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## CHAD Food Security Update

June 2007

There was very little change in Chad's food security situation between May and June. Harvests of flood-recession and 2006/07 off-season crops helped to some extent to improve grain availability for households in river valley areas. Thanks to grain surpluses following two consecutive surplus crop years (2005/06 and 2006/07), regular market supplies were able to keep grain prices level despite the onset of the lean period.

Regular food distributions in refugee and IDP zones helped normalize the food situation, with the volume of pre-positioned food supplies in these areas making for an encouraging food outlook. The current challenge for assistance agencies active in receiving areas for refugees and IDPs is to improve access to clean water and sanitary facilities and could partially explain the surge in certain diseases in these areas. However, many rural households in structurally deficit areas of Kanem and Batha and flood victims in the southern part of the country are still experiencing food access problems.

The first rains of the year slowly helped get the growing season underway in the southern part of the country, producing fresh pasture for grazing animals. However, heavy pressure by the human and animal populations on a relatively degraded area in the country's eastern zone is further curtailing access to natural resources in general and land in particular, which is affecting the livelihoods of host communities and making IDPs increasingly reliant on humanitarian aid.

### Food security in at-risk areas

Despite what, on the whole, was a surplus crop year, the food security of certain population groups in Kanem and West Batha, both of which are structurally deficit areas, and in Mandoul, Mayo Kebbi and Moyen Chari in the southern part of the country affected by flooding will deteriorate during the pre-harvest lean period. Some 102,609 residents of Kanem and Batha and 7,425 flood victims were classified as highly food-insecure by the members of the joint assessment mission organized by the Ministry of Agriculture in March of this year. These groups should benefit from the May 2 decision by the Action Committee for Food Security and Crisis Management to distribute seeds and set up a social marketing program (solely for residents of Kanem and Batha) beginning in June, to re-energize the 2007/08 growing season.

### Food security of refugees and IDPs

World Food Program (WFP) relief operations for refugees and IDPs proceeded without any major problems despite what are still rather volatile security conditions in the country's eastern zone, as well as in the south. These operations have recently been stepped up in anticipation of the onset of the rainy season, necessitating the pre-positioning of food supplies in operating areas liable to be cut off from the rest of the country (by impassable roads). These efforts to pre-position food stores, which are normally begun before the heavy rains begin, have already assembled enough supplies to cover 95 percent of needs for the next five months in refugee camps throughout eastern Chad. WFP is hoping to complete this operation before July 15. The swollen numbers of IDPs in the wake of attacks triggered by ethnic fighting and the ensuing panic has clearly had an impact on the pre-positioning of food aid.

### Sudanese refugee population in eastern Chad

On the whole, the food situation of Sudanese refugees in the eastern part of the country is satisfactory. In fact, the general food distribution to refugees for the month of June was completed somewhere between June 9 and June 12 at all refugee camps, with more than 3,878 MT of provisions distributed to 228,900 camp residents. To some extent, compliance with the schedule for these food distributions has helped the refugees better manage their monthly food ration, making them an

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integral part of their coping strategies. However, continuing water shortages in certain camps are interfering with the optimal use of these food supplies.

Moreover, civil strife along the Sudanese border and the exclusion of certain refugees from relief operations are creating small streams of Sudanese refugees heading towards Gaga. The coordination office for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Chadian National Commission for the Accommodation and Reintegration of Refugees (CNAR) registered some 2,596 “spontaneous” Sudanese refugees over the period between January and May 2007, plus an additional 136 in June, with the count still ongoing. For the most part, these spontaneous refugees had settled along the border, away from the camps, remaining close to their native villages in order to have access to their fields and other natural resources. Their belated resettlement is due, in large part, to the deterioration in security conditions in and around their settlement sites. Most of these refugees are arriving in Gaga supplied with enough provisions to meet two or three weeks worth of food needs and generally receive assistance once the UNHCR/CNAR coordination office has completed its head count and registration formalities. There are concerns for the welfare of the latest wave of refugees due to their makeshift shelters, exposing them to the elements. However, no steps can be taken by relief agencies to provide them with needed materials for a proper shelter until the completion of all camp registration formalities.

### **Internally displaced population in eastern Chad**

A 90-day food ration was distributed to all IDPs over the last three months. In addition, a 90-day seed protection ration has already been distributed to residents of the Kerfi, Adé, Allacha, Goudiang and Goz Bagar settlements and is in the process of being distributed to IDPs in other locations. This latter ration is designed both to ensure the optimal use of seeds and to enable prospective farmers to devote themselves to full-time farming activities.

More than 147 MT of provisions were transferred to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Assongha region as part of an inter-agency agreement enabling WFP and ICRC to transfer food supplies back and forth. These provisions are scheduled to be distributed to some 15,000 IDPs at the Goz Bagar, Goudiang and Hiledye settlements as a 42-day seed protection ration.

A WFP team in the Salamat region distributed 117 MT of provisions to more than 5,000 recipients as a 60-day seed protection ration for IDPs at the Ideter, Badine, Arkouk, Maka and Ardo settlements. Thus, in the last three months, 3,612 MT of provisions, including grains, pulses, oil, salt and sugar, were distributed to a target group of 115,600 IDPs.

Access to water supplies and sanitation services is becoming increasingly problematic at settlement sites for IDPs and could partially explain the reported rise in rates of infectious diseases in certain settlements such as Kerfi, Adé, Koloma and Habilé. A number of mitigating measures have been taken to help close gaps in these services. UNICEF and its partners in the field are considering the option of hastily installing 80 boreholes equipped with hand pumps, including 60 manual and 20 automatic pumps. Efforts by Doctors Without Borders-France (MSF/F) to furnish drinking water to residents of the Koubigou, Gassiré, Koloma and Adé settlements using a dozen tank trucks making two trips a day each have eased the extremely heavy pressure created by the acute water shortage at these locations.

Yet another problem in the country’s Eastern Zone has to do with the need to ensure that the digging of latrines does not contaminate the water table in that area, particularly with the rise in the level of the water table in certain parts of Dar Sila threatening to raise it to a depth of less than two meters. Despite the relative improvement in the food situation of IDPs, residents of the spontaneous settlement in Ambaroka are facing a real problem getting access to food and non-food aid. Thus far, this makeshift settlement on the outskirts of the city of Goz Beida has received only government aid and is not included in current scheduled food distributions. The destitution of this group of IDPs has recently forced a first wave of 369 residents to leave the settlement for Koubigou in search of assistance.

A look at trends in conditions in the Sila department health district between epidemiological weeks 21 and 22 shows surges in the number of cases of certain infectious diseases such as acute respiratory syndrome (72 percent rise), acute jaundice syndrome (60 percent rise) and watery diarrhea (50 percent rise among children under five years of age). This rise in the incidence of infectious diseases could be attributable to several factors, including makeshift shelters and shortages of blankets in the midst of the rainy season, shortages of clean water, poor hygiene and limited sanitary facilities. The state of

the water supply and sanitation services, which is clearly substandard at certain settlement sites for IDPs, could be another contributing factor. At the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO) team, the following measures were taken in the face of the persistence of the virus causing jaundice syndrome (in many cases, transmitted by drinking water contaminated with human feces) despite chlorination efforts in an effort to halt its propagation:

- Mounting of a general hygiene promotion campaign (personal, environmental hygiene, etc);
- Regular follow-ups on reported cases by health professionals and home visits.

### **Central African refugee population in southern Chad**

Conditions in the southern part of the country in the receiving area for Central African refugees are stable. However, security pressure from clashes between government troops and rebel forces in the northern reaches of the Central African Republic (CAR) is forcing area residents to seek sanctuary in Chad. Close to 81 refugees were transported from Bekoninga to Dosseye on June 7, including 17 children under five years of age.

General food distributions for the month of June went smoothly in all three camps in Goré (Amboko, Dosseye and Gondjé), where 275 MT of provisions were distributed to 27,244 recipients over the period from June 4 through June 9.

In addition to these general distributions, targeted distributions under the Nutrition Program provisioned by the WFP furnished 1,470 recipients with 7,242kg of foodstuffs as part of the maternal and child health component, 200 recipients with 750kg of foodstuffs as part of the therapeutic feeding center component and 322 recipients with 1,483kg of foodstuffs as part of the nutritional health center component.

## **Nutritional status of refugees and IDPs**

### **Sudanese refugee population in Chad**

Medical NGOs active in refugee camps in Iriba are reporting a new outbreak of diarrhea and a rise in global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates among children up to five years of age. According to one such organization, namely the International Medical Corps, the GAM rate in Amnabak was at 5.18 percent in May, compared with 4.7 percent in April. The severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rate for this same period was 0.28 percent. The findings by in-depth screening operations by Doctors Without Borders-Luxembourg at the Iridimi and Touloum camps in June are still pending. The main cause of diarrhea is most likely the consumption of contaminated water drawn from open wells to satisfy unmet needs for drinking water at the refugee camps.

### **Internally displaced population in eastern Chad**

The last few months have given rise to a controversy and concerns over the nutritional status of the country's internally displaced child population. While routine data collected by on-site partners showed relatively stable conditions, with an average GAM rate of under 10 percent (which is the threshold rate signaling a cause for concern by international standards), a study conducted by Doctors Without Borders/France in May of this year in conjunction with Epicentre reported a 19 percent prevalence rate for GAM and a daily mortality rate of 4 per 10,000 children under five years of age. By international standards, a mortality rate of more than 2 deaths a day per 10,000 is cause for concern. Finally, a rapid assessment by Doctors Without Borders-Spain at IDP settlements in Salamat (Ideter, Al Kouk, Badiné, Ardo, Maka and Mishegue) put the GAM rate at 5.9 percent, with a SAM rate of 0.8 percent. The Ideter settlement had the highest SAM rate, at 3.5 percent.

These findings are not comparable because they were achieved using different methods of calculation. Moreover, while they provide an instant snapshot of the situation, they do not necessarily show a pattern. Nevertheless, the reported figures all point to a troubling nutritional situation requiring a rapid response.

At the recommendation of UNICEF, UN agencies, government health services and the country's humanitarian partners active in the area of nutrition met on June 8 to study the situation, reach a consensus and propose countermeasures. The

study process showed the nutritional situation to be more or less stable in settlements in the Goz Beida area, but steadily deteriorating at remote settlements such as Kerfi, Gassiré, Adé and Habilé, where there is relatively little nutrition infrastructure and the climate of insecurity is limiting relief efforts by humanitarian agencies. Moreover, shortages of drinking water, poor hygiene, limited access to health services and negative cultural factors such as unsound breast-feeding and feeding practices for infants and young children were deemed to be other major contributing factors to the deterioration in the nutritional situation at these locations.

To reverse the current trend and keep the nutritional situation under control, a series of proposals were made for improving water supplies and hygiene, particularly at the Habillé settlements, improving access to health services at the Kerfi, Gassiré and Adé settlements and targeting farm aid such as seeds, farm implements and access to cropland primarily at recent IDPs.

To prepare for the imminent onset of the rainy season, it was proposed that supplies of needed drugs and nutritional inputs be assembled in order to prevent fresh outbreaks of severe acute malnutrition, malaria and diarrheal diseases. UNICEF has pre-positioned supplies of therapeutic foods (266 cartons of F100, 229 cartons of F75 and 295 cartons of PlumpyNut) in Gos Beida, Abéché and Goré and is working in the field, together with its on-site partners, to improve water supplies and sanitary facilities (latrines) at all locations by digging additional boreholes and latrines.

A joint survey of the state of nutrition and its key drivers was conducted by UNICEF, the WFP, the WHO and the Chadian government – represented by the National Statistics and Economic and Population Research Institute (INSEED) and the National Nutrition and Food Technology Center (CNNTA) – in May. The survey covered the Ouaddai, Kanem, Guera and Batha regions, as well as the country's internally displaced population. The Waddi Fira region, which was originally scheduled to be included in the survey, was later excluded for security reasons. Data collection efforts were completed by the end of June and the preliminary findings are expected to be released in mid-July and should provide specific insights into the nutritional situation and its main drivers in these areas and in IDP settlement sites.

### **Central African refugee population in southern Chad**

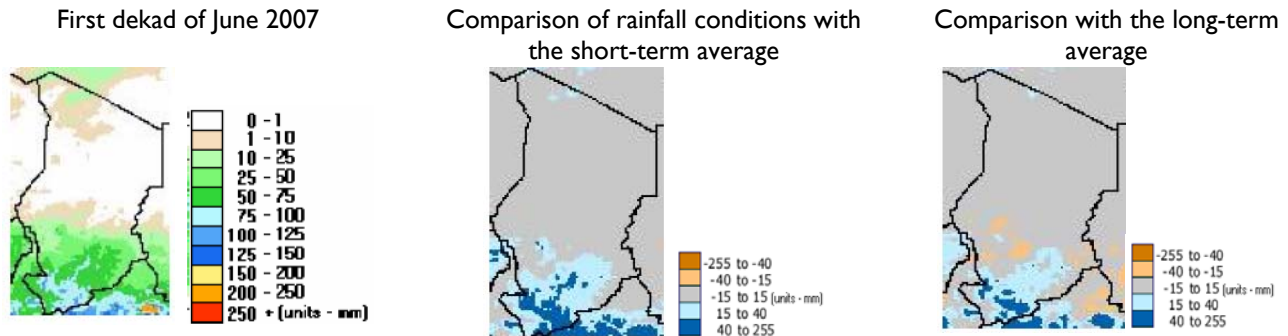
The nutritional situation for Central African refugees is stable in camps in southern Chad. The last screening by the Italian NGO Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) in May put the GAM rate at 4.0 percent, with a SAM rate of 1.5 percent. Most cases of severe acute malnutrition involve newcomers to the refugee camps.

## **Monitoring the 2007/08 agropastoral season**

### **Rainfall estimates and status of crops**

The growing season is gradually getting underway in farming areas around the country. In the South, rainfall amounts since April have allowed for the localized planting of major crops, particularly early grain and oilseed crops. Satellite imagery for the first dekad of June (figure 1) shows useful precipitation sweeping through the southern part of the country, producing anywhere from 75 to 120mm of rain in the far south. Rainfall was somewhat lighter in the southern Sahelian zone, with only trace amounts of rain showing in the northwestern reaches of that area. Rainfall amounts in the far south and south-central part of the country, respectively, were moderately to well above the short-term average for the same ten-day period and near-average to below-average throughout most of the Sahelian zone. A comparison with the long-term average shows above-average rainfall in the Sudanian zone, with well-below-average rainfall amounts in the Sahelian zone. However, forecasts for the upcoming weeks are promising, which could get the growing season in the Sahelian zone off to a normal start.

**Figure 1.** Rainfall estimate for the first dekad of June of 2007

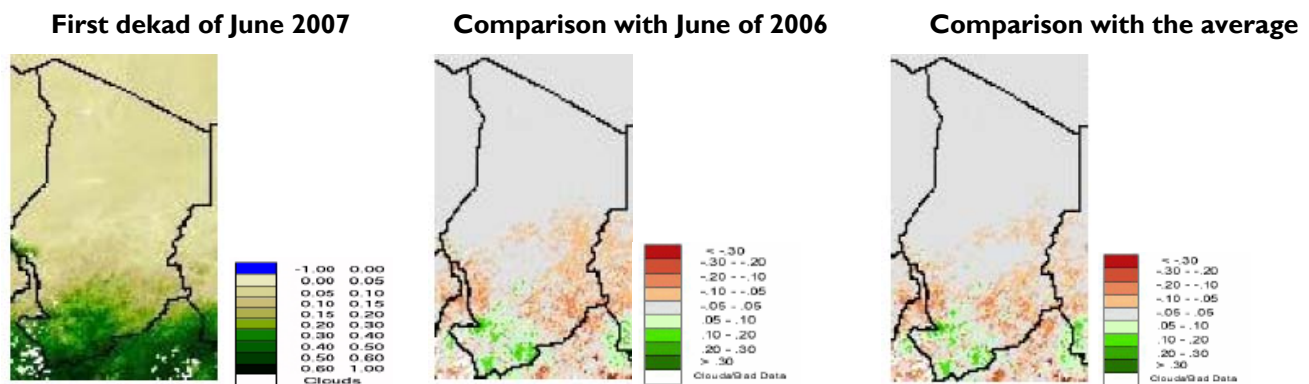


Source of data: NOAA; Interpreted by FEWS NET Chad

**Measurement of vegetation and conditions in livestock-raising areas**

The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) for the first dekad of June (figure 2) shows very dense vegetation in the country's Sudanian and Sudano-Sahelian zones. The fresh woody growth at this time of year allows camels, goats and, to a lesser extent, cattle, to feed on aerial pasture. The vegetation front is also advancing in the central part of the country, particularly within a narrow belt between the Ouaddaï and the Hadjer Lamis regions, thinning out in the northern reaches of that area. A comparison of the condition of vegetation in the first dekad of June with the same time last year shows considerably more pasture production in the central and western reaches of the Sudanian zone. Compared to last year, the improvement in pasture production farther north has been less significant and conditions in the eastern and western reaches of the Sahelian zone have deteriorated. A comparison of the first dekad of June with the short-term average shows pasture production well below-average in the Sahelian zone and slightly above-average in the southern part of the country, which could slow the progress of seasonal migratory movements northwards.

**Figure 2.** NDVI estimate for the first dekad of June of 2007



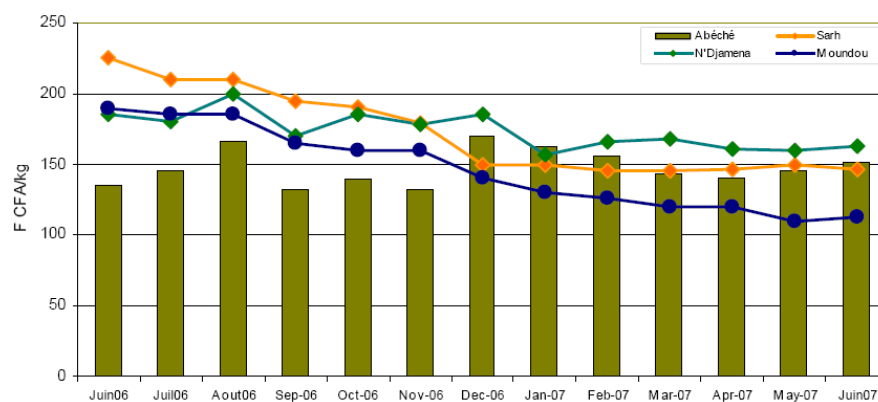
Source of data: NOAA; Interpreted by FEWS NET Chad

## Price analysis and food access

### Millet prices

Millet prices inched upwards between May and June on three of the four main grain markets monitored by FEWS NET Chad (figure 3). Domestic market supplies are still relatively well ensured by locally available grain crops. However, recently, the onset of the rainy season has prompted certain players on the grain market to modify their behavior, particularly grain traders. The rise in fuel prices is adding to the traditionally high shipping costs during the rainy season, affecting price formation for coarse grain crops, which also includes a more virtual cost element produced

**Figure 3.** Millet prices on Chad's four largest grain markets (June 2006 to June 2007)



Source: SIM; Analysis by FEWS NET Chad

by speculative practices such as stock-piling crops to defer supply until the lean period gets underway in order to make a profit, particularly with nomadic pastoralists returning north with their migratory herds. However, the negative financial repercussions (delays in payments of wages and salaries and the erosion in income from cotton-farming activities with the plunge in world cotton prices) of the current social crisis at the country-wide level have reduced effective demand, slowing what is generally a steeper rise in prices at this time of year.

Millet prices in Abéché rose by 5 percent between May and June. The main cause of this hike in coarse grain prices is the ongoing food and/or seed procurement program on the Abéché and other markets as part of the food aid operation mounted by the assistance committee for IDPs. Moreover, since the beginning of the rainy season, road and track conditions have been deteriorating, slowing down trade flows between this market and one of its main sources of supply in Dar Sila department. This has affected marketing channels and the regularity of market supplies. In addition, certain wholesalers traditionally engage in stock-piling at this time of year in order to create a fictitious shortage, speculating on the return of nomadic herders, who will often buy their provisions in Abéché at comparatively high prices.

Millet prices inched upwards between May and June in N'Djaména and Moundou, by 3 percent and 2 percent, respectively. Even with the announcement of across-the-board pay raises for government workers and the ensuing proportionate rise in prices for consumer goods and services between late May and early June, delays in the payment of wages and salaries, particularly in N'Djaména, and in payments for cotton crops in Moundou, reduced effective market demand, softening the shock of the announced raises.

The Sarh market is still well stocked thanks to current good grain availability. The rainy season got off to a relatively good start in certain localized areas in the month of June and, with expected early harvests of groundnut and maize crops in the next few months, the promising food outlook for the months of July and August points to a relatively easy lean period. Grain traders on wholesale markets reacted to this encouraging food outlook by unloading their inventories. The excess supply, together with a flagging effective demand caused by delays in payments of wages and salaries due to the ongoing social crisis at the country-wide level and delays in payments for cotton crops resulting from the financial problems facing CotonTchad, the national cotton enterprise, caused prices to fall by 2 percent between May and June.

A seasonal and medium-term analysis of household grain access on local markets shows mixed results. Compared with the same time last year, June prices were 13 percent higher on the Abéché market and down by 41 percent, 35 percent and 12 percent, respectively, on the Moundou, Sarh and N'Djaména markets (figure 3).

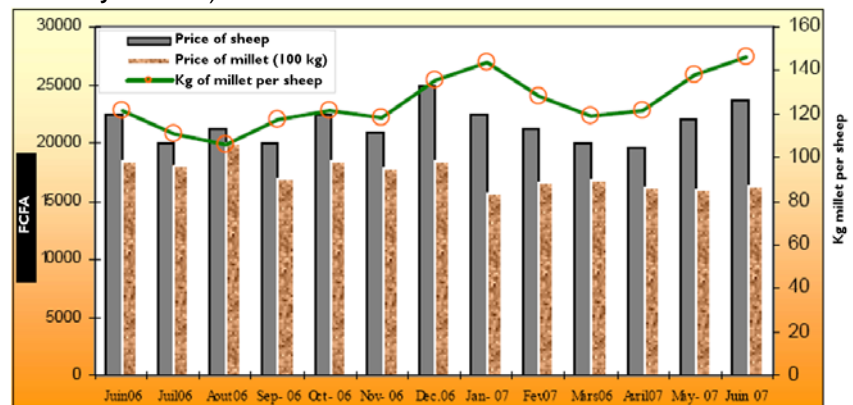
June prices on all four markets monitored by FEWS NET were running below the five-year average for the same time of year by anywhere from 7 percent in Abéché to 32 percent in Moundou.

### Terms of trade for sheep/millet

The average price of a sheep in N’Djaména by the third week of June was 23,750 CFAF, compared with 22,000 CFAF for the same week of May, an increase of close to 8 percent.

The additional 1,750 CFAF pocketed by herders in June was equivalent to an extra 8kg of millet per average sheep sold. A comparison of terms of trade in June 2006 and June of this year shows a significant gain of 24kg of millet for herders selling sheep. Thus, price ratios are still clearly in favor of herders, strengthening their food access just as the rainy season is getting underway in the Sahel, when milk production by their animals, which is a major source of cash for herders and agropastoralists, is still relatively limited.

**Figure 4.** Terms of trade for sheep/millet on the N’Djaména market (June 2006 to June 2007)



Source: SIM; Analysis by FEWS NET Chad