

Executive Brief: **Democratic Republic of Congo** Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) / 2007- 2008

Overview

Since 1996, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been affected by civil conflict, which has devastated and destabilised the country claiming the lives of an estimated 4 million civilians and leading to the displacement of more of a million. Despite encouraging signs such as the first free elections held in 40 years in 2006 and recent regional agreements to control rebel activities in the east of the country, the political and security situation remains precarious.

DRC classifies as a least developed country and ranks 168 out of 177 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index (2007). About 70 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and 52 percent are considered extremely poor. The country has enormous potential of natural and mineral resources. Its economic system is currently principally geared towards the export of mineral resources. Farming, which is the main activity in rural areas, is rudimentary. The logistics and transport infrastructure is poor throughout the country.

The political instability and the civil conflict of the last ten years, occasional natural disasters (volcano eruptions, earthquakes and floods) and widespread poverty have led to high levels of food insecurity. Food production has decreased by 30 to 40 percent in the last ten years. Almost one third of the population eats only once a day. Acute malnutrition affects 11 percent of children under 5, chronic malnutrition affects about 40 percent of children under 5 and 30 percent of children are underweight.

To better understand the patterns of food insecurity in rural areas, to improve targeting and establish a reference base, WFP conducted a comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis in collaboration with the government's National Institute for Statistics (INS). This is the in-depth survey that provides an analysis of the food security situation covering the entire country.

How was the survey done? The survey was implemented in two phases. A first phase covering Equateur, Katanga, Maniema, South Kivu, North Kivu and Ituri took place in July 2007. The second phase covering Province Orientale, (excluding Ituri), Kasai Oriental, Kasai Occidental, Bandundu, Bas Congo took place in February 2008. The Province of Kinshasa was not included. A total of 323 villages were visited and 3,230 households were interviewed. The sampling is representative of the province's level. The anthropometric measurement of 3, 941 children was taken.

WFP is also planning to carry out a survey with partners to analyse IDPs' food security, nutrition and self reliance situation in the east of the country in the coming weeks.

How many households are food insecure?¹

More than 3.6 million people are severely food insecure. About 17 million people are moderately food insecure. Whilst there are differences between the provinces, the situation is worrying in the entire country.

On average 36 percent of households are food insecure. About 6 percent of households are severely food insecure, about 30 percent are moderately food insecure.

Food insecurity is characterised by low dietary diversity and low food intake frequency.

Where are the food insecure households?

Food insecure households are concentrated in the east of the country.

oThe highest prevalence of households with poor food consumption is in **Katanga** (11%) and in **South Kivu** (11.7%). They are severely food insecure.

Province	Population End of April 2008	Number of severely food insecure people	Number of moderately food insecure people
Bandundu	7,444,000	454,000	1,905,000
Bas Congo	4,237,000	292,000	1,283,000
Equateur	6,793,000	143,000	1,718,000
Province Orientale	7,394,000	399,000	2,343,000
Kasai Oriental	4,759,000	338,000	1,627,000
Kasai Occidental	5,807,000	58,000	1,004,000
Katanga	9,659,000	1,100,000	3,400,000
Maniema	1,787,000	80,000	926,000
Nord Kivu	5,100,000	285,000	1,560,000
Sud Kivu	4,422,000	517,000	1,464,000
TOTAL	57,402,000	3,666,000	17,230,000

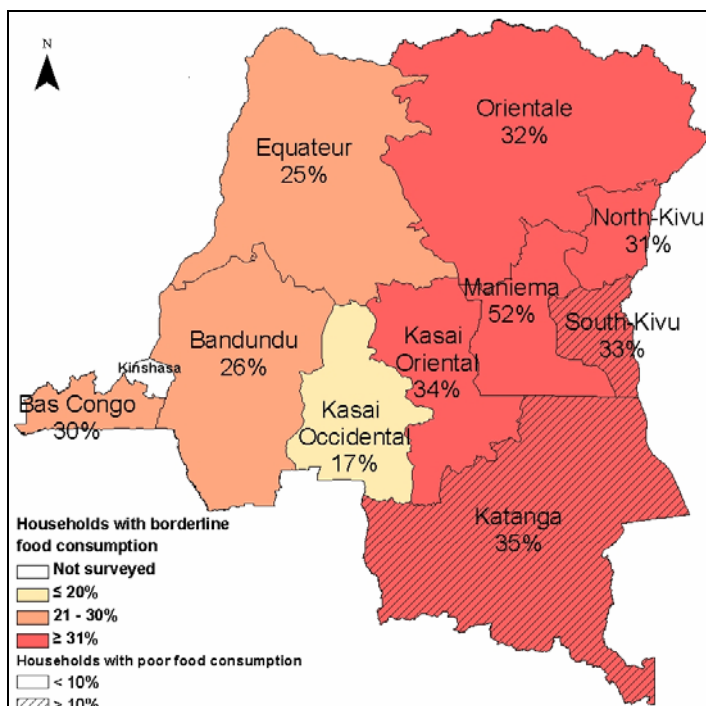
¹ The last census dates back to 1984. The population estimate is 65,256,000 (National Statistics Institute, April 2008).

Households with poor food consumption represent more than 10 percent of households in the following areas:

- South Kivu (11.7%),
- Tanganyika (11.5%), Lualaba (26,2%) districts in Katanga,
- Tshopo district (11.5%) in the Province Orientale,
- Sankuru (14.3%) in the Kasai Oriental
- Kwango (13.3%) in Bandundu
- Bas Fleuve (11.9%) in the Bas Congo.

The highest prevalence of households with borderline food consumption are in Maniema (52%), Katanga (35%), South Kivu (33%), North Kivu (31%), Province Orientale (32%). These households are moderately food insecure and vulnerable to shocks affecting their capacity to access food.

The nutritional situation is worrying in the country, but particularly so in Ituri, North and South Kivu, Maniema and Katanga, where conflicts led to displacement and food insecurity.



Global acute malnutrition affects 11 percent of children under 5.

- Two Provinces have rates above 15 percent: Katanga (17.6%) and Equateur (15%), followed by South Kivu (12.5%), Bas Congo (12.2%), Bandundu (10,9%) and Kasai Occidental(10,5%). It is the lowest in Province Orientale.
- The severe form of malnutrition affects 6.7 percent of children under 5 in Katanga, 5.8 percent in Bas Congo and 5.7 percent in South Kivu. It is the lowest in Province Orientale.
- The rates are similar to the one of the EDS (Enquête Démographie et Santé) analysis from 2007, except for the province of Kasai (3.7 percent for the CFSVA against 5.5 percent for EDS in Kasai Occidental and 1.7 percent for the CFSVA against 7.5 percent of the EDS survey in Kasai Oriental).

Chronic malnutrition is worrying in the entire country with rates largely above 40 percent.

- In North Kivu and in the Province Orientale, 55 and 50 percent respectively of children below 5 are stunted.

About 30 percent of children under 5 are underweight, 12 percent are severely underweight. The highest prevalence are in South Kivu, Katanga and Equateur.

The direct causes of malnutrition are the **lack of access to potable water** (more than two thirds of the population has no access to potable water), **morbidity** (malaria, respiratory infections and diarrhoea) and **poor food consumption**. Breast feeding practices are inadequate.

About 12 percent of the under 18 children are orphans. The prevalence changes a lot across the country, and it is higher in the East (more than 16 percent in province Orientale).

Who are the food insecure households?

According to OCHA, 550,000 people were internally displaced in May 2008. IDPs are particularly exposed to food insecurity as they often have lost their assets and access to their field. There are various types of IDPs: the ones who live in the bush, the ones who found some assistance with relatives and the ones who live in camps. Overall, 15.7% of households have currently displaced members.²

The most food insecure households tend to be engaged in livelihood activities such as fishing, hunting and gathering. About 10.4 percent of these households are food insecure. IDPs often resort to gathering activities. About 8 percent of households whose income comes from petty trade are food insecure, and about 6 percent of farming households are food insecure.

The food insecure households have generally the following profile: they are extremely poor, have limited assets, the education level of the household's head is low. They do not own livestock and cultivate a very small land plot (less than 1 hectare, 20 percent of households cultivate less than 0,2 hectare). Their livelihood is limited to agricultural related activities. Households who own the land they cultivate are less likely to be food insecure.

² WFP will carry out a survey with partners to analyse IDPs' food security, nutrition and self reliance situation in the east of the country in the coming weeks.

Farming or related activities (sale of agricultural products or hunting, fishing and gathering) **is the main livelihood activity for 92 percent of rural households** (it varies from 83.3 percent in South Kivu to 97 percent in Bas Congo). It contributes to about 64 percent of households' food consumption. Fishing is the second livelihood activity in Equateur and Katanga, while petty trade is the second activity in the Kivu. In Kasai, the first livelihood activities are wage labour and mining activities.

About 55 percent of households' expenditure is spent on food (only 40 percent in Bandundu). The main source of food is people's own production. The second source of food is the market, except for the two provinces of Kivu, where households rely first on the markets to access food.

What are the causes of food insecurity?

Food insecurity is caused by a combination of factors. In the east of the country, continuous violence and rebel attacks and poverty are the main cause of the food insecurity. For the rest of the country, food insecurity is closely linked to the widespread poverty of the population. Almost all of the provinces lack basic infrastructure and suffer from lack of agricultural development. Education, health and social services are not sufficient and the infrastructure that does exist is often inaccessible for the majority of the population. Natural disasters also lead to food insecurity and vulnerability.

The main factors of food insecurity are:

- **Insecurity:** this is one of the main causes of food insecurity. Due to insecurity and conflict, households have been displaced, and are unable to access their field and cultivate. More than 60 percent of households have been the victim of crops rampage in the last two years. Illegal taxation prevents farmers and traders from selling agricultural surplus in other villages or urban centers.
- **Poverty:** this is one of the main causes of food insecurity. The poorest households represent a high proportion of the households with poor food consumption.
- **Limited production:** Despite the country's enormous potential for agricultural production, DRC is a food deficit country. Only the western part of the country is a net producer, in particular the province of Bas Congo. Over the last ten years, there has been a significant decline of the production of almost all agricultural products. For example, the production of cassava has decreased by 23 percent between 1992 and 2006, the production of plantain has decreased by 75 percent between 1990 and 2006. There has been an increase of the maize production (by 33 percent between 1990 and 2006) however in Maniema and North Kivu the production has decreased by 22, in Katanga by 12 percent.

The agricultural system is mainly subsistence-oriented. More than 93 percent of households have access to land, however the majority cultivates less than 1 hectare, which does not allow for adequate production for sale or own consumption. Cultivation techniques are still very traditional and households lack farming tools. Few households have a plough or a tractor. Agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers are not available. Seeds are often of low quality, and productivity is low. In the East people do not cultivate due to the violence, in the Province Orientale, the young generation has left the agricultural sector to work in the extraction industries (gold, diamond and coltan).

Only 18 percent of households own livestock. When they do, it is usually in small quantity. Goat is the main livestock owned.

- **Poor income generating activities:** income generating activities lack funding opportunities and suffer from a lack of training and skills. Access to credit is limited, despite the action of specific NGOs which try to develop micro-financing.
- **Lack of employment opportunities:** farming is the main activity and employment opportunities are very limited. During the dry season and if the harvest is poor, households' heads have real difficulties to answer the households' basic needs.
- **Poor rural road infrastructure:** the lack of access and isolation are obstacles to the sale of agricultural surplus. Tracks when they exist are often in a bad state. This hampers the development of local initiatives to improve production in rural areas. About 40 percent of villages covered by the survey are more than 10 hours away from the district's main urban center, for 20 percent of villages it is more than 24 hours away.

Potential shocks affecting households' food security

The potential shocks that could further affect households' food security are: continued and renewed violence in the east of the country and in Bas Congo, floods which are frequent in Katanga and Equateur, and a further decline of the agricultural production due to the lack of inputs and pest diseases.

The price of basic foods has continuously increased since 2000 in Kinshasa but the situation has particularly deteriorated since 2005 with a 25 percent increase. If food and fuel prices remain high on the international

markets, households in DRC who rely on the markets to access food, will be further impacted, as the country imports important quantities of cereals (wheat, maize, rice), vegetable oil, sugar and meat.

Response recommendations

An integrated participative approach is necessary to implement the interventions recommended. Activities in the health, education, agriculture sectors and income-generating activities should be given priority. Some of these interventions could be implemented through Food-for-assets programs. However assets' ownership is not enough in itself to ensure the sustainability of livelihoods or food security. The construction of basic socio-economic infrastructure (roads, schools health centres, etc) would help to ensure the success of assets creation programmes. Food aid has an important role to play during the emergency, transition and development phases.

The following interventions are recommended:

- **Targeted and time-limited food distributions:** the intervention should target recently displaced people in the east of the country and victims of natural disasters. The beneficiaries would then be involved in food-for-work projects focusing on the rehabilitation of infrastructure and assets that have been destroyed. *Priority areas: North Katanga, North and South Kivu, Maniema and Ituri.*
- **Support to health and nutrition programs:** in view of the high prevalence of global acute malnutrition, support to health and nutrition programmes is needed. These programmes should also include information and education on nutrition and hygiene. Food aid plays a complementary role to the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients in poor and food insecure households. *Priority areas: Katanga, North and South Kivu, Equateur.*
- **School feeding:** expand the school feeding programme to increase the attendance of children from returnee families. *Priority areas: Katanga, North and South Kivu, Maniema, Province Orientale, but also Equateur and Kasai oriental due to the low school attendance rates.*
- **Food-for-assets:** with a view to open up remote areas and rehabilitate transport and agricultural infrastructures. To ensure the durability of newly created assets, better organisation and the strengthening of communities' capacities through trainings and monitoring of implementation is necessary. *Priority areas: entire country, with focus on areas in transition where security conditions allow and have been improving.*
- **Strengthening of productive assets and income generating activities:** it is necessary to strengthen the access to agricultural inputs and access to micro-credit to boost agricultural, fishing, livestock rearing, and handicrafts activities. Food aid can play a significant role to protect the inputs during the lean season. *Priority areas: agricultural zones in Katanga, Maniema, Equateur, North and South Kivu, and the province Orientale, to be extended to the rest of the country.*
- **Food-for-training:** in the field of alphabetisation, agriculture, nutrition, health, hygiene, handicraft, and food and non-food item trade. It should be targeted at women. *Priority areas: areas with high malnutrition prevalence and high morbidity rates in the east of the country and in Equateur.*
- **Creation of agricultural production groups:** to improve agricultural systems and the development of production capacity. *Priority zones: agricultural areas of the country.*

All projects should include a component on environmental protection

- **Implementation of an early warning and food security monitoring system:** to monitor in particular the situation of moderately food insecure households. *Priority areas: Katanga, Maniema, Province orientale. South and North Kivu where more than 36 percent of households are moderately food insecure*

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