Results in May indicate that there was a tremendous reduction in food stocks at the household level since the March baseline.

- The food security situation in Karamoja has continued to deteriorate since the mVAM baseline in March 2016 with only 14% reporting food stocks that could last for five days on average.
- Humanitarian assistance and markets are the main source of food.
- Increased number of households with debt (62%) of which the majority (47%) used it to buy food.
- Increased number of admissions (moderately malnourished) into the Supplementary Feeding Programme.
- The food security situation in Karamoja will continue to worsen until the new harvest expected late August 2016, hence the need for external food assistance.

Overview

In May and June 2016, WFP Uganda Country Office conducted its first ever mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) through telephone calls. The main objectives of the mVAM project are to:

a) Provide real-time analysis of the performance of a few key indicators
b) Serve as a core pillar of WFP’s Food Security & Nutrition Early Warning System.

A total of 912 telephone numbers were collected during the baseline conducted in March 2016 in Karamoja from households willing to participate in telephone interviews. These households formed the sampling frame which was handed over to a third party, Exquisite Solutions Limited. The service provider drew a random sample and carried out 420 telephone interviews evenly distributed across the seven districts that comprise the Karamoja region (Abim, Amudat, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak). However, due to network connectivity, a total of 412 complete telephone surveys were conducted representing 98% of the required sample. The two key districts that did not meet the required minimum sample size of 60 complete surveys per district were Amudat (31) and Napak (37). Going forward, additional telephone numbers will be collected from these two districts.

Key Highlights

- The food security situation in Karamoja has continued to deteriorate since the mVAM baseline in March 2016 with only 14% reporting food stocks that could last for five days on average.
- Humanitarian assistance and markets are the main source of food.
- Increased number of households with debt (62%) of which the majority (47%) used it to buy food.
- Increased number of admissions (moderately malnourished) into the Supplementary Feeding Programme.
- The food security situation in Karamoja will continue to worsen until the new harvest expected late August 2016, hence the need for external food assistance.

Outlook for June & August 2016

No harvest is expected until August. Only 13% of the households in Karamoja had food stocks in May, enough to last for one week on average. The main source for sorghum and maize grain (key staples) was food assistance from WFP/Partner. Without humanitarian assistance, the situation would have been even worse as of May. Another key source for staples was market purchase, yet the main livelihood activities are brewing and sale of firewood/charcoal which are unsustainable. Also, 46% of the households have debts. The main reason for borrowing is to buy food which increases vulnerability.

Recommendations:

- Since no harvest is expected until August, external food assistance from the government, UN Agencies, NGOs and other partners is needed for the lean period: GFD for the EVH (disabled and chronically ill), conditional food and cash transfer for food-insecure households with able-bodied members, and the Supplementary Feeding Program will help curb the prevalence of malnutrition.
- Dissemination of weather-related information and advice on current agricultural production.
- Encourage and support households to identify and initiate alternative businesses to diversify their livelihoods.

Food stocks

Results in May indicate that there was a tremendous reduction in food stocks at the household level since the March baseline.
In May 2016, the telephone interview results indicated that 14% of the households had food stocks in Karamoja compared to 36% in March.

For the households that had food stocks, 75% had less than 50Kgs and this could last on average a maximum of one week. Kotido had the highest number of households (35%) with stocks. 14% of the households in Moroto and 15% in Nakapiripirit had food stocks which could last for less than one week.

In general, the main source of maize and sorghum in May was WFP/Partner food distribution and market purchase as opposed to self-production during the baseline in March 2016.

Households will mainly depend on market purchase and humanitarian assistance for the next three months (June – August).

Household Income

Although over 60% of the households had at least one income earner, their key livelihood activities include; Agricultural wage labor, Sale of firewood/charcoal, Brewing and other livelihood mechanisms.

“Other” livelihood activities include; Food crop production/sales, Income derived from sale of livestock and / or animal products, Non-agricultural wage labor, Salary, Food assistance, Pension, government allowances, Cash crop production/sale, Remittances, Gifts/begging, Handicrafts and Fishing/Hunting.

Most of the common livelihood/income activities are not stable or sustainable. Agricultural wage labor depends on rainfall yet Karamoja experiences regular dry spells. Sale of firewood/charcoal has a negative impact on the environment and relying on gifts and begging is short term.

Prevalence of Debt

Similar to the baseline, the majority of the households with debt obligation had debts between UGX 20,000 and UGX 100,000. The highest percentage of households with debts over UGX 500,000 was mainly in Napak (43%) and Amudat (32%).
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

The Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) measures food insecurity by considering the activities undertaken by households to manage food shortages. More information on rCSI can be found at http://resources.vam.wfp.org/node/6.

The most vulnerable groups are female headed households, households with no formal education and disabled and the chronically ill.
WFP supports moderately malnourished individuals with nutritious foods through the Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP). The cases are identified by village health teams (VHTs) or health staff. They are referred for treatment at health centers and also admitted to the SFP. Therefore, admissions into SFP provide a clear indication of the levels of malnutrition in the region.

The graph on the right highlights an increase in the number of admissions (moderately malnourished) into the supplementary feeding programme this year since January compared to 2015. The numbers are expected to remain high until late August.


Kaabong, Napak and Nakapiripirit have consistently admitted more malnourished individuals (above 1,000) for the last five months. Admissions to SFP in Kotido have been in the range of 750-1,000 for the majority of the months except in April when admissions were above 1,000 people. Despite having low admissions in Abim and Amudat, admissions to SFP have been high across Karamoja in 2016 compared to 2015 and this may be attributed to food insecurity at the household level due to the poor crop performance experienced last year and limited livelihood coping strategies.