NGOs, co-chaired by the UN head and Permanent Secretary (Office of the Vice President). After

discussions and feedback from the Forum members, the report became a government document submitted to the Cabinet. The recommendations in this report led the government to develop country flood response plans, some of which are already being implemented.

Angola. During the quarter under review, the FEWS NET Angola office and the Food Security Office (GSA) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MINADER) worked in partnership to seek USAID/FEWS NET support for revitalizing its national food security early warning and vulnerability analysis and monitoring system. Discussions among the three parties led to an agreement that a consultancy would be needed which review existing information systems at the national and provincial level. At the same time, the SADC Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Directorate, through its regional VAC capacity building program, also has a mandate to support member states in precisely the manner that GSA and FEWS NET had agreed upon. The FRR suggested that SADC and USAID/FEWS NET carry out a joint study that would increase discussions and enhance the recommendations to be implemented by all parties concerned; especially the Government of Angola (GRA). The study was implemented in August-September 2007, with technical support from the MFEWS Guatemala MNR. FEWS NET assisted MINADER to define their strategy through suggestions grounded in a short- and medium-term view of what exists now in Angola, the relative opportunities for implementing structural and/or incremental changes to the current setting, and a practical judgment about what improvements are achievable through the medium-term to both inform GRA and other partner decision-making, and also to validate the benefits of such a system.

Southern Africa. In Madagascar, the recommendation to embark on a national study that would advise on and support the establishment of an NVAC in Madagascar was made following an exploratory mission by staff of the SADC Secretariat in response to a request by the Government of Madagascar for assistance in establishing an effective food security and vulnerability information system. FEWS NET is part of the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and contributes in the implementation of the activities outlined in SADC's five-year program on Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis capacity building in the region. RVAC members were requested to assist SADC to secure funding for the activity once the terms of reference for the proposed consultancy were drafted and agreed upon. FEWS NET secured USAID surge funding, through support from OFDA, to improve, rationalize and harmonize the existing information systems to provide credible and timely information for key decisions to be taken. FEWS NET is now providing oversight for the consultancy which will take place in the first quarter of PY3. The FEWS NET Regional Representative (RFNR) and Malawi FEWS NET Representative will also provide technical and institutional orientation to the consultant at various points during the consultancy.

Sahel. During June and July 2007, FEWS NET RFNR for Sahel, Salif Sow, conducted a Food Security and Climate Outlook in Bamako, Mali with CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter-états de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse), Food Crisis Prevention Network partners including UN World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 15 Early Warning Systems (EWS) country representatives, and members of the farmers organizations of Réseau de Organizations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, (ROPPA).

This study culminated in a report, which presented a regional climate prognosis and current food security conditions. A planning session was also held during which time regional monitoring activities and programs were discussed and scheduled for the upcoming 2007/2008 agricultural season.

The June 15th, press release of “Avis de communiqué” via International Press (RFI, BBC, TV5 and local radios and TV) is expected to increase awareness and supplement the report disseminated to all donors and decisions makers.

In July, the RFNR attended the Regional Market and Trade Border Monitoring Information system meeting with partners including CILSS, Economic Community Of West African States, (ECOWAS), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), WFP, FAO, 20 countries Markets Info Systems Representatives, ROPPA representatives, and Réseau des Systèmes d'Information des Marchés en Afrique de l'Ouest (RESIMAO) representatives. The participants, in collaboration, established a protocol for creating the Regional Market Information Systems. If endorsed by donors, the partners anticipate increased awareness.

One of the challenges identified by the FNR was the absence of a vehicle and the need for a market specialist for in-depth analysis of work.

Chad. During the quarter, FEWS NET monitors, humanitarian partners, and local authorities led and participated in a range of follow-up surge activities. These activities served to increase pre-positioning operations before the rainy season in both Eastern and Southern Chad. Weekly monitoring reports and ad hoc briefings on food security conditions were provided to the U.S. Embassy, WFP, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Government of Chad to increase the amount of information available and facilitate response planning.

Beginning in August with an expected end date of October 2007, project staff in Chad participated in a harvest assessment and food balance sheet meeting with CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter-états de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), WFP, and the Chad Ministry of Agriculture. Participants convened to project cereal production figures and produce a joint trip report on the preliminary results of crop surveys that will provide early warning of vulnerable zones and inform response plans.

In September 2007, FNR Yacoub Abdelwahid, participated in a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM). Past JAM recommendations were reviewed and updated. In addition, recommendations were made for the coming year and the strategy for food and non-food related assistance was updated. Collaborative partners included representatives from WFP, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Office of the UNHCR. Proposed activities focused on determining what assistance is required.

One of the challenge identified by the FNR as a recurring issue was partners' increased requests for information as well increased requests for technical contribution on the part of FEWS NET

Chad. It is projected that increased demands will add to the field office's existing work load and could diminish work quality.

Niger. The FEWS NET Niger office worked this quarter to evaluate ongoing food security and nutrition issues by conducting assessments, monitoring current conditions, and participating in trainings. In order to improve household practices, FEWS NET/Niger collaborated with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Helen Keller International (HKI), and the Niger Ministry of Public Health (MSP) to conduct training-of-trainers in *Communication for the Change of the Household and Community Behaviors* in the framework of the Essential Actions in Nutrition (EAN). FEWS NET also conducted a rapid assessment of early childhood nutrition to assess the structural character of malnutrition as well as the utilization rate of cross-border health resources.

The office coordinated with UNICEF, HKI, MSP, WFP, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to define roles, responsibilities, and zones of intervention so that data collection and responses to food security could be more efficient in Niger. Throughout this quarter, FEWS NET Niger and its local partners monitored and analyzed the current conditions of food, nutritional, and markets vulnerability. These activities resulted in eight reports, which improved access to information and which seek to achieve more durable responses to assistance needs. In addition, socio-economic surveys and nutritional causal analysis workshops were conducted to ensure adoption of a joint analytical framework to integrate the nutritional indicators in the early warning and information systems.

Cross-border activities between Niger and Nigeria commenced with a pilot program in Kano-Katsina-Maradi with local partners including Club du Sahel et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest/OCDE, Niger Food Crises Task Force, the Nigeria National Boundary Commission, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel / CILSS, the UNDP Niger and Nigeria, and the European Commission in Niger. This initiative seeks to enhance cross-border movement of cereals and livestock, improve capital transfer, improve access to banking in the region, and establish joint border communication facilities.

West Africa Markets. In July and August 2007, FEWS NET National Representative (FNR) for Niger, Laouali Ibrahim, conducted a regional market study. The study culminated in a multi-country trader survey report which will highlight catchments and linkages between markets within and across Nigeria and Chad for early warning systems.

Task Order 2—Afghanistan

Ghor Food Needs Assessment. For the reporting period, FEWS NET Afghanistan continued its efforts to understand the food security situation throughout the country as it prepared for the coming winter. The Ghor Food Needs Assessment highlighted food insecurity and its causes in the central Ghor Province. In conjunction with WFP and FFP, this assessment sensitized decision-makers to the need for timely diagnoses of food security problems and provided them with an opportunity for intervention. Through capacity building of the Provincial Government of Ghor, local teams are now positioned to conduct food needs assessments on their own. In addition to this and other activities, a consultant worked with the FNR to review wheat assessments conducted in Northern Afghanistan and Pakistan, which lead to increased accuracy

of the report and provided for better understanding of food insecurity causes and the regional market impact on Afghan food security.

Task Order 3—Haiti

The two highest impact activities of this quarter were the execution of a Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) with various partners and the completion of training for CNSA (*Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire*) and the Ministry of Agriculture on basic principles of food security analysis and rapid assessments.

CFSVA. The field assessment was based on the livelihood zoning and profiling study from mid-2005 and was conducted jointly with WFP, CNSA, Action Aid, USAID, and the USAID-funded NGOs CARE, WVI, CRS, and Save the Children US. The assessment findings are now available and will be analyzed during the first quarter of 2008. These results will help to more accurately identify the characteristics and location of populations vulnerable to food insecurity and will complete the current livelihood zoning and profiling of Haiti. The completion of the livelihood profiles will ultimately allow the food security network to better understand vulnerabilities, provide more timely early warning, and craft more appropriate responses to crises.

Food security and analysis training. FEWS NET Haiti offered training in the basic principles of food security analysis and rapid assessments to mid-level professionals from Ministry of Agriculture and CNSA. Participants trained included ten field officers who coordinate Ministry of Agriculture and CNSA activities, eleven market price enumerators, and four CNSA colleagues. The training strengthened participants' concept of food security and provided them with the tools required to assess the food security status of various populations all over the country. Participants are now better equipped to collect the type and quality of information CNSA and FEWS NET need to make reliable food security analysis and to prepare better early warning bulletins.

Task Order 4—MFEWS/Central America

Guatemala. During the reporting period, MFEWS Guatemala continued to support livelihood studies, contribute to new analyses of food insecurity, and build its relationship with the Guatemalan government. In conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Central American Regional Program for Food Security and Nutrition (PRESANCA), and the Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat (SESAN), MFEWS Guatemala carried out livelihood updates in 15 zones, as well as livelihood studies in three new zones in July and August. Subsequently, these organizations conducted a workshop to share experiences and tools, define zone boundaries, and agree upon a standardized approach to preparing profiles.

From July through September, MFEWS participated in WFP's 2007 Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) study which analyzed the municipalities that are most vulnerable to food insecurity in Guatemala. In this effort, MFEWS contributed to the development of tools, sample selection, and analysis of results. During this time, MFEWS also worked with the Guatemalan

Seismology, Vulcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology Institute (INSIVUMEH) and MFEWS/USGS to produce historical evapotranspiration and average rainfall maps for the last 20 years.

Elections were held on September 4, 2007 and the new authorities will take office in January 2008. As a result personnel in government partner institutions are therefore reluctant to commit to future activities. As such MFEWS is working to systemize its processes and interaction with the government in order to encourage the stability of future partnerships. Specifically, MFEWS provided field-based training in the use of the web-based crop monitoring database for technical staff of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in ten departments. The project also worked with MoA, FAO, INSIVUMEH, SESAN and MFEWS/USGS to upgrade and consolidate Guatemala's crop monitoring information system. Output tables were improved for internal use and maps are now available on the server for all users.

In addition, during August and September, the Guatemala MFEWS National Representative traveled to Angola to analyze the current food security monitoring process and vulnerability assessment capabilities of the Angolan Government and suggested next steps for the establishment of a food security information system. Additional information about this consultancy is included above in the Angola activity description.

End of Project Highlights for Offices Closed During the Quarter

Presented below is a selection of key results and highlights from the project offices which were closed at the request of the client during the quarter.

Honduras

- MFEWS Honduras was designated by the SAN Coalition members to lead the Food & Nutrition Security Monitoring Commission, responsible for monitoring the food security situation throughout the entire country.
- *Mapping of governmental and NGO food and nutritional security interventions in Honduras.* This tool will enable NGO, government, and donor food security interventions to be more effective, while focusing on the most vulnerable populations, and encouraging more efficient use of human, technical, financial, and logistical resources.
- *Created a Conceptual Framework*, including indicators, and information collecting tools, for the implementation of a local participatory monitoring, evaluation, and information system for food and nutritional security. After a training workshop for donor and NGO program managers, the system was effectively implemented in the Southern region of the country which resulted in the ability to monitor and evaluate crop production and losses, and collect early warning information.
- *Regional Food Aid Strategy.* A regional food aid strategy was designed with local participation and inter-institutional support, significantly increasing food access and nutrition levels of nearly 12,000 highly vulnerable households.

- *Analysis of Food and Nutritional Security of Small Holder Coffee Producers and Cutter.* In collaboration with the Western Honduran Food and Nutritional Security Coalition, conducted analysis on food and nutritional security situation of small holder coffee producers and coffee cutters' households, which will lead to the organization of the first national forum on coffee and food security.
- *Developed a Political Persuasion Program.* This program including a workshop scheduled for August, was focused at governmental and non-governmental decision makers, with the eventual goal of creating a Food and Nutritional Security Ministry
- *Conducted Assessments of Drought and Rat-Affected Areas.* In coordination with WFP, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO), and the Ministry of Health, assessments of the drought and rat-affected areas were conducted. Out of the assessments, MFEWS provided consequent response recommendations for the Government of Honduras and other organizations, leading to an emergency response for 1000 that families received food aid, and Ag supplies for the elimination of the rats.
- MFEWS Honduras participated in a series of partner meetings in Honduras and El Salvador, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and the Emergency Response Commission, regarding the standardization of food security early warning indicators in the country. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is under development to define partners' roles and responsibilities regarding the new geographically decentralized monitoring system. The restructuring of early warning in the country will lead to more efficient use of scarce resources and improved quality and quantity of support to decision-makers.

Nicaragua

Despite partial success in combating poverty and malnutrition over the past decade, half of Nicaragua's population continues to live below the poverty line. Early warning mechanisms to identify potential or imminent food security crises are weak or non-existent. During the period of 2006 – 2007, MFEWS served as an instrument of change and reflection in Nicaragua. Among its major accomplishments:

- MFEWS was instrumental in the development of a functioning and expanding early warning and food security network that includes "Programa Hambre Cero", international cooperation agencies that included, FAO, FAO/PESA, Nicasalud, WFP, OCHA, ECHO, INCAP, ACH and MFEWS. This was accomplished in an environment where food security and early warning issues have neither been clearly understood nor have they enjoyed priority attention.
- *Increased National and Regional Coordination.* MFEWS efforts in Nicaragua during the period focused on national and regional coordination, as well as continued technical support to partners and reporting of food security information. Meetings were held with a number of local partners to plan the implementation of the food security early warning system at the municipal level.

- *Provided Support to the Central America Health Network Investigation (funded by Gates Foundation).* This activity, implemented by Nicasalud, improved the surveillance of infant growth through community-level promotion and strengthening channels of cooperation between institutions at the national and regional levels. This investigation has found a positive correlation between nutritional indicators and food security early warning, and has produced a standardized methodology of nutritional investigation for early warning in Central America.
- *Increased and Improved Quantity and Quality of Food Security Information Availability.* Through the publication of the Monthly Report on Food Security--a collaborative effort of MFEWS, the Ministry of Agriculture, Markets Information System (SIPMA), and INETER--MFEWS contributed to the increased and improve quantity and quality of information available concerning food security in the country.
- MFEWS contributed in early warning with the Food security perspectives, which allowed to forecast the conditions of food security with valued information for the decision makers to carry out anticipated actions to prevent food crisis
- MFEWS contributed to the improvement of food security analysis focusing on livelihoods, which allowed us to know better about the economy and dynamic of the rural families of Nicaragua.

Rwanda

- *Provided Critical Timeline and Early Warning and Vulnerability Information.* As neither the Government of Rwanda nor WFP have the capacity to routinely monitor the food security situation in the country, FEWS NET has served a critical role in providing timeline and analytical early warning and vulnerability information. For example, in 2006, the impact of a food shortage was mitigated because of early warnings from FEWS NET.
- *Decision Makers Used to Revise Policies.* FEWS NET-provided information enabled the Government of Rwanda to revise its policies towards food aid and convince donors to contribute to mitigating the crisis. These types of decisions would not have been possible without FEWS NET.

Senegal

Established in February 2004, FEWS NET Senegal's objectives were to provide early warning information to decision-makers, implement a monitoring network on food security, and to strengthen capacity-building for local partners. While the project operated for less than 4 years, through the exemplary collaboration of partners, the project's impact was just beginning to be felt at the level of governmental authorities. The information that FEWS NET Senegal was able to provide, was used by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other projects within their monitoring framework in their zones of intervention. An example of the utility of

this information includes a nutrition project which was able to reduce the number of regional antennas to better orient their activities in the field.

REVIEW OF THE QUARTER'S ACTIVITIES—WASHINGTON

Management

During the quarter both technical and project management Home Office staff focused on ensuring that all core activities and ad hoc requests were addressed, while moving major activities and initiatives forward. This required strategic resource management from the COP and flexibility from the staff.

On the technical side, specific issues addressed with Tech Team staff included working closely with network partners on the integrated phase classification, strategic decisions and timing for the Integrated Systems Initiative and new website, the development of core guidance materials for field staff, and many country- and region-specific issues. For each of these, a lead activity manager from the Tech Team has been responsible for coordination and communication about the activity including holding meetings, when necessary, to reach consensus.

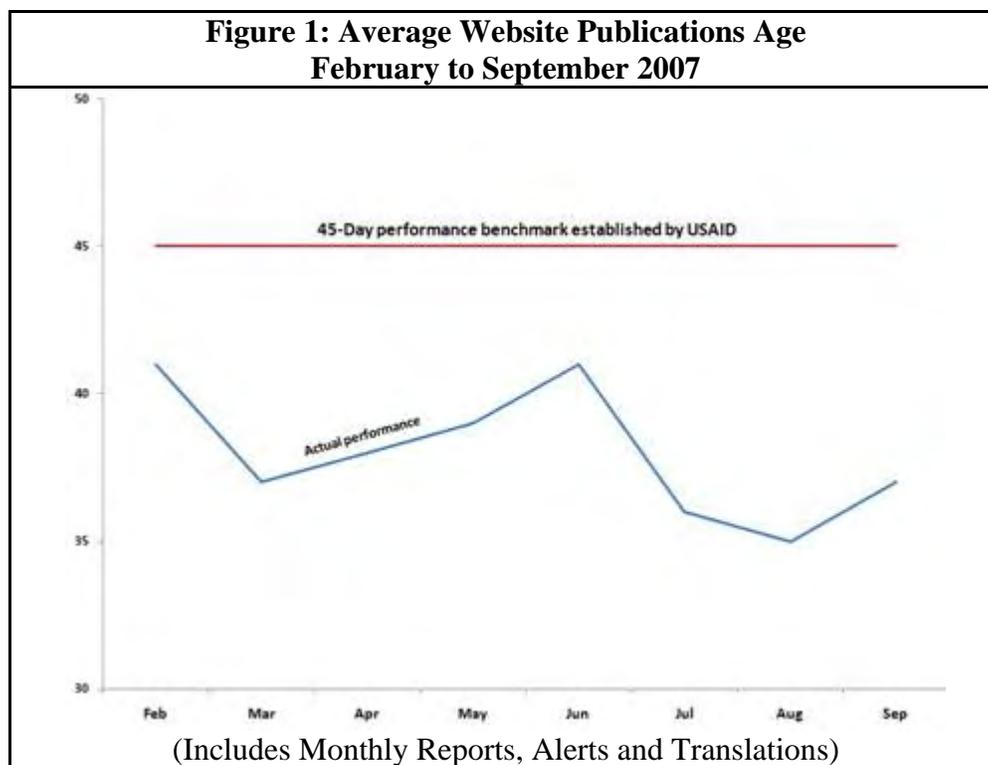
On the project management side, considerable effort continued to be spent on closely managing the budget, closing five field offices, and preparing for the FY 2008 budgeting process. While closely managing the budget is a necessary aspect of contract management, given the budget constraints, difficult decisions and trade-offs were made at the end of the fiscal year to ensure that we stayed within available resources. By closely monitoring the budget during the period under review, all major deliverables were completed on time and some cost savings were obtained. The other major activity was preparing for and implementing the closure of FEWS NET offices in Senegal, Nicaragua, Honduras, Rwanda, and Angola. By the end of the quarter, the Senegal, Nicaragua, and Honduras offices were closed; the Rwanda office was nearly closed; and the closure of the Angola office was well underway (Chemonics was instructed to close the Angola office no earlier than the end of November). Finally, preparation of the FY 2008 budget has taken substantial planning given the move to specific country and region budgets. To do this requires a complete re-orientation of the budgeting process and the structure of the budget itself. Much progress was made during the period under review, and the finalization is expected during the first quarter of FY 2008.

Monthly regional coordination meetings were continued during the reporting period and were held each month for each of the six FEWS NET geographic areas of coverage, including Afghanistan, east, west, and southern Africa, Central America, and Haiti. These meetings foster improved planning, coordination, and tracking for all completed, on-going, and new activities among implementation team members. These meetings continue to be an important tool to ensure that both technical and project management priorities are aligned.

The chief of party made two visits during the period under review, including one to Oxford, England for the integrated phase classification steering committee meeting and one to Boulder (Colorado) for the USGS-organized science meeting.

Decision Support

Sustained timeliness for report publications. Since implementation of the monthly publications status report in February 2007, we have sustained a high level of performance overall in terms of timely publication of monthly food security updates, including translation, and alerts. We have been well below the maximum 45-day performance benchmark established by the CTO every month this year. In the fourth quarter of FY2007, this high level of performance was sustained despite the heavy summer travel and leave schedules of field and home office staff. This was achieved through the successful implementation of the summer reporting plan presented to the CTO in June 2007. Figure 1 illustrates monthly average website age for regular reports and translations against this benchmark



Chemonics is confident that overall performance will remain in compliance with the CTO established benchmark and will continue to provide monthly status reports focused on solving individual problems in the reporting system.

Zimbabwe briefings. In September, FEWS NET developed two high level briefings on Zimbabwe. The first briefing was presented to USAID Assistant Administrator for DCHA, Mike Hess, and senior DCHA staff. This briefing was initiated at the request of FFP, following the monthly Food Security Assistance Forecast briefing earlier in the month. Following the briefing, USAID announced an allocation of \$50 million in additional food aid for Zimbabwe. This briefing and the allocation of funds to Zimbabwe represent an excellent example of the use of FEWS NET information to support USAID decision making. Following this first briefing,

FEWS NET conducted another briefing at an inter-agency meeting including AA/DCHA Hess, the US Ambassador to Zimbabwe, senior staff from OFDA, OTI, FFP and the Africa Bureau, the State Department, and other relevant USG agencies.

Establishing more detailed review process for WHA. During the quarter, the Decision and Planning Support Group established a formal review mechanism for providing more substantive input in to the weekly NOAA-led FEWS NET Weather Hazards and Benefits Assessment. The implementation of this review process has allowed us to provide more substantive input and guidance to the process and its outputs, in line with the instructions we received from the CTO.

Inter-agency contingency planning. In July, FEWS NET Decision and Planning Support Advisor, Richard Choularton, was invited to provide the keynote address at the 1st Global Consultation of Humanitarian Contingency Planners, hosted by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in Geneva, Switzerland. Mr. Choularton presented the finding of the joint review between the Overseas Development Institute and FEWS NET “Contingency Planning and Humanitarian Action: A review of practice” to over 60 contingency planners from donors, UN agencies, NGOs and national governments. At the same time, the FEWS NET Decision and Planning Support Advisor contributed to the development of the new Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Action, developed by the IASC.

Sahel notes. As this quarter parallels the peak hunger season in the Sahel, the DPSG put a special focus on following and communicating the major food security messages on the main production season for the region. This included focused coverage on the impact of floods and erratic rains across the region and the progression of this season compared to normal, as well as to ‘crisis’ years. This focus allowed the DPSG to provide senior staff at USAID/FFP and DCHA with timely, evidence-based information with which to respond to the sometimes-hyperbolic media coverage of food security issues in the Sahel.

Chad surge activity. The DPSG, in collaboration with the FEWS NET Technical Coordinator, developed and distributed French and English versions of a user survey as part of a broader effort to evaluate the Chad surge activity. This survey was disseminated to all levels of decision makers and other users of the Chad surge product, including USAID/Chad and US Embassy/Chad staff, USAID/Washington staff, UN organizations, local and international NGOs and Chadian government officials. The results of this survey are being compiled now and will be used to determine the utility of the activity and whether or how to best continue to undertake this work.

Niger – Nigeria Nutrition Special Report. In September, FEWS NET produced a special brief analyzing the nutritional situations in Niger and Nigeria, and exploring the links between the two countries. This brief was the first in a series of information products that provided decision makers with an evidence base for understanding the causalities and dynamics of malnutrition between these two countries and how the nutrition situation there this year differed from that of the nutritional crisis in 2005. Additional information on this is also included in the above section on Niger.

Tanzania comprehensive review. During the quarter, the FEWS NET technical team conducted an in-depth review of analysis and reporting from Tanzania. The results were presented to the Tanzania FEWS NET national representative as a basis for improving her reporting and analysis. This input has already had an impact in improving the quality of reporting from the country.

Food Security and Assistance Planning Calendar. At the request of USAID FFP, FEWS NET developed the Food Security and Assistance Planning Calendar. This product serves as a reference guide and tool for improved allocations of food aid and other resources. The tool is regularly used by FFP to more strategically program their resources. A public version of this tool will be released in the first quarter of FY 2008.

Ethiopia – Somali Region internal USAID brief. In early July, FEWS NET identified an emerging humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia's Somali region. In order to highlight the potential crisis, an urgent analysis of the situation where government security operations were resulting in pre-famine conditions, was prepared. This analysis was presented in an internal brief to USAID. The content was used to brief the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, and senior USAID officials. This brief helped provide evidence for the US Embassy issued a disaster declaration and for USAID to begin mobilizing efforts to respond to the crisis. This is an excellent example of FEWS NET providing very early and strategic early warning, months ahead of a major crisis. The situation in the region is now approaching the worst case scenario.

Guidance review. During the quarter, FEWS NET developed guidance for the Minimum Standard Components and new alert guidance. This guidance has greatly facilitated the implementation of the FEWS NET Strategic Plan and prepared our reporting systems for the new website.

Darfur Rain Timeline and Seven Day Forecast. FEWS NET continued to produce with NOAA the highly successful Darfur Rain Timeline and Seven Day Forecast, which provides humanitarian agencies in eastern Chad and Darfur with critical operational information for prepositioning and logistical planning in the region.

Challenges in the period ahead

- The crises in Somalia and Ethiopia have reached a stage where famine is a real possibility in early 2008. Providing a greater level of support and more in depth analysis and early warning to USAID will be a major challenge between October 2007 and early 2008. The DPSG will prioritize efforts to maintain the highest level of support possible and will work with the CTO to prioritize efforts
- The final stages of development of the new website, its testing and launch represent a significant level of effort during the next period. The DPSG is coordinating closely with the Technology Advisor to support the process.

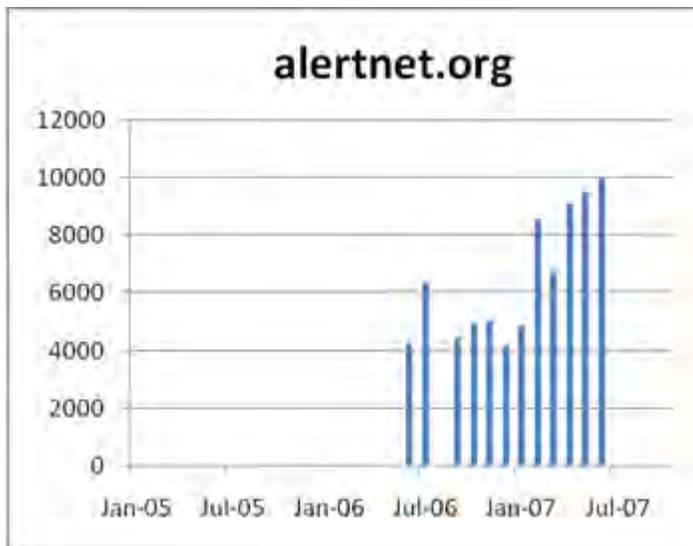
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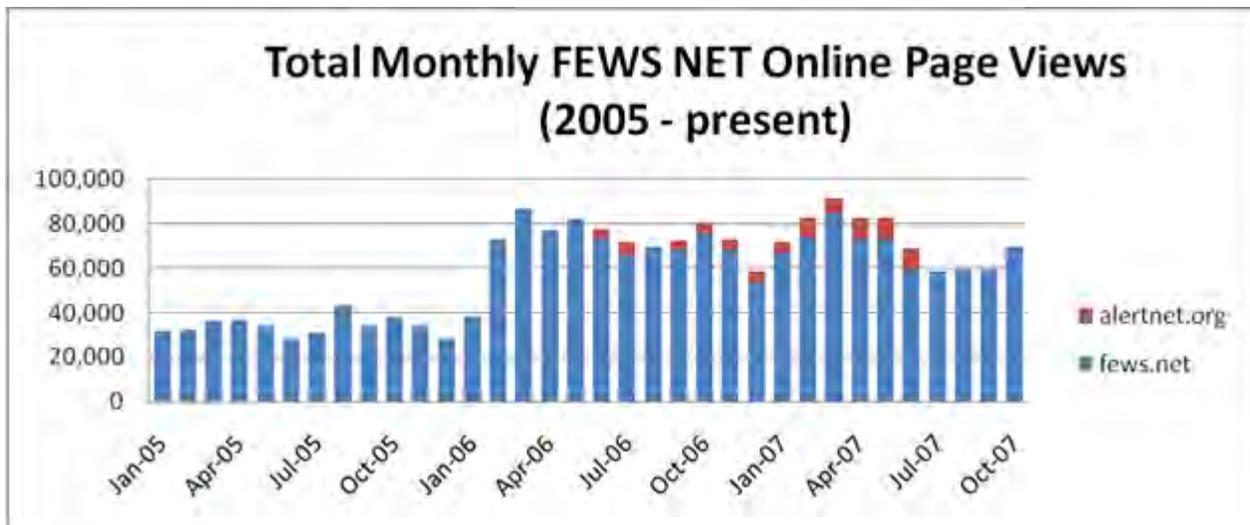
Integrated Systems Initiative. Despite holds that had to be placed on procurement and service agreements due to the temporary and agreed need reprioritize funds and monitor certain types of expenditures, solid technical progress was made as follows:

- FEWS NET v4.0 website site map and draft content and copy (including translations) was nearly completed
- Integrated standards, guidance and workflow models were developed and published internally
- The ISPortal management information system was staged for its first production deployment (and successfully deployed in mid-October)
- Global folder replication system tested in the field
- The new Spatial Data Infrastructure database was designed and partially developed
- Collaboration with NOAA to conceptualize and design the new, online Weather Hazards maps and related services

The completion of the Integrated Systems Initiative, marked by the acceptance of the v4.0 website product in Q4 and subsequent launch, remains on track. The former is planned for delivery at the end of November with a launch date to be announced.

Online Public Communication. Website readership continues with strong numbers compared with the long-term monthly averages recorded over the last seven years. Although, traffic has leveled off, most likely due to the current website's age (3 years on November 30th), the v4.0 website launch is expected to rekindle the growth rate beginning in 2008. The following graphics show actual website usage figures.





Livelihoods

FEWS NET continues to apply its livelihoods analytical framework to food security and livelihood assessment, monitoring, early warning and decision support. In October, Jessica Grillo joined the Technical Team as the Livelihoods Advisor ad interim in order to provide guidance and address priority technical issues. Field-based livelihoods activities this quarter included:

Burkina Faso. In July, 2007 FEWS NET Burkina Faso worked with network partners, including CILSS and DGPSA, to identify key livelihoods indicators associated with the structural causes of food insecurity and to discuss prospective livelihood profiling activities. In partnership with WFP and DGPSA, a national food security and nutrition survey was begun with particular focus on vulnerability of urban areas.

Nigeria. In August FEWS NET Nigeria, in partnership with Save the Children UK, UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Health, conducted a rapid nutritional assessment in the North West Millet and Sesame Livelihood Zone. This assessment, which increased information for monitoring nutrition and food security conditions, represented the first strategic use of livelihood zones in Northern Nigeria. In October Government officials were debriefed on the assessment results.

Somalia. In September FEWS NET Somalia collaborated with FSAU, UNOCHA and FAO to develop livelihood support proposals for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the central, Hiran and parts of Shabelle regions. IDPs are now receiving needed livelihood support from FAO and a number of NGOs.

In August FEWS NET Somalia and Food for Peace worked with CARE Somalia to review its food aid program and assess its overall impact in Gedo Region in an effort to newly consider and inform non-food livelihood support.

Sudan. FEWS NET advocated the need to incorporate the HEA livelihoods framework into the upcoming WFP led Annual Needs and Livelihoods Assessment (ANLA), scheduled to take place between November and December in Lakes and Northern Bahr El Gazal States. Consensus was reached and it was agreed that the ANLA will be preceded by HEA training and the assessment supplemented.

Kenya. In August FEWS NET Kenya piloted the IPC tool during the 2007 long rains national food security assessments, in partnership with the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) technical team and sectoral working group members, in part to help compare and categorize food security status across livelihood zones.

Mozambique. FEWS NET Mozambique began preparations for proposed livelihoods baseline work in five provinces. The activity will integrate in-depth market assessment into the HEA livelihoods baseline activity for a closer look at the role of markets and trade in livelihood systems and vulnerability. As one first step, an inventory was conducted of all existing livelihoods work for the country.

Tanzania. In September FEWS NET Tanzania met with partners to discuss establishment of a more coordinated livelihoods based food security information systems.

Malawi. In partnership with the MVAC, FEWS NET Malawi continues to use its livelihood baseline analytical framework in food security assessment and early warning activities.

Zimbabwe. In September, a research plan was developed together with draft data collection instruments to better understand urban food insecurity.

Additional livelihood activities in Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Haiti are detailed in other sections.

Markets and Trade

During the reporting period the Senior Markets and Trade Advisor developed a number of global level guidance and training materials for use throughout the FEWS NET activity. As one component of the FAO Food Security Distance Learning Module, the SMTA, in collaboration with WFP and other independent consultant reviewers, drafted and revised content for the market assessment lesson. Although this is an FAO-led activity, the products directly benefited FEWS NET in Sudan and Somalia where they were incorporated into the WFP emergency needs assessments, and in southern Africa where they are being used in the OFDA-supported market integration in vulnerability assessments workshop which will take place in the first quarter of FY 2008. In addition, with assistance from graduate student interns from Michigan State University and with input from FNRs Sidow and Laouali and RFNR Mdladla, the SMTA developed guidance on price and production reporting for the website and draft guidance on Structure, Conduct, Performance, and Parity Pricing. Both sets of guidance materials will be incorporated into future trainings.

The SMTA also provide targeted country and region-specific support during the reporting period. This included strengthening market information system and data collection in Haiti,

support to the consultant undertaking the Northern Wheat Trader Survey and Afghan Food Security activity, and support to the data analysis phase of the West Africa Markets surge activity.

One key challenge encountered is capacity building and the ability to scale up activities. The proposed solution is to allocate some time to discussions with partners on how to coordinate training and capacity building. This would include identifying qualified individuals in the field, at MSU (faculty and students), and others, such as WFP and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, who could develop and conduct short training courses tailored to FEWS NET representatives and their partners.

Strategic Challenges and Proposed Solutions

Maintaining timely production and publication of monthly reports and alerts will continue to be a challenge for FEWS NET given the high volume of routine deliverables and the additional information requests. Other factors contributing to the increased workload for FEWS NET staff going forward include: key activities which are moving into intensive final stages--such as the Integrated Systems Initiative and the new FEWS NET website; the completion of the final round of work planning following the FY 2008 budgeting process (first round was previously completed); absence of long-term staff as they go on their well deserved annual vacations; and performance evaluations are nearly completed, all leading to an increased workload for FEWS NET staff. Despite this challenge, through close coordination it is anticipated that all routine information products will be completed well within the benchmark established by the FEWS NET CTO, as they were within the period under review.

The planning and preparation of the FY 2008 budget is the key challenge for the first quarter of the fiscal year. The previous FEWS NET budgets for Task Order #1 combined the activities of the home office and field offices into one single budget. For FY 2008 individual budgets have been created for each regional and country office, directly correlating with their annual work plans. This process has been a highly collaborative one with participation from both our home office and field staff. The magnitude of this process is a key strategic challenge, but a necessary and important step which we look forward to taking on.

Finalizing the Integrated Systems Initiative and the next version of the FEWS NET website is also a key strategic challenge, one that involves a significant effort of all FEWS NET home office staff and some field office staff. The Integrated Systems Initiative and the next version of the FEWS NET website will be completed in the first quarter of FY 2008 for review by the CTO.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE UPCOMING QUARTER

Looking ahead to the upcoming quarter, FEWS NET anticipates achievement of the following milestones:

- *Routine reporting*: full suite of information products including country and regional monthly food security updates, alerts, executive overview briefs, and food security assistance forecast, and other special briefings and products delivered in a timely manner;
- *Decision support*: given the severe level of food insecurity conditions Ethiopia and Somalia it is anticipate that a significant increase in requests for information products and senior-level briefings will be made from both USAID/W and Missions;
- *Markets and trade*: support to national vulnerability assessment committees in southern Africa and regional marketing and trade meetings in southern and eastern Africa;
- *Livelihoods*: a long-term livelihoods advisor identified and draft guidance for field staff developed;
- *Vulnerability assessments*: two strategic meetings in southern Africa, one on markets and trade and one on developing food security scenarios, will be held with a limited number of national vulnerability assessment committees;
- *Management*: final annual work planning completed as the annual incremental funding process will be completed; and
- *Information technology*: completion of the integrated systems initiative and website for review by CTO.