Based on the recent 2nd round of food security and nutrition monitoring system (FNSMS), the food security situation in several parts of Rwanda has shown an improvement in comparison with the first round that took place in September 2010. This food and nutrition security monitoring was carried out in 16 Strata namely; Nyagatare-Gatsibo-Kayonza, Kirehe-Ngoma-Rwamagana, Bugesera Musanze-Burera, Gakenke, and Rurindo-Gicumbi, Rubavu, Nyabihu, Ngororero, Rutsiro-Karongi, Nyamasheke-Rusizi, Kamonyi-Muhanga-Ruhango, Nyanza, Huye, Gisagara, and Nyamagabe-Nyaruguru. Households in most strata have shown improving food consumption patterns, and increased reliance on the own production as a source of food. This was also reflected in the decreased percentage of food expenditure and increasing percentage of non food expenditure. The improved food security situation could be attributed to the recently completed harvest from season A meaning most of the households still have food stocks. However, there is an increase in the coping strategies index meaning higher stress levels which could be associated with households reacting to the upcoming lean season, when household food stocks are low, that usually lasts until June. This FNSMS, similar to the results of the first round, indicates that agricultural activities, livestock production and casual labour/manual labour are still the main livelihood activities around rural Rwanda. In the analysis below, comparisons are made with the results of the first round of food security and nutrition monitoring that took place in September 2010. The second round sample comprised of 1,300 households, 923 children (under 5years), took place in March 2011.

Household Food Consumption

The Food Consumption Score allows comparisons of frequency and diversity of food eaten among populations and is also used to establish a threshold of dietary quality against which to compare these populations. Overall, 74% of sampled households were found to have acceptable consumption in March 2011 compared to 69% in September 2010. Comparing consumption trends with the previous monitoring round indicates that household consumption has improved; households with poor consumption have decreased by 3% and those with borderline consumption have decreased by 2%. This improvement in the consumption could be attributed to the just completed harvest from Season A implying that households still have food stocks. The previous food security monitoring took place in September which coincides with the lean season with household stocks possibly diminished, and thus may explain lower food consumption trends. The graph above illustrates the results of a food consumption analysis for the two rounds of data collection showing an increase in percentage households with acceptable consumption while the percentage households with poor and borderline consumption is reducing. In terms of strata, all have shown an improvement in consumption except Nyabihu, Nyanza, and Bugesera. The strata of Kamonyi-Muhanga-Ruhango, Nyabihu and Bugesera have shown an increased proportion of households with poor consumption. According to a rapid assessment by the World Food Programme (WFP), several areas in the eastern part of the country were affected by erratic rainfall which  

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1 Rural Rwanda covers all parts of the country except Kigali
affected their food availability and could thus be the reason for the increase in percentage households with poor consumptions in some of the strata mentioned above.

As shown in the graph to the left, households with ‘borderline’ consumption eat an equivalent of starch 6-7 days a week; pulses 3 days a week, and oils about 3 days per week and hardly any meat or milk. Those with ‘poor’ consumption eat starch 5 days a week, pulses 1 day a week and oil 1 day a week with no meat or milk. Households with ‘good/acceptable’ consumption reported eating the equivalent of starch 7 days a week, pulses 6 days a week, oil 5 days a week and meat and milk 2 days a week. Comparing the two monitoring rounds, households with poor consumption have reduced their consumption of starches and added more vegetables and sugar to their diet for the March monitoring period.

**Household Food Sources**

Looking at sources of food, households in all strata mainly rely on own production and purchase as major sources of their food as shown in the graph below. This is similar for both monitoring rounds as well as what was reported in the 2009 Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Analysis Survey (CFSVA). However, households’ reliance on the market as a source of food has reduced between September 2010 and March 2011 albeit by a small margin. The graph to the right shows food sources by household consumption profiles and the trend is the same for all three food consumption groups (poor, borderline and acceptable). As seen, reliance on own production increased in March 2011. As indicated above, this could be associated with the recently concluded season A harvest implying that household still have food stocks to rely on and are therefore reducing their reliance on the market. The increased reliance on own production is also reflected in improving consumption patterns meaning households still have access to their own food stocks. However, it should be noted that households still rely hugely on the market as a source of food. Reliance on gifts, exchange borrowing and aid is still minimal at 1%, although households with poor consumption showed an increased reliance on gifts from friends and family.

By strata, Gisagara showed the highest reliance on own production at 77%. Bugesera is the only strata that reported less reliance on own production at 35% in March 2011 down from 60% in September 2010. Similarly, their reliance on the market as a source of food increased. A rapid assessment by the World Food Programme indicates that the Eastern province to which Bugesera belongs to was affected by erratic rainfall which affected their food availability and in turn affecting household food sources. Bugesera also reported the highest reliance on fishing, gathering and hunting at 7% while all the other strata are below 2%.
**Household Expenditure**

In general, households reported spending 49% of their expenditure on food with 51% on non food items for the March 2011 monitoring period. This percentage food expenditure is slightly lower than what was reported in the previous monitoring round at 55% and percentage non food expenditure at 44%. This is in line with households increased reliance on their own production as a source of their food as indicated above meaning they are spending less on food items because they are still benefiting from their harvest.

There are small variations across strata but highest percentage food expenditure was reported in Rubavu (65%), Nyanza (63%). Bugesera reported the lowest percentage food expenditure at 38% for September 2010 although it reported a high reliance on the market as a source of food. As shown in graph above, expenditure patterns are similar across all three consumption groups with all showing lower percentage food expenditure than non food expenditure. It's worth noting that households with borderline consumption have the highest percentage food expenditure at 51% compared to the other two consumption groups for the March 2011 reporting period. In addition, households with good consumption reported the largest decrease in percentage food expenditure of 9% between September 2010 and March 2011. Overall monthly per-capita household expenditure at an average of Rwanda Francs 6,200 up from 6100 reported in September. However, in absolute values, total expenditure has reduced hence increased per capita expenditure could be associated with other factors such as increasing prices.

**Livelihood Activities**

In order to better understand the importance of different livelihood sources to household income, households were asked to estimate the contribution of their livelihood activities relative to their total income. The graph on the right shows the change in relative mean contribution of different activities to household income for the two reporting periods September 2010 and March 2011.

Overall, for March 2011, agriculture has the highest contribution (51%) followed by Livestock activities (19%) and Labour (7%). Although agriculture is still the most important activity for households, its contribution to households’ income has reduced albeit by a small percentage. As indicated earlier, the harvest season has ended and thus minimal agricultural activities available to households. This may also be linked to decrease in contribution of sale of agricultural produce to household income. Contribution of labour between the two reporting periods has remained the same at 7%. Contribution of livestock production to household income has increased and could be attributed to the President’s initiative to enable at least every household to own a cow in order to improve livelihoods and nutrition at household level. On the other hand, contribution of gifts/aid to households’ income has increased by 2% and may be
linked to increased households reliance on gifts as a source of food reported earlier. The contribution of other activities (salaries, petty trade, and marginal hunting, fishing, gathering) households has remained fairly similar for the two reporting periods. Analysis by strata showed that contribution of agriculture to household income increased in Gisagara, Nyaruguru-Nyamagabe, Gakenke, Musanze Burera, Rurindo-Gicumbi, and Kirehe-Rwamagana-Ngoma. Casual Labour activities increased in Nyanza, Gisagara, Nyaruguru-Nyamagabe, Huye, Ngororero, and Bugesera while contribution of livestock activities increased in Nyanza, Ruhango-Muganga_Kamonyi, Ngororero, Rusizi-Nyamasheke, Rurindo-Gicumbi and Kirehe-Rwamagana-Ngoma. It is important to note that almost all households rely on agriculture as a livelihood source in conjunction with other activities.

Coping Strategies and Shocks

The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) measures the frequency and severity of actions taken by households in response to perceived food shortage. A higher CSI score means more stress and potentially declining food security. As shown in the graph, a trend in the reduced CSI indicates an increase between the two reporting periods of September 2010 and March 2011 by strata. This is not consistent with improving household food consumption, and expenditure patterns reported above. This could be due to households adjusting their consumption patterns in anticipation of the upcoming lean season that usually lasts till June. All strata show a higher CSI score between the two monitoring periods of September 2010 and March 2011 with the exception of Gakenke and Kirehe-Ngoma-Rwamagana.

For the March 2011 monitoring period, limited rainfall/drought (65%) and human illnesses (28%), hailstones (12%), high food prices (9%) were the most reported by households. As shown in the graph to the right, between the two reporting periods, drought and hailstones were reported more in March 2011. According to a rapid assessment by the World Food Programme, several areas in the eastern part of the country were affected by erratic rainfall which affected their food availability and thus could be the reason for the increase in households reporting drought as a shock. Analysis by strata also reveals that percentage households in the Eastern Strata (Nyagatare-Gatsibo-Kayonza, Kirehe-Ngoma-Rwamagana, Bugesera) reporting shocks increased between the two reporting periods. This increase is seen in all strata except Gisagara and Ngororero. The decrease in percentage households reporting unusually high food prices is reflected in expenditure patterns as well as food sources of several households. Households reported a decrease in their percentage food expenditure while decreasing their reliance on the market as a source of food, hence less reports on effects of prices.
Health and Nutrition

In this FSMS data collection round, over 900 children 6-59 months were weighed and measured\(^2\). Of those, 4.4% were wasted or low weight-for-height, while 13.2% were moderately underweight (low weight-for-age) and 45.1% were chronically malnourished or moderately stunted (low height-for-age). Comparing with results of the September 2010 round, wasting was at 4.4%, underweight at 13.2% and stunting at 45% respectively.

Comparing nutrition by sex, it was found that wasting and stunting were higher among boys than girls as shown in the table on the right. It was also found that 19% of boys had diarrhea compared to 14% of girls two weeks prior to the survey. Reports of fever were also slightly higher among boys than girls at 27% and 26% respectively.

As shown in the graph, stunting has reduced in all age groups except 6-11 months and 48-59 months while underweight is highest among the 6-11 months group. Stunting in this age group can be attributable to maternal malnutrition caused by the consumption of an inadequate quantity and quality of nutritious foods during pregnancy, lactation or both. Wasting was found highest in the 12-17 months age group for both September 2010 and March 2011 reporting rounds, indicating factors other than food security such as illness or inconsistent infant and young child feeding practices have contributed to low weight for height in this age group. Overall Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) are still within acceptable limits at 4.4% and 1.4% respectively which is lower than 6.6% and 3.8% reported in September 2010. By strata, GAM was highest in Gisagara (9%), Huye (12%). SAM rates were highest in Bugesera (6%), Huye (6%), Rusizi-Nyamasheke (5%) and Gisagara (5%) while stunting was highest in Nyabihu at 65% with all other strata ranging between 37-55%. In addition to high rates of SAM and underweight, it was also found that Rusizi-Nyamasheke had the highest rates of Fever/Cough at 56% as well as high rates of diarrhoea at 27% only lower than Huye at 33%.

\(^2\) 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.