Contingency planning Middle and Lower Shabelle Regions and Agropastoral Hiraan Region

Background
As highlighted in October, the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum predicted an increased probability of near average to below-average September to December (Deyr) rainfall across much of Somalia. Rains began in October, but spatial and temporal distributions were erratic and the total amounts of rainfall received were low (FEWSNET). Rains only reached sufficient levels for planting in mid-November.

The FSC issued an alert in October highlighting Hiraan agropastoral as a potential area of concern. This alert also includes Middle and Lower Shabelle and is in addition to Delayed Deyr planting: contingency planning Middle and Lower Juba and Gedo Regions.

Overview Hiran agropastoral
Hiran’s agropastoral was one of the two livelihood zones (LZ) classified in IPC 3 after FSNAU’s Post Gu Assessment. Recent monitoring poor distribution of Gu 2013 rains resulting poor cereal harvests has resulted in the immediate loss of income opportunity from crop sales and mid to longer term income due to asset losses (FEWSNET). There is a reliance on the market for access to food while at the same time income sources are limited and the labor wage has reduced by 23% in six months (FEWSNET). Recently planted sorghum is expected to be poor at harvest in the agropastoral livelihood of Beletweyne district (FSNAU); normally Deyr harvests last two to three months though this is not expected this year (FSNAU).

Overview Middle & Lower Shabelle
In August flooding began occurring in Middle Shabelle with an extensive reach. Approximately 8,000 hectares of standing crops in Jowhar and Balcad Districts in Middle Shabelle were flooded (FSNAU). As of the end of November these flood waters reached Afgoye District of Lower Shabelle and additional 4,000 hectares of land were inundated (FSNAU). The maize harvest in the Shabelles is expected to be below average; this is mainly due to poor rains at the start of the Deyr season, low planting and poor germination, floods (FSNAU). The floods could reduce the overall volume of the Deyr harvest in much of the Shabelles, which are surplus-producing areas that contribute significantly to national supply (FEWSNET). Flood-affected districts of Middle Shabelle are likely to be classified in crisis IPC 3 in post Deyr 2013/14 (FSNAU).

Recommendations
The potential number of affected households is 550,000 people including agropastoral households of Hiraan and riverine, agropastoral and agricultural households in Lower and Middle Shabelle. These households are those classified in the latest IPC as in emergency, crisis and stressed. FSC partners and members implementing in these areas of concern are recommended to:

- Submit updated planning in to the FSC as soon as possible
- Monitor the situation at their district level and livelihood zone levels
- Begin livelihood asset programming (e.g. conditional transfers) early as January
- Extend activities contributing Improved Access response objective through April 2014
Although the FSC indicates needs as per response priorities, which seek to respond in advance of food security deterioration, members and partners are encouraged to employ conditional responses in place of unconditional Improved Access activities.

These recommendations can be downgraded depending on the changes after the Deyr harvest. Currently the previous alert released downgrades the concerns for Gedo Region based on FSNAU analysis. The FSC will keep the membership updated as the seasonal analysis is available.