KENYA Food Security Outlook — October 2008 – March 2009

Food security summary

- The current food security situation as shown on figure 1 depicts the presence of high levels of food insecurity in the northern and northwestern pastoral areas, resulting from two consecutive failed seasons, and moderate levels of food insecurity across wide areas of the rest of the country. Extreme food insecurity persists in IDP camps in the southwest of the country, an area that is otherwise moderately food insecure.

- Two scenarios, the most likely and the worst case scenarios, have been developed for December 2008 – March 2009, based in part on the outcome of the Greater Horn of Africa Consensus Climate Outlook (Annex 1).

- In the most likely scenario for December 2008 – March 2009, food security conditions are expected to improve in the western half of the country, including the coastal and southeastern lowlands. In contrast, food security is expected to deteriorate to high to extreme levels in the northern and eastern pastoral areas (figure 2).

- The worst case scenario for the same period is based on the failure of the short rains in both halves of the country and would likely culminate in a humanitarian crisis in the areas shaded red, while significant portions of the country would also be highly food insecure (figure 3).

- Other compounding factors in each scenario include livestock decimation by the *Peste de petit ruminants* (PPR) disease, heightened conflict in pastoral areas, high and rising food and non-food prices, below-average maize production during the 2008 long rains and a tightening maize supply situation, and an inadequately stocked Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR).

Current food security situation

The 2008 long rains season began early, in mid-March instead of early April, in the drought-prone areas of the country, which include the northern, eastern, and southern pastoral areas, and the southeastern and coastal lowlands. However, within a month, the rains had ended. Within some of those areas reporting substantial

Figure 1. Current food security conditions, October – November 2008

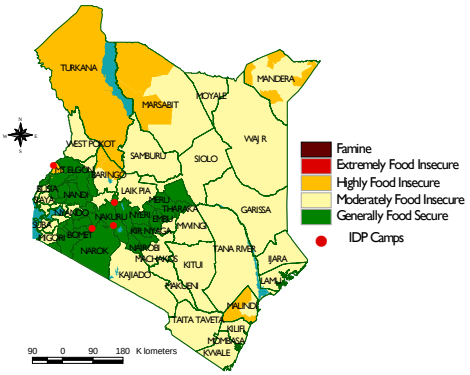


Figure 2. Most likely scenario: December 2008 – March 2009

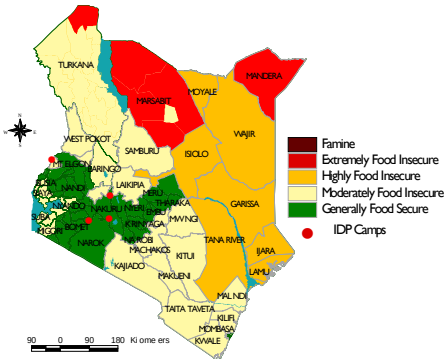
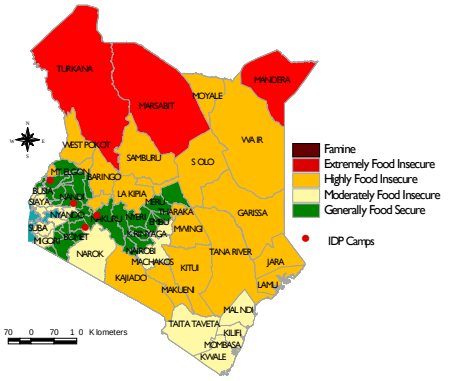


Figure 3. Worst case scenario: December 2008 – March 2009



Graphics (figures 1-3): FEWS NET

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rainfall deficits are areas that received exceptionally heavy rains that were poorly distributed in time and space. The timing of the onset of the rains was normal in most of the key cropping zones in the west. Rains began about a month late in the south Rift and western areas around Lake Victoria, but continued beyond their normal cessation, compensating for earlier deficits.

The impacts of generally poor long rains in northwestern pastoral and southeastern marginal cropping lowlands resulted in severe deterioration in household food security. In pastoral areas, the poor rains accelerated early livestock migrations that left sedentary household members without milk and animal products; compromised the condition of the livestock by weakening the livestock and predisposing them to diseases; promoted conflict as competition for resources intensified; triggered severe depletion of water sources, leading to extended trekking distances and high water prices; caused an upsurge in human disease as hygiene conditions deteriorated; and increased school dropout rates, as children migrated earlier-than-usual with their parents in search of water, pasture, and browse. In marginal agricultural and agropastoral areas, the poor rains have led to crop failure, which has reduced local food availability and increased pressure on food prices. However, improvements in household food security have been reported in some parts of the eastern pastoral areas, localized areas along the coastal belt, and most of the normally food secure Rift Valley, Western, and Nyanza highlands.

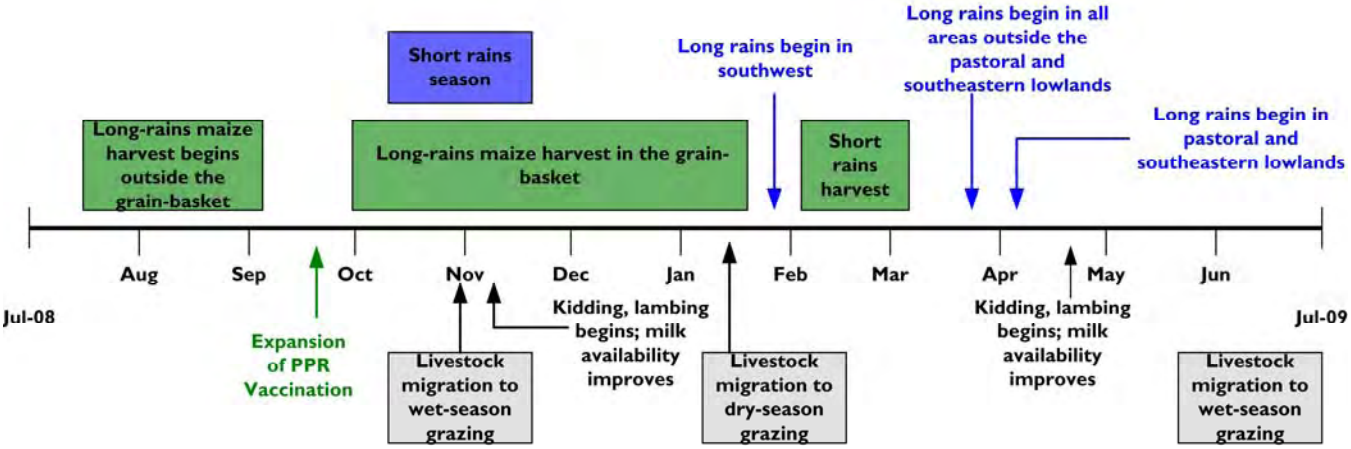
The reduced long-rains maize production this season (10 percent below average) will be a factor influencing food security in the current quarter (September – December 2008) and the year ahead. Maize is the overwhelming staple across all livelihood zones, and any shortfall in its production is synonymous with elevated food insecurity. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) anticipates that in total, 2.3 million MT of maize will be harvested during the current long-rains season (September 2008 – January 2009), which normally accounts for close to 85 percent of total annual national maize output. The expected level of production is below both the 2007 long-rains harvest of 2.52 million MT and the three-year average long rains production of 2.58 million MT. The reduction in output is attributed to a 60 percent crop loss in the central highlands and marginal agricultural areas as result of poor rains in much of those areas; erratic rains in southern parts of the Rift Valley highlands; sub-optimal application of fertilizers; low use of appropriate seed varieties, after nearly a 30 percent increase in the cost of production**;** and a 10 percent reduction in area put to maize.

In addition, the country has relatively low carryover stocks from previous seasons. The SGR, which is a vital in mitigating the domestic shortfall, moderating market supplies and damening the rise in prices, is carrying less than 25 percent of the statutory requirement of 360,000 MT. It is also estimated that inflows through cross border trade will be below normal, sustaining current higher than normal prices. About 200,000 MT is normally imported through cross-border trade, but this year, these imports are likely to decline substantially as Tanzania, which normally contributes 44 percent of maize imports, seeks to replenish its own stocks following a poor 2007 season and currently has an official ban on all cereal exports. Under this scenario, even if the upcoming short rains are normal and current crop projections hold, the country will most likely not have sufficient supply to meet annual demand of about 3.2 million MT for the July 2008 – June 2009 marketing year. In order to address the likely shortfall in national supply, the Government of Kenya (GoK) plans to import about 80,000 MT of maize from South Africa by October 2008, to cover the immediate gap and probably import additional maize next year, before July 2009.

It is estimated that about 1.38 million people in rural areas are highly food insecure and will not be able to meet their minimum food requirements in the coming six months unless urgent external support is provided through March 2009. The food shortfall for October is estimated to be 580 MT, largely CSB and salt. The worst affected areas are situated in identified locations in the pastoral livelihood of Turkana, Mandera, Samburu, Baringo, Marsabit, Wajir, Moyale, and Garissa; significant areas in the agropastoral and the marginal agricultural livelihoods in Kitui, Mwingi, Makueni, Mbeere, Malindi, Kilifi, Kwale; and Tana River. The number includes an estimated 300,000 former and current internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are highly to extremely food insecure and will likely remain so until they can return to their pre-election status or re-adjust to sustainable livelihoods.

In addition, urban food insecurity has deepened as a result of the rising food and non food prices, amidst static incomes for the majority of the population, who depend almost entirely on food purchases. Preliminary indications have revealed that the number of people that are moderately to highly food insecure in urban slums as a result of rising food prices, as of July 2008, may be in the range of 3.5 million to 4.1 million up from about 3 million persons in 2007.

Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline



Source: FEWS NET

Most likely food security scenario: December - March, 2009

Scenario description and main assumptions

The October-December short rains forecast (see Annex 1) suggests that the western half of the country, including the southeastern and coastal cropping lowlands, is expected to receive above normal to normal rains, while all the northern and northeastern pastoral areas are likely to receive below normal to normal rains. The southeastern and coastal lowlands have experienced three successive poor seasons and above normal rains would benefit this short-rains dependent region. However, significant parts of the north and northeast that are expected to receive below normal rains have also suffered two successive poor seasons, and food security prospects are dire. Above normal short rains in the Rift Valley highlands could be problematic because harvesting begins in October and rains could impede harvesting or promote pre- and post harvest losses. Grain that is hurriedly harvested and stored under sub-optimal conditions often attracts infestation with pest and disease, the most common being aflatoxin poisoning. Heavy short rains could also cause floods around Lake Victoria and result in crop damage, asset losses, and displacements. The extent to which the forecast holds will be come clear at the end of November and that will determine the operational scenario.

Table 1. Most-likely scenario assumptions and indicators

- Above normal rains in the western half of the country, including the southeast and coastal lowlands.
- Below normal rains in the entire north and northeastern pastoral areas.
- Increased pre- and post-harvest losses in the grain basket.
- Incomplete resettlement or return of IDPs
- Heightened conflict in rain-deficit areas.
- Limited control of the livestock diseases and PPR.
- Aflatoxin control instituted.
- Rising and higher-than-normal food prices.
- Limited implementation of cross-sectoral interventions.
- Flooding in the lake region.

Conflict incidences have intensified over the past two years, expanding the size of areas that are inaccessible to local and migrating pastoralists, particularly in the northwestern pastoral districts. While poor rains normally increase competition for resources and trigger conflict, periods of good rains have not been spared conflict, which has resulted in loss of lives and livelihoods; closure of markets and schools; and soaring cereal prices in the midst of declining livestock prices. Although sustained conflict mitigation and prevention efforts by the GoK are ongoing, conflict has increased, rather than decreased, and remains an important indicator in both scenarios.

Livestock diseases, particularly PPR, remain a major food security threat for the entire pastoral livelihood. Over the past two years, the disease has spread from one pastoral district to 16. Small stock mortalities associated with the disease are

of great concern because goat-dependent livelihoods are often the most drought-prone and food insecure. While the control of the PPR is ongoing, the scale of intervention is still well below the need.

Over 80 percent of the estimated 300,000 IDPs have been resettled either to their original farms or in transit camps close to their farms. The rest remain in camps predominantly in the Rift Valley highlands. An additional 200,000 integrated into families outside the conflict areas, in early January, most of them in the Central and Nyanza highlands. In northern Kenya, humanitarian assistance programs will be required to address the needs of a growing number of refugees from Somalia.

The price of food and non-food commodities has risen across the country since January 2008, by margins ranging between 60-120 percent. The impacts of the price increase are most significant for the urban, pastoral, and marginal agricultural livelihoods that are overwhelmingly market-dependent and food deficit. The trend in food prices, and especially the extent to which harvests will reverse the upward trend in food prices from October onward, will be important indicators that will determine the operational scenario. Prices are expected to decline steadily from October through March 2009 during the long- and short-rains harvests. Heightened demand to fill the SGR and on-farm stocks as well as from traders and millers suggests that the decline will be short-lived.

Food security implications

Food security is expected to improve significantly in the northwestern pastoral areas, the agropastoral rangelands, and the southeastern and coastal short rains-dependent lowlands. Households in each of these areas have experienced a succession of poor seasons, and their food insecurity has deepened. Significant parts of Turkana and Baringo are already in the highly food insecure category. Favorable rains would reverse that trend toward the end of November when the season establishes and kidding, lambing and calving begin. However, pastoralists in conflict-prone areas especially in Turkana and Marsabit may experience deterioration in their food security if conflict continues unabated. Over the past three years, conflict has become less predictable and is not necessarily correlated with seasonal performance, but instead has been facilitated by the easy availability of high-tech weapons and poor deterrent measures. Some have already lost household members and livestock, suggesting that good short rains will have little impact on their already precarious food security situation. Mitigation and prevention of conflict in the northwest remain central in ensuring that benefits of good rains are realized. In addition, the impacts of good rains may be reversed if proposed PPR control measures are not expanded further, to forestall the decimation of the small stock in the most food insecure region of the country. The highly virulent PPR disease has already claimed a significant proportion of the small stock in Turkana, West Pokot, Baringo, and Samburu districts.

Food security is also expected to improve substantially in the southeastern and coastal lowlands, where short rains production accounts for at least 70 percent of annual output locally. At the household level, harvests from a favorable season are often sufficient to last through the next harvest. However, to meet cash needs for debts, input requirements, and other non-food necessities, households often sell large quantities of their produce soon after the harvest when the market is already saturated and prices are at their lowest. Although good rains are forecasted in Kenya's grain basket, their timing is problematic because the main harvesting is expected to start at the onset of the short rains. Inadequate storage infrastructure at the household level has often led to proliferation of pests and disease, increasing post harvest losses. Aflatoxin poisoning arising from poorly dried and stored grain has increased over the past five years, and its control will be critical in reducing crop losses and ensuring that only uncontaminated grain is marketed. In addition, heavy rains in the highland areas adjacent to Lake Victoria could cause flooding downstream, damaging crops and property, displacing households, and causing an upsurge in water and vector borne diseases.

In contrast, food security is expected to deteriorate precariously in the northern and eastern pastoral districts, especially in Marsabit and Mandera districts that are already in the highly food insecure category, should the forecast for normal to below-normal rains in this area hold. It is likely that food security could deteriorate to an emergency with extreme levels of food insecurity in some parts of the north and northeast. Absence of pasture, browse, and water, resulting in extended trekking distances, could cause significant livestock mortalities.

High and rising food prices are likely to impact adversely on the food security of the urban and pastoral households under this scenario. Both livelihoods source over 80 percent of their food needs from the market. Food prices are not expected to decline substantially even during the harvest, due to the anticipated national deficit during the 2008-09 marketing year. In addition, due to export bans and heavy demand in several neighboring countries, Kenya's cross border imports are expected to be lower than normal, while carryover stocks are minimal. Farmers are expected to hold on to their harvests for speculative purposes, while the GoK will likely soak up any marketable harvest, in a bid to restore the eroded SGR back to the statutory requirement of 360,000 MT. Already close to 4 million urban dwellers are moderately to highly food insecure following the rise in food prices. The numbers may increase further, because the rise in the price of most food and non-food commodities has been unrelenting.

The food security status of close to 300,000 IDPs and returnees is likely to remain precarious until pre-election production levels are re-established, a process that could take several years. The food security status of the IDPs who lost high-yielding livestock breeds, businesses, homes, and household members will require several years to recover, if at all. Returnee households still residing in transition camps in southwestern Kenya with few amenities are highly susceptible to vector and water borne diseases, while child malnutrition is rising. A large proportion of IDPs is extremely food insecure and they are likely to remain as such through the current outlook period, ending in March 2009. Though not directly affected by the post-election conflict, small-scale farmers hosting over 200,000 IDPs will need to complement food needs by supplementing their income with other income-generating activities.

It is estimated that about 1.6 million persons in rural areas may fall in the highly and extremely food insecure categories, in the event that this scenario holds. The number assumes that the full impacts of the good rains in the marginal agricultural areas will not be realized until the harvest in March 2009. The number is also consistent with that of comparable drought periods during previous years. Interventions suggested across sectors, in the following section, seek to mitigate the worsening food security and rising malnutrition in the north and northeast; to enhance recovery activities in areas expected to experience a favorable season; and to establish the resilience of livelihoods, which have been eroded by successive poor seasons.

Opportunities for response

Areas in the northwest that are on a critical precipice are expected to show improvements toward the end of November. The drought-hit southeastern and coastal lowlands should also experience substantial recovery under this scenario. However, the northern and eastern pastoral areas are likely to experience a significant deterioration in food security with localized areas likely to deteriorate to the extremely food insecure categories. Subsequently, a mix of emergency, mitigation and recovery interventions are proposed, as shown below:

- Continue food interventions for 1.4 million persons in rural areas, rising to 1.6 million in November, in the event that the short rains forecast holds. The number includes 300,000 IDPs, predominantly in the Rift Valley Province.
- Expand the supplementary feeding program to arrest growing malnutrition in the northwest, northeast, and among IDPs in the southwest.
- Restore the Expanded School Feeding Program in the marginal, coastal, and pastoral livelihood zones so as to: (1) mitigate a likely fall in enrollment, and (2) enhance nutrition status in areas reporting high rates of acute and chronic malnutrition in the northeast, northwest, and the coastal lowlands.
- Conduct an urban vulnerability assessment that seeks to clarify appropriate interventions among the food insecure population.
- Implement safety net programs among the urban poor to forestall rapid deterioration in nutrition; to avoid civil instability; and mitigate the rise in crime.
- Rehabilitate water sources including desilting and repair of dams and boreholes, so as to enhance holding capacities during the upcoming short rains.
- Pre-position trucks and other facilities in readiness for expanded water-trucking in the northeastern pastoral districts.
- Enhance disease surveillance and sanitation coverage to minimize disease spread and arrest susceptibility to malnutrition.

- Accelerate mass vaccination of livestock across the entire pastoral and agropastoral livelihood zones to forestall the spread of PPR and other livestock diseases, so as to arrest the decimation of the pastoral livelihood. An estimated 13 million goats are at risk.
- Commence livestock off-take in areas where poor rains are forecast to avoid rapid deterioration in livestock condition and value.
- Livestock re-stocking programs need to be enhanced in areas that are expecting good rains and are free of disease.
- Urgent provision of drought-tolerant seeds, other inputs, and farm implements in short-rains dependent areas in the southeastern and coastal lowlands, where rains are expected to be favorable.
- Build capacities in post-harvest management, including cereal banks, and encourage formation of seed banks among farmers in the southeastern and coastal lowlands.
- For farmers in the Rift Valley highlands and other cropping areas, implement input subsidies that promote production rather than output subsides that distort market prices

Worst case food security scenario: December 2008 - March 2009

Basic description of the scenario and main assumptions

Under the worst case scenario, the October-December short rains would fail in all parts of the country. The food security status in this scenario would range from highly food insecure in the short rains-dependent southeastern and coastal lowlands to the extremely food insecure in the northern and northwestern pastoral districts. Poor short rains are generally inconsequential in the Rift Valley highlands. Dryness could in fact be beneficial, since the bulk of the long rains maize crop will be harvested from the onset of the short rains in October, onward.

Table 2. Worst-case scenario assumptions and indicators

- Poor short rains in both the eastern and western half of the country.
- Expanded spread of the PPR due to limited control.
- Limited restoration of IDP livelihoods.
- Resource-based conflict escalates in pastoral areas, as well as across the borders.
- Steep rise in food prices after the failure of the short-rains season, in addition to below normal production in key growing areas.
- Mitigation initiatives are not implemented.

In the worst-case scenario, the rapid spread of livestock diseases, especially of PPR, which has already spread from one district in 2006 to 16 districts currently, would worsen in this scenario. Apart from limited control measures, increased migration of livestock within the pastoral livelihood and across the borders is likely to accelerate the spread of the disease, resulting in decimation of livestock.

Under the worst case scenario, pasture, browse, and vegetation will deplete at an even faster rate than at present, and competition for meager grazing resources will invariably intensify, exacerbating on-going conflict. Conflict incidences are expected to intensify as pastoralists seek pasture in unsafe areas that are otherwise endowed with good resources. Unseasonable haphazard migration will also accelerate disease spread and limit control initiatives, heightening livestock mortality rates.

While resettlement of IDPs is ongoing, a significant proportion will remain in transit camps or in IDP camps, after failing to return to their homes due to a combination of lack of resources and continuing insecurity. Under this scenario, both IDPs who were formerly in camps as well as those integrated in households will have little access to income generating activities and their pre-election production capacities are unlikely to be re-established in the near or medium term. Most of the IDPs, not integrated into households are still classified as either highly or extremely food insecure. The IDPs that integrated into households are classified as moderately to highly food insecure, and their situation could deteriorate because their hosts are largely small scale farmers who are themselves under increasing pressure, due to rising food and non food prices.

Under this scenario, food prices are expected to rise even further because of the failure of the short rains in the southeastern and costal lowlands and lowered long-rains production. Urban, pastoral, and marginal agricultural households who purchase the majority of their food from the market will be adversely impacted by the expected steep rise

in food prices. Non-food expenditure, such as education, medical services, and transport has already been reduced significantly, and there is little relatively discretionary expenditure that can be allocated to food purchases.

Food security implications

A failed 2009 short-rains harvest would be the third successive crop failure in the southeastern and coastal lowlands, precipitating a food security crisis in February – March 2009. Households in the marginal cropping lowlands depend on the short-rains season for up to 70 percent of their food needs, and the next significant local harvest would not occur until March 2010. Food insecurity would deteriorate from moderate to high levels to high to extreme levels. Increased supply of off-farm labor would likely push down wages, eroding household purchasing capacities. The most commonly applied coping strategy – charcoal production – would continue to devastate the environment and forestall any chance of restoring the ecosystem for improved future production.

A poor season in the pastoral areas would be catastrophic, after three failed seasons, particularly in the northwest. However, the entire pastoral livelihood would be at risk because livestock is not an easily recoverable asset, once lost. Some areas such as Turkana, Marsabit, and Mandera, already categorized as highly food insecure, would likely deteriorate to the extremely food insecure category. While the failure of the short-rains season is likely to have adverse impacts on household food security, compounding factors would worsen the situation to unprecedented levels. Expanding conflict, poor environmental conditions, the rapid spread of the PPR, and soaring food prices would all combine to accelerate the decline of the pastoral livelihood. It is unclear that the pastoral livelihood would still be viable for a significant proportion of the pastoralists in the event that the season fails. Increased destitution and migration to urban centers would result, adding to the growing number of highly to extremely food insecure households in rural and urban areas. Additionally, in the worst case scenario, the spread of the PPR remains unchecked, with 13 million goats at risk; internal and cross border conflict remains unmitigated, and food and non-food prices continue to rise. Heightened conflict would render expansive areas inaccessible, cause the closure of more markets, limit migration options, and impede delivery of interventions in areas already reporting the highest rates of malnutrition.

The food security of IDPs remains of serious concern. An estimated 500,000 persons who were generally food secure suddenly became moderately to extremely food insecure. The settlement process has been difficult and impeded by: lack of sufficient resources to return households to pre-election status and the continuation of civil insecurity, stuttering reconciliation efforts, and, in some instances, resulting in the loss of productive household members. Unless the complete or near-complete return to former livelihood status is achieved, IDPs could become chronically food insecure, leading to the need for an expanded intervention across sectors. Solving the IDPs resettlement now will remove the need for a long-term commitment to finance a long-lasting humanitarian crisis.

The urban population that is food insecure is estimated to constitute up to 4.1 million persons, and is growing. The failure of the short-rains season will tighten the food market even further and increase the pressure on already well above average food prices. Poor production in the marginal agricultural lowlands would also suggest that the SGR will not be replenished and will therefore not cushion the highly and extremely food insecure categories in urban centers and elsewhere. Under these circumstances, households will forego medical, education, transport, and other important non-food needs, further entrenching chronic food insecurity. Rising food insecurity in urban centers has already led to riots, and these would increase in the worst case scenario, alongside increases in crime rates, due in part to increased school drop-outs.

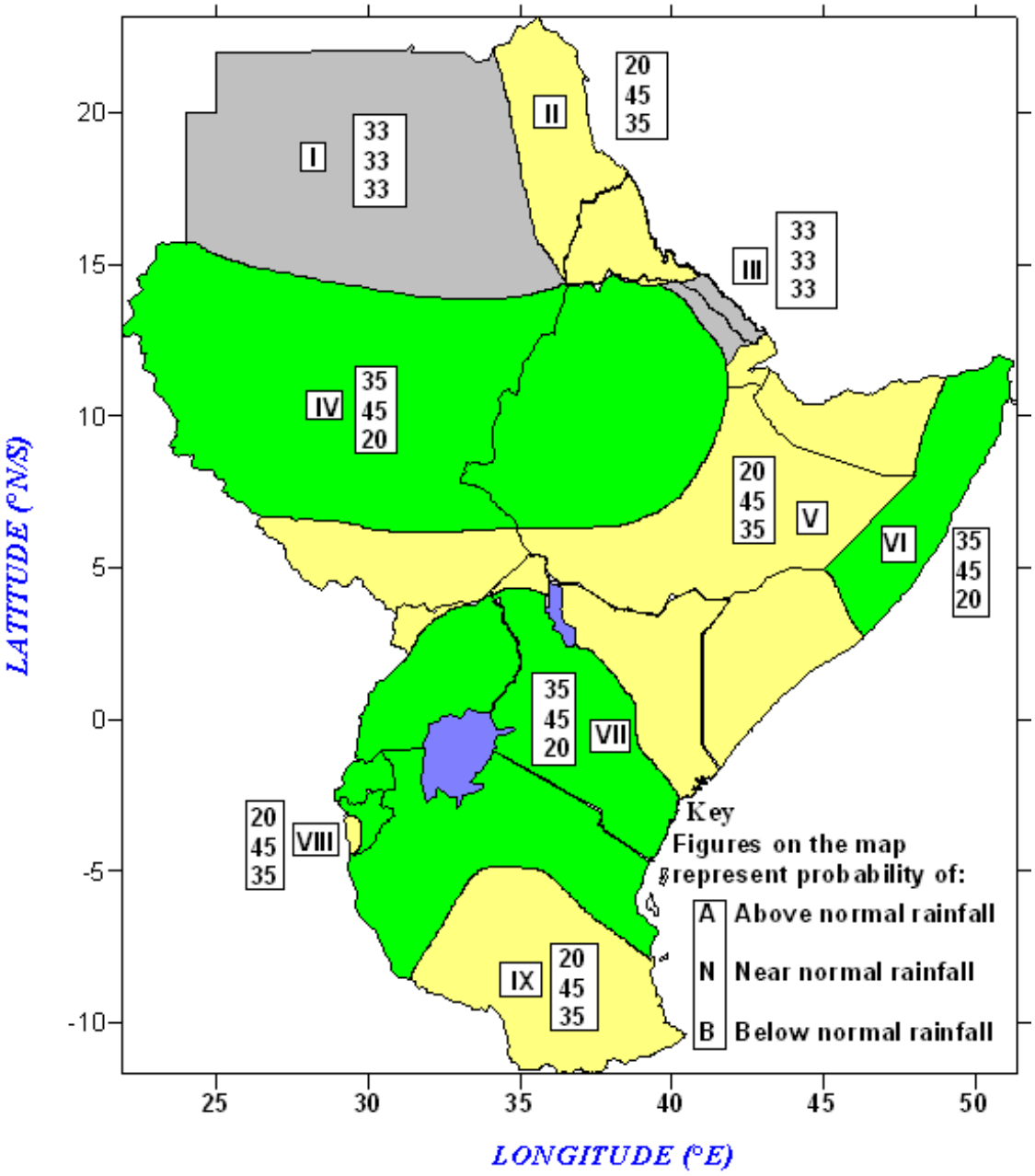
The worst case scenario is an undesirable scenario, and up to 3.2 million persons could become highly to extremely food insecure, mirroring the impacts and scale of the 2005/06 drought. Measures need to be instituted by the GoK and development partners to ensure that controllable factors such conflict and the PPR are mitigated, so that the GoK, development partners, and NGOs can concentrate efforts and resources in addressing and mitigating the impacts of uncontrollable factors such as drought. Measures would be aimed at restoring livelihood viability through recovery and developmental activities that include diversification and protection of the livelihood.

Opportunities for response

Most interventions would likely be emergency interventions geared toward saving lives and livelihoods, and could include:

- Expansion of emergency food distributions to an estimated 3.2 million persons.
- Expand the supplementary and school feeding programs to sustain nutrition and to uphold school enrollment.
- Institute a safety-net program to cushion the hardest-hit households, especially in urban centers.
- Urgently institute conflict mitigation and prevention measures that are deterrent in nature.
- Initiate early livestock off-take before body conditions deteriorate precariously.
- Pre-position water trucking facilities to avoid water shortages and disease spread.
- Constitute rapid response teams to repair over-worked boreholes.
- Enhance the level of the drought contingency fund in affected districts.
- Undertake early revision of drought contingency plans for timely intervention of necessary activities.
- Clean up water sources to facilitate recharge of the sources in areas where rains may occur.
- Urgently expand vaccination against PPR and other livestock diseases.
- Pre-position maize stocks in NCPB depots, close to drought-hit areas.
- Judicious importation of maize, cognizant that the bulk of the harvest will begin in October and continue through January.
- Conduct nutrition surveillance and carry out nutrition surveys in critical areas, so as to better inform decision-making.
- Enhance sanitation and hygiene interventions to mitigate disease spread and worsening malnutrition.
- Carry out rapid assessments in selected areas where the situation is unclear and could require an expanded intervention.

Conclusion

The food security prognosis for the outlook period is unfavorable even in the most likely scenario. The forecast for normal to below-normal short rains in the eastern half of the country is a factor in both the most likely and worst case scenarios. However, rapid implementation of suggested food and non-food interventions could enhance the capacities of livelihoods to cope with the upcoming poor season, thus avoiding a humanitarian catastrophe and severe livestock losses. The impacts of rising prices on deficit households, predominantly in the urban, pastoral, and marginal agricultural areas can not be understated and will likely result in highly undesirable consequences, if not mitigated. The food security and health condition of IDPs is precarious even as they struggle to return to pre-election production levels. Rapid resolution of the IDPs' displacement is critical to averting a humanitarian crisis. KFSSG's long rains report published in August 2008 contains full details of required interventions and their estimated cost.

Annex 1: Greater Horn of Africa Consensus Climate Outlook for September to December 2008