In October and November 2009, WFP, in partnership with South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, South Sudan Commission for Census and Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE), UN, and NGOs conducted the Annual Needs and Livelihood Assessment (ANLA). This exercise, combined with the WFP/FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM), is carried out yearly and is a key planning tool for food security and livelihood programmes within the region.

This year the assessment was carried out in seven states: Jonglei, Upper Nile, Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBEG), Western Bahr el Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria and Warrap. Ten locations were purposively selected in each livelihood zone. Initially Unity State had been excluded as insecurity hindered access to key areas. Following improvement in the security situation, Unity State has been recently assessed and findings will be available after analysis in early January 2010.

Overall, findings of the 2009 ANLA assessment indicate that the food security situation in Southern Sudan has further deteriorated, due to the combined impact of drought and insecurity. In 2009, the first agricultural season failed in many areas, while production from the second season was well below average. Livestock prices have declined, while grain prices rose even during the harvest season. Early livestock migration, due to water and pasture shortages, is expected to lead to increased incidence of tribal fighting. In addition, the upcoming elections have increased political tension in the region.

How Was the Assessment Carried Out?

The assessment was undertaken using a two-staged approach; purposively selected locations based on livelihood zones and randomly selected households. Locations typical for the zone were selected. A total of 2,080 household interviews were conducted in 30 households randomly selected per location. That included over 420 detailed semi-structured focus group discussions and more than 210 key informant interviews. The key areas of analysis included food consumption, food access and coping strategies index. These indicators were combined with analysis of livelihood patterns, economic differentiation of households, context and risk analysis. Finally, these results were aggregated to identify households at most risk of food insecurity. Consequently, three categories of people were identified: severely food insecure, moderately food insecure and food secure. The results were complemented by relevant secondary data and consultation with inter-agency technical working groups. Data collection and analysis included high level of interagency participation. Experienced enumerators from WFP, GOSS, UN and NGOs were trained to ensure quality data collection. State-level inter-agency technical groups collaborated with WFP and GOSS to; review the key analytical outputs; undertake one-day workshops to present the final assessment results; conduct an inter-agency response options analysis of the results. At the national level, results were reviewed by the Livelihood Analysis Forum (LAF).
The ANLA findings show that the food security situation in Southern Sudan has further deteriorated due to the combined impact of drought and insecurity.

As a result, there are some 4.5 million people who are currently severely or moderately vulnerable to food insecurity. The below graph represents a comparison between the ANLA 2008/2009 and 2009/2010. Compared to the previous year, more households were found to be food insecure.

As crop yield is less than normal and households are relying on market purchases earlier than in a normal year, the most food insecure are populations that rely heavily on agricultural production. Accordingly, in terms of the livelihood groups, it appears that the agriculturists in the ‘Hill and Mountains’ zone are the worst affected, followed by the agro-pastoralists. Additionally, the escalating conflict linked to cattle raids and tension over access to natural resources, such as grazing areas, combined with the decreasing terms of trade for grain and livestock, have increased the number of food insecure pastoralist households. Similarly, pastoralists in the semi-arid zones are also amongst the severely and moderately food insecure.

Within all of these livelihood groups, the female-headed households and the poor are amongst the severely food insecure. Results of the 2008/2009 ANLA indicated that internally displaced persons and returnees faced more food insecurity compared to residents. This year, the ANLA results showed that residents, internally displaced persons and returnees are on the same level of food insecurity. This is considered as another indicator of the severity of the food security situation this year as compared to previous years as resident populations are normally amongst the food secure groups.

In summary, the severely and moderately food insecure households were found to have depleted their own crop production, have limited access to productive assets and rely on casual labour opportunities and sale of natural resources, while the food insecure households are heavily dependent on market purchases and have been affected by the price of key food commodities.

The most common coping mechanisms for all these groups include: sale of livestock (including Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk ethnic groups that traditionally do not sell livestock); reliance on natural resources (including firewood, charcoal, wild foods); migration to urban towns (including return to Kenya and Uganda) and; casual labour. Livestock prices have sharply declined while grain prices are on the rise despite the fact that it is the harvest season.
The most food insecure states are Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria. In addition, Upper Nile and Northern Bahr el Gazal are more food insecure in comparison to last year. This is mainly attributed to: complete failure of the first agricultural season; the sharply below-average performance of the second season and; the increased incidence and intensity of tribal conflicts. Despite the variation in rainfall, states such as Central and Western Equatoria, and Western Bahr el Ghazal are average due to the diversity of the produced food items. The exception is the recently displaced people from the Zande ethnic group (affected by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) activities) who are residing in makeshift camps.

The table is a summary of the household food consumption status, a key component of the ANLA food security analysis and one of the key indicators for food insecurity. The table clearly illustrates that Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei states have the highest levels of poor food consumption. These levels of poor consumption are very unusual during the months of October and November, the main harvest period for most states in Southern Sudan.
As mentioned, the first agricultural season failed in many areas and production from the second season was well below average. Livestock prices have declined, while grain prices rose even during the harvest season. Early livestock migration, due to water and pasture shortages, is expected to lead to increased incidence of tribal fighting. In addition, the upcoming elections have increased political tension in the region.

The chart below summarizes the results of household responses on shocks experienced in 2009 including insecurity and delayed rainfall amongst the highest shocks, followed by human sickness.

**Eastern Equatoria**

As a result of the dry spell, the August harvest has been seriously reduced with a significant impact on livestock. The hunger season will therefore be prolonged from August to October/November, when the main harvest is expected. Livestock conditions are worse and deteriorating due to poor vegetation conditions, and there are more sales of livestock in the pastoral and agro-pastoral regions compared to normal years. Generally, livestock prices have remained stable despite the rising food prices. Cattle raiding, however, remains a problem.

**Lakes**

The August harvest was affected by the prolonged dry spell across the State. Cultivated crops withered away during the dry spell in most locations. Short- and medium-term Sorghum are the most common Sorghum varieties cultivated in some of the assessed areas. Long-term Sorghum exist in some areas (e.g. Paloc). In Aweil County and Rumbek East, short-term Sorghum that was planted in May has failed, medium-term sorghum that survived is expected to have poor yield. Conflict has affected cultivation in Wulu County, where cultivated farms were abandoned and left unattended. Pests also contributed to complete failure of crops in Paloc.

**Western Bahr El Ghazal**

There are pockets of worsening food insecurity status prompted by displacements, initial household food insecurity and returnees. The vulnerable populations affected include displaced households affected by insecurity; returnee households; and the elderly and children.
Jonglei
The dry spell in May/June affected crop performance leading to poor harvests in August/September. Rains resumed in mid-July/August and planting of short- and mid-term sorghum was carried out. Harvest of sorghum is expected to take place in November and December in all livelihood zones with yields that are below average. High levels of insecurity and conflict are expected to lead to further displacements, loss of livestock and disruption of market activities.

Upper Nile
The region received less rainfall as compared to the last season. Rainfall distribution was poor, with a dry spell being experienced when crops were at vegetative stage, resulting in severe crop damage. Recurrent insecurity, due to continuous cattle raiding, remains to be a serious concern.

Warrap
Warrap State has experienced late and irregular rainfall this year, which has adversely affected crop production. The dramatic increase in attacks and cattle raiding incidents compared to last year have led to loss of assets and lives as well as massive displacements. The insecurity is not confined to particular areas of Warrap but is reportedly prevalent throughout the state.

Is the Situation Likely to Change in the Coming Months?
It is expected that the situation will continue to further deteriorate. Vulnerable households have limited stocks or no stocks to carry over into the next year, and the hunger gap is expected to start earlier than usual. Political and ethnic tensions are likely to increase with the upcoming elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

Recommendations:
- General Food Distribution to severely food insecure and Internally Displaced Persons;
- Provisional of Seasonal support to moderately food insecure people; and
- Blanket Supplementary Feeding to children under five years during the lean season in order to prevent further deterioration in nutritional situation.

Food assistance to these vulnerable groups of people will vary, depending on context-specific information, and as they are in many places limited to seasonal support. The main aim objective is, however, to prevent further deterioration and further displacement due to poor access to food.