Current Situation Overview

In this IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis, nine rural districts of Balochistan, seven rural districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and nine rural districts of Sindh were analysed, amounting to around 8.6% of Pakistan’s population. Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh are three provinces in Pakistan all having a high prevalence of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. In 2021, their populations faced multiple shocks including high food prices, drought, inadequate rainfall and livestock diseases, which were exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In total, nearly 4.66 million people (25% of the population analysed) will experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) through March/April 2022. These include over one million people (6% of the population analysed) in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) and over 3.5 million people (19% of the population analysed) in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) across the 25 districts analysed.

For all three provinces, food insecurity has consistently remained high over the years, and urgent action is required to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps of people in Crisis and save lives and livelihoods of those in Emergency. The latest IPC Acute Malnutrition analysis conducted in Sindh province also reported nearly 640,000 children under the age of five likely suffering from acute malnutrition through February 2022.

Key Drivers

High Food Prices
High food prices of commodities and high inflation led to low purchasing power of households (nationally food prices went up by 9.1 percent for rural consumers, on a year-over-year basis in September 2021), particularly for low income groups, e.g., small farmers, wage labourers, households relying on petty trade, etc.

COVID-19
The pandemic had an economic impact on income and purchasing power due to limited income opportunities in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, also resulting in loss of employment.

Drought/dry spells
Most of the analysed areas fall under rain-fed regions with a dependency on rainfall and did not receive adequate rainfall during 2021. Due to deficiency of rainfall, farmers experienced difficulties and a reduction in crop and livestock production.

Conflict and displacement
Prolonged conflict and displacement, mainly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, over several years has affected livelihoods. Some remote areas are still deprived of basic facilities and people are not able to revive their livelihoods.

Livestock diseases or deaths
Limited availability of water, veterinary services, and declining grazing pastures/fodder caused livestock diseases and deaths, and affected livestock-based livelihoods, mainly in Balochistan.

Recommended Actions

Humanitarian Assistance
Food and cash and voucher assistance to reduce food consumption gaps and protect asset depletion.

Livelihood Support
Timely provision of quality seeds for high-yielding crops and vegetables, and toolkits, especially to subsistence-level farmers. Provision of livestock/poultry to vulnerable households.

Livestock Support
Scale-up of livestock protection and management interventions such as vaccination campaigns to prevent prevailing diseases, provide access to multi-nutritional feed and pastures.

Capacity Development
Training on climate-smart crop and fodder production, including guidance on kitchen gardening. Capacity building of communities on processing and preservation of seasonal produce to enable them to earn higher income from processed fruits and vegetables and meet food requirements in the lean seasons.

Water Infrastructure
Construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructure for agriculture and livestock for better conservation and management.

Economic Empowerment of Women
Inclusion of women in economic growth activities (agriculture and non-agriculture) to improve their livelihoods.