Key Highlights

- Although 8% of households had food stocks in September, at least there is an improvement compared to 4% in July;
- Debt prevalence is still high at 61% with Napak having the highest at 89%. The main reason for debt was to buy food (40%), pay for school/education costs (17%) and to cover health expenses (16%);
- In August, the number of children admitted to Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) reduced by 10% compared to July. Most likely, this is an effect of increased food access in the region from own production;
- In September, overall Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) was 16 compared to 21 in July, it depicts a 23% decline. It shows households are doing better.

Overview

WFP Uganda Country Office initiated mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) in May and June, which is carried out through phone calls. Main objectives of mVAM are to:

a) Provide real-time analysis of the performance of a few key indicators;

b) Serve as a core pillar of WFPs Food Security & Nutrition Early Warning System.

Exquisite Solutions Limited, a third party drew a random sample of 420 telephone interviews evenly distributed across Seven Districts of Karamoja Region and 420 complete interviews were conducted. However, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak did not make the minimum sample size of 60 per district.

Outlook for October and November, 2016

Regardless of an alarming food security situation in September with only 8% of households with food stocks, this is expected to improve in the next two months. September analysis indicated a rise in households with food stocks by 4% compared to July. Prices of staple foods are also on the decline.

Harvest season is ongoing in Karamoja and several parts of the country, second season harvest in some districts of Uganda is expected to start in November, this will result to not only improved food access and availability at both community and household level but also reduction in Market prices of staple foods. However, the food security situation is expected to improve in the next two months.

Recommendations

- Continued support to children (Specifically 6-23 Months) through targeted supplementary feeding programmes;
- Need to keep track of the food security situation in Karamoja, market prices inclusive;
- Continued awareness creation of communities on good Post-Harvest handling practices across Karamoja;
- There is also need to scale up sustainable programmes to boost household economic status.
Food stocks
In September (Round 3), analysis showed that 8% of the overall households in Karamoja had food stocks. This still indicates that the food security situation in the Region is not good. However, households with food stocks increased by 4% in September compared to July (Round 2). Increment is attributed to the ongoing harvests not only in Karamoja but across the country, particularly neighboring regions.

Across districts, results showed increase in households with food stocks in all districts except Amudat with insignificant increments in Abim, Kaabong and Nakapiripirit. Moroto had the highest percentage of households with food stock (24%). Analysis further indicated a decline in household dependence on markets for food from 37% in July to 14% in September. Dependence on market purchase is expected to decline in the next two months due to the ongoing harvests.

Number of households with food stocks is expected to increase across Karamoja between October and November as a result of the harvest season and anticipated fall in Market prices of staple foods.

Food Consumption Score (FCS)
Findings in September showed that nearly half, (49%) of the overall households had acceptable FCS, 40% and 11% had borderline and poor FCS respectively. Napak had 82% of households with acceptable FCS while Amudat and Moroto had 75% and 71% respectively. Kaabong had 11%, the lowest percentage of household with acceptable FCS.

Stable food consumption patterns in September could be a result of the onset of the harvest season as manifested by majority of households that had food stocks reporting own production as a major source. It could also be attributed to coping mechanisms particularly borrowing money. September results showed that among households that had debt, 40% used it to buy food.

"There are some harvests in the community with slight reduction of food price. However, not everyone can afford the food sold in the markets hence making it difficult for some to access food" a respondent from Campswahili, Moroto

"Food prices have slightly lowered, it has enabled people to purchase some food like sorghum," a respondent from Rikitae, Kotido
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

In Karamoja, the rCSI was at 16 compared to 21 in July (Round 2) indicating a 23% decrease, it implies that households are better compared to July. Furthermore, analysis depicted a reduction in rCSI in all districts except Napak compared to July results. A 60% drop was noted in Kaabong, the highest. Decline in rCSI is attributed to the harvest season in Karamoja and across the country resulting into improved access to food, and it is expected to continue for the next 2 Months.

*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.*
Household Income

98.3% of households in Karamoja have at least one income earner. In September, analysis indicated that, 21% of the households derived income from petty trade compared to 13% in July (Round 2). Findings also revealed 8% decline in households engaged in Agricultural wage labor in September, compared to July. This could be due to reduced agricultural activities. Additionally, 58% of households in Abim engaged in Agricultural wage labor, the highest percentage compared to other districts, this is attributed to the harvest season. In Kotido and Napak, the main income source was sale of Firewood/Charcoal with 34% and 36% respectively, thus an environmental concern.

Other income sources encompass; Fishing/Hunting; Food Assistance; Salary; Income derived from sale of Livestock and/or animal products; Remittances; Food crop production/Sale; Pensions, Government allowances; Gifts/begging; Cash crop production/Sales and Handicrafts

Prevalence of Debt

Debt prevalence in Karamoja stands at 61% compared to 63% in July. Households with debt is above 75% in four (Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak) of the seven districts of Karamoja. Nakapiripirit had the highest prevalence with 89%. Further analysis showed that, Nakapiripirit since July has the highest debt prevalence. Additionally, debt prevalence increased in all districts since July except in Abim and Kaabong. Kaabong also saw debt prevalence reduce from 64% in July to 50% in September.

September analysis further indicated that, nearly half (47%) of the households reported having debt ranging from 20,000-100,000 UGX. Thirty four percent had debt amount of 100,001-500,000 while 16% had debt of >500,000 UGX. Nakapiripirit had 23% of households with debt above 500,000 UGX, this was the highest compared to other districts.

Forty percent of the households borrowed money to buy food, a decrease of 12% since July. Kotido had the highest number of households borrowing to buy food with 67%. Compared to July, analysis also showed a reduction in households borrowing to buy food across all districts except Abim. In Kaabong the percentage of households that borrowed to buy food reduced by 22%. Abim saw an increase of 7%. Reduction in borrowing to buy food is attributed to the onset of the harvest season. 14% of households also borrowed to invest in business compared 7% in July. Additionally, 16% borrowed to cover health expenses, increase of 5% from July.
Karamoja Market prices of staple foods

In Karamoja, market prices for staple foods are dropping. Average retail price for maize reduced by 12% in September compared to August 2016, while market prices for Sorghum declined by 17%. Sorghum price reduction was mainly noted in Abim (40%), Kotido (32%) and Moroto (17%). Further analysis showed that, average Sorghum prices remained higher in Karamoja compared to September 2015. Importantly, there was no significant change in the average price for maize grain this year compared to 2015 except in Nakapiripirit and Kaabong where prices increased by 13% and 11% respectively.

Price reduction of staple foods, is mainly due to the harvest that has increased household food stocks. The supply of food has also increased both from within and neighboring districts in Teso and Elgon regions. However, market prices are expected to continue decreasing for the next two months.

Supplementary Feeding Admissions

WFP implements a supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) at Health Facilities. Village Health Teams (VHTs) identify Moderately Malnourished individuals whom they refer to Health Centers for both treatment and enrolment to SFP. These individuals receive nutritious foods. Admissions to SFP provide an indication of the levels of malnutrition in the region.

In August, 9,272 Moderately Malnourished individuals were admitted to SFP. Compared to July, results showed that Admissions dropped by 10%. Graph below depicts high Admissions to SFP in Karamoja Region in 2016 compared to 2015.
Since June, the number of new Admissions to SFP is falling. This could be attributed to interventions by Government, UN Agencies and other development partners.

Comparing districts, new Admissions to SFP in August were above 1000 in Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, & Nakapiripirit. Since January, admissions to SFP in these four districts except Moroto have been above 1000. In August, Kaabong had the highest (2,353) number of Children, Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLWs) admitted to SFP, Amudat had the lowest with 460. Admissions to SFP dropped in four districts (Kaabong, Kotido, Napak and Amudat), by over 10%, the highest drop was noted in Napak with 22%. 4% and 6% increments were cited in Abim and Nakapiripirit respectively.