Executive Summary

- The overall food security situation has considerably improved compared to February 2011. The improvement in food security can be attributed to a significant improvement in the income proxy that contributed positively to household food security situation. However, there is significant increase in the proportion of food insecure households among all community groups compared to November 2011.
- The food consumption score (FCS) has improved in comparison to November 2012 and the same period last year; over 85 percent of households in camps, mixed and resident communities have acceptable FCS.
- The price of the minimum healthy food basket (MHFB) has increased to 2.39 SDG compared to 2.07 SDG reported in November 2012. MHFB has increased by 75 percent in comparison to the same month last year due to an increase in the prices of nearly all food items in the food basket. Cereals, sugar and cooking oil have recoded the highest increase in prices compared to last year.
- The increase in the cost of MHFB prices during this round has affected the purchasing power of IDPs and mixed communities compared to November 2011. Consequently, 45 percent of camp IDPs, 48 percent of mixed communities and 21 percent of resident communities are unable to afford the cost of one MHFB.
- IDPs are primarily reliant on small businesses as a main source of income securing around 40 percent of households’ income. Sales of crops constitute 39 percent and 36 percent of the mixed and resident communities’ income respectively. Households in IDP camps have access to more diverse options of income opportunities compared to households of mixed and resident communities.
- Some 59 percent of household expenditure is spent on food items, among which 15 percent of the expenditure is on cereals.
- The proportion of households who faced food shortage has drastically increased within IDP communities; 52 percent of surveyed households faced food shortage compared to 26 percent reported in 2011. The proportion of households who faced food shortage among mixed and residents communities has slightly dropped compared to those reported in the same period last year.
- The proportion of children who consume more than four food items has significantly increased among all types of community groups compared to 2011.
- According to the mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurements, approximately four percent of the surveyed children were severely or moderately malnourished.
1. FOOD SECURITY

The proportion of food secure households among IDPs in camps has significantly increased to 63 percent compared to 16 percent reported in February 2011. The percentage of food secure households has also shown an increase compared to the last round carried out in November 2011.

Four percent of the camp IDP households are severely food insecure, while 33 percent are vulnerable.

However, the food security situation has improved among all other community groups. The improvement in the food security situation is mainly due to increased income opportunities as well as regular food distributions in the surveyed IDP camps.

A. Market situation and cost of minimum healthy food basket prices

Sorghum prices in Nyala market followed a sharp upward trend in February 2012 compared to November 2011. Cereal prices have been affected by low supply and high demand triggered by the below-average harvest. The inter-state movement of supplies to North Darfur is one of the main reasons for the continued increase in cereal prices. Sorghum and millet prices are expected to increase during the next few months due to the increase in demand combined by low quantities of household own production.

A post-harvest assessment conducted in January 2012 indicate a poor crop production and a consequent food deficit as a result of low and poorly distributed rainfall in all localities of South Darfur state. Poor rainfall (compared to last year’s) is reported in most locations combined with pests during all stages of crop cultivation. The Majority of farmers cultivated more areas of groundnut at the expense of sorghum and millet, resulting in a decreased production of cereals. The highest cereal deficit is recorded in Shaeria followed by Eddaiein, Nyala, Bahr Elarab, Kass, Buram and East Jebel Marra, respectively.

The Strategic Reserve Corporation (SRC) planned to inject quantities of subsidized cereals in local markets to stabilize prices. However, the demand remained higher than the supply, especially in remote localities in the state.

The terms of trade (ToT) between one medium size goat and a bag of sorghum in Nyala market has significantly increased compared to November 2011. The ToT remain beneficial to livestock owners compared to cereal producers in regards to exchange of goods. Livestock prices are expected to decrease during the rainy season as more supplies are expected to be received in local markets from pastoralists who will be moving towards their home villages.
Primary income sources for IDPs include: small businesses (40 percent), wage labor (18 percent), and firewood/charcoal and crops sale (17 percent). This follows seasonal patterns when agricultural activities are unavailable, with an increase in the significance of small businesses activities.

Mixed communities are relatively enjoying a diversity of income opportunities compared to camp IDPs. These include sale of crops as the most significant income source for 39 percent of mixed community households.

This is followed by small businesses and wage labor, constituting 16 and 15 percent respectively.

Resident communities continue to have access to more diversified income sources compared to IDPs and mixed communities.

The main income source is sales of crops (36 percent), followed by small businesses (18 percent) and sales of firewood and charcoal (12 percent).

This clearly reflects the ability of resident communities to engage in various activities to generate income sources depending on the seasonal calendar.
C. Expenditure

Among the overall sampled households, an average of 59 percent of the households’ monthly expenditure is spent on food items; a slight increase from 56 percent reported in November 2011. This is mainly attributed to increased reliance on market purchase as a main food source. The expenditure of households on main non-food items is on health care (eight percent), followed by social events (six percent), while transportation, clothing and education are reportedly at the same expenditure rate (four percent).

Purchasing Power:
The cost of the minimum healthy food basket (MHFB) is reported at 2.39 SDG/capita/day, showing a significant increase compared to 1.59 SDG/per capita/day reported in February 2011 and 1.21 SDG/per capita/day reported in February 2010. This upward trend is based on a consistent pattern over previous rounds and could be attributed to the increase in the prices of food items included in the food basket. The increase in food prices during this period could be attributed to the increase in the cost of transport and fuel as well as taxes. The proportion of households who are unable to afford the cost of MHFB price within camp IDPs has slightly decreased compared to 2010 and 2011. Despite the increase in the cost of MHFB, the proportion of food insecure households among IDPs has slightly decreased. The impact of soaring market price on the affordability might not be significant among the resident communities for the short term run, due to the relatively good harvest in their areas. However, the situation is likely to worsen during the coming months when food stocks start to deplete.
About 45 percent of the households in camps are unable to afford the MHFB, while the proportion of households who can afford to buy more than two MHFB has sharply increased to 20 percent compared to 5 percent in February 2010. The purchasing power of the camp IDPs and mixed communities has remarkably deteriorated compared to November 2011 due to increasing prices, especially of cereals, sugar and oil. The increase in the cost of MHFB resulted in reduction of IDP and mixed community household proportions who can afford 1-2 MHFB and more than two MHFB.

D. Food Consumption

Among IDPs, the proportion of households with an acceptable food consumption score has increased to 88 percent compared to 73 and 86 percent in 2011 and 2010 respectively.

Consequently, the proportion of households in the poor food consumption category has significantly decreased from 11 percent during November 2011 to 2 percent in February 2012.

2. Coping Strategy Index

The proportion of IDP households who faced food shortage and have therefore adopted a coping strategy has remained the same compared to 52 percent reported in November 2011.

Meanwhile, this proportion has increased compared to February 2010 and February 2011 (49 percent and 26 percent respectively).
Within mixed communities, the proportion of households who faced food shortage has decreased to 58 percent compared to 64 and 71 percent reported in 2011 and 2010 respectively. That could be attributed to the availability of more diversified income opportunities.

The majority of households among resident communities (83 percent) are not engaging in any coping strategy, maintaining an improving trend within the same time in the last three years and remaining at the same level compared to the previous round undertaken in November 2011.

The most commonly used coping strategies in South Darfur include reliance on less preferred or less expensive food items; consumption of borrowed food; borrowing of cash to purchase food items; limiting portion sizes at meal times; and reducing number of meals consumed during the day.

3. Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC)

The Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) was applied on children in the age between 6-59 months. There has been an improvement in the situation of IDP children as the percentage of severely malnourished children has declined from one to zero percent.

Meanwhile, the percentage of moderately malnourished children has also decreased to four percent from six percent reported in November 2011.

The proportion of severely malnourished children within mixed communities has decreased from four percent in November 2011 to zero percent in February 2012. There are no records of severely malnourished children among the three community categories in this round.
4. Child Health and Dietary Diversity

Analysis of the dietary diversity of children between 6-23 months of age indicates that there has been an improvement in the nutritional situation of IDP children compared to the last round conducted in November 2011. Findings indicate that 48 percent of surveyed children reportedly consume four or more food groups. However, as many as 52 percent still do not receive adequate nutrients required for normal growth.

A significant improvement was also reported within mixed communities as 64.2 percent of the surveyed children consume four or more food groups, compared to 34.4 percent reported in November 2011.

The nutritional situation of children within resident communities remain as the worst among all three categories, having the highest percentage of children who receive less than four food groups (59.5 percent), though it has generally improved compared to November 2011 (68.6 percent).

5. Food Assistance

The proportion of camp IDP households receiving food assistance is almost 80 percent, while within mixed and resident communities almost 100 percent of households have not received any food assistance. Low coverage of food assistance is mainly due to halting of seasonal support to resident and mixed communities in areas showing a relative improvement in the food security situation.

6. Who Are the Food Insecure?

Of the total interviewed households, 31 percent are found to be female-headed. Analyzing the food security situation based on gender shows a significant difference between female and male headed households. Findings indicate that 43.3 percent of severely food insecure households are female-headed compared to 56.7 percent of male headed households.

Analysis of the food security situation by education level of the household head shows that education has an impact on the household food security situation. Findings show that 86 percent of IDP households are headed by an uneducated person compared to 100 percent of the food insecure resident households. However, in mixed communities education does not have any impact on the food security status.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 20 primary sites visited
- 31 percent of the households assessed are female headed;
- Average household size is 6.8 persons;
- 58.2 percent of the households are IDPs living in camps;
- 24.1 percent resident;
- 15.6 percent IDPs outside camps;
- 2.1 percent returnees