Key Highlights

♦ In November, only 3% of the overall households had food stocks compared to 8% in September due to delayed harvests.

♦ There was an increase in the number of households with acceptable FCS from 49% in September to more than half (53%) in November.

♦ Since July, debt prevalence rates in Karamoja have been going down with 27% reduction observed in November compared to September.

♦ The average market prices for staple food crops across Karamoja were relatively stable in October compared to September. However, in Kotido prices of sorghum and beans increased by 20% and 13% respectively compared to September.

♦ 7,011 children were admitted to Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) in October, an increase of 8% compared to September.

Overview

WFP Uganda Country Office initiated mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) in May which is carried out through phone calls every two months. 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 WFP's Food Security & Nutrition Early Warning System.

For the fourth round, Exquisite Solutions Limited (a third party) was able to conduct 385 (92%) complete surveys across the seven districts of Karamoja Region out of the 420 total sample needed. The failure to meet the required sample was due to poor network connectivity in some areas. Therefore, all districts except Abim and Moroto did not make the minimum sample size of 60 per district for round four.

Outlook for December 2016 and January, 2017

Karamoja has one planting season in a year and therefore, harvest is expected to continue up to end of November and early December in some areas due to delayed rains. For other parts of the country (except Karamoja region) harvest for the second season is expected continue up to January /February 2017 especially for cereals (maize grain) and this will improve on the supply of staple foods in the markets. In November, only 3% of the households reportedly had food stocks and harvest was still ongoing in some areas up to early December. However, this year’s harvest is expected to be low due to prolonged dry spells and delayed rains that affected crop performance. Currently the main source of food stocks is own production (50%), and market purchase (30%). The low harvest in 2016 will lead to early depletion of food stocks and the lean season is also expected to start earlier by February 2017 in some areas.

Recommendations

♦ There is need to closely monitor the current food security situation in Karamoja;

♦ Despite the poor harvest experienced, communities should be advised not to waste food;

♦ There will be need for humanitarian assistance by the end of February 2017 since the current food stock are expected not to last longer and the lean season will start earlier (February) than normal (March/April).
The food security situation in Karamoja continues to be worse with only 3% of the households reportedly having food stocks portraying a decrease from 8% in September. This could be attributed to delayed harvests and the depletion of food stocks for the households that harvested early as result of the poor crop performance.

Comparing districts, Abim had the highest (8%) percentage of households with food stocks. 50% of the households in Karamoja derived food from own production while 30% purchased from the market. 20% cited WFP/Partner food distributions as a source of food stocks. In Nakapiripirit, own production was the only source of food stocks among households that had food stocks.

Food shortage is due to the dry spell during this farming season, crops got destroyed from the garden, a respondent from Tapac, Moroto

Food Consumption Score (FCS)

More than half (53%) of the overall households in Karamoja had acceptable FCS showing an increase from 49% in September. The highest percentage of households with acceptable FCS were observed in Nakapiripirit (82%), Moroto (80%) and Napak (67%). It could be attributed to the current crop harvests in the region however small they might be.

Proportion of Food Insecure Households (Poor+Borderline)

Despite the ongoing harvest in the region, the food security situation in Kotido is bad with 78% of the households reportedly having poor FCS. This is not surprising as majority of the households reported not having food stocks in November. Additionally, there was an increase in markets prices in Kotido, prices of sorghum and beans increased by 20% and 13% respectively in October compared to September.
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

There was a minor increase in the rCSI from 16 in September to 18 in November among the households in Karamoja. This was due to the poor crop performance and delayed harvest in some areas. Moroto observed the highest increase in the rCSI from 18 in September to 30 in November, an indication of increased application of distress coping strategies in the district. However, households in Abim, Kotido and Nakapiripirit are less coping with results showing a continued reduction in rCSI since July and this could be due to the improved food availability and accessibility in these areas through different means including own production and market purchase. The average rCSI reduced by 19% in Abim and by 13% and 29% in Kotido and Nakapiripirit respectively in November compared to September 2016.

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.

Proportion of Food Insecure Households (Poor+Borderline)

Some people are starving, little food since the harvest was poor, there were no rains, a respondent from Kapedo, Kaabong.

Food is not sufficient enough to sustain households in the coming Months, a respondent from Aninata, Abim.
Household Income

In November, analysis indicated that all households reportedly had at least one income earner. Households in November primarily derived their incomes from Agricultural wage labor (16%), Petty trade (16%), Non-agricultural wage labor (14%), Brewing (12%) and Sale of Charcoal/Firewood (11%). Since July 2016, household engagement in agricultural wage labor has been declining due to reduced demand for agricultural wage labor since agricultural activities have continued to go down.

At district level, Abim since September continues to have the highest percentage (55%) of households deriving their incomes from agricultural wage labor. In Kotido, households predominantly depend on sale of firewood/charcoal (30%) to earn income, the highest across the region. However in Napak, households deriving incomes from the sale of firewood/charcoal dropped from 36% in September to 9% in November, this could be a result of bi-laws enacted against charcoal burning at local level in some districts.

Prevalence of Debt

Since July, debt prevalence in Karamoja has been dropping with 34% of the households reporting having debt in November compared to 61% in September. Analysis further showed a significant decline across all districts compared to September, the highest decline was observed in Nakapiripirit (61%), Kotido (46%) and Moroto (43%). Majority of the saving groups do not lend money to borrowers toward the end of the year, this could be a contributing factor to the continued decline in the debt prevalence. Also the current crop harvest might have been used to pay off the debts as it is a custom in Karamoja region during the harvest season.

The main reason for debt was to buy food (37%), followed by health expenses (20%) and investment in other business (19%). Kotido had 80% of the households borrowing to buy food, the highest compared to other districts. Compared to September, Kotido and Nakapiripirit observed an increase in the percentage of households borrowing to buy food by 46% and 16% respectively. This could be due to the low and delayed harvest experienced this year with majority of the households affected by the dry spell.

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

Casual labor is our current main source of income and we use these earnings to buy food, a respondent from Lokial, Kaabong.
Karamoja Market prices of staple foods

Generally, average market prices for staple foods (Sorghum and Maize) were relatively stable in October compared to September and this is due to the recent harvest. However, the low supply on the markets resulted to an increase in the average price of sorghum in Kotido and Nakapiripirit by 20% and 6% respectively compared to September. There was also an increase in the price of beans by 13% in Kotido compared to September.

Despite the relatively stable prices in October, the prices of maize grain and sorghum this year have remained higher compared to October 2015 by 20% and 24% respectively indicating an increasing cost of living for vulnerable and poor households.

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 October, 7,011 Moderately Malnourished individuals were admitted to SFP. New admissions increased by 8% in October compared to September. Graph below depicts high Admissions to SFP in Karamoja Region in 2016 compared to 2015.
Generally, the number of new admissions to SFP in October increased by 8% compared to September and this could be due to the poor harvest resulting from the prolonged dry spell experienced this year.

District data indicated that new admissions in Kaabong, Kotido and Nakapiripirit remain above 1,000. There was an observed increase in the number of admissions in Kaabong by 27%, followed by Kotido (33%) and Amudat (38%). Furthermore, admissions in Abim dropped by 100% in October compared to September and this could be due to the recent harvest that has increased food supply within households and on the markets.
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Admissions of Moderately Malnourished Children and Mothers into Supplementary Feeding Programme (Jan-Jun 2015/2016)

For further information please contact the AME unit, WFP Uganda.

Siddharth KRISHNASWAMY
Analysis Monitoring & Evaluation, Head.
siddharth.krishnaswamy@wfp.org,

Nathan LOWANYANG
Program Assistant (AME)
nathan.lowanyang@wfp.org

Hamidu TUSIIME
Food Security & Market Analyst
hamidu.tusiime@wfp.org