

LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

LIVELIHOODS IN SOMALIA

Somalis live in extremely poor and underdeveloped conditions. Livelihoods are broadly based on subsistence farming and pastoralism with limited opportunity to earn wages. The predominant livelihood systems are outlined below:

Pastoralism is found throughout areas of rural Somalia but predominantly in the arid lands of northern and central Somalia, as well as along the Ethiopian and Kenyan borders. The livestock sector is the largest contributor to Somali livelihoods, with over 65% of the population engaged in some way in the industry. Exports of livestock and their products account for 80% of exports in normal years, but exports have been periodically interrupted by droughts and international bans. Despite the ban imposed by Saudi Arabia in 2000, livestock exports continue to be the largest traded commodity for Somalia. Livestock are shipped to various countries in the Arabian Peninsula, and trekked or transported to markets in Kenya, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. Livestock also enter Somalia through the borders with Ethiopia and Kenya. Furthermore, livestock products are a key local consumption commodity for household food security.

Agriculture is an important livelihood activity in Somalia not only in terms of meeting the food needs of the population (nearly 50% of population's cereal requirements are met through domestic production) but also in terms of generating income through crop sales and agricultural labour opportunities. Agriculture is a major component particularly for two of the main rural livelihood systems in Somalia:

- i) Agro-pastoralist; a mix of agriculture and livestock production based livelihood. Agro-pastoralists are found in the inter-riverine regions of Bay, Bakol, western Hiran, eastern Gedo, Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba in Southern Somalia but also found in parts of Awdal and Western Galbeed in the north-west
- ii) Agriculturalist: agriculture based livelihood. Two areas are considered high potential for crop production with rainfall ranging from 400mm to 600mm: a small area in the Northwest (west of Hargeisa) and a much larger inter-riverine area between the Shabelle and Juba river valleys. Agriculture is primarily rain fed making this livelihood extremely vulnerable to climatic hazards.

Fishing: Fishing as a livelihood system involves fishermen along the Somali coast as well as casual labour migrants from further inland. The Somali coastline, the longest in Africa, is under-utilized by Somalis as the fisheries sector is under-developed. Rather, marine resources are exploited by international fleets and businesses. It is estimated that Somalia loses approximately US\$ 100 million to illegal fishing activities, resources that could go a long way towards improving the livelihoods of Somalis.

Urban Residents and IDPs: Urbanization is providing new opportunities and livelihood linkages. The large urban towns are Hargeisa, Mogadishu, Kismayo, Bossaso and Baidoa. IDPs are a particularly vulnerable sub-strata of urban populations concentrated in these large towns. Livelihood systems are strongly interlinked through trade, social networks or sharing and competition for resources. Livelihood systems are also characterized by disparities and differences based on assets, including natural, physical, financial, social and human as well as structures and institutions that enable/disrupt economic, social and political progress. Livelihoods in Somalia are vulnerable to 'shocks' stemming from natural hazards, international livestock bans or conflict. Household coping mechanisms to deal with these 'shocks' can, in extreme situations, undermine the livelihood itself. For example, in 2004, during the peak of the drought in the north, some pastoralists resorted to burning wood to make charcoal, which undermines the environmental viability of pastoralism. Somalia has a strong social network and support system that is resorted to as a coping mechanism in times of difficulty. The Somali diaspora transfers about US\$1 billion into Somalia annually, which exceeds international aid assistance to the country. The financial lifeline it represents stimulates both local and international trade, thus averting a worse humanitarian crisis.

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY IN 2006/2007

In early 2006, Somalia experienced an aggravated humanitarian emergency brought on by the drought that hit the Horn of Africa. Around 2.1 million Somalis country-wide were in need of critical assistance, including up to 400,000 IDPs. Central/South felt the brunt of the drought as around 1.5 million experienced an Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis or Humanitarian Emergency. The 2006 *Gu* rains brought marginal relief, which varied significantly by region. In mid-2006, around 1.8 million people were identified in need of critical assistance, including 880,000 people experiencing an AFLC, 425,000 in HE, and 400,000 protracted IDPs.

The 2006/07 *Deyr* rains caused severe flooding in southern Somalia. In some parts, rainfall measured six times the average for the time of year. Around 255,000 people in the Shabelle and Juba riverine areas were displaced. In late December 2006, just as floodwaters were receding, widespread fighting erupted between forces of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), backed by Ethiopians troops. An estimated 65,000-70,000 people were displaced at the peak of the fighting, some of whom had already been displaced by flooding. Access to IDPs and other vulnerable groups in early 2007 was hampered by conflict, ongoing military air operations, inter- and intra-clan fighting, and a lack of local authorities/counterparts.

Despite the flooding, the *Deyr* rains resulted in an improvement in livelihoods and food security. In early 2007, around 1 million people (including the 400,000 IDPs) were identified in need of assistance until June 2007. Around 360,000 people are in Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, while around 230,000 people are in Humanitarian Emergency, mostly in Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba. The situation improved in all regions except for riverine areas of the Juba and the Shabelle rivers. Due to a combination of drought, flooding and displacement, riverine areas of Middle and Lower Juba, Gedo and Hiran are in a state of Humanitarian Emergency, while agro-pastoral and pastoral areas of Hiran, Bay and Bakool (except for some pockets) saw an improvement and are out of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, as is the North.

Subsequent to widespread fighting between TFG and Islamic Courts Union forces in late 2006, clashes persisted in Mogadishu in early 2007 between TFG/Ethiopian forces and anti-TFG factions. Between 1 February and early May 2007, over 360,000 people fled the city, many heading south to Lower/Middle Shabelle. Priority needs include water and sanitation, food, shelter and access to health services. Insecurity and administrative directives by the authorities in early April were obstructing the scaling up of the humanitarian response. Since the *Deyr* floods, cases of Acute Watery Diarrhea have been on the increase and malnutrition rates remain exceedingly high in some areas of southern Somalia, above the 15% emergency threshold. Fighting in Mogadishu in conjunction with slowdown of port activities and the consequent reduced importation of food and non-food commodities, and the expected increase in food prices throughout South/Central is compounding the problems experienced by the thousands of displaced around the capital.

IGAD's Climate Outlook Forum predicts an enhanced likelihood of normal rains in Somalia and near to above normal *Gu* rains in the Ethiopian highlands. Southern Somalia thus faces the possibility of renewed flooding. Coupled with the possibility of more fighting in Mogadishu, should the forecast for flooding during the *Gu* season hold true, a deterioration in the humanitarian situation is expected.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Agriculture and Livelihood cluster aims to provide immediate support to pastoral communities as well as promote longer term pastoral drought resilience. An unbalanced response to pastoralists and farmers would increase the risk of potential resource-based conflicts. Lack of balance in addressing immediate needs and underlying root causes of livelihood erosion would also likely increase the risk of perpetuating food insecurity. The cluster will continue to focus on the provision of immediate relief support in the most vulnerable areas and on short to medium-term support to rural households to enable progressive return to productive and sustainable livelihoods. Partners in the Agriculture and Livelihoods cluster include FAO, ASEP, AFREC, COOPI, DRC, Oxfam UK, SADO, SCF-UK, VETAID, VSF-Suisse, World Vision, Horn Relief, ACF, Mercy Corps USA, Agrosphere, World Concern, CEFA, IMC, ICRC, German Agro Action, GTZ GmbH, UNA, CARE and PACSU.

WFP, CARE and other food aid cluster partners have an agreement whereby they have divided the country between them to ensure effective food aid assistance (based also on FAO/FSAU findings). Given the recent improvements in food security, the response will now also include early recovery actions targeting different livelihood groups, as well as food delivery. Partners in the Food Aid cluster include WFP, CARE, World Vision, UNICEF (Nutrition), ICRC, FAO/FSAU, ACF, and NCA.

POST 06/07 DEYR PROJECTION JANUARY-JUNE 2007. ESTIMATED POPULATION BY REGION (source: FAO/FSAU – 7 March 2007)

Affected Regions	Estimated Population of Affected Regions (1)	Assessed and Contingency Population in AFLC and HE		
		Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis (AFLC) (2)	Humanitarian Emergency (HE) (2)	Total in AFLC or HE as % of Region Population
North (3)	2,341,718	0	0	0
Central	680,156	0	0	0
South				
Bakool	310,627	80,000	0	26
Bay	620,562	10,000	0	2
Gedo	328,378	90,000	110,000	61
Hiran	329,811	10,000	10,000	6
Lower Juba	385,790	90,000	40,000	34
Middle Juba	238,877	80,000	70,000	63
Lower Shabelle	850,651	0	0	0
Middle Shabelle	514,901	0	0	0
Sub-Total (South)	3,579,597	360,000	230,000	13
GRAND TOTAL	7,502,654	360,000	230,000	31

Assessed and Contingency Rural Population Numbers in AFLC or HE	590,000	8 (5)
Estimated number of IDPs (4)	400,000	5 (5)
Estimated Total Population in Crisis	990,000	24 (5)

- (1). Source: Rural Population Estimates by Region/District, UNDP Somalia, August 1 2005. Note this only includes population figures in affected regions. FSAU does not round these population estimates as they are the official estimates provided by UNDP.
- (2). Estimated numbers are rounded to the nearest ten thousand, based on resident population not considering current or anticipated migration, and are inclusive of population in High Risk of AFLC or HE for purposes of planning.
- (3). Dan Gorayo District is included within Bari Region following precedent set in population data prior to UNDP/WHO 2005.
- (4). Roughly estimated as 30% and 20% of urban population in HE and AFLC areas respectively.
- (5). Source: OCHA updated April 2004 (376,630) and UNHCR IDP map Dec.2005 (407,000), rounded to 400,000 as an estimate.
- (6). Percent of total population of Somalia estimated at 7,502,654 (UNDP/WHO 2005).

CONSTRAINTS TO PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AID AND RELIEF

Humanitarian access in Somalia remains critical to the country's most vulnerable populations in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection, particularly those in South/Central regions. Years of lack of sustained access and restricted operating space in South/Central have been major factors affecting human survival. Primarily dictated by insecurity, access is further hampered by a combination of poor infrastructure, poor operational capacity/presence on the ground, flooding, and absence of a local authority/counterpart.

During 2006, humanitarian agencies mobilized an increased influx of assistance in response to drought and flood conditions. However, the lack of adherence to humanitarian principles by local authorities resulted in frequent interruptions to humanitarian activities and prevented sustained access to vulnerable populations. In recent months, the political and security contexts have undergone significant changes, including fighting over the control of Mogadishu. While in early 2007, new access developments (for example in Galkayo) are providing new opportunities for engagement, in other critical areas, access remains obstructed; for example in and around Mogadishu as mentioned above.

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