



Press Release on 20th February 2020

Food Security Situation in the Republic of South Sudan

The National Bureau of Statistics on behalf of the government of the Republic of South Sudan, the IPC South Sudan Technical Working Group and all Food Security Stakeholders, announces the results of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis conducted in January 2020.

IPC version 3.0 continues to increase the rigor and utility of food security analysis in South Sudan, while still maintaining its evidence-based approach that adheres to internationally accepted protocols for classifying the nature and magnitude of food insecurity and acute malnutrition.

The just concluded IPC analysis shows that food insecurity continues to affect almost half of the population of South Sudan, mainly due to climatic shocks, low crop production, pockets of insecurity, and the macro-economic crisis.

In the January 2020, an estimated 5.3 million people, or 45% of the population, were facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity or worse, out of which 1.11 million were facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity and 40,000 were in Catastrophe (IPC phase 5). The people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in January 2020 were in Akobo, Duk and Ayod counties of Jonglei State. Compared with the same period last year, the January 2019 levels of food insecurity reflect a 9% reduction in the population facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity in the post-harvest season. This reduction has largely been driven by the peaceful conditions that have prevailed in most parts of the country following the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South on 12 September 2018.

In the projection period of February to April 2020, an estimated 6 million people, or 51% of the population, will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity, with about 20,000 of them in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). The population in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) is found in Akobo and Duk of Jonglei State. Furthermore, in the projection period of May to July 2020, which is the typical lean season for South Sudan, an estimated 6.5 million people, or 55% of the population, will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity.

From the 2019 cropping season, the country's cereal harvests are estimated to only cover 63% of the country's cereal needs in 2020. This is an improvement from last year when the 2018 harvests covered 52% of the national cereal. This is a clear indicator that the dividends of peace are manifesting in an increase of crop production as the population engages in productive livelihood activities.

But, even as we celebrate the gains, let us not lose sight of the fact that more than half of the population of South Sudan will likely be severely food insecure during the lean season of May to July 2020. Key factors contributing to this dire food security situation include the protracted depletion of assets for majority of the population; the ongoing macro-economic crisis that continues to constrain households' purchasing power; climatic shocks that disrupt livelihoods and lead to loss of assets; low crop production that decreases availability of food for the majority; and crop and livestock pests and diseases.

In order to prevent some of the populations from falling into Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) during the lean season, and save their lives, there is need for sufficient and

sustained multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to the affected populations. The release of this report is timely and should adequately serve the response and targeting needs of the government and the humanitarian community. I urge you all to undertake close monitoring of the worst-affected areas – particularly Akobo, Duk and Ayod – so as to ensure that the food security situation does not deteriorate further to the extent of endangering people's lives.

As you are all aware, and based on recent events, the government is fully committed to the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement, so as to afford our people a better life. We look forward to a peaceful environment that will continue to support recovery of disrupted livelihoods and greater participation of the population in the upcoming 2020 agricultural season. These will prevent further deterioration of an already severe food insecurity situation in the country.

The IPC Technical Working Group, the National Bureau of Statistic (NBS), together with all other relevant Ministries, urges all stakeholders to scale up their efforts in the coming months in order to prevent further deterioration of food security situation and acute malnutrition in the Country.

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