Current Acute Food Insecurity Situation June-Sept 2020

Overview
In the current period (June to September 2020), an estimated 9.6 million people are experiencing high and acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) and are in need of urgent action. This is the highest figure ever recorded in the history of the IPC in Sudan compared to previous years. Around 2.2 million people are facing an Emergency acute food insecurity situation (IPC Phase 4) and around 7.4 million people are facing Crisis acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3). Nearly 1.59 million people are estimated to be in Stresses (IPC Phase 2). This is also a high figure compared to previous analyses, a result of population shifting to worse phases. Overall, all localities from 18 Sudanese States have been classified, with exception of At Tina locality in North Darfur and Abyei PCA area in West Sudan, where there was no data collected and similar locality data could not be used either.

Food insecurity remains alarmingly high in Sudan with increased and protracted displacement, economic decline and inflation, and high food price hikes, exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly decreased commodity movement, market function and cross-border trade, and compromised livelihoods, daily labour opportunities, reducing household purchasing power and food access of the vulnerable population.

The most affected groups are: Internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, those with protracted displacement, economic decline and inflation, and compromised livelihoods, daily labour opportunities, reducing household purchasing power and food access of the vulnerable population.

Increased population movements and displacement due to fresh and protracted conflict internally displaced population reached 1.89 million people.

Phase 4 (Emergency Food Insecurity) from October to December 2020

6.4 million people are expected to be in high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) from October to December 2020.

The Impact of COVID-19
Lockdown and movement restrictions imposed may be lifted in the near future, however, the economic impact on trade/labour will likely continue. COVID-19 restrictions may have an indirect impact on agriculture production through reduced labour supply (less willingness to hire outsiders or increased intensities and loss of productivity among labour supply). A FAO Sudan report on the adverse impact of COVID-19 shows that restricted internal and cross-border movements, livestock transhumance and nomadic migration were already curtailed, causing the concentration of herds in limited spaces. This resulted in deteriorated health and body conditions of livestock and decreased production environment and social insecurity. Protracted and high food insecurity and livelihood losses are anticipated, due to the adverse impacts of COVID-19 measures, coupled with the pre-existing common driving factors, in the immediate, medium and longer terms.

The effect of lockdown on market activities of selling and buying different goods; closures of state and national borders also affected transportation and availability of food commodities within and outside the State and drastically increased the prices. The daily labourers were among the most negatively affected groups. Food availability and supply to the market is affected by agricultural labour shortages and increased cost of transportation.

Access to food is also affected because many micro-enterprises and petty small informal businesses were restricted or curtailed, causing loss of income that enabled vulnerable people to purchase food and other livelihood necessities.

Food utilization is affected by lower market availability and higher prices of nutritious foods, in addition to high rates of literacy and traditional food culture, which may lead to increased acute malnutrition. Above all, food stability is affected due to the restrictions/interruptions of flow of goods and services. In addition, the flow of safety nets and social protection of the vulnerable population might be affected by the COVID-19 restriction measures.

In the current and projection analysis periods, out of 86 localities that received Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA), 32 localities had at least 25% of their households benefiting from the assistance in the form of food or food vouchers, and all the beneficiaires were receiving 50% and above of their daily caloric requirements. The people targeted by this humanitarian assistance are mainly Internally Displaced Populations, vulnerable host families, refugees and returnees, particularly in the states where some of the localities have received significant HFA. Khartoum, Blue Nile, White Nile, South Kordofan, Central Darfur, North Darfur, South Darfur and East Darfur. Humanitarian assistance has contributed to reducing the impact of COVID-19 on the food security of the assisted population. However, the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the measures taken to limit its spread will likely amplify needs, particularly in main urban centres, especially for those who lost their employment and those relying on daily wage labour.

In the projection period, 22 localities out of 86 will have 25% of households benefiting from the assistance and all of them will receive 50% and above of their daily caloric requirements. Humanitarian assistance in form of food or food vouchers should be scaled up and continue targeting EPRs, refugees and returnees and vulnerable households in the host community, as well as giving priority to populations classified in Emergency and Crisis.