Press Release on September 28, 2018

Overall Food Security & Nutrition Situation in South Sudan

The National Bureau of Statistic (NBS) and IPC Technical working Group in the Republic of South Sudan announce the analysis finding of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis for September 2018.

The IPC is an evidence-based approach, which uses international standards to classify the nature and magnitude of food insecurity in a country or region.

Based on September 2018 IPC analysis, it is expected that 6.1 million people (59% of the total population) faced Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity at the peak of the lean season, of whom 47,000 were in Catastrophe (IPC phase 5) and 1.7 million were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) as a result of the protracted conflict, disruption of livelihood, poor economic condition, climatic change, fall army worm (FAW) infestation on crops across the country and other challenges faced in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Food security has improved slightly with the green harvest in September relative to July and August, and further improvement are expected in the Post-harvest period between October and December 2018 when the number of people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) are most likely to reduce to 4.4 million (43% of the total population), with 26,000 in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). However, an anticipated earlier than normal start of the lean season will result in an estimated 5.2 million (49% of the total population) people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse between January and March 2019, with 36,000 in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). These estimates are in the presence of planned humanitarian food assistance.

In September 2018, it is expected small percentage of the populations are in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Leer and Mayendit (former Unity state), Yirol East and Yirol West (former Lakes state), Canal/ Pigi (former Jonglei state), Panyikang (former Upper Nile state), and Greater Baggari in Wau (former Western Bahr El Ghazal state). In October - December 2018, Catastrophe (IPC phase 5) outcomes are expected in Leer and Mayendit (former Unity state), Pibor (former Jonglei state), Panyikang (former Upper Nile state) and Greater Baggari in Wau (former Western Bahr El Ghazal state). In January - March 2019, Catastrophe is expected in Pibor and Canal/ Pigi (former Jonglei state) and Leer and Mayendit (former Unity state).

Of greatest concern are counties where access to humanitarian assistance may be limited for a section of the population; possible returns from within and outside of the country may cause further pressure on already scarce resources; insecurity, poor harvest, lack of freedom of movement and extreme depletion of livelihoods prevails. As a result, extreme levels of acute food insecurity are expected to persist in many areas even in the presence of planned, funded, and likely humanitarian assistance. This calls for immediate and unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance and close monitoring.

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2 Five counties excluded from the analysis due to lack of data: Maban (Greater Upper Nile); Terekeka, Lainya, Morobo and Yei (Central Equatoria) with a total population of 620,638.
3 The adjusted population for South Sudan factoring in refugee outflows is 10.9 million. This (59%) is the highest proportion of food insecure populations at the height of the lean season ever recorded since the start of IPC in South Sudan in 2008.
4 Of the food insecure population, an estimated 25% are children under 5 years, 7% are the elderly and another 7% are pregnant and lactating women (PLWs).
The overall situation of acute malnutrition has slightly improved this year as compared to the same period last year with no county reporting extreme critical levels (GAM above 30%) of acute malnutrition in 2018. A total of 31 counties in the former states of Warrap, Unity, Upper Nile, and Jonglei reported ‘Critical’ (GAM (WHZ) 15.0 – 29.9%) levels of acute malnutrition while 20 counties in Lakes, Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile reported ‘Serious’ (GAM (WHZ) 10.0-14.9%) levels of acute malnutrition. Most of the counties for which county-level data was available in Central Equatoria and Western Equatoria recorded ‘Alert’ (GAM (WHZ) 5.0-9.9%) and ‘Acceptable’ (GAM (WHZ), <5.0%) levels of acute malnutrition.

The level of acute malnutrition is attributed to severe food insecurity, poor access to health and nutrition services, high morbidity, extremely poor diets and poor sanitation and hygiene. Levels of acute malnutrition are expected to improve marginally between October and December 2018 due to seasonal availability of local production, increased availability of fish and milk, and relatively better access to markets and key services. However, levels of acute malnutrition are expected to deteriorate in the first quarter of 2019 when most households are expected to deplete food stocks from own production, beginning the early onset of 2019 lean season.

Large scale humanitarian food assistance and ongoing nutrition services in many areas of the country have prevented more catastrophic outcomes, and possibly prevented Extreme Critical levels of GAM (WHZ) and excess mortality in some areas. Despite this, extreme acute food insecurity, including some households in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) exists currently and is expected to persist throughout the projection period. It is highly recommended that humanitarian food assistance be scaled up to meet the estimated need and that the rebuilding of livelihoods and improving access to basic services also be perused. However, large scale humanitarian assistance is still critical to avert a deteriorating situation especially in areas with continued access constraints and areas likely to receive returnees. A more optimistic and best-case scenario is likely to prevail if the current peace agreement can be sustained, unhindered humanitarian access is also rendered.

As peace agreement is implemented and revitalization process in the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) start functioning in earnest, it is expected that the physical security situation will gradually improve within the projected period (October December 2018) and January-March 2019. This will have some positive impact on markets, livelihoods and humanitarian space.

The Government reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the recently signed Peace Agreement and working hard to secure a lasting peaceful solution to the ongoing political crisis, so that peace and stability may set the stage for self-reliance and this reduce food insecurity. We are also fully committed to ensuring enhanced trade in all areas of the country, uninterrupted access for humanitarian aid, and an enabling environment for people to return to their homes to rebuild and recover their livelihoods.

Sign:

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