

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 the industry in some way. Livestock export and their products account for 80% of exports in normal years, but trade has been periodically interrupted by droughts and international bans. Despite the ban imposed by Saudi Arabia in 2000 due to an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever (RVF), livestock exports continue to be the largest traded commodity for Somalia. Livestock is 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 generating income through crop sales and agricultural labor opportunities. Agriculture is a major component particularly for two of the main rural livelihood systems in Somalia:

- i) Agro-pastoralists; which mix of agriculture and livestock production for their 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 as well as parts of Awdal and Western Galbeed in the north-west.
- ii) Agriculturalists who solely depend on agriculture based livelihood. Two areas are considered high potential for crop production with rainfall ranging from 400 millimetres 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. Instead, marine resources are exploited by international fleets and business interests such large-scale fishing activities. 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 damages 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, averting a worse humanitarian crisis.

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY IN 2006/2007

At the turn of 2007, the *Deyr* (October – December) rains caused severe flooding displacing about 255,000 people in the Shabelle and Juba riverine areas. 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 Ethiopian 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, 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 were in Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, while around 230,000 people were 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 were 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 were out of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, as is the North.

Throughout 2006/2007, OCHA Somalia has received funding from:
Australia, ECHO, Ireland, Italy, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and United Kingdom, SIDA, USA, DFID
OCHA SOMALIA
7th Floor, Kalson Towers, Crescent Street, off Parklands Road, P.O. Box 28832, 00200 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel No: (254-20) 3754150-5; Fax No: (254-20) 3754156, <http://ochaonline.un.org/somalia>
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The Post *Gu* (April – June) analysis (August) highlighted an appalling situation in Middle and Lower Shabelle regions, normally the most resilient and most agriculturally product regions in south/central Somalia. Most or 85% of those identified in Humanitarian Emergency and 31% identified in Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis are in the Shabelle regions. A number of factors like ongoing conflict in Mogadishu, failed *Gu* rains, increase in essential food commodities among others contributed to the crisis. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased from 1 million to 1.5 million. Of these, 295,000 are in Humanitarian Emergency, 490,000 are in Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, 325,000 people are newly displaced IDPs from Mogadishu and 400,000 protracted IDPs.

Anti-government elements continued to fight Ethiopian/TFG forces based in Mogadishu triggering massive movements of people in and out of the city. According to United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s Population Movement Tracking, an estimated 600,000 remain displaced in and out of Mogadishu since February. As recent as 27 October, more than 200,000 people (about 60% of Mogadishu's population) have left, leaving entire neighbourhoods in the capital nearly empty headed for Lower Shabelle, other locations in Mogadishu, Galgadud region, Mudug region and Middle Shabelle.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

POST *GU* 2007 PROJECTION JULY - DECEMBER 2007. ESTIMATED POPULATION BY REGION (Source: FAO/FSAU – 14 August 2007)

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 deteriorated food security situations, response will be intensified to benefit vulnerable communities especially in the Shabelles. Partners in the Food Aid cluster include WFP, CARE, World Vision, UNICEF (Nutrition), ICRC, FAO/FSAU, ACF, and NCA.

Affected Regions	Estimated Population of Affected Regions	Assessed and Contingency Population in AFLC and HE		
		Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis (AFLC)	Humanitarian Emergency (HE)	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	5,000	0	1
Gedo	328,378	80,000	30,000	33
Hiran	329,811	30,000	15,000	14
Lower Juba	385,790	80,000	0	21
Middle Juba	238,877	65,000	0	27
Lower Shabelle	850,651	90,000	165,000	30
Middle Shabelle	514,901	60,000	85,000	28
Sub-Total (South)	3,579,597	490,000	295,000	22
Banadir	901,183			
GRAND TOTAL	7,502,654	490,000	295,000	10

Assessed and Contingency Rural Population Numbers in AFLC or HE	785,000	10
Estimated number of IDPs new IDPs since April 2007	325,000	4
Estimated number of old IDPs	400,000	5
Estimated Total Population in Crisis	1,510,000	20

Estimated numbers are rounded to the nearest 5,000 based on residence population not considering current or anticipated migration.

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 2007, humanitarian agencies mobilized an increased influx of assistance in response to humanitarian emergencies. 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.

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