

LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

LIVELIHOODS IN SOMALIA

Somalia's people live in extremely poor and underdeveloped conditions. Livelihoods are broadly based on subsistence farming and pastoralism with limited opportunity to earn wages. The predominant livelihood systems are outlined below.

Pastoralism is found throughout areas of rural Somalia but predominantly in the arid lands of northern and central Somalia, as well as along the Ethiopian and Kenyan borders. The livestock sector is the largest contributor to Somali livelihoods with over 65% of the population engaged in some way in the industry. Exports of livestock and their products account for 80 per cent of exports in normal years but exports have been periodically interrupted by droughts and international bans. Despite the ban imposed by Saudi Arabia in 2000, livestock exports continue to be the largest traded commodity for Somalia. Livestock are shipped to various countries in the Arabian peninsula, and trekked or transported to markets in Kenya, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. Livestock also enter Somalia through the borders with Ethiopia and Kenya. Furthermore, livestock is a key local consumption commodity for household food security.

Agriculture is an important livelihood activity in Somalia not only in terms of meeting the food needs of the population (roughly 50% of populations cereal requirements are met through domestic production) but also in terms of generating income through crop sales and agricultural labor opportunities. Agriculture is a major component particularly for two of the main rural livelihood systems in Somalia:

Agro-pastoralist – mix of agriculture and livestock production based livelihood. Agro-pastoralists are found in the inter-riverine regions of Bay, Bakol, western Hiran, eastern Gedo, Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba in Southern Somalia but also found in parts of Awdal and Western Galbeed in the north-west

Agriculturalist - agriculture based livelihood - Two areas are considered high potential for crop production with rainfall ranging from 400mm to 600mm: a small area in the Northwest (west of Hargeisa) and a much larger inter-riverine area between the Shabelle and Juba river valleys.

Agriculture is primarily rain fed making this livelihood extremely vulnerable to climatic hazards.

Fishing : Fishing as a livelihood system involves fishermen along the Somali coast as well as casual labor migrants from further inland. The Somali coastline, the longest in Africa, has been under utilized primarily by local artisan fishermen with little large-scale commercial activity. International fleets primarily exploit the Somali marine resources. It is estimated that Somalia loses approximately 100 million US dollars to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities, resources that could go a long way towards improving the livelihoods of Somalis. World Bank and FAO have completed fishing sector assessments for Puntland, Somaliland and South/Central (November 2005). The assessments will inform a comprehensive strategy to facilitate a commercially viable and ecologically sustainable fisheries sector for Somalia.

Urban Residents and IDPs : Urbanization is providing new opportunities and livelihood linkages. The large urban towns are Hargeisa, Mogadishu, Kismayo, Bosasso and Baidoa. IDPs are a particularly vulnerable sub strata of urban populations concentrated in these large towns.

Livelihood systems are strongly interlinked through trade, social networks or sharing and competition for resources. Livelihood systems are also characterized by disparities and differences based on assets including natural, physical, financial, social and human as well as structures and institutions that enable/disrupt economic, social and political progress. Livelihoods in Somalia are vulnerable to 'shocks' such as drought, flooding, tsunamis, international livestock bans or conflict. Some coping mechanisms used by households to deal with 'shocks' can in extreme situations undermine the livelihood itself. For example in 2004 during the peak of the drought in the north, some pastoralists resorted to burning wood to make charcoal, which undermines the environmental viability of pastoralism. Somalia has a strong social network and support system that has provides insurance and is used as a coping mechanism in times of difficulty. **Remittances, sent by relatives living abroad accounts for 700 million to 1 billion US dollars annually**, thus exceeding the international aid assistance and averting a worse humanitarian crisis.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS CREATE HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY IN 2006

The already dire humanitarian situation in Somalia has been further aggravated by the worst drought in a decade. Given the failed 2005 Deyr, around 1.7 million people – not including 400,000 IDPs – are now in urgent need of assistance until June 2006. The number has more than doubled since the last seasonal assessment in August 2005 when almost 1 million people were reported in need of assistance and protection. Around 710,000 people are in a state of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis while 915,000 are experiencing a Humanitarian Emergency (figures inclusive of those at high risk of descending into either category in the coming months). The worst hit regions are Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba, and areas of Bay and Bakool, with northern Gedo and riverine areas in the Juba regions identified at moderate risk of a famine. The depletion of resources is resulting in increased movement of people (February 2006). The Climate Outlook predicts a below normal Gu rainy season (due to start in April) and this has serious implications for the severity of the drought crisis in coming months.

NUTRITION SITUATION DETERIORATES AS DROUGHT PREVAILS AND RAINS FAIL

Malnutrition levels throughout Somalia remain unacceptably high, ranging from around 10% in the north to over 15% in many parts of the south. The high rates are related to variations in access to a diet of adequate quantity and quality, poor public health conditions (including water and sanitation), low levels of access to quality health services and sub optimal care for vulnerable groups. During December 2005 and January 2006, the onset of the drought dominated the humanitarian arena with particular focus directed at the worse hit regions of southern Somalia. Surveillance information has shown some early indications of increasing levels of malnutrition and decreasing dietary diversity. Decreasing access to acceptable and sufficient levels of water and food will directly influence human wellbeing in the coming weeks and months, particularly in Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba and parts of Bay and Bakool.

What is the Food Security Analysis Unit Somalia? (FSAU)

The Mission of the FSAU is to provide evidence-based analysis of Somali food, nutrition and livelihood security to enable both short-term emergency responses and long-term strategic planning to promote food and livelihood security for Somali people. The project is funded by the European Commission and USAID/OFDA, and implemented by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization. The FSAU receives technical support from a number of technical partners and services a wide range of clients and users, including the international development community and Somali people. The **Food Security Component seeks to** ensure continued availability and access to information and analysis of Somali livelihoods, thereby enabling early and appropriate responses to food insecurity crises and the development of policies and strategies to address longer-term food and livelihood security issues. The **Nutrition Component** seeks to ensure that relevant and accurate information on the nutritional status of populations throughout Somalia is available to decision makers.

THE COORDINATION MECHANISMS AND RESPONSE TO CURRENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS (MARCH 2006)

The first meeting of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in Somalia took place in Feb 2006 - the discussions of which focused on the sector response to the drought and requirements for advocacy. In Somalia, seven IASC clusters have been identified together with respective cluster co-leads (from NGOs and UN agencies) to plan and coordinate sectoral responses to humanitarian issues. These are food aid; agriculture and livelihood; water and sanitation; health and nutrition; access; protection and education. The Drought Working Group was established to handle the drought response and is in line with the cluster approach. The Working Group is composed of the different cluster co-leads and the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator and will meet on a weekly/biweekly basis to review the response to the drought, identify gaps, ensure sectoral cross coordination and discuss advocacy needs. On a needs basis, the Working Group will consult with the TFG's Ministerial Disaster Committee.

The main objectives of the Agriculture and Livelihood cluster are to provide immediate support to pastoral communities (87,000 households); short-term assistance to farmers (93,000 households); promotion of an integrated agro-pastoralist response (700 households) and the promotion of pastoral drought resilience (community at large). ***If no support is provided immediately to pastoralist communities, asset depletion will start to occur (of productive animals) and recovery will be compromised.*** Delays in assisting farmers during the Gu 2006 season will also jeopardize their capacity for timely planting, which is particularly important to maximize available rainfall. An unbalanced response between pastoralists and farmers is likely to increase the risk of potential resource-based conflicts. As a result, insecurity would prevent access to beneficiaries. Unbalanced response between addressing immediate needs and underlying root causes of livelihood erosion will increase the risk of perpetuating food insecurity. WFP, CARE and ICRC have an agreement where they have divided the country between them to ensure effective food aid delivery in locations where there are food shortfalls (and as identified by the FSAU). When there is not an emergency, they meet on a monthly basis at the Food Security and Rural Development Committee (FSRDC) of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (alongside a broad range of UN agencies, INGO and Local NGOs involved in food security) and where the FSAU gives a monthly update on the food security situation and context.

CONSTRAINTS TO PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AID AND FOOD RELIEF

Humanitarian access in Somalia remains critical to the country's most vulnerable populations in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection (estimated at 2.1 million) - and particularly the large number who reside in south/central region who are extremely food insecure or internally displaced. In recent years lack of sustained humanitarian access and restricted operating space in south/central have been major factors affecting human survival (as well as limiting operational capacity of aid organizations) in the region.

Continued sea piracy along the Somali coastline is impacting on humanitarian supply pipelines into southern Somalia. Because of hijackings, the World Food Programme has had to transport food aid into Somalia overland through Kenya.

ESTIMATED POPULATION BY REGION IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY (HE) AND ACUTE FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD CRISIS (AFLC) INCLUSIVE OF HIGH RISK GROUPS

Affected Regions	Estimated Population of Affected Regions (1)	Assessed and Contingency Population in AFLC and HE		
		Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis (AFLC) (2)	Humanitarian Emergency (HE) (2)	Total in AFLC or HE as % of Region Population
North				
Bari	235,975	45,000	0	19
Nugal	99,635	20,000	0	20
Sanag	190,455	55,000	0	29
Sool	194,660	50,000	0	26
Togdheer	302,155	40,000	0	13
Coastal (Fishing)		20,000	0	
Sub-Total	1,022,880	230,000	0	22
Central				
Galgadud	319,735	40,000	0	13
Mudug	199,895	20,000	0	10
Sub-Total	519,630	60,000	0	12
South				
Bakol	225,450	45,000	105,000	67
Bay	655,686	135,000	395,000	81
Gedo	375,280	80,000	180,000	69
Hiran	280,880	55,000	0	20
Lower Juba	329,240	60,000	115,000	53
Middle Juba	244,275	50,000	120,000	70
Sub-Total	2,110,811	425,000	915,000	63
Total	3,653,321	715,000	915,000	45

Summary Table (2)

(Both Tables Kindly Provided by FSAU)

Assessed and Contingency Population Numbers in AFLC or HE	1,630,000	22 (6)
Urban population in Crisis Areas in the South (3)	30,000	1 (6)
Combined Assessed, Urban and Contingency Populations in AFLC and HE	1,700,000	23 (6)
Estimated number of IDPs (5)	400,000	6 (6)
Estimated Total Population in Crisis	2,100,000	29 (6)

(1) Source : WHO 2004. Note this only includes population figures in affected regions.

(2) Estimated numbers are rounded to the nearest five thousand, based on resident population not considering current or anticipated migration, and are inclusive of population in High Risk of AFLC or HE (estimated at 210,000) for purposes of planning.

(3) Roughly estimated as 30% and 20% of urban population in HE and AFLC areas respectively.

(4) Actual number is 1,660,000 however this is rounded to 1,700,000 for purposes of rough planning and ease of communication.

(5) Source UN OCHA updated April 2004 (376,630) and UNHCR IDP map Dec 2005 (407,000). rounded to 400 000 as an estimate

Given the already challenging operational environment in southern Somalia where insecurity dictates the restricted nature of access, the implications of piracy pose an added obstacle to meeting the needs of highly vulnerable populations.

During a UNICEF/OCHA visit to Lower Juba to consult with partners on the ground and identify quick impact priority interventions to be undertaken, on 1 March the mission was ambushed in Afmadow by armed militia and a UNICEF international staff detained. Direct negotiations with the TFG and local authorities were immediately commenced to seek the staff member's quick and safe release - which after intense consultations occurred 30 hours later. The mission to Lower Juba would have enabled progress in the drought response in the region. Lower Juba is one of the worse affected regions yet also one with the smallest presence of aid organisations. Despite the complications, in mid-January (2006) the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Prime Minister in which the TFG committed itself to cooperating with the UN to enhance unhindered access and to assist in the dissemination of the MOU's principles at the local level. UN agencies have produced a statement for local authorities and communities to adhere to basic humanitarian principles. The TFG has also created a Technical Committee, which among other things will look into access issues.

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