In general, the food security situation in several parts of Burundi based on the latest round of food security monitoring system (FSMS) that took place in October 2010 has improved. This food security monitoring was carried out in eight (8) livelihood zones namely: Dépression Nord, Dépression Est, Plateau Nord, Plateau Est, Plateau Sud, Centre Haute, Altitude, and Lacustre. Households in most zones have shown an improvement in food consumption patterns, a reduced coping strategy index in most areas meaning lower stress levels as well as reliance on their own production and the market as sources of food which could be attributed to early harvest in some parts of the country. However, households in Depression Nord and Plateaux Nord still show declining consumption and a higher coping index compared to the other areas. This could be attributed to regular drought in these areas and limited land access due to population density. Regarding nutrition, Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) are still within acceptable limits at 7.2% and 2.0% respectively, however, stunting and underweight among under five children are still quite high at 31.2% and 58.9% respectively. In this analysis (with exception of nutrition), comparisons are made with the results of previous rounds of FSMS data collected in April 2009, October 2009 and April 2010. The sample of about 855 households and 717 children for this FSMS, was only based on those with the lowest food security status (poor and borderline consumption) as revealed by the 2008 CFSVA. This FSMS, similar to the results of the 2008 CFSVA and previous rounds, indicated that agriculture and related activities and casual labour/manual labour are still the main sources of income.

**Household Food Consumption**

The Food Consumption Score not only allows comparisons of frequency and diversity among populations but is also used to establish a threshold of dietary quality against which to compare these populations. Overall, 50% of sampled households were found to have acceptable consumption in October 2010 compared to 40% in April 2010. Reviewing consumption trends from July 2008 baseline and subsequent rounds shows that consumption has been steadily improving. In the baseline sample (July 2008), the percent of households with poor food consumption was 97 percent and as seen in the graph, most have recorded a significant improvement in their consumption thus reduced to 15 percent for October 2010. Households with borderline consumption have decreased from 40% to 35% between April and October 2010. It should be noted that the sample for this FSMS only included households that had poor and borderline consumption as indicated by the 2008 CFSVA; hence no households with acceptable consumption were captured for monitoring. The graph above illustrates the results of a food consumption analysis for the last four rounds of data collection. In terms of livelihood

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1. The sample for nutrition in the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System is not representative and therefore figures provided are only indicative and not representative.
zones, all areas have shown improvement with the exception of Depression Nord and Plateau Nord which recorded more households with poor consumption at 38% and 31% respectively compared to 18% and 15% in April 2010. Households with ‘borderline’ consumption eat the equivalent of cereals 6 days a week; pulses once a week, and oils about 3 days per week and hardly any meat. Those with ‘poor’ consumption eat the cereals/tubers 5 days a week, vegetables and oil 2 days a week with no meats and milk products reported. However, households with ‘good’ consumption reported eating the equivalent of cereals/tubers, vegetables and oil 7 days a week and meat and pulses 4 days a week. According to the 2008 CFSVA baseline food consumption was found to be a good proxy measure for household food security status and hence, this improvement in household food consumption implies an improvement in their overall food security of the households studied.

**Food Sources**

Looking at sources of food, households in all zones mainly rely on own production and purchase as major sources of their food as shown in the graph. Households relying on own production as a source of food has shown a small decrease from 37% in April to 31% in October 2010. Reliance on purchase/market for food has increased by 5% in the same period. Harvesting for season C takes place between September and October and contributes about 10% to production. In addition, at the time of the study, early harvest had started in some parts of the country mainly for tubers. This probably explains why households are relying on own production but at the same time buying food from the market as households may still have more income from agricultural activities. Reliance on barter, hunting has decreased although there is a small increase in households relying on gifts (2%) as a source of food in some areas as shown above. It’s worth noting that household in Lacustre still have the highest reliance on the market (82%) for their food compared to all the other zones. Trends in the other zones are fairly similar.

**Household Food Expenditure**

In general, households are still spending over 75% of their expenditure on food with only a small percentage on non food items. This trend is similar for all previous FSMS rounds as well as the current one of October 2010. Although there are small variations across livelihood zones, overall, the pattern is the same with the highest percentage food expenditure in Plateau Nord at 86%. As shown
in graph above, households with poor and borderline consumption reported an increase in percentage expenditure on meat and sugar and a decrease in cereals while those with acceptable consumption reported an increase in their percentage expenditure on cereals. This, although minimal, coincides with the increased reliance of households on the market as a source of food as indicated above. This overall trend is also reflected in households' food consumption because most of them reported increased consumption of these same food items/groups. Cereals and tubers are probably from own production/harvest while pulses and meat could be from the market. None the less, it should be noted that households are spending more in absolute these food items. Furthermore, per-capita expenditure has increased in all the livelihood zones except for Plateau Nord.

**Livelihood Activities**

In order to better understand the relative importance of different livelihood sources, households were asked to estimate the percentage contribution of each source to their total income. The graph on the right shows contribution of different activities to household income across all the FSMS livelihood zones. Agriculture has the highest contribution (over 35%) for all zones with the exception of Plateau Est which is more reliant on casual labour. Other major activities that contribute to household income are Seasonal labour, Cash crop production, employment and handicraft/artisan production. The graph below shows mean/average change in relative contribution of different livelihoods between April 2010 and October 2010. Contribution of agriculture to household income increased across all livelihood zones except Centre and Plateau Est where it reduced. In addition Reliance on casual labour increased while contribution of mining decreased significantly for households in all the zones. Analysis of all previous four rounds showed that households' reliance on mining as a livelihood is mainly in April and reliance on casual labour significantly drops during the same period. Other activities that showed an increased contribution to household income are petty trade, cash crop production and minimal from aid and transfers.
**Coping and Shocks**

The *Coping Strategies Index* (CSI) measures the frequency and severity of actions taken by households in response to perceived food shortage. A lower CSI score means less stress and potentially better food security. As shown in the graph, trends in the reduced CSI indicate a steady decline between April 2009 and October 2010 for most of the livelihood Zones. However, stress levels in Depression du Nord are still much higher compared to the other zones and this is also reflected in the consumption patterns; this zone has an increase in households with poor consumption while the other zones have shown an improvement. Similar across all rounds, the strategy reported by most households was reducing adult meals in order to benefit children.

In terms of shocks, overall, limited rainfall/drought (20%) and human illnesses (22%) were the most reported by households. Besides human diseases which were reported by more households in October 2010 than April 2010, all other shocks were reported less hence minimal effects of these shocks on households’ food security. According to the household responses in October 2010, drought was reported highest in Depression du Nord at 61%, while 71% of the households reported human diseases in Plateaux Nord. Besides drought and human diseases, most of the other shocks were reported by fewer households in October 2010 compared to April 2009. Other shocks widely reported by households were erosion and hailstorms.
Health and Nutrition
In this FSMS data collection round, over 700 children 6-59 months were weighed and measured\(^2\). Of those, 2.0% were wasted or low weight-for-height, while 31.2% were moderately underweight (low weight-for-age) and 58.9% were chronically malnourished or moderately stunted (low height-for-age).

When comparing by sex, the boys were slightly more likely to be wasted (3% vs 1%), severely stunted (29% vs 18%) as well as moderately stunted (35% vs 27%). It was also more likely to find moderately underweight children had been ill with a fever as well as diarrhoea. As shown in the graph to the right, children in the 24-35 months age group had the highest rates of underweight which is more common in the younger age group due to weaning period. In addition, stunting is also highest (71%) among this age group. Overall Global Acute Malnutrition and Severe Acute Malnutrition are still within acceptable limits at 7.2% and 2.0% respectively. However by livelihood zone, GAM rates are highest in Plateau Nord and Centre at 11.4% and 14.3% respectively. High SAM rates were also recorded in Depression Nord at 3.9% and Plateau Nord at 5.1%.

**Morbidity** - In total, 35% of the children had experienced diarrhoea in the 2 weeks prior to the survey. Over 50% had experienced a recent fever and 40% had suffered from acute respiratory infection. It’s important to note that human diseases were among the most reported shocks by households in October 2010.

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\(^2\) The sample for nutrition in the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System is not representative and therefore figures provided are only indicative and not representative.