Main Findings

- All 12 sentinel sites were reached in February 2011.
- Data collection was carried out mid-February 2011, which is considered to be the harvest season.
- The food security results in rural areas were similar results of the rounds carried out on July 2010 and November 2010 with 60 percent of households being food secure. In the urban areas, a slight deterioration in the food security situation was reported as the percentage of households facing food insecurity increased from eight to 15 percent. However, the majority of urban households are food secure.
- The cost of the minimum healthy food basket (MHFB) increased to SDG 1.78 per person/day February 2011 compared to SDG 1.49 recorded in November 2010.
- Sorghum prices decreased at the beginning of 2011, contributing to the improvement of the Terms of Trade (ToT) in favor of livestock owners.
- In urban areas, small businesses remained the most important income source (33 percent), while waged labor continued to be the main income source in rural areas (24 percent).
- An average of 54 percent of the households’ total expenditure was spent on food items, a slightly higher percentage compared to November 2010. This can be attributed to increased prices of some food commodities.
- The majority of households in urban and rural areas have an acceptable food consumption score.
- As many as 88 percent of children in urban areas and 73 percent of those in rural areas consume less than four food groups and do not receive adequate nutrients required for growth.
- The percentage of severely malnourished children has decreased from 11 percent in November 2010 to five percent in February 2011 in urban areas and from five to three percent in rural areas.
1. FOOD SECURITY

In rural areas, the food security situation in February 2011 is similar to July 2010 and November 2010, with 40 percent in the moderately and severely food insecure categories. In the urban areas, there was a slight deterioration in food security as the percentage of moderately food insecure households has increased from eight percent in November 2010 to 15 percent in February 2011, with no households in the severely food insecure category. Analysis of the food security situation by location shows that all areas were above the lower threshold (food insecure) with an improvement in all areas except Oko (mountainous nature and low resources) where the situation has deteriorated from November 2010. Port Sudan had the highest score, followed by Dordai and Marafit.

*The food security indicator consists of the following: market situation and cost of minimum healthy food basket; income sources; expenditure; and food consumption.*

**Market situation and cost of minimum healthy food basket prices**

There was a substantial decrease in total traded cereals in Port Sudan market compared to November 2010, especially for wheat. This decrease in wheat trading is attributed to market dependence on commercial wheat after the depletion of stocks subsidized by the Strategic Reserve Corporation. Furthermore, the decrease in sorghum trading was due to the incomplete summer crop harvesting in Gedaref State which is the main supply source of sorghum for Port Sudan market. Consequently, the current size of stock at hands of wholesalers was negatively affected by a significant decrease in the size of cereal trading during February 2011. As a result, cereals stored by wholesalers in February 2011 decreased by 46 percent compared to November 2010.

According to traders, purchasing power was the main obstacle in February 2011. Sorghum market price recorded a remarkable decrease in the beginning of 2011 due to the fact that this round coincided with the harvest season. Although the expected seasonal production is above average, sorghum prices continued to be above average. This was mainly attributed to the incompleteness of harvest in many mechanized agricultural projects in Gedaref State and to the entry of the intervention of the Strategic Reserve Corporation as a main buyer at a minimum price of SDG 70/bag.

The significant decrease in prices of sorghum contributed to improving the Terms of Trade in 2011 in favor of livestock owners. In February 2011, the cost of the minimum healthy food basket was SDG 1.78 person/day compared to SDG 1.49 in November 2010 and SDG 1.65 in July 2010. This increase was due to the increase in prices of some items such as sugar. Results showed that the situation for households in urban areas deteriorated as the percentage of those who can meet twice the cost of food basket decreased from 90 percent in November 2010 to 83 percent. Similarly, the situation also deteriorated in rural areas as the percentage of households who cannot afford one basket has increased from nine to 14 percent.
**Income Sources**

The most important income source in urban areas was small businesses (33 percent), followed by salaried work (24 percent). In rural areas, waged labor was the most important income source (24 percent).

This can be explained by the harvest season when agricultural wage labor traditionally is of great importance and the percentage is significantly higher in February 2011 than in July 2010 (10 percent) and November 2010 (13 percent).

**Expenditure**

Of the total household expenditure, 54 percent is spent on food items, which is slightly higher than in November 2010. This can be attributed to the increase in the prices of some commodities.

Despite the decrease in sorghum prices, expenditure on cereals represented the highest percentage (15 percent) which can be explained by the increase in wheat prices.

For non food items, the largest proportion is spent on repayment of debts (eight percent) related to commitments from the agricultural season.

**Food Consumption**

Analysis of food consumption showed that the majority of households has an acceptable food consumption score.

In urban areas the situation is stable compared to July 2010 and November 2010, while in the rural areas the food consumption situation has improved with as many as 90 percent of the households having an acceptable food consumption score.

It was also found that 90 and 99 percent of households in rural and urban areas respectively rely on market as their main source of sorghum.
Analysis of the food consumption by location, findings showed that all areas are situated above the highest threshold with improvement in all areas except Oko which was slightly worse than in November 2010. There was a remarkable improvement recorded in Marafit area.

2. Agriculture

Cultivated area in Red Sea State has increased significantly this season, leading to an 80 percent increase in estimated cereal production.

The total sorghum cultivated area in the different sectors (irrigated and rain fed) was 10,000 feddans, while the harvested area was 9,000 feddans with an estimated production of 4,000 MT. Area cultivated with millet was 18,000 feddans, out of which 13,000 feddans were harvested with an estimated production of 2,000 MT.

According to the sample, the average sorghum cultivated area per household in the 2010/2011 season was one feddan, compared to 1.4 feddans in the 2009/2010 season despite the increase in the total cultivated areas at the state level with an average production of 1.9 bags per household in the rural areas.
3. Coping Strategy Index

The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) is used to assess how households cope when they do not have adequate food or in case of unavailable cash to purchase food items. The higher CSI indicates a higher level of vulnerability. The CSI is classified into four categories: no need to use coping; low risk coping; medium risk coping; and high risk coping.

In February 2011, there has been an increase in the percentage of households who used high risk coping strategies from one percent in July 2010 and five percent November 2010, to eight percent in February 2011 in urban areas. In the rural areas, the situation was similar to November 2010, but compared to July 2010, the percentage of those who used high risk coping strategies has increased.

4. Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC)

Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) was measured on 89 children in rural areas and 22 children in urban areas.

Results showed an improvement with the decrease in the percentage of severely malnourished children in urban areas from 11 percent in November 2010 to five percent. Also the percentage of moderately malnourished children has slightly decreased.

In rural areas, the situation is similar to November 2010 with a slight improvement in the percentage of those who were severely malnourished from five to three percent.
5. Child Health and Dietary Diversity

In February 2011, data was collected for 60 children in the age between 6 and 23 months. In urban areas, the situation related to child dietary diversity has significantly deteriorated, and an overwhelming 88 percent of the children receive food from less than four food groups and therefore do not consume adequate nutrients required for growth. One reason for this can be the increase in prices of food supplies. In rural areas, the situation has improved with an increase in the percentage of children who receive food from four food groups or more, from 16 percent in November 2010 to 27 percent in February. However, still as many as 73 percent do not receive enough nutrients required for growth.

6. Food Assistance

The percentage of those who received food assistance during the previous three months (November, December and January) was 40 percent which is similar to November 2010.

The main reason for selling of food assistance was to cover education expenses.