Executive Summary

- Data was collected in May and June 2012, the start of the lean season in Darfur.
- The overall food security situation has slightly deteriorated compared to May 2011 and May 2010. Findings indicate an increase in the proportion of food insecure households among camp IDPs and resident communities. One-third of households in camps are food insecure while one-quarter of food-insecure households were reported among resident communities. Among the mixed communities, the food security situation in May 2012 remains, to a large extent, similar to that reported in May 2010 and 2011, with an increase in the proportion of food secure at the expense of vulnerable households compared to 2010 and 2011.
- In May 2012, the food consumption of the mixed communities remains similar to May 2011 and 2010, with over 75 percent of the households having an acceptable food consumption. However, the food consumption for the camp IDPs and resident communities has deteriorated in May 2012 compared to the last two years, with 17 and 15 percent of IDPs and resident communities respectively having a poor food consumption.
- The price of the minimum healthy food basket (MHFB) has increased by 73 percent compared to May 2011 and by 19 percent compared to February 2012. Of the eight food items included in the MHFB, cereals and cooking oil continue to record the highest rate of increase since February 2012.
- The continuous increase in the cost of MHFB price has negatively affected the purchasing power of camp IDPs and resident communities, particularly among the poorest households in both categories. The proportion of households among camp IDPs and resident communities who cannot afford the cost of one MHFB has increased; in May 2012, 55 and 58 percent of households among IDPs and resident communities respectively cannot afford the cost of one MHFB.
- Wage labor continues to be the main source of income for the camp IDPs and mixed communities. During this round, two-fifth and one half of household’s income of the camp IDPs and mixed communities respectively are generated from wage labor.
- Overall, some 65 percent of households’ expenditure was spent on purchasing food items. In May 2012, expenditure on cereals has increased to 26 percent of the total expenditure.
- In May 2012, a large proportion of children in all community groups received food from less than four food groups, ranging from 59 percent of children in mixed communities to 72 percent of IDP children.
- According to the mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurements, approximately 4 and 8 percent of the children in the camp IDPs and mixed communities were severely malnourished respectively.
1. FOOD SECURITY

Cereal prices are higher than usual resulting in a minimal level of cereal stocks at local level, mainly due to the poor crop production in the last agricultural season. This has made the state highly dependent on supplies from other states as well as on quantities supplied by the Strategic Reserve Cooperation.

In May 2012, the proportion of food insecure IDP households has increased compared to those reported in the same period in 2011 and 2010. Despite regular food assistance provided to IDPs through general food distributions, the sharp increase in food prices compounded by reduced income opportunities during the lean season are possible reasons behind this increase.

Simultaneously, there has been an increase in the proportion of food secure households compared to May 2011, that has translated into the largest shift for households from the ‘vulnerable’ to the ‘food insecure’ category.

The food security of mixed communities in Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra towns has improved, mainly due to improved crop production prospects during the rainy season due to relatively higher rainfall compared to other parts of the state. In addition, communities in these towns, unlike other parts of the state, have access to irrigated summer cultivation of cash crops which gives them access to off-season income opportunities, either through own production or labour activities.

In May 2012, 79 percent of mixed community households are found to be food secure, while 16 percent are vulnerable and 5 percent are food insecure. Among the mixed communities, there is a drop in the proportion of vulnerable households in May 2012 compared to May 2010 and 2011.
In May 2012, 26 percent of the resident communities households are found to be food insecure, representing an increase compared to May 2011 and 2010. This increase is mainly attributed to low crop production of cereals and cash crops, coupled with diminished household food stocks and price hikes. Poor cereal production has significantly impacted the market situation leading to an unseasonal increase in cereal prices in all markets across the state. This situation has heavily affected poor households with limited resources within resident communities.

Overall, the food security situation for all communities in May 2012 has slightly deteriorated for all community groups compared to February 2012. The food security situation in the next 4-5 months will remain unclear until the prospects of the upcoming agricultural season become clear by end August or mid September.

Although the level of production failure has provoked State government to respond to the food gap, the actual amounts of cereal supplied remains unconfirmed. However, in April and May the supply of millet from the Strategic Reserve Corporation into the market has had a positive effect on the cereal prices.

A. Market Situation

In 2012, cereal prices in Fasher started at high levels and continued to increase until the end of April. Prices have increased again by mid-May. However, as of the end of June, prices have been decreasing. Poor crop harvest and decrease in cheap food aid sorghum are the main reasons behind the increase in cereal prices. In addition, there has also been a lower supply from the rural areas compared to normal with the rural areas becoming increasingly dependent on the main town markets such as Fasher, Kutum and Malha. This remains contrary to the usual pattern when main markets are supplied from rural markets. The state has become heavily dependent on cereal supplies from South Darfur and Central Sudan. This, coupled by road access challenges has resulted in hiking prices.

In May 2012, sorghum prices in Fasher town market are 60 percent higher compared to May 2011. The terms of trade between goat and sorghum (i.e. the amount of sorghum that can be purchased by selling a male adult goat) is still higher compared to last year and the five-year average. Against all expectations, goat price continued to increase with the rising prices of cereals. Earlier in the year, goat prices were expected to decrease due to poor pasture and shortage of drinking water, however, livestock prices remained high until May 2012.
**B. Income Sources**

Wage labor remains the single most important income source for IDPs in camps across all rounds. In May 2012, this activity contributes to about two-fifths of household’s income. Wage labour is often seasonal, making the IDPs vulnerable especially in years with poor harvest and limited agricultural wage labour opportunities. Other important income sources are small businesses (23 percent) and collection of firewood and charcoal (18 percent).

For mixed communities, in May 2012, reliance on wage labor has increased and contributes now to almost half of the household income. Compared to May 2011, reliance on donations and small businesses have decreased; the second most important income source is small businesses (18 percent), followed by sale of crops (11 percent) and salaried work (10 percent).

The resident communities have access to more diverse income sources compared to the IDPs and mixed communities. Consequently, resident communities are less vulnerable to shock if access to one income source decreases. In May 2012, wage labor remains the most important income source (24 percent), followed by salaried work (16 percent), small businesses (15 percent) and sale of livestock (14 percent).
**C. Expenditure and Purchasing Power**

Overall, in May 2012 65 percent of household’s income was spent on purchasing food items. Over 60 percent of the households spend more than 65 percent of their expenditure on purchasing food items and almost half of camp IDPs are spending more than 65 percent of their expenditure on food items. For the mixed communities, less than one-third of the households are spending over 65 percent of their income on food.

Last year’s low crop production compounded by high cereal prices are reasons behind the increase in expenditure on cereals. In May 2012, 26 percent of the expenditure is spent on cereals compared to approximately 20 percent reported in previous rounds. Expenditure on cereal is followed by expenditure on dry vegetables (10 percent); cooking oil (eight percent); meat (eight percent); and sugar (seven percent). In regards to non-food items, healthcare, transport, communication, social events, repay of debts, clothing and education are key areas of expenditure.

**Purchasing power:**

The cost of the minimum healthy food basket (MHFB) is, in May 2012, 2.82 SDG/capita/day, representing a large increase compared to 1.63 SDG/capita/day reported in May 2011. In May 2012, 55 percent of IDP households cannot afford the cost of one Minimum Healthy Food Basket (MHFB), an increase compared to May 2010 (33 percent) and May 2011 (45 percent). This increase is mainly due to the sharp increase in the cost of the MHFB, which has increased by approximately 70 percent compared to May 2010.

The cost of MHFB has considerably changed over the last three years. However, the affordability of the better-off households in the camps (i.e. those who can afford more than twice the cost of MHFB) has remained relatively stable.

Despite the increase in the cost of MHFB, the proportion of households within the mixed communities who cannot afford one MHFB has remained similar to that reported in May 2011 and has decreased compared to May 2010.
In May 2012, 62 percent of IDP households have an acceptable food consumption, which is a reduction compared to May 2010 and 2011. Furthermore, 17 percent of the IDP households have a poor food consumption, mainly due to the higher food prices in 2012 compared to those reported in 2010 and 2011.

For the resident communities, 58 percent of households cannot afford the cost of one MHFB in May 2012 compared to 42 and 33 percent in May 2010 and 2011. Meanwhile, the proportion of households that can afford more than twice the cost of MHFB has decreased. Currently, only 7 percent of the households can afford more than two baskets. This represents a reduction compared to 22 and 24 percent in May 2010 and May 2011.

**D. Food Consumption**

In May 2012, 62 percent of IDP households have an acceptable food consumption, which is a reduction compared to May 2010 and 2011. Furthermore, 17 percent of the IDP households have a poor food consumption, mainly due to the higher food prices in 2012 compared to those reported in 2010 and 2011.

None of the households in the mixed communities have a poor food consumption. This has remained similar over the years. However, in May 2012, there is an increase in the percentage of households with a borderline food consumption, from approximately eight percent in May 2010 and May 2011 to 24 percent.
Within the resident communities, the food consumption has deteriorated in May 2012 compared to May 2010 and May 2011. Findings indicate that 15 percent of the households have a poor food consumption compared to zero percent in the last two years. Resident communities in North Darfur are facing a food gap as a result of the poor crop production in the last agricultural season.

Most surveyed locations have an overall acceptable food consumption. However, resident locations such as Umketera, Umkesrock, Neina in addition to Kassab camp are having a borderline food consumption, while camps such as Rwanda in Tawila locality (usually recording a poor food consumption) have an acceptable food consumption in May 2012.

2. Households’ responses to food shortages (coping)

In May 2012, the proportion of IDP household who have faced food shortages the last seven days has increased compared to May 2011, but decreased compared to May 2010. Currently, about one-third of IDP households have been forced to engage in various coping strategies.

Within the camp IDPs, for those who faced food shortages, eating borrowed food and reduce the number of meals eaten per day are the most frequently adapted strategies in May 2012.

Within the mixed communities, the proportion of households that faced food shortages have decreased from 49 percent in May 2010 to 41 percent in May 2012. This represents an increase compared to February 2012, when one-quarter of these households have faced food shortages. In May 2012, borrowing food is the main coping strategy adopted by households that faced shortages.

Over half of the resident communities’ households (55 percent) reported to have experienced food shortages in May 2012, an increase compared to May 2010 and 2011. Simultaneously, this situation remains similar to the situation reported in February 2012 (50 percent).

The most frequently adapted strategies are borrowing food, limiting portion size and reducing the number of meals.
A total of 731 children had their Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measured in North Darfur in May 2012. For IDP children, the results are similar to May 2011 with four percent being severely malnourished and 11 percent moderately malnourished. Within the mixed communities, the situation has deteriorated compared to May 2011, with eight percent of the children being severely malnourished. This is contrary to the food security situation for this community group, which is better compared to IDPs and resident communities. The mixed community locations include large concentrations of IDPs in small towns that lack proper sanitation. This consequently results in health related issues. There is also an increase in the proportion of moderately malnourished children (11 percent).

The situation of children in resident communities in May 2012 remains similar to May 2011. One percent of the children are severely malnourished and 12 percent are moderately malnourished.

There has been an improvement in children's eating habits. In February 2012, only six percent of children were provided with food from four or more food groups. In May 2012, findings showed that 48 percent of the children receive food from four or more food groups. The situation has deteriorated for children in resident communities, where 74 percent of the children receive less than four food groups indicating that they are not receiving adequate nutrients required for growth. Furthermore, 58 percent of IDP children and 30 percent of children in mixed communities consume food from less than four food groups.

This section reports information on receipt and utilization of food assistance within a recall period of three months. All IDPs in camps receive food assistance through regular food distributions on a monthly basis at a standard ration of 310 gram/per person/per day. Regular food assistance is also provided to the mixed communities. In 2012, findings showed that mixed communities and two IDP camps receive food assistance through the food voucher modality. In May 2012, 99 percent of the camp IDPs reported receiving food assistance, while 61 percent of the mixed community households also reported receiving food assistance in the last three months. Advanced seasonal support was provided to resident communities in some locations in May 2012.
6. *Who are the food insecure?*

**Food security by gender of head of household**

Four out of five food insecure IDP households are female headed. Meanwhile, only one out of 10 food secure household is a female headed household. During this round, 40 percent of households income is generated from wage labor as a primary source of income. This indicates that the number of adults working members in a given household remains key to securing cash income for a households in a camp. Female headed households are likely to have less members at working age.

Similar to camp IDPs, four out of five food insecure households among mixed communities are female headed. Moreover, one in every four food secure household is a female headed household.

Within the food secure category among resident communities, four out of five food secure households are male headed. For all community groups, there is a correlation between the gender of the household’s head and the food security status of that household.

**Food security by education level of head of household**

Findings show that the education level of the head of household in IDP camps has a strong link to the food security situation of the household. In IDP camps, three out of five food insecure households are headed by an uneducated person. The mixed communities showed similar results to that of the IDPs with regards to the food insecure category, while in resident communities education of the household head has no effect on the food security status of the household.

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**DEMOGRAPHICS**

- All the 22 primary sites visited;
- 34 percent of the households assessed are female headed;
  - Average household size is 6.8 persons;
- 42 percent of the households are residents; 32 percent are IDPs living in camps; 23 percent are IDPs outside camps; and 3 percent are returnees.