FSNAU
Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit - Somalia

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Somalia Crisis Easing, but 2.12 Million People Remain Food Insecure

August 29, 2012, Nairobi - Food security and nutrition data indicate continued improvements in food security in Somalia. During 2011, a Famine affected over 4 million people, or more than half of the population of Somalia, leading to tens of thousands of deaths. However, a report by Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), managed by UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with FEWS NET, estimates that 2.12 million people are in acute food security crisis for the August to December 2012 period, a 16 percent reduction from the beginning of the year. The improved situation is attributed to sustained humanitarian interventions over the last twelve months, improved food stocks at the household and market levels following an exceptional January 2012 *Deyr* harvest and improved milk availability and higher livestock prices in most pastoral areas of Somalia. Despite these improvements, lifesaving humanitarian assistance remains necessary between now and December to help food insecure populations meet immediate food needs, protect livelihoods, and build resilience.

Poor rains and below average harvest

According to recent assessment findings, the August/September *Gu* harvest will be significantly below average due to a late start of rains, poor rainfall totals, and pest outbreaks, among other factors. However, food stocks from last season's exceptional *Deyr* harvest will help to mitigate this shortfall and overall production for the 2012 calendar year will be average. Low cereal prices, high casual labor wage rates, and high livestock prices over the past six months have also contributed to reduced food insecurity by significantly strengthening the purchasing power of poor agropastoral households. In pastoral areas, households have also benefited from record livestock sales prices, robust livestock exports, and increasing livestock holdings, which have resulted in improved milk availability. This improved access to milk, among a variety of other factors, has driven a 27 percent reduction since January in the number of children requiring nutrition treatment. Currently 236,000 children are severely malnourished, of which 70 percent are in the South.

While conditions have improved considerably since last year, the food security crisis has not ended. In the southern and central agropastoral areas, the below average *Gu* harvest, the continued need for cash to pay down debts, and low livestock holdings are keeping most southern and central agropastoral areas in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). Other areas of concern include coastal areas and the coastal plains along the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean in the northern and central regions.

Outlook

A mild/moderate El Niño is increasing likely between now and December. Overall, an El Niño is expected to have positive impacts on Somalia as this phenomenon is associated with average to above average October to December *Deyr* rains. However, these rains are not always well distributed and therefore, cropping conditions could vary greatly over the rainfed, agropastoral areas. In addition, riverine areas are likely to experience flooding as a result of heavy rainfall and increased river levels. During the moderate 2006-07 El Niño, *Deyr* rains caused flooding, which disrupted production and markets, especially in the Juba Valley.

International food prices have risen and will likely have an impact on prices in Somalia between now and December, especially for wheat and sugar. Over the past three years, wheat and wheat product imports have averaged 63 percent of Somalia's food imports in grain equivalent terms. Prices for local maize and sorghum, the staple foods consumed by the poor, are likely to rise seasonably over the coming six months, but will be substantially lower than 2011.

The epicentre of Somalia's humanitarian crisis remains in the South, largely due to the long-term effects of drought and famine, and the short-term effects of this year's poor *Gu* rainy season. Efforts to meet immediate needs are essential to prevent further deterioration of food security. Assistance to help food insecure populations meet immediate food needs, protect their livelihoods, build their resilience, and improve food access remain necessary in Somalia between now and the *Deyr* harvest in January.

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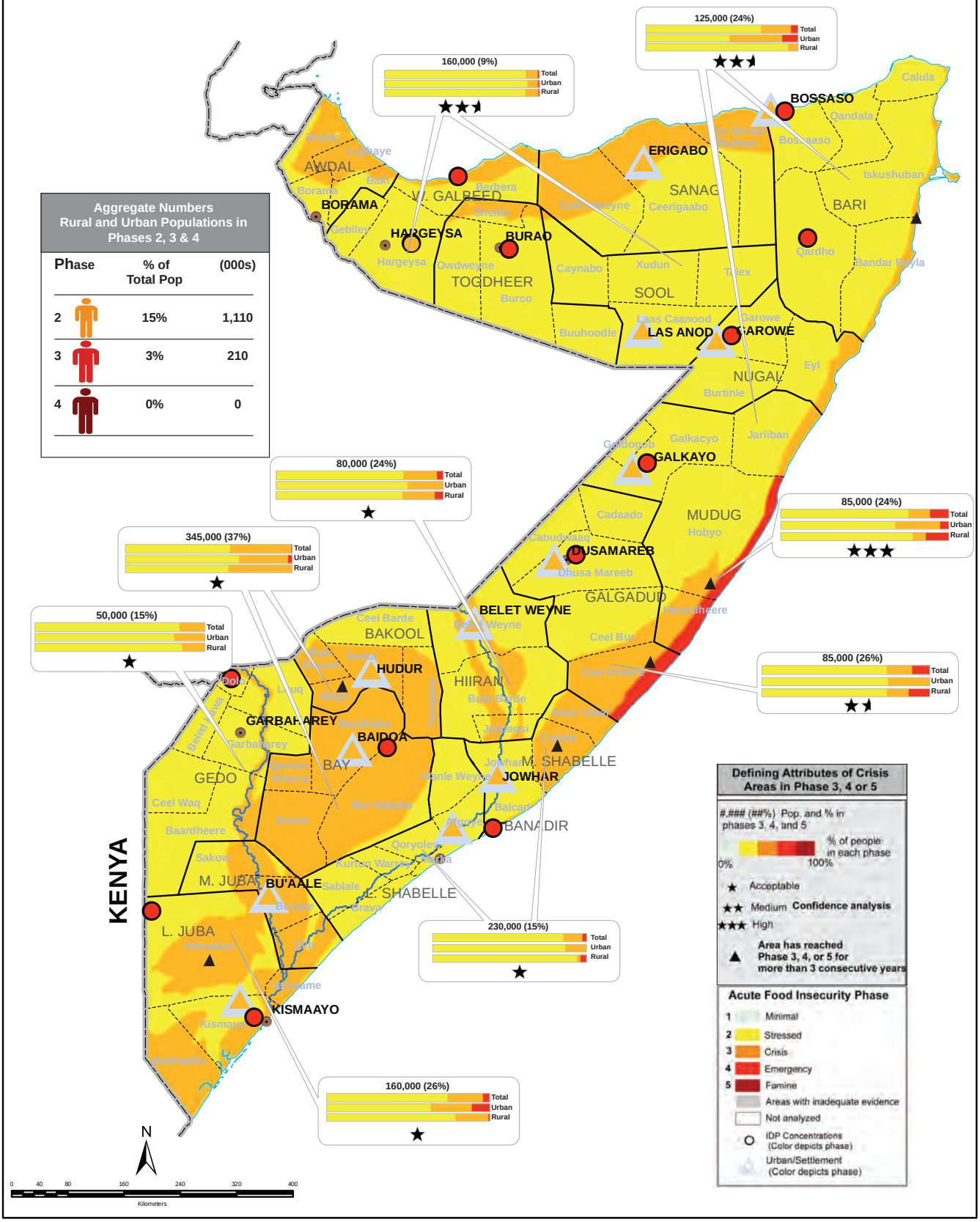
Somalia Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview

Rural, Urban and IDP Populations: August - December, 2012 Most Likely Scenario

IPC Integrated Food Security Phase Classification



Assessed and Contingency Population in Crisis and Emergency	Number affected	% of Total population	Distribution of populations in crisis
Assessed Urban population in Crisis and Emergency	530,000	7	25%
Assessed Rural population in Crisis and Emergency	790,000	11	37%
IDP in settlements* (out of UNHCR 1.3million) to avoid double counting	800,000	11	38%
Estimated Rural, Urban and IDP population in crisis	2,120,000	28	100%