

SKBN Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update

June 2018

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Depleting food stocks and limited markets

As food stocks are depleting, and most markets are poorly functioning, with limited availability of commodities and rocketing prices, coupled with consumers' lack of purchasing power, the food gap for over a million people in South Kordofan and Blue Nile is growing. The areas of Wadaka in Blue Nile and the counties of Thobo (Boram), Umdorein and Heiban in South Kordofan are especially affected. No information is available from the areas of Rashad, New Tagele (Abassya), Kao Nyaro and Warni.

FSMU writes in its [May Market Report](#) that “with post-harvest food stocks dwindling households are turning to markets to meet their food needs. Market prices in Wadaka, Blue Nile are climbing above seasonal norms. Bean prices vary widely across the monitored areas and prices for imported goods, like sugar, were very high in most monitored markets due, in part, to the impact of the fuel shortage on transport costs”.

[Fewsnet writes](#) “The June 2018 to January 2019 outlook period includes the peak of the lean season between June and September, followed by the October to January harvest period. The protracted conflict in Jebel Marra in South and Central Darfur states and in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states since 2011 has disrupted access to main livelihood activities, function of markets, eroded households' livelihood asset holdings and limited households' access to income earning opportunities in these areas. Meanwhile, the persistent sharp increase of staple food prices has reduced the ability of poor households and protracted IDPs to access food through market purchase, especially during the June to September peak lean season when cereal prices will be at its highest. The persistent macroeconomic challenges in the form of high inflation and local currency devaluation have resulted in reduced purchasing power for many households in Sudan, particularly poor households. Approximately 20-30 percent of IDPs and poor households in SPLM-N controlled areas are likely to face significant food consumption gaps between June and September 2018 and will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4)”. The conflict in South Sudan and high inflation of the South Sudanese pound is further affecting the livelihood opportunities of the communities in Blue Nile and the southern counties of South Kordofan.



Highlights

- Populations in Blue Nile are extremely vulnerable this year with food stocks depleted and very limited seeds to plant.
- Information on the food insecurity and progress of the agricultural season in Rashad, New Tagele, Kau, Nyaro and Warni is not available due to lack of access.

As post-harvest food stocks are dwindling, households are turning to markets to meet their food needs, as noted in the FSMU [May Market Report](#). However, the ability to purchase food is limited in both areas as food prices remain high due to limited supply and inaccessibility. In Blue Nile, market prices in Wadaka are climbing above seasonal norms. Shortage of fuel in the North has had a tremendous effect especially on the food supply in cross-line markets in South Kordofan.

The food gap in Thobo, Umdorein and Heiban Counties in Southern Kordofan is alarming and requires emergency intervention. There is still no report on the progress of the agricultural season in Rashad, New Tagele, Kau, Nyaro and Warni, which are not covered by any monitoring entity. Vegetable seed distribution by partners are ongoing.

A total of 278 households in Jau and Hijerat (Thobo county) were identified as food insecure during a recent assessment by partners, as a result of a poor harvest. Heavy rains affected most of the farms in the low areas and eroded the ones in the high lands last year. As per the same assessment, 20 households were identified as food insecure in Debi, and reportedly they had returned from different towns in the rest of Sudan as a result of deteriorating living conditions (difficulty to meet daily needs, health services and the school requirements for their children). From the Western Jebels in South Kordofan there are reports of a continued increase in commodity prices, with maize and wheat no longer available in local markets. CU monitors report an increase in people crossing from Government controlled areas to crossline markets for trading, so they can purchase food in turn. In the SPLM-N controlled areas of Blue Nile, markets are under stress and not fully functioning. Insecurity in Asosa, Ethiopia late June interrupted the border for Ethiopian traders supplying Moguf and Yabus Balla markets. This in turn, affects supplies to the supply other weekly markets within the state and in South Sudan, including Balila, Mayak and Bunj. Additionally, trade from South Sudan (through Maban) was interrupted by heavy rain early June. As a result of these bottle necks in market supply, food prices have seen an increase across all four markets. Wheat and beans were not available in markets in June while maize was only available at the Yabus Balla and Moguf markets.

These market challenges were echoed in the FSMU [May Market Report](#) stating : “Wadaka markets showed more turbulence. Due to a poor 2017 harvest, caused in part by conflict, Wadaka sorghum stock levels in January and April 2018 were considerably lower than the corresponding months in 2017 ([FSMU Quarterly Report March-April 2018](#)). Market functioning also deteriorated in recent months, leaving the two monitored Wadaka markets [Mayak and Moguf] with below-average supplies and transactions. Whereas in January of this year, sorghum prices [in Wadaka market] were about the same as in previous years, by May, prices had climbed approximately 70 percent. At USD 0.76/kilogram, they were about twice as high as in nearby Yabus and amongst the highest across the entire FSMU-monitored area in Blue Nile. Sources reported that Wadaka households were increasingly reliant on costly supplies from Maban County, South Sudan, where a confluence of factors, including conflict and poor harvests, have contributed to high prices”. CU Monitors report that in the Central Region of SPLM-N controlled area of South Kordofan planting and weeding activities are in progress but that erratic rainfall in May and first part of June forced farmers to replant with already limited seeds in Heiban, Umdorein and Western Kadugli. While farmers in Blue Nile have access to their near (jibraka) and far farms this season, they don't have enough seeds to adequately provide for this season. Planting could continue up to August for short duration sorghum if there are seeds to plant.

HEALTH

Reports of malnutrition in Western Jebels

While partners are supporting the 23 functioning clinics in Blue Nile, access to clinics in Wadaka and Chali Alfil is blocked by swamps and increased water levels, affecting the quality of health services. Furthermore, the Yabus river has cut the Komo Ganza community off from health services until at least October. Communities in Wadak payam and Chali Alfil payam are facing the same challenges with swamps and increased water levels blocking partners operating in the health sector. Vast areas are now only accessible on foot.

Continued cases of malaria, eye infections, diarrhea and onchocerciasis, also known as river blindness, have been reported in the last month throughout all three monitored payams of Wadaka, Chali Alfil and Yabus, in Kurmuk county, Blue Nile.

In the Western Jebels of South Kordofan, there have been reports of malnutrition by the only hospital in the area, and an urgent assessment is needed. In addition, there are reports of goiter cases in Dilling and Al-Sunut, which reveals that thousands of people face severe dietary constraints.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Several infectious diseases affecting cattle

The Central Region of South Kordofan saw reports of several diseases affecting livestock in June. Haemorrhagic septicaemia (HS) and black quarter (BQ), both acute infectious and highly fatal bacterial diseases for cattle, was reported in Talodi area by the Secretariat of Animal Health (SoAH), with 59 heads of cattle reportedly dead and 858 are at risk.

Sheep pox was reported to be still present in Umdorein County. New Castle disease affecting poultry numbers have been reported in some counties in Central Region. The SoAH has no drugs available for the disease. These are all highly infectious diseases and require a coordinated response inside the areas and beyond the frontlines to contain further spread and prevent economic losses.

A Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CCBP) disease outbreak was reported recently in Debi payam of Heiban county, where drugs have been dispatched by the SoAH. CBPP is one of the most serious diseases of cattle which can cause great economical losses if not controlled, spreading fast in areas where cattle concentrate. The disease can be controlled effectively with vaccination.

Cattle raiding in the Western Jebels, and consequent loss of grazing land, is further affecting animal health as the availability of grazing land reduces.

Preparations are underway for the livestock census by the Secretariat of Animal Health that should start in July. An estimated 575 km² of grazing land has been lost due to a cattle raid by northern militias in Western Jebels and the burning of graze land. This is having a serious effect on available food for better planning, preparedness and coordination among partners.

There are no veterinary services in Blue Nile and diseases can spread unchecked into the rest of Sudan and into South Sudan. More support to this sector is urgently needed.

WASH

More clean water sources to improve health are required

While water sources are replenished now with the rainy season in full swing, access to safe drinking water remains a challenge in both areas. Humans and animals still share water sources and if water-borne diseases, such as cholera, affect more communities, there will likely be insufficient improved water sources to prevent its spreading.

Increased cases of diarrhoea have been reported in Komo Ganza in Blue Nile. About 200 households received water tablets and buckets for filtering water in Yabus Balla. More clean water sources and animal specific reservoirs are needed to improve health conditions throughout the two states.

EDUCATION

No single curriculum in use

With primary schools out of session for holidays, secondary schools continue. There are eight secondary schools in South Kordofan and none in Blue Nile.

In general, across both states, there is a lack of school materials.

The lack of single curriculum to use remains a concern. While the Kenyan curriculum is still in use in schools in South Kordofan it's no longer possible for pupils to sit the end of primary examination (KPCE) and only limited numbers of kids are able to go to refugee camps in South Sudan to sit the South Sudan Curriculum examination. In Blue Nile, the Sudan curriculum is still widely used. With this situation, students will have no access to higher education or other opportunities past the basic, under-resourced schools in the Two Areas.

SECURITY

Insecurity at the Ethiopia border halts trade

In Blue Nile, free movement of population is reported to South Sudan, and no clashes between the SPLM/A-N factions have occurred since February. But insecurity at the border with Ethiopia disrupted trader supply to weekly markets in June. The [Africa News website reports](#) that at least 10 people were killed in the western Benishangul-Gumuz Region in the latest inter-tribal clashes in Ethiopia.

With exception of the looting and incidents of minor crimes, the general security situation seems to be calm in South Kordofan. In particular, cattle raiding and burning of land in Western Jebels, allegedly by northern militias, is estimated to have led to the loss of about 575 km² of grazing land. This is diminishing available food for cattle and keeping livestock undernourished and very vulnerable to diseases.