



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Food  
Programme

Horn of Africa

## A joint call for action before a major regional humanitarian crisis

Joint Position Paper



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# Current situation



Amongst the lowest cumulative rainfall totals since 1981 across parts of the Horn of Africa



Only 1 good cropping season out of 7 since 2016



11.4 million food insecure people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda



785,000 children estimated to require treatment for severe acute malnutrition in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and parts of Uganda in 2019<sup>i</sup>

**11.4 million people are currently food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and require urgent food assistance in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda.** Although the food insecure population is currently lower than the total numbers in need at the height of 2016/17 drought, there is a high risk of a worsening situation due to observed and forecast drought conditions in Somalia, Kenya, and south-eastern Ethiopia (where overall needs are the highest), as well as in north eastern Uganda. An increase in the number of people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity or higher is expected from now through September as a result of consecutive failed seasons that have destroyed livelihoods and eroded the ability of communities to cope.

**According to a FEWS NET alert published on 21 May<sup>ii</sup>, remote sensing data indicates that cumulative rainfall totals between March and mid-May 2019 have been less than 50 percent of average across the Horn of Africa and have been less 80 percent of average across much of Uganda.** Additionally, in northern Somalia and localized areas of eastern Uganda, western Kenya, and south-eastern Ethiopia, the ongoing long/*Gu* rainy season has been either the first or second driest on record.

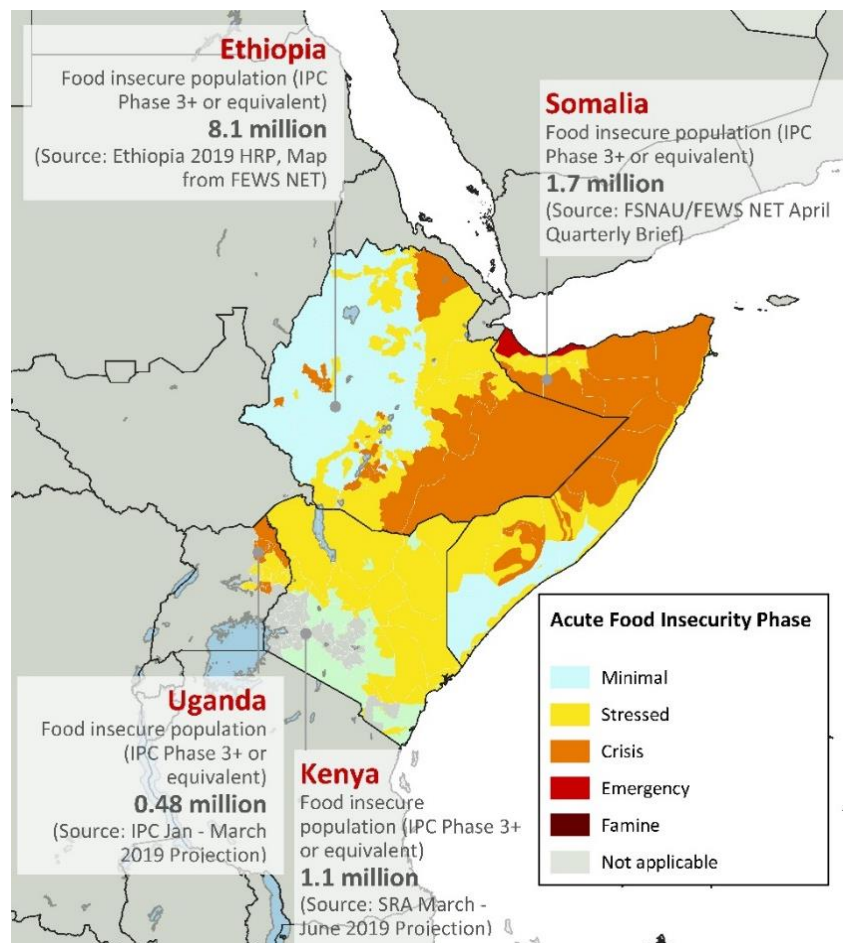
**In cropping areas, the severe dryness has disrupted planting operations and has severely impacted crop establishment and development across the region.** According to FAO's Agricultural Stress Index (ASI), severe drought conditions are currently affecting large portions of the region's cropland, with the most severe drought intensities recorded over central Uganda (the main cereal exporter for the region), south-eastern Kenya and southern Somalia (see Annex 2).

**In pastoral and agro-pastoral areas, the cumulative impact of the poor October-December rains, followed by the current dryness has resulted in very poor rangeland conditions and widespread pasture and water shortages.** Worst-affected areas include south-eastern Ethiopia, northern Kenya and central and northern Somalia, where livestock body conditions are currently poor, and drought-induced livestock diseases, abortions and deaths have been reported. In these areas, the availability of milk, a key source of nutrients for young children, is extremely limited.

**The nutrition situation across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia remains concerning.** Currently, in Ethiopia, the burden of acutely malnourished children remains the highest in the region, with the largest concentration in the Somali region. A key risk for these children remains the ability to provide uninterrupted integrated services at scale, which is under threat due to funding constraints, especially for the pipeline for treating moderately malnourished children. In Somalia, the nutrition survey results from the 2019 *Deyr* assessment, conducted by FSNAU and FEWS NET, highlighted specific concerns in several districts in Somaliland and Puntland and

indicated that risks remain in Central South Region, should the rains be poor. The nutrition sector in Somalia is severely underfunded, restricting opportunities to scale up response and therefore risks increasing the numbers of acutely malnourished children. In Kenya, the nutrition situation is critical yet stable, with the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) exceeding 15 percent in Turkana, Samburu and Mandera counties, as well as East Pokot (Baringo) and North Horr (Marsabit) sub-counties.

**The situation is particularly challenging among the populations displaced, which have reached 5.8 million in Somalia and Ethiopia.** The drought could further exacerbate the risk of displacement and will impact the already precarious situation of the IDPs, especially newly displaced ones.



Current food security outcomes and food insecure populations, May 2019<sup>iii</sup>

# Forecast scenario



Food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) population could rise to 14-17 million by August



Crop production up to 50 percent below average



Deteriorating pastoral conditions limit milk access, reduce herd sizes, and drive atypical movements



Rising staple food prices limit food access



Rapid deterioration in nutritional status of young children

**Food insecurity will likely peak between June and October and according to WFP, the food insecure population (IPC Phase 3+) in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda could reach 14 to 17 million people by August 2019.**

Though rainfall has improved in late April/early May over certain areas, these rains were insufficient to offset the accumulated moisture deficits and came too late to allow any significant crop recovery. Upcoming harvests, normally gathered in June/July, will be delayed and up to 50 percent below average in central and southern Somalia, bimodal Uganda, and marginal long rains cropping areas of Kenya, according to FSNAU and FEWS NET. **The current situation will both prolong the current lean season and result an early depletion of household food stocks later in the year, extending the period that households rely on market purchases until their next harvest in early 2020.**

Driven by unfavourable crop prospects, cereal prices have recently begun to increase, with maize prices increasing between April and May by between 9 and 33 percent at most markets monitored by FAO in Kenya and Uganda. Similarly, maize prices are between 62 – 76 percent above last year's levels at all monitored markets in Uganda and are up by between 35-50 percent at markets in Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nakuru in Kenya. In Somalia, sorghum prices trends varied from market to market between March and April but are up compared to last year's levels at Belet Weyne (50 percent), Baidoa (16 percent), Bossaso (11 percent) and Mogadishu (8 percent). In Ethiopia, April prices are not yet available, but March maize prices were generally stable compared to the previous month but up slightly (4 to 7 percent) compared to the same time last year. **Prices are expected to continue their increasing trend due to expected below-average production**, both locally and in Uganda, the main maize exporter for the region, severely constraining food access for vulnerable households.

**In pastoral areas, recent rains brought a temporary respite though rangeland conditions remain poor and are expected to further deteriorate after the end of the rains.** Deteriorating livestock body conditions and atypical movements will limit availability and access to milk. Additionally, the availability of marketable animals will be very low, as most animals will remain in poor condition and herds are already at well below average levels after the massive losses suffered during the 2016/17 drought. As a result, cash incomes will be severely limited, restricting food purchases for pastoralists.

**A rapid deterioration in the nutritional status of children is expected in the worst-affected areas should the May and June rains continue to underperform.** Areas of concern include the Somali region of Ethiopia (which hosts the highest numbers of acutely malnourished children in the country), northern pastoral areas of Kenya (where prevalence rates of acute malnutrition have

historically doubled during years of severe drought (e.g. 2017) and central and southern regions of Somalia (which also carry the highest burden of acutely malnourished children in Somalia). Specifically, in Somalia, the annual burden of acutely malnourished children is predicted to increase from the current estimate of 903,000 up to 1.5 million, should the rains completely fail. A key driver of the rapid deterioration in pastoral populations is significantly reduced access to milk for young children, who rely on it as a main source of nutrition.

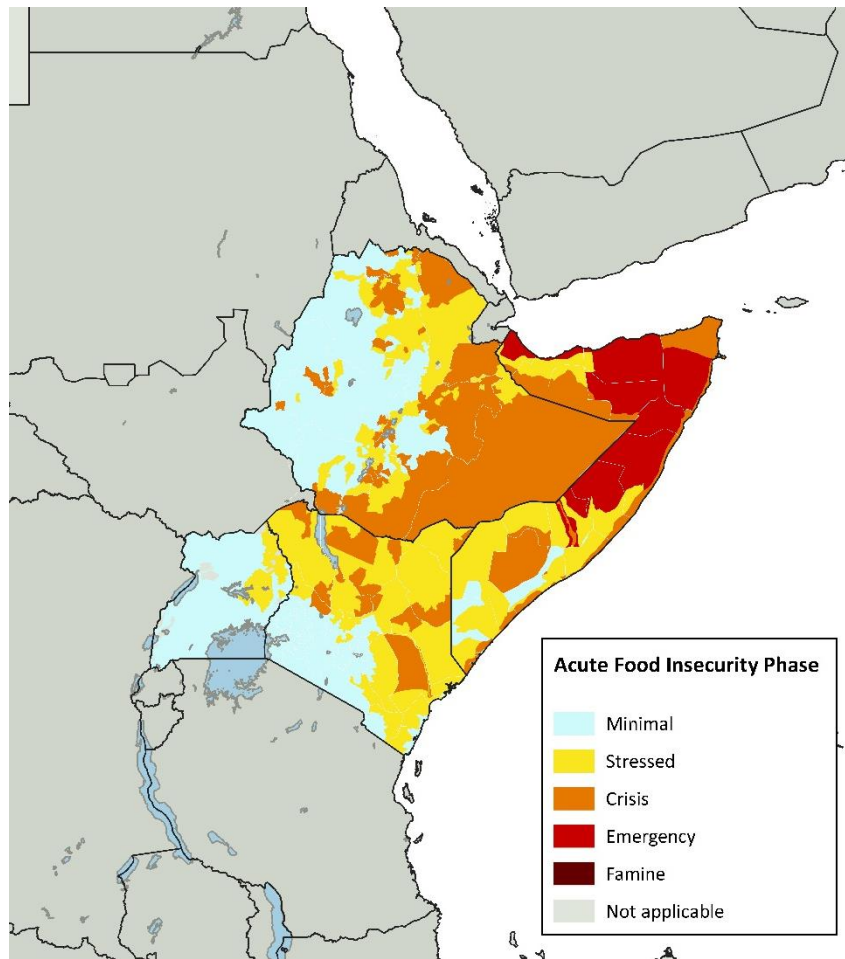
**There are already indications of water scarcity, which is likely to be aggravated in the coming weeks.** A UNICEF assessment in March already identified that 116 schools were already lacking water in the Arid and Semiarid Lands (ASAL) in Kenya. In Somalia, water prices are twice the levels based on a five-year average.

**Limited access to safe water and sanitation, increasing malnutrition and displacement will also increase the risk of infectious diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and measles.** Currently measles and cholera outbreaks within the region are at risk of expanding due to the effects of the drought, increasing the pressure on the already overstretched health systems.

**The situation will also impact other rights, including education and protection.** Drought conditions are likely to lead to further school drop-outs. It can also exacerbate protection risks as families can resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as child labor and child marriage. It also increases family separation, with household breadwinners moving in search of livelihoods, leaving children under alternative care arrangements. Protective family and community structures are, therefore, disrupted, placing children and female headed households at high vulnerability to gender-based violence, exploitation and further isolation from humanitarian assistance.

**Chronic underfunding of response programmes, against a backdrop of decades of underinvestment in marginal areas, acts as a compounding factor, elevating the overall risk of a further and significant deterioration in food security and nutritional outcomes.** For example, the average funding level of the Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) since 2014 has only been 68 percent, and in Ethiopia, the average since 2017 is 51 per cent.

**This trend is particularly critical at this time, as communities have not fully recovered from the 2016/17 drought. Urgent humanitarian assistance, including food, nutrition support, water, sanitation, health and livelihood initiatives, is required** to mitigate the impacts of widening food gaps, rising acute malnutrition, accelerated depletion of livelihood assets, and the overall erosion of community coping mechanisms.



*Projected food security outcomes, June - September 2019 (FEWS NET)<sup>iv</sup>*



# The risk of not acting on time



Up to 1,000,000 more acutely malnourished children under 5 years of age across the region



2.6 - 5.6 million additional people in IPC Phase 3+ by August 2019



Every US\$ 1 invested in early action can save up to US\$ 9 in response

**If the worst-case scenario in terms of rain materialize, and the current response is delayed or underfunded, a scenario close to 2017 (i.e. pre-famine conditions) could occur.** A key challenge posed by the current dry conditions is that it comes only a year and three months after the 2016/17 crisis. In that context, Government, partners and humanitarian actors reacted quickly and to scale. Yet again, Governments and resource partners are called upon to accelerate and increase the level of assistance to vulnerable communities in order to prevent dramatic increases in the number of food insecure people, a deterioration of the nutritional status of children and overall erosion of coping mechanisms, and to cover humanitarian needs already identified and costed under the 2019 HRP.

**Gambling on the potential of good rains towards the end of the season or waiting for the next short rains is an option too risky.** Sufficiently reliable and credible analyses have been available since March 2019 to enable a timely response without delay.

**If action is not taken in time, it is anticipated that 2.6 to 5.6 million people currently facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity will fall into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse, and up to 1 million additional children under the age of 5 years will require treatment for acute malnutrition.** Acutely malnourished children have a significantly increased risk of death compared to those that are well-nourished (four times higher for moderately malnourished children and nine times higher for severely malnourished children).



# Strategic direction



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Responding to a drought is about implementing the right activity at the right time of the drought cycle

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Saving livelihoods by saving assets and preventing negative coping mechanisms

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Prioritize assistance for the most vulnerable individuals and households, including children and women households

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- 1. Provide early, flexible, un-earmarked funds now on a ‘no regrets’ basis** in order to implement immediately multi-sectoral early actions to prevent the depletion of productive assets, the dramatic worsening of food security outcomes, escalating levels of acute malnutrition, and lack of water, among others. Despite alerts provided at country and regional levels, an Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) press conference on 17 April and country-based donors meetings, early action funding barely materialized in April. A small window of opportunity still exists to reduce the risk of a major humanitarian crisis by acting now. It is much more cost-effective to act early than wait for a declaration of a drought emergency to save lives and livelihoods with emergency assistance. The Somalia 2016-2017 drought demonstrated that an early scale up and reprioritization of resources prevented a famine and was also cost effective.
- 2. Scale-up humanitarian assistance for the anticipated extended lean season.** The current drought is only exacerbating an already dramatic humanitarian crisis in Somalia and Ethiopia where HRPs are significantly underfunded to date, i.e. 81 percent and 94 percent respectively. There is an urgent need for an immediate scale-up of humanitarian response to address both needs identified at the beginning of the year and now the additional needs generated by the ongoing drought.
- 3. Prepare for the next rainy season.** Assuming the next October-December rainy season is average, it is imperative that farmers and herders have full capacities to resume farming and herding. It is equally important to be ready to respond to potential increases in water-borne diseases and their negative impacts on nutritional outcomes.
- 4. Ensure that both immediate lifesaving programming and resilient development approaches** are supported to ensure that recovery from the current drought is sustained. Resilient programming should include shock-responsive social protection and safety net programmes, which should be linked to national systems when possible, and which will allow the population affected to prevent, stand and recover better from the effects of drought.



# Joint early action

(May – December 2019)

**The coming months will be critical for affected people in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda.** Either timely and appropriate action is taken now while simultaneously scaling-up humanitarian response, or a major humanitarian crisis is likely during the second half of the year that will be both time consuming and significantly more costly to address and will put children and other vulnerable people at risk.

**FAO, UNICEF, and WFP are working together at both the country and regional levels, along with other partners, to address simultaneously and in a coordinated fashion the multiple needs of vulnerable households** (e.g. food, nutrition, WASH and livelihoods), including through planning geographic convergence of interventions. WFP and UNICEF will also seek to coordinate the procurement, shipment and distribution of nutrition related commodities, in order to enhance efficiencies in the supply chain. Priority activities for the three agencies are:

## FAO



Funding required  
US\$ 202,200,000



Households targeted  
1,862,850

### Activities

- Subsidize feed provision through commercial contracts
- Identify, establish and activate emergency slaughtering points/areas
- Provide protective livestock treatment
- Activate Cash-for-Work
- Subsidize/promote commercial destocking
- Subsidize/promote commercial water trucking
- Distribute farming livelihood packages including cash (Cash +)

## UNICEF



Funding required  
US\$ 289,825,000



People targeted  
5,437,300



Children targeted  
3,246,800

### Activities

- Scale up of the delivery of lifesaving nutrition services, including outreaches to support screening and treatment for children with acute malnutrition
- Provision of counselling on infant and young child feeding for mothers and caregivers
- Life-saving preventative and curative interventions for children affected by acute watery diarrhea, malaria or measles
- Provision of safe water and sanitation, when possible through sustainable solutions
- Provision of sanitation and hygiene services, essential for disease prevention and response
- Support psychosocial support and other child protection services for children affected by drought, including family tracing and alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied or separated children, and expansion of sexual and gender base violence and community care interventions and assistance for victims

- Increase access to education for out of school children, and to prevent dropouts
- Support shock-responsive government led social protection systems, through contingency budget to the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia (PSNP), or additional safety net programmes in drought affected areas for the countries in the region

## WFP



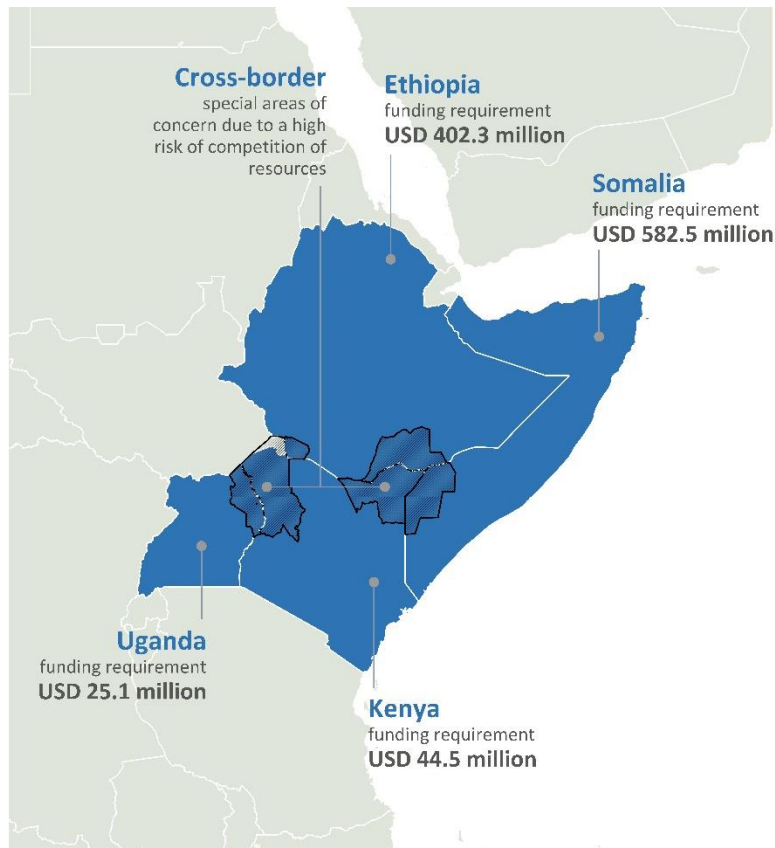
Funding required  
US\$ 562,322,283



People targeted  
4,700,000

## Activities

- Unconditional in-kind general food distributions comprising of cereals, pulses and vegetable oil in areas where there is limited market access
- Unconditional cash-based transfers in the form of e-vouchers or cash in areas where markets are functional and conditions for cash-based transfers are met
- Scale up of the delivery of lifesaving nutrition services, including outreaches to support screening and treatment for children with acute malnutrition
- Blanket supplementary feeding and nutritional supplements to children under 5 years
- Urban poor and chronically food insecure people in Mogadishu with a predictable safety-net transfers
- Food security and nutrition monitoring
- The extensive registration of beneficiaries to the SCOPE platform



# Funding requirements

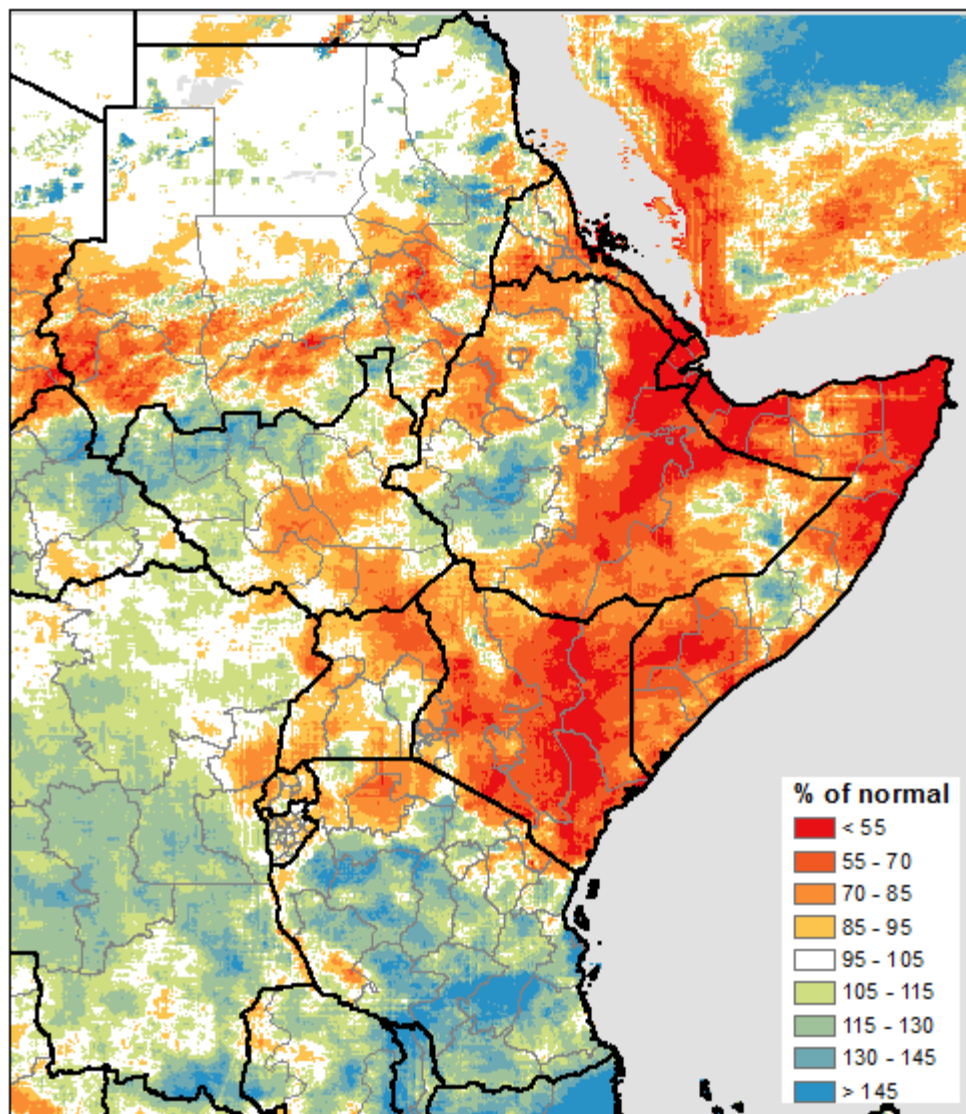
(May – December 2019)

	Somalia	Ethiopia	Kenya	Uganda	Total
<b>FAO</b>					
Target beneficiaries (HH)	1,057,600	600,000	185,250	20,000	<b>1,862,850</b>
Required budget (USD)	143,700,000	36,000,000	13,000,000	9,500,000	<b>202,200,000</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>					
Target beneficiaries	1,500,000	3,000,000	881,700	55,588	<b>5,437,288</b>
Target children	885,000	1,590,000	749,200	22,680	<b>3,246,880</b>
Required budget (USD)	145,325,000 <sup>v</sup>	120,900,000 <sup>vi</sup>	22,400,000 <sup>vii</sup>	1,200,000 <sup>viii</sup>	<b>289,825,000</b>
<b>WFP</b>					
Target beneficiaries	2,300,000	2,010,000	390,000	-	<b>4,700,000</b>
Required budget (USD)	293,439,028	245,354,770	9,109,302	14,419,183	<b>562,322,283</b>



© UNICEF/ MK Coursin, Kenya

## Annex 1. Seasonal rainfall totals, percent of normal (1 March – 20 May)



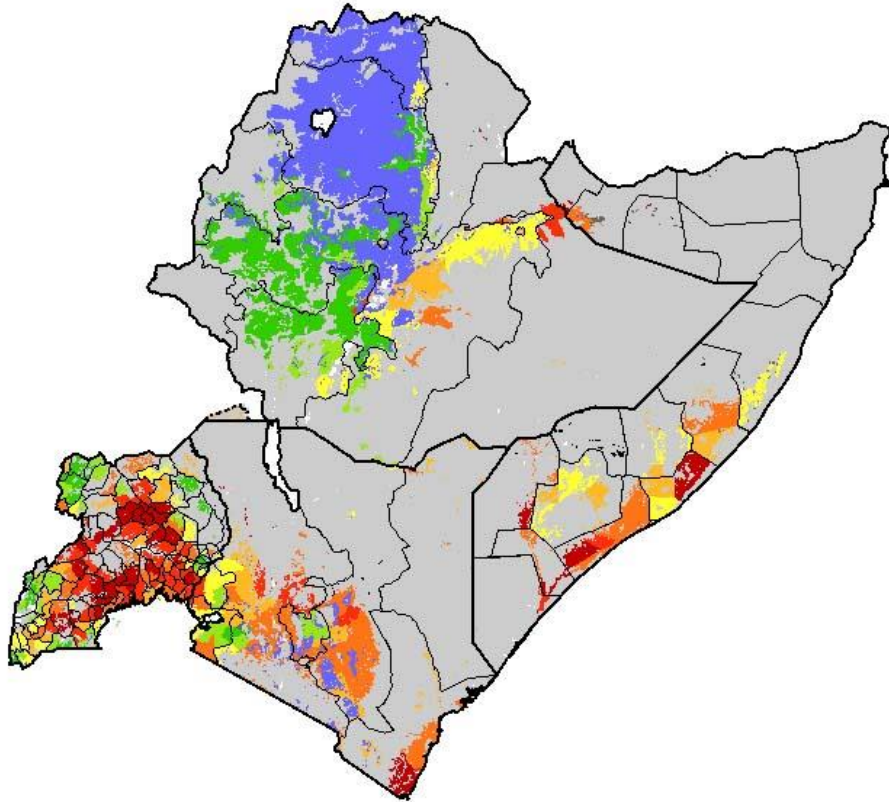
Source: CHIRPS version 2.0 **prelim**

Map produced by USGS/EROS



## Annex 2. Agricultural Stress Index (ASI)

### Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda



#### Agricultural Stress Index (ASI)

% of cropland area affected by severe drought

per GAUL 2 region

from : start of SEASON 1

to : dekad 1 May 2019

METOP-AVHRR

WGS84, Geographic Lat/Lon

#### ASI (%)



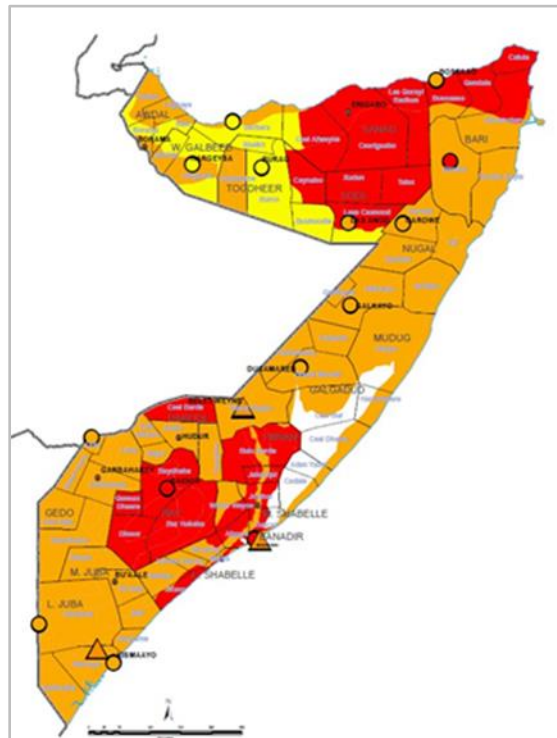
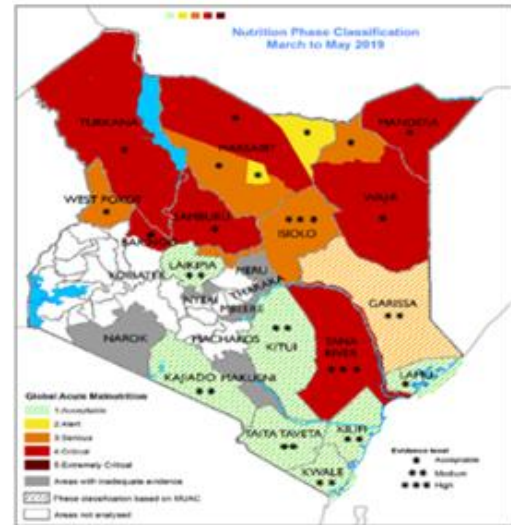
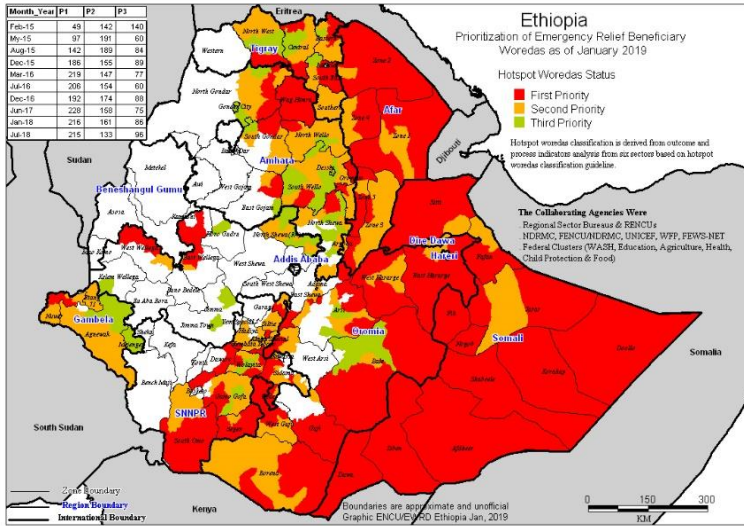
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*Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Dashed lines represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.*

**Note:** The Agricultural Stress Index (ASI) is a quick-look indicator that facilitates the early identification of cropped land with a high likelihood of water stress (drought).

# Annex 3. Projected nutrition situation, February–April 2019



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<sup>i</sup> Estimation done in January 2019 and does not include the current deterioration due to drought.

<sup>ii</sup> Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), Update of 21 May 2019, available at:

[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EAST\\_AFRICA\\_Alert\\_052119.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EAST_AFRICA_Alert_052119.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> FSNAU-Somalia and FEWS NET estimate that the food insecure population (IPC Phase 3+) in Somalia will increase to 2.2 million during the July – September period. The Somalia analysis can be found at: <http://www.fsnau.org/downloads/FSNAU-Food-Security-Quarterly-Brief-April-2019.pdf> The Kenya Short Rains Assessment report can be found at: <https://www.ndma.go.ke/index.php/resource-center/send/61-2019/5136-2019-sra-national-report>. The Uganda IPC analysis can be found at: <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1151994/>. The Ethiopia HRP can be found at:

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ethiopia/document/ethiopia-humanitarian-response-plan> The shapefiles for the current food insecurity map were provided by the IPC GSU team and FEWS NET.

<sup>iv</sup> Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) East Africa Key Message Update for May 2019, available at: <http://fews.net/east-africa/key-message-update/may-2019>

<sup>v</sup> UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children's Appeal (HAC) for Somalia can be found at: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/somalia.html>

<sup>vi</sup> Total UNICEF HAC for Ethiopia is US\$5132 million, the portion indicated corresponds only to the drought response. UNICEF HAC for Ethiopia can be found at: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/ethiopia.html>

<sup>vii</sup> UNICEF HAC for Kenya is currently under review, and will the amount required will be revised upwards for a total of US\$28 million. The portion indicated corresponds only to the drought response. HAC can be found at: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/kenya.html>

<sup>viii</sup> Total UNICEF HAC for Uganda is US\$551.7 million, the portion indicated corresponds only to the drought response. HAC can be found at: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/uganda.html>