Key Highlights

- Only 9 percent of the households reportedly had food stocks in March 2017, a decrease from 15 percent in January;
- The proportion of households with acceptable FCS increased from 55 percent in January 2017 to 60 percent in March;
- Since September 2016, the reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) is relatively stable, currently at 18. However, in Napak (31), households are highly coping compared to other districts;
- 6,917 moderately malnourished were admitted to supplementary feeding programme (SFP), with significant changes across districts;
- Average retail prices for staple foods (maize and sorghum) were generally higher in February 2017 compared to the same period in 2016, more significantly in Nakapiripirit and Napak.

Overview

WFP Uganda Country Office initiated mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) in May and June 2016 whereby data collection is carried out through phone calls. Main objectives of mVAM are to:

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

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

This issue is based on data that was collected between 14th and 19th March 2017.

A random sample of 435 telephone interviews evenly distributed across Seven Districts of Karamoja Region. 44 percent of the respondents were Females.

Outlook for April and May, 2017

As food stocks are expected to last for 41 days (about a month), households will resort to market purchase in the second half of April, implying there is an anticipated increase in the cost of living for the majority of the households. Similarly, the proportion of households borrowing to buy food will increase within the same period, showing household stress in meeting their food needs. Furthermore, household engagement in agricultural wage labor will rise with the onset of the rainy season, and this will offer labor opportunities for the very poor and poor households, enabling them to earn incomes to meet their food needs. Households in Moroto and Napak are already experiencing the lean season earlier than usual compared to other districts, explaining the increasing numbers of SFP admissions. However, this is expected to worsen at the peak of the lean season if no efforts are made to address household food needs.

Recommendations

- Need for close monitoring of the food security situation across the region, including the market prices for staple foods;
- There is need for timely delivery of weather related information as agricultural activities are commencing across the region;
- Need for enhancing business skills as well as financial literacy, particularly for households engaged in petty trading in Napak and Nakapiripirit;
- For food assistance interventions, there is need to have contingency plans in case the food security situation worsens.
Food stocks
9 per cent of the overall households in March had food stocks, showing a reduction from 15 percent in January 2017. The reduction was observed across all districts, particularly in Abim (28%), and Nakapiripirit (11%), this could be due to depleting food stocks and also poor harvest in 2016.

Since September 2016, own production (87%) is the main source of food stocks. Majority of the households realized a late harvest, which helped stretch food stocks into 2017. This could possibly be a reason for continued dependence on own production. However, available food stocks are expected to last for about one Month (41 days), implying households will heavily depend on market purchase by the end of April amidst escalating food prices, which will result into increasing cost of living for both the poor and vulnerable households.

Proportion of Households with Food Stocks

Food Consumption Score (FCS)
In March 2017, 60 percent of the households had acceptable FCS, an increase by 5% since January 2017. The proportion of households with acceptable FCS significantly increased by 20% and 13% in Moroto and Nakapiripirit respectively, this can partly be attributed to the February 2017 food assistance interventions by WFP in the two districts. Similarly, among households with debt, 30 percent are borrowed to buy food.

However, results in March 2017 indicated significant differences on households with acceptable FCS across districts, ranging from 6% in Kotido to 96% in Moroto.

Furthermore, Kotido (94%) and Kaabong (74%) had the highest percentage of food insecure households, and this could be attributed to the depletion of food stocks resulting from excessive sale of food during and after harvest period. This situation might worsen since households are expected to resort to market purchase amidst escalating market prices.
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

Since September 2016, the rCSI is relatively stable, with an overall mean at 18 in March 2017. Households in Napak compared to other districts are highly coping, with an observed increase in the rCSI by 12 percent since January 2017, and this implies that households are stressed in meeting their food needs. However, this is expected to get worse in April and May, with the peak of the lean season.

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

Households are mainly deriving incomes from petty trading (23%), followed by non-agricultural wage labor (17%), and sale of firewood/charcoal (12%). Similarly, 12% of the households are reportedly selling livestock and animal products to earn income, with Amudat (44%) and Moroto (22%) having the highest proportion, and this implies that households are employing stress coping strategies.

Furthermore, there was a significant decline in the sale of firewood/charcoal from 21% in January to 12% in March. This could be due to the onset of the rainy season, with households trying to clear their gardens for planting, offering agricultural labor opportunities, this is not surprising as households engaged in agricultural wage labor increased to 7% from 3% in January.

Main livelihood/income sources

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.

Prevalence of Debt

The debt prevalence in Karamoja is relatively stable since January 2017, and Abim (91%) and Kaabong (81%) continue to have the highest debt prevalence. Households are mainly borrowing to pay for school, education costs (31%) and to buy food (30%). While households in Abim borrowed to pay school (66%). In Kaabong, 44% borrowed to buy food, this calls for the need for public works/cash for work to enable households have alternative sources of incomes to feed their families.

Additionally, households in Nakapiripirit (46%) and Napak (55%), are borrowing mainly to invest in other business. Interestingly, analysis also shows petty trading as the main income source for households in these districts as reported by 39% and 38% of the households in Nakapiripirit and Napak respectively.

Trends on borrowing to buy food (May 2016-Mar 2017)

“People are surviving on petty trading, from which they earn income to buy food for their family members” a Male respondent in Karenga, Kaabong

“People within the community are mainly surviving on loans from saving groups to buy food from markets” a Male respondent in Loyoro, Kaabong

Source: WFP mVAM, March 2017
Karamoja Market prices of staple foods

The average retail price for both maize grain and sorghum in Karamoja increased by 13% in March 2017 compared to February, mainly in Nakapiripirit and Kaabong, this could be due to increasing market demand as food stocks are depleting at household level. However, Napak observed a reduction of 6% in the price for maize grain.

Compared to the same period in 2016 and the long term average (2013-2016), prices for staple foods (maize grain, sorghum, beans and maize flour) were generally higher in 2017 and more significantly in Napak, Kotido and Nakapiripirit. This is attributed to poor crop performance that resulted from the dry spell experienced in 2016.

Source: WFP’s ProMIS

“Food is scarce, but also too expensive in the markets” a Female respondent in Panyangara, Kotido
**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.

### SFP Admissions in Karamoja

![Graph showing SFP admissions in Karamoja](image)

In February 2017, 6,917 Moderately Malnourished individuals were admitted to SFP in Karamoja, indicating no significant change since January. However, SFP admissions were high in February 2017 by 12% compared to the same period in 2016. (See graph on the left)

**Source:** WFP's ProMIS

### Admission Trends by District January-June; 2016/2017

In February 2017, there was no significant change in SFP admissions compared to January, significant changes were observed across districts. Whereas SFP admissions increased in Amudat, Napak, Abim and Moroto, there were no observed changes in Kaabong Kotido and Nakapiripirit. Comparing districts, total admissions to SFP were above 1,000 in all districts except Abim and Amudat.